AN

EXPOSITION

OF THE

New Teſtament,

IN THREE VOLUMES.

IN WHICH

The Senſe of the SACRED TEXT is given;
Doctrinal and Practical TRUTHS are ſet in a plain and eaſy Light,
DIFFICULT PLACES EXPLAINED,
SEEMING CONTRADICTIONS RECONCILED;
AND
Whatever is Material in the VARIOUS READINGS, and ſeveral
ORIENTAL VERSIONS, is obſerved.
THE
Whole illuſtrated with NOTES taken from the moſt ancient JEWISH WRITINGS.

VOL. III.

By *JOHN GILL*.

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BRITISH MUSEUM

AN
EXPOSITION
OF THE
New Teſtament.

The Epiſtle of PAUL the Apoſtle to the *GALATIANS*.

CHAP. II.

Ver. 1. THEN *fourteen years after I went up again to Jeruſalem*, &c.] That is, either after it pleaſed God to call him by his grace, and reveal his Son in him; or rather after he had been at *Jeruſalem* to ſee *Peter*, with whom he ſtaid fifteen days, and then went into *Syria* and *Cilicia*; ſo that it was ſeventeen years after his converſion that he took this journey to *Jeruſalem* he here ſpeaks of; and he ſeems to refer to the time when he and *Barnabas* went from the church at *Antioch* to the Apoſtles and elders about the queſtion, whether circumciſion was neceſſary to ſalvation, *Acts* xv. 1, 2. which entirely agrees with the account the Apoſtle here gives of this journey, and which he went not alone, but *with Barnabas: and took Titus with me alſo*; *Barnabas*, is mentioned in *Luke*'s account as going with him at this time, but *Titus* is not; who, tho' he was not ſent by the church, yet the Apoſtle might judge it proper and prudent to take him with him, who was converted by him, was a miniſter of the Goſpel, and continued uncircumciſed; and the rather he might chuſe to have him along with him, partly that he might be confirmed in the faith the Apoſtle had taught him; and partly that he might be a living teſtimony of the agreement between the Apoſtle's principles and practice; and that having him and *Barnabas*, he might have a competent number of witneſſes to teſtify to the doctrines he preached, the miracles he wrought, and the ſucceſs that attended him among the *Gentiles*; and to relate, upon their return, what paſſed between him and the elders at *Jeruſalem*; for by the mouth of two or three witneſſes, every thing is eſtabliſhed.

Ver. 2. *And I went up by revelation*, &c.] He was not ſent for by the Apoſtles at *Jeruſalem*, nor did he go of himſelf, nor only by the vote of the church at *Antioch*, but by a divine revelation; not a revelation made to the church, or by the prophets there, but by God himſelf to him; he had a ſecret impulſe from the Spirit of God, and a private intimation given him, that it was the will of God he ſhould go up at this time; which is no ways inconſiſtent with his being ſent by the church, but ſerved as a confirmation to him, that what they determined was right, and according to the mind of God: *and communicated unto them that Goſpel, which I preach among the Gentiles*; that ſelf-ſame Goſpel, which he had preached, and ſtill continued to preach to the *Gentiles*; relating to free and full remiſſion of ſin by the blood of Chriſt, juſtification by his righteouſneſs without the works of the law, and freedom from all the rituals and bondage of the *Moſaic* diſpenſation; for as the Goſpel he preached was all of a-piece, uniform and conſiſtent, ſo he did not preach one ſort of doctrine to the *Gentiles*, and another to the *Jews*; but the very ſelf-ſame truths which were the ſubject of his miniſtry in the *Gentile* world, which were a crucified Chriſt, and ſalvation alone by him, theſe he communicated, laid before, and expoſed unto the conſideration of the elders and Apoſtles at *Jeruſalem*; not with a view either to give, or receive inſtructions, but to compare their ſentiments and principles together; that ſo it might appear that there was an entire harmony and agreement between them; and this he did not publickly, to the whole church, at leaſt at firſt, and eſpecially the article of chriſtian liberty, which reſpects the freedom of the believing *Jews*, from the yoke of the law; for as yet they were not able to bear this doctrine; they could pretty readily agree that the *Gentiles* were not obliged to it, but could not think themſelves free from it; wherefore the Apoſtle in great prudence, did not avouch this in the publick audience: ***but privately to them which were of reputation***; or *who ſeemed to be*, *i. e.* ſomewhat, very conſiderable perſons; not in their own opinion, or appearance only, but in reality, they ſeemed to be, and were pillars in the houſe of God; particularly he means *James*, *Cephas*, and *John*, men in great eſteem with the ſaints, and deſervedly honoured and reſpected by them, they being faithful labourers in the word and doctrine; ſo the *Jewiſh* doctors [a] call men of great eſteem, חשובים, who *ſeem to be*, or *are accounted of*, a word to which the phraſe here uſed anſwers: theſe were ſpiritual men, capable of judging of all ſpiritual things; men of full age, whoſe ſenſes were exerciſed to diſcern between truth and error; and were very proper perſons for the Apoſtle to lay before, the ſcheme of his miniſtry, and the various truths he inſiſted on in it: theſe he met *privately*, or *ſeparately*, and *ſingly*, as it may be rendered; he either converſed with the Apoſtles alone, and all together, in ſome private houſe; or ſeparately, one by one, in their own houſes, and there freely and familiarly diſcourſed with them, about the ſeveral doctrines of the Goſpel; and particularly this, of freedom from the law: his end in it was, as he ſays, *leſt by any means I ſhould run, or had run in vain*; which is ſaid, not with regard to himſelf, as if he had entertained any doubt of the doctrines he had preached, and needed any confirmation in them from them; for he was fully aſſured of the truth of them, and aſſured others of the ſame; or that he queſtioned the agreement of the Apoſtles with him; or that his faith at all depended on their authority; but with regard to others, and his uſefulneſs among them. The falſe teachers had inſinuated, that his doctrine was different from that of the Apoſtles in *Jeruſalem*, and ſo endeavoured to pervert the Goſpel he preached, and overthrow the faith of thoſe that heard him; and could this have been made to appear, it would in all likelihood have rendered, in a great meaſure, his paſt labours in vain, and have prevented his future uſefulneſs: ſome read theſe words as an interrogation, *do I in any manner run, or have I run in vain?* no; from the account he laid before the church, the elders, and Apoſtles, both in private and in publick, *Acts* xv. 4, 12. it clearly appeared what ſucceſs attended his miniſtry, how many ſeals he had of it, what numbers of ſouls were converted under it, and how many churches were planted by his means; for by *running* here is not meant, the chriſtian courſe he ran, in common with other believers, which lies in the exerciſe of grace, and the diſcharge of duty; but the courſe of his miniſtry, which he performed with great activity, application, diligence, and conſtancy, until he had finiſhed it.

Ver. 3. *But neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek*, &c.] There was ſuch an agreement between the Apoſtle, and his fellow Apoſtles at *Jeruſalem*, even about this article of the neceſſity of circumciſion, and other rituals of the law of *Moſes*, to ſalvation; that *Titus*, whom he brought along with him, an intimate companion of his in his travels, a fellow-labourer with him in the miniſtry, and now upon the ſpot, tho' he was a *Gentile*, an uncircumciſed perſon, yet even not he, *was compelled to be circumciſed*: the elders did not urge it, or inſiſt upon it, as proper and neceſſary; they looked upon it as a thing indifferent, left him to his liberty, and made uſe of no forcible methods to oblige him to it; yea, were of opinion, as *Peter* and *James* in the ſynod declared, that ſuch a yoke ought not to be put upon the necks of the diſciples, and that thoſe who turned to God from among the *Gentiles*, ſhould not be troubled with theſe things.

Ver. 4. *And that becauſe of falſe brethren*, &c.] This is the reaſon why the elders did not inſiſt upon the circumciſion of *Titus*, why he did not ſubmit to it, and why the Apoſtle would not admit of it: had it been left as a thing indifferent, or had it been moved for in order to ſatiſfy ſome weak minds, it might have been complied with, as in the caſe of *Timothy*; but theſe men inſiſted upon it as neceſſary to ſalvation; they were ſly, artful, deſigning men; could they have gained their point in ſuch an inſtance; could they have got ſuch a precedent at ſuch a time, when this matter was canvaſſing, they would have made great uſe of it in the *Gentile* churches, for which reaſon it was by no means judged proper and expedient. Theſe men are deſcribed as *falſe brethren*; they had the name, but not the grace, which entitles to the character of *brethren*; they called themſelves Chriſtians, but were in reality *Jews*: at the head of theſe, *Cerinthus*, that archheretick, is ſaid [b] to be. They are further deſcribed as ſuch, who were *unawares brought in, who came in privily*; into the churches, and into the miniſtry, into private houſes, where the Apoſtles were; or rather into the publick ſynod, where they were convened together about this article of the neceſſity of circumciſion to ſalvation. Their views, aims, and ends were, *to ſpy out our liberty which we have in Chriſt Jeſus*; by which is meant, not a liberty to ſin, which is no chriſtian liberty, is contrary to Chriſt, to the Spirit of Chriſt, to the principle of grace in believers, and to the doctrines of the Goſpel; but a liberty from ſin; not the being of it, but the dominion and damning power of it: that branch of chriſtian liberty the Apoſtle here chiefly deſigns, is a freedom from the law, both the moral law, as in the hands of *Moſes*, and as a covenant of works, tho' not from obedience to it as in the hands of Chriſt, and as a rule of walk and converſation; but from obeying it, in order to obtain life, righteouſneſs, and ſalvation by it, and from the curſe and condemnation of it; and chiefly the ceremonial law, circumciſion, and all the other rituals of it, and the free uſe of all things indifferent, provided the glory of God, and the peace of weak believers, are ſecured. This liberty is ſaid to be had *in Chriſt*, becauſe Chriſt is the author of it; it is that with which Chriſt makes his people free; and ſuch as are made free by him, are free indeed; and is what they come to enjoy by being in him; for by having union to him, they come to partake of all the bleſſings of grace which come by him, and this among the reſt. Now the deſign of theſe falſe teachers getting in privily among the Apoſtles, elders, and brethren, was to make their remarks upon this liberty, to object to it, and, if poſſible, to break in upon it, and deſtroy it, and ſo gain another point, which follows: *that they might bring us into bondage*; to the moral law, by directing ſouls to ſeek for juſtification and ſalvation by the works of it, which neceſſarily induces a ſpirit of bondage, genders to a ſtate of bondage and involves in it; and to the ceremonial law, by engaging to an obſervance of circumciſion, that yoke of bondage, and of days, months, times, and years, and other beggarly elements, which naturally lead on to ſuch a ſtate.

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[a] Vid. Sol. Ben Melech in Pſal. xl. 17.

[b] Epiphan. contr. Hæreſ. l. 1. Tom. 2. hæreſ. 28.

Ver. 5. *To whom we gave place by ſubjection*, &c.] Meaning not the Apoſtles, elders, and brethren at *Jeruſalem*, who did not inſiſt upon the obſervance of the rituals of the law as neceſſary, but were one and all of opinion, that the *Gentiles* ſhould be free from them; but the falſe teachers with whom they combated, and would not yield in the leaſt unto, ſo as to be brought into ſubjection to their impoſitions, nor ſuffer others to yield unto them: *no, not for an hour*; for the leaſt ſpace of time, knowing what advantages and improvements would be made of it, ſhould they allow of the uſe of theſe things as neceſſary for any ſhort time, tho' it ſhould be agreed then to drop them. This is a way of ſpeaking uſed by the *Jews*, when they would expreſs their ſteady adherence to any principle or practice; of which take the following inſtance from *Gamaliel*[c]: "it happened to *Rabban Gamaliel*, that he read the firſt night he was married; his diſciples ſaid to him, maſter, haſt thou not taught us, that the bridegroom is free from reading the *Shema*, i. e. *hear*, *O Iſrael*, &c. the firſt night? he replied to them, I wont hearken to you to cauſe to ceaſe from me the yoke of the kingdom of heaven, אפילו שעה אחת, *even one hour.*" The reaſon why the Apoſtle, and others with him, were ſo reſolute and pertinacious in this matter was, *that the truth of the Goſpel might continue with you*; with the *Galatians* in particular, and with all the *Gentiles* in general, which otherwiſe would have been in danger of being entirely removed from them, at leaſt of being adulterated and mixed with the *Moſaic* rites, and the inventions of men; whereas the Apoſtle's deſire was, that the Goſpel might be continued with them genuine, ſincere, and unmixed, in oppoſition to the ſhadows of the law, and the falſe doctrines of men.

Ver. 6. *But of theſe, who ſeemed to be ſomewhat*, &c.] Not the falſe brethren, but the Apoſtles *James*, *Cephas*, and *John*, who were, חשובים, *men of great eſteem*; high in the opinion of all good men; not that they were looked upon to be more than human, as *Simon Magus* gave out that he was *ſome great one*, and his followers thought him to be *the great power of God*; for ſuch an extravagant conceit of theſe men was never entertained; nor were they thought to be ſomething when they were nothing, for they really were ſomewhat; they were miniſters of Chriſt, and ſtewards of the myſteries of grace; they were the Lord's embaſſadors, and the Apoſtles of the Lamb. However, ſays the Apoſtle, *whatſoever they were*; ϖοτε, *formerly*, ſometime ago, which our verſion does not ſo fully expreſs, *it maketh no matter to me, God accepteth no man's perſon.* This is ſaid, not by way of ſlight or contempt, but in vindication of himſelf, whom the falſe teachers endeavoured to leſſen, by giving high encomiums of the Apoſtles at *Jeruſalem*. It looks as if they had upbraided the Apoſtle with being a perſecutor of the church before his converſion, when nothing of ſuch a nature could be laid to the charge of theſe men, and therefore he was not to be ſet upon a level with them: to which he may be thought to reply in ſuch manner as this, that as for himſelf, 'tis true, he had been an injurious perſon to the ſaints; and he was ready to own it, for his own humiliation, and to illuſtrate the grace of God in his converſion; and as for theſe excellent men, what they were before their converſion, it was no concern of his; tho' perhaps, was he diſpoſed to enquire into their characters then, ſome blemiſhes might be found therein, as well as in his; but it is not what he and they had been, but what they now were: he could have obſerved, that they were perſons formerly of a very low figure in life, of mean occupations, fiſhermen by employment, and very illiterate perſons, when he was bred a ſcholar at the feet of *Gamaliel*; but he choſe not to make ſuch obſervations, he knew that God was no reſpecter of perſons, nor was he influenced by any ſuch external circumſtances, but choſe whom he pleaſed to ſuch an high office; and that he, who of fiſhermen made them Apoſtles, of a perſecutor, had made him one alſo. Or theſe falſe teachers perhaps had objected to him, that theſe valuable men had been with Chriſt from the beginning, were eye-witneſſes of his majeſty, heard the doctrines of the Goſpel from his lips, and ſaw his miracles, had had a familiar converſation with him, when he was a preacher of much later date, and could not pretend to ſuch advantages, and therefore ought not to be equalled to them: his anſwer is, that whatever privileges of this kind they had enjoyed, as could not be denied, but they were conſiderable, yet this mattered not, nor did it make any great difference between him and them; he had ſeen Chriſt too, tho' as one born out of due time; had received an immediate commiſſion from him to preach his Goſpel, and was appointed an Apoſtle by him as they were, without any reſpect of perſons: and whereas it might have been urged, that theſe men had entertained different ſentiments from him formerly, concerning the obſervance of the law, he ſignifies he had nothing to do with that, to their own maſter they ſtood, to whom they muſt give an account, who, without reſpect of perſons, will render to every man according to his works: and, adds he, *for they who ſeemed to be ſomewhat in conference added nothing to me*; whatever opinions they formerly gave into, in their converſation with him, when he communicated the Goſpel he preached to them, they found no fault with it; they did not go about to correct it; nor did they make any addition to it; the ſcheme of truths he laid before them, which had been the ſubject of his miniſtry, was ſo compleat and perfect, containing the whole counſel of God, that they had nothing to add unto it; which ſhows the agreement between them, that he did not receive his Goſpel from them, the perfection of his miniſtry, and that he was not a whit behind them in knowledge and gifts.

Ver. 7. *But contrariwiſe, when they ſaw that the Goſpel*, &c.] *James*, *Cephas*, and *John*, were ſo far from blaming or correcting any thing in the Apoſtle's miniſtry, or adding any thing to it, that they highly approved of it; and as a token of their agreement with him and *Barnabas*, gave them the right hand of fellowſhip: the reaſons of their ſo doing are interſerted here, and in the following verſe, and in the next to that: the reaſon here given is, becauſe *they ſaw that the Goſpel of the uncircumciſion was committed unto me, as the Goſpel of the circumciſion was to Peter*; by *the uncircumciſion* and *circumciſion* are meant the *Gentiles* and *Jews*; ſee *Rom.* ii. 26, 27. and iii. 30. by the *Goſpel* of the one, and the *Goſpel* of the other, two Goſpels are not deſigned, for there is but one Goſpel, and not another. *Paul* did not preach one Goſpel unto the uncircumciſed *Gentiles*, and *Peter* another to the circumciſed *Jews*; but the ſame Goſpel was preached by both, and is ſo called with reſpect to the different perſons to whom it was preached by theſe Apoſtles,

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[c] Miſn. Beracot, c. 2. §. 5.

Apoſtles. The Apoſtle *Paul* was ordained a miniſter of the *Gentiles*, and he chiefly preached among them, tho' not to them only. *Peter* was principally employed among the *Jews*, tho' alſo as he had opportunity he ſometimes preached to the *Gentiles*: however, the ſubject of both their miniſtrations was the Goſpel, which is ſaid to be *committed* to them, as a truſt depoſited in their hands, not by man, but by God; the management of which required both prudence and faithfulneſs, and which were eminently ſeen in theſe good ſtewards of the myſteries of God. This being obſerved by the Apoſtles at *Jeruſalem*, they came into an agreement, that one part ſhould diſcharge their miniſtry among the *Gentiles*, and the other among the *Jews*.

Ver. 8. *For he that wrought effectually in Peter*, &c.] The *Syriac* verſion renders it, *he who exhorted Peter to*; the *Arabic* verſion is, *he who ſtrengthened Peter in*; the Spirit of God is meant, who filled *Peter* with ſuch eminent gifts, and inſpired him with ſo much zeal and reſolution *to the apoſtleſhip of circumciſion*, to diſcharge his office as an Apoſtle among the *Jews*; and who wrought by him ſuch wonderful works for the confirmation of it, as curing the man that was lame from his birth, ſtriking *Ananias* and *Sapphira* dead for telling lyes, and raiſing *Dorcas* from the dead, and communicating miraculous gifts by the impoſition of his hands; and which ſame ſpirit alſo made his miniſtrations effectual to the converſion of a large number of ſouls, as of three thouſand by one ſermon. *The ſame was mighty in me towards the Gentiles*. The Spirit of God wrought as effectually in, and by him, as in *Peter*; filled him with extraordinary gifts for the diſcharge of his work among the *Gentiles*, and inſpired him with equal zeal, conſtancy, and intrepidity of mind; wrought as many miracles by him to confirm his miſſion; ſuch as ſtriking blind *Elymas* the ſorcerer, healing the cripple at *Lyſtra*, raiſing *Eutychus* from the dead, with many other ſigns and wonders wrought by him among the *Gentiles*, through the power of the Spirit of God, whereby they became obedient by word and deed. The ſame Spirit alſo accompanied the Goſpel preached by him, to the converſion of multitudes, by which means many famous churches were founded and raiſed among the *Gentiles*; and this is another reaſon which induced the Apoſtles at *Jeruſalem* to take *Paul* and *Barnabas* into an aſſociation with them.

Ver. 9. *And when James, Cephas, and John*, &c.] Theſe are the perſons all along deſigned, tho' not till now named. *James* was the brother of our Lord, the ſon of *Alpheus*, who wrote the Epiſtle that goes by his name, made that famous ſpeech in the ſynod at *Jeruſalem*, *Acts* xv. 13. preſided in that church, was a man of great holineſs, and much eſteemed of by the ſaints, and had a good report of them that were without. *Cephas* is *Simon Peter*. This name was given him by Chriſt, *John* i. 42. and in the *Syriac* language ſignifies a *ſtone*, as *Peter* does in the *Greek*, to which our Lord alludes, *Matt.* xvi. 18. *John* was the Evangeliſt, and the ſame that wrote the Epiſtles, was the beloved diſciple, and who out-lived all the reſt: *who ſeemed to be pillars*; not as the *Arabic* verſion, *who thought themſelves ſuch*, but were eſteemed ſo by others, and very rightly. They were pillars among the Apoſtles of the higheſt note, and greateſt eminence among them; they were the very chief of the Apoſtles; for tho' they were all in the ſame office, and had the ſame commiſſion, and were employed in the ſame work, yet there were ſome who made a greater figure than others, as theſe did, and are therefore called pillars; they were more conſpicuous, and to be obſerved, and taken notice of, than the reſt; they were pillars in the church, ſet in the higheſt place there, and the ornaments of it; ſee *Prov.* ix. 1. *Rev.* iii. 12. They are called ſo for their conſtancy and ſtability in preaching the Goſpel, and ſuffering for the ſake of Chriſt; they were ſtedfaſt and immoveable in his work, nor could they be ſhaken or deterred from it by the menaces, reproaches, and perſecutions of men; and they were the means of ſupporting others that were feeble minded, and of defending and maintaining the truths of the Goſpel; and were ſet, as *Jeremy* was, as a defenced city, an iron pillar, and brazen walls againſt all the enemies of Chriſt, and his Goſpel; and were, as the church is ſaid to be, *the pillar and ground of truth*. The Apoſtle may have reſpect to the titles of this kind which were beſtowed on the *Jewiſh* doctors. 'Tis ſaid [d], "when *R. Jochanan* "*ben Zaccai* was ſick, his diſciples went in to viſit "him; and when he ſaw them, he began to "weep; his diſciples ſaid to him, lamp of *Iſrael*, "עמוד הימיני, *the right-hand pillar*, &c. why doſt "thou weep?" So another of their *Rabbins* is ſaid [e] to be, "one of the walls, ועמודי, *and pillars* "of the ſchool." The character better agrees with theſe eminent Apoſtles, who when they *perceived the grace that was given unto me*; meaning not ſo much the grace of the Spirit of God that was wrought in him, or the good work of grace upon his ſoul, with which the church at *Jeruſalem*, and the Apoſtles there, had been made acquainted ſome years before; but the grace and high favour of Apoſtleſhip, which was conferr'd upon him, and all thoſe extraordinary gifts of grace, whereby he was qualified for the diſcharge of it; and particularly the efficacy and ſucceſs of his miniſtry thro' the grace of God which went along with it, and was ſo viſible in it: *they gave to me and Barnabas the right-hands of fellowſhip*; as a token of a covenant or agreement between them; they took them, as it were, into partnerſhip with them, admitted them as Apoſtles into their ſociety, and gave their full conſent, particularly to this article, *that we*, Paul and Barnabas *ſhould go unto the heathen*, preach among the *Gentiles*; *and they*, Peter, and thoſe that were with him, *unto the circumciſion*, and diſcharge their office among the *Jews*; and to ſhew their joint agreement, uſed the above rite; and which ceremony was uſed as among other nations [f], ſo with the *Jews*, when covenants were made, or partnerſhip was entered into; ſee *Lev.* vi. 2. where the phraſe, בתשומת יד, *in putting of the hand*, and which we render *in fellowſhip*, is, both by *Onkelos*, and *Jonathan ben Uzziel*, rendered, בשותפות ידא, *in fellowſhip of the hand*, or *by the right hand of fellowſhip*; that being given in token of their agreement and conſent to be partners together, to which the alluſion ſeems to be here; or to the making of proſelytes, to whom they *ſtretch out the hand* to bring them under the wings of the *Shechinah* [g], or in token of their being proſelytes.

Ver. 10. *Only they would that we ſhould remember the poor*; &c.] Not in a ſpiritual ſenſe, as ſome have thought, tho' theſe the Apoſtle was greatly mindful of; but properly and literally the poor as to the things of this world; and may deſign the poor in general, every where, in the ſeveral churches where they ſhould be called to miniſter, and particularly the poor ſaints at *Jeruſalem*; who were become ſuch, either thro' the frequent calamities of the nation, and a dearth or ſcarcity of proviſions among them, and which affected the whole country; or rather thro' the perſecutions of their countrymen, who plundered them of their goods for profeſſing the name of Chriſt; or it may be thro' their having given up all their ſubſtance into one common ſtock and fund, as they did at firſt, and which was now exhauſted, and that in a great meaſure by aſſiſting out of it the preachers who firſt ſpread the Goſpel among the *Gentiles*; ſo that it was but juſt that they ſhould make ſome return unto them, and eſpecially for the ſpiritual favours they received from them, as the Goſpel, and the miniſters of it, which firſt went out of *Jeruſalem*: the *remembring* of them not only intends giving them actual aſſiſtance according to their abilities, which was very ſmall, but mentioning their caſe to the ſeveral *Gentile* churches, and ſtirring them up to a liberal contribution: *the ſame which I alſo was forward to do*; as abundantly appears from his Epiſtles to the churches, and eſpecially from his two Epiſtles to the *Corinthians*. Now ſince the Apoſtles at *Jeruſalem* deſired nothing elſe but this, and ſaid not a word concerning the obſervance of the rites and ceremonies of the law, and neither found fault with, nor added to the Goſpel the Apoſtle communicated to them, it was a clear caſe that there was an entire agreement between them, in principle and practice, and that he did not receive his Goſpel from them.

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[d] T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 28. 2.

[e] Ganz Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 46. 1.

[f] Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 2. c. 19. Cornel. Nepos, l. 2. c. 8. Gale's Court of the Gentiles, part 2. book 2. c. 6. §. 9. & c. 9. §. 3.

[g] Vajikra Rabba, § 2. fol. 147. 4.

Ver. 11. *But when Peter was come to Antioch, &c.*] The *Alexandrian* copy, and others, and the *Vulgate Latin, Syriac*, and *Ethiopic* verſions, inſtead of *Peter*, read *Cephas*; who, by ſome ancient writers, is ſaid to be not *Peter* the Apoſtle, named *Cephas* by Chriſt, but one of the ſeventy diſciples. So *Clemens*[h] ſays, that *Cephas*, of whom *Paul* ſpeaks, that when he came to *Antioch* he withſtood him to his face, was one of the ſeventy diſciples who had the ſame name with *Peter* the Apoſtle: and *Jerom* ſays[i], that there were ſome who were of opinion, that *Cephas*, of whom *Paul* writes that he withſtood him to his face, was not the Apoſtle *Peter*, but one of the ſeventy diſciples called by that name: but without any manner of foundation; for the ſeries of the diſcourſe, and the connexion of the words, moſt clearly ſhew, that that ſame *Cephas*, or *Peter*, one of the twelve diſciples mentioned, ver. 9. with *James* and *John*, as pillars, is here meant. Our Apoſtle firſt take notices of a viſit he made him, three years after his converſion, ch. i. 18. when his ſtay with him was but fifteen days, and for what appears there was then an entire harmony between them; fourteen years after he went up to *Jeruſalem* again, and communicated his Goſpel to *Peter*, and the reſt, when they alſo were perfectly agreed; but now at *Antioch* there was a diſſention between them, which is here related. However, the *Papiſts* greedily catch at this, to ſecure the infallibility of the biſhops of *Rome*, who pretend to be the ſucceſſors of *Peter*, leſt ſhould the Apoſtle appear blameworthy, and to be reproved and oppoſed, they could not, with any grace, aſſume a ſuperior character to his: but that *Peter* the Apoſtle is here deſigned, is ſo manifeſt, that ſome of their beſt writers are obliged to own it, and give up the other as a mere conceit. When *Peter* came to *Antioch* is not certain; ſome have thought it was before the council at *Jeruſalem* concerning the neceſſity of circumciſion to ſalvation, becauſe 'tis thought that after the decree of that council, *Peter* would never have behaved in ſuch a manner as here related; tho' it ſhould be obſerved, that that decree did not concern the *Jews*, and their freedom, from the obſervance of the law, only the *Gentiles*; ſo that *Peter*, and other *Jews* might, as it is certain they did, notwithſtanding that, retain the rites and ceremonies of the law of *Moſes*; and according to the ſeries of things, and the order of the account, it ſeems to be after that council, when *Paul* and *Barnabas* returned to *Antioch*, and with others continued there for ſome time, during which time *Peter* came thither; ſee *Acts* xv. 30, 35. and the following contention happened, *I withſtood him to the face*; not in ſhew, and outward appearance only, as ſome of the ancients have thought, as if this was an artifice of the Apoſtle's, that the *Jews* having an opportunity of hearing what might be ſaid in favour of eating with the *Gentiles*, might be convinced of the propriety of it, and not be offended with it: but this is to make the Apoſtle guilty of the evil he charges *Peter* with, namely, diſſimulation; no, the oppoſition was real, and in all faithfulneſs and integrity; he did not go about as a tale-bearer, whiſperer, and back-biter, but reproved him to his face, freely ſpoke his mind to him, boldly reſiſted him, honeſtly endeavoured to convince him of his miſtake, and to put a ſtop to his conduct; though he did not withſtand him as an enemy, or uſe him with rudeneſs and ill-manners; or, as *Jannes* and *Jambres* withſtood *Moſes*, and falſe teachers reſiſt the truth; but as a friend and an Apoſtle, and in an amicable manner, and yet with all uprightneſs: his reaſon for it was, *becauſe he was to be blamed*; ſome read it, *was blamed*, or *condemned*, either by others, by the *Jews*, for his going into *Cornelius*'s houſe formerly; but what has this to do with the preſent caſe? or by thoſe who lately came from *James* to *Antioch*, for his eating with the *Gentiles* there; yet this could be no reaſon for the Apoſtle's withſtanding him, but rather a reaſon why he ſhould ſtand by him; or he was condemned by himſelf, ſelf-condemned, acting contrary to the ſentiments of his mind, and what he had declared in the council at *Jeruſalem*; though it is beſt to render the word, *to be blamed*, which ſhews that the Apoſtle did not oppoſe him for oppoſition-ſake, raſhly, and without any foundation; there was a juſt reaſon for it, he had done that which was culpable, and for which he was blame-worthy; and what that was is mentioned in the next verſe.

Ver. 12. *For before that certain came from James, &c.*] The Lord's brother, mentioned before with *Cephas* and *John*, who reſided at *Jeruſalem*, from whence theſe perſons came; and who are ſaid to come from *James*, becauſe they came from the place and church where he was, though it may be, not ſent by him, nor with his knowledge. They were ſuch as profeſſed faith in Chriſt; they were *judaizing* chriſtians believing in Chriſt, but were zealous of the law. Now before the coming of theſe perſons to *Antioch*, *he*, Peter, *did eat with the Gentiles*; which is to be underſtood, not of eating at the Lord's table with them, but at their own tables: he knew that the diſtinction of meats was now laid aſide, and that nothing was common and unclean of itſelf, and that every creature of God was good, and not to be refuſed if received with thankfulneſs; wherefore he made uſe of his chriſtian liberty, and eat ſuch food dreſſed in ſuch manner as the *Gentiles* did, without any regard to the laws and ceremonies of the *Jews*; and in this he did well, for hereby he declared his ſenſe of things, that the ceremonial law was aboliſhed, that not only the *Gentiles* are not obliged to it, but even the *Jews* were freed from it, and that the obſervance of it was far from being neceſſary to ſalvation: all which agreed with the preaching and practice of the Apoſtle *Paul*, and ſerved greatly to confirm the ſame, and for this he was to be commended; nor is this mentioned by way of blame, but for the ſake of what follows, which was blameworthy: *but when they were come he withdrew and ſeparated himſelf*; not from the church, and the communion of it, for then he had been guilty of ſchiſm, but from private converſation with the *Gentiles*; he did not viſit them in their own houſes, and ſit down at table and eat with them as he was wont to do; which argued great inconſtancy and inſtability, very unbecoming one that ſeemed to be, and was a pillar in the church of God, as well as much diſſimulation, for he knew better than he acted; his conduct did not agree with the true ſentiments of his mind, which he covered and diſſembled; and which muſt be very ſtaggering to the believing *Gentiles*, to ſee ſo great a man behave in ſuch a manner towards them, as if they were perſons not fit to converſe with, and as if the obſervance of *Jewiſh* rites and ceremonies was neceſſary to ſalvation. What induced him to take ſuch a ſtep was, his *fearing them which were of the circumciſion*; that is, the circumciſed *Jews*, who profeſſed faith in Chriſt, and were juſt now come from *Jeruſalem*; not that he feared any danger from them, that they would abuſe his perſon, or take away his life; but he might either fear he ſhould come under their cenſure and reproofs, as he formerly had for going to *Cornelius*, and eating with him and his; or leſt that they ſhould be offended with him, and carry back an ill report of him, as not acting up to his character as an Apoſtle of the circumciſion. This led him into ſuch a conduct; ſo true is that of the wiſe man, that *the fear of man bringeth a ſnare*, *Prov.* xxix. 25.

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[h] Apud Euſeb. Eccl. Hiſt. l. 1. c. 12.

[i] In loc.

Ver. 13. *And the other Jews diſſembled likewiſe with him*, &c.] Not the men that came from *James*, for they never acted otherwiſe, and therefore could not be ſaid to diſſemble; but the *Jews* that were members of this church at *Antioch* from the beginning; or who came along with *Paul* and *Barnabas*, and ſtaid with them there; ſee *Acts* xv. 35. and who before had eat with the *Gentiles*, as *Peter*; but being under the ſame fear he was, and influenced by his example, concealed their true ſentiments, and acted the very reverſe of them, and of their former conduct: *inſomuch that Barnabas alſo was carried away with their diſſimulation*; ſo good a man as he was, full of faith, and of the Holy Ghoſt; who had been a companion of the Apoſtle *Paul*'s in his travels among the *Gentiles*, had greatly aſſiſted him in preaching the Goſpel to them, was a meſſenger with him at the council in *Jeruſalem*, heard the debates of that aſſembly, and the iſſue of them, returned with him to *Antioch*, and was one with him both in principle and practice; and yet ſo forcible was the example of *Peter*, and the other *Jews*, that as with a mighty torrent he was carried away with it, and not able to withſtand it; ſuch is the force of example in men who are had in great veneration and eſteem: wherefore it becomes all perſons, particularly magiſtrates, maſters of families, and miniſters of the Goſpel, to be careful what examples they ſet, ſince men both of grace and ſenſe are much influenced by them.

Ver. 14. *But when I ſaw that they walked not uprightly*, &c.] Or *did not foot it aright*; or *walked not with a right foot*; they halted, as the *Jews* of old did, between two opinions, being partly for God, and partly for *Baal*; ſo theſe ſeemed, according to their conduct, to be partly for grace, and partly for the works of the law; they ſeemed to be for joining Chriſt and *Moſes*, and the grace of the Goſpel, and the ceremonies of the law together; they did not walk evenly, were in and out, did not make ſtraight paths for their feet, but crooked ones, whereby the lame were turned out of the way; they did not walk in that ſincerity, with that uprightneſs and integrity of ſoul, they ought to have done: *nor according to the truth of the Goſpel*; tho' their moral converſations were as became the Goſpel of Chriſt, yet their Chriſtian conduct was not according to the true, genuine, unmixed Goſpel of Chriſt; which as it excludes all the works of the law, moral or ceremonial, from the buſineſs of juſtification and ſalvation, ſo it declares an entire freedom from the yoke of it, both to *Jews* and *Gentiles*. Now when, and as ſoon as this was obſerved, the Apoſtle without any delay, leſt ſome bad conſequences ſhould follow, thought fit to make head againſt it, and directly oppoſe it: *I ſaid unto Peter before them all*. The *Alexandrian* copy, and others, and the *Vulgate Latin*, *Syriac*, and *Ethiopic* verſions read, *Cephas*, as before. The reproof was given perſonally and principally to *Peter*, tho' *Barnabas* and others were concerned with him, becauſe he was the firſt in it, the chief aggreſſor, who by his example led on the reſt; and this was given publickly before *Barnabas*, and the other *Jews* that diſſembled with him, and for their ſakes as well as his; before the *Jews* that came from *James* for their inſtruction and conviction, and before all the members of the church at *Antioch*, for the confirmation of ſuch who might be ſtaggered at ſuch conduct; nor was this any breach of the rule of Chriſt, *Matt.* xviii. 15. for this was a public offence done before all, and in which all were concerned, and therefore to be rebuked in a public manner: and which was done in this expoſtulatory way, *if thou being a Jew*; as *Peter* was, born of *Jewiſh* parents, brought up in the *Jews* religion, and was obliged to obſerve the laws that were given to that people: *liveſt after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews*; that is, he had done ſo, he had eat with the *Gentiles*, and as the *Gentiles* did, without regarding the laws and ceremonies of the *Jews* relating to meats and drinks; being better informed by the Spirit of God, that theſe things were not now obligatory upon him, even tho' he was a *Jew*, to whom theſe laws were formerly made: *why compelleſt thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?* he aſks him, with what conſcience, honour, and integrity, with what conſiſtency with his own principles and former practice, he could compel, not by force, nor it may be, even by perſuaſions and exhortations, but by his example, which was very ſtrong and powerful, the *Gentiles*, to whom theſe laws were never given, and to obſerve which they never were obliged; how he could, I ſay, make uſe of any means whatever to engage theſe to comply with *Jewiſh* rites and ceremonies. The argument is very ſtrong and nervous; for if he, who was a *Jew*, thought himſelf free from this yoke, and had acted accordingly, then a *Gentile*, upon whom it was never impoſed, ought not to be entangled with it: and in what he had done, either he had acted right or wrong; if he had acted wrong in eating with the *Gentiles*, he ought to acknowledge his fault, and return to *Judaiſm*; but if right, he ought to proceed, and not by ſuch uneven conduct enſnare the minds of weak believers.

Ver. 15. *We who are Jews by nature*, &c.] I *Paul*, and you *Peter* and *Barnabas*, and the reſt of the *Jews* at *Antioch*. Some are *Jews* by grace, in a ſpiritual ſenſe, as all are that are Chriſt's, that are true believers in him, that are born again, and have internal principles of grace formed in their ſouls, of whatſoever nation they be; ſee *Rom.* ii. 28, 29. *Rev.* ii. 9. Others become *Jews* by being proſelytes to the *Jewiſh* religion: ſuch were the *Jews*, devout men, out of every nation under heaven, that were dwelling at *Jeruſalem*, when the Spirit was poured down on the Apoſtles on the day of Pentecoſt, *Acts* ii. 5. but theſe here ſpoken of were ſuch as were *Jews* by birth; they were born ſo, were deſcended of *Jewiſh* parents, and from their infancy were brought up in the *Jewiſh* religion, and under the law of *Moſes*, and in the obſervance of it: *and not ſinners of the Gentiles*; רשעי אומות העולם, *the wicked of the nations of the world*, as the [l] *Jews* call them. Not but that the *Jews* alſo were ſinners both by nature and practice, were involved in the guilt of ſin, under the power of it, and defiled with it, as the Apoſtle elſewhere moſt fully proves: nor is this ſaid with regard to the vain opinion the *Jews* had of themſelves, as very holy and righteous perſons, who in their own apprehenſion needed neither repentance nor remiſſion; and who looked upon the *Gentiles* as very unholy and unfit for converſation with them: but this more particularly reſpects that part of the character of the heathens, that they were without the law, and were under no reſtraints, but lived in all manner of wickedneſs, without hope and God in the world, and ſo were notorious ſinners, filled with all unrighteouſneſs, profligate and abandoned to every evil work, and are therefore called emphatically *ſinful men*, *Luke* xxiv. 7. And indeed the word Εθνος, *Gentiles*, among themſelves is ſometimes uſed for μερος τι ϖονηροτατον, *a certain moſt wicked part of Gentiles* in a city [m], and ſo may here deſign ſuch who lived the moſt diſſolute lives and converſations, to which the *Jews* are oppoſed, who had a written law, and were under a better regulation and diſcipline. The reaſon of this deſcription, both in the poſitive and negative branch of it, is to obſerve, that ſince they, the Apoſtles, and others, who were born *Jews*, and ſo under the law of *Moſes*, and until Chriſt came, were under obligation to obſerve it, but had now relinquiſhed it, and wholly and alone believed in Chriſt for righteouſneſs and life; then it was the moſt unreaſonable thing in the world, by any means whatever, to lead the *Gentiles*, who never were under the law, to an obſervance of it.

Ver. 16. *Knowing that a man is not juſtified by the works of the law*, &c.] That is, *Peter*, *Paul*, *Barnabas*, and other believing *Jews* knew this, and that from the law itſelf, which requires perfect and ſinleſs obedience, and accuſes, holds guilty, and adjudges to condemnation and death for the leaſt failure, both as to matter or manner of duty; and from the prophets, which declare that by the deeds of the law no fleſh can be juſtified in the ſight of God, and who bear witneſs to the doctrines of remiſſion of ſin, and juſtification by the righteouſneſs of Chriſt; and from the Goſpel, in which this truth is moſt clearly revealed; and from the illumination of the bleſſed Spirit, who led them into all truth; and from the revelation of Jeſus Chriſt they were favoured with; and from their own experience, being fully convinced of the exceeding ſinfulneſs of ſin, the inſufficiency of their own righteouſneſs, and of the neceſſity, ſuitableneſs, and fulneſs of the righteouſneſs of Chriſt. By *the works of the law* are meant, not only obedience to the ceremonial law, tho' this is included, but alſo to the moral law; for it can hardly be thought, that the men the Apoſtle oppoſes could ever dream of juſtification by their compliance with the rituals of the ceremonial law, if they believed there could be no juſtification by their obedience to the moral law; for if there is no juſtification by the latter, there can be none by the former: the words are therefore to be taken in the largeſt ſenſe, as rejecting all works of the law, of whatſoever kind, from juſtification in the ſight of God; and ſuch works are deſigned, as are performed by ſinful men in and of themſelves, otherwiſe men are juſtified by the works of the law as performed by Chriſt in their room and ſtead, but not by any as performed by themſelves, for at beſt they are very imperfect, and ſo can't juſtify; they are oppoſed to the grace of God, to which the juſtification of a ſinner is always aſcribed, and therefore can't be by works; ſuch a ſcheme would diſanul the death of Chriſt, and promote boaſting in men, and indeed is impracticable and impoſſible: *but by the faith of Jeſus Chriſt*; not by that faith, which Chriſt, as man, had in God, who promiſed him help, ſuccour, and aſſiſtance, and for which he, as man, truſted in him, and exerciſed faith upon him; but that faith of which he is the object, author, and finiſher; and not by that as a cauſe, for faith has no cauſal influence on the juſtification of a ſinner; it is not the efficient cauſe, for it is God that juſtifies; nor the moving cauſe, or which induces God to juſtify any, for that is his own free grace and good-will; nor the meritorious or procuring cauſe, for that is the obedience and bloodſhed of Chriſt: nor is faith the matter of juſtification; it is not a juſtifying righteouſneſs; it is a part of ſanctification; it is imperfect; as an act it is a man's own, and will not continue for ever in its preſent form, nature, and uſe; and is always diſtinguiſhed from the righteouſneſs of God, by which we are juſtified, which is perfect, is another's, and will laſt for ever. Men are not juſtified by faith, either as an habit, or an act; not by it as an habit or principle, this would be to confound juſtification and ſanctification; nor as an act, for as ſuch it is a man's own, and then juſtification would be by a man's works, contrary to the ſcripture: but faith is to be taken, either objectively, as it relates to Chriſt, the object of it, and his juſtifying righteouſneſs; or as it is a means of receiving and apprehending Chriſt's righteouſneſs; the diſcovery of it is made to faith; that grace diſcerns the excellency and ſuitableneſs of it, approves of it, rejects a man's own, lays hold on this, and rejoices in it: *even we have believed in Jeſus Chriſt*; we who are *Jews* by nature, being fully apprized that there is no juſtification by the works of the law, but by the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, received by faith, have quitted all confidence in our own works, and are come to Chriſt, and believe in him, not only as the Meſſiah, but as the Lord our righteouſneſs: *that we might be juſtified by the faith of Chriſt, and not by the works of the law*; not that faith, as before obſerved, has any cauſal influence on juſtification. Theſe *Jews* did not believe in Chriſt, in order by their believing to procure their juſtification before God, and acceptance with him, but that they might receive, by faith, this bleſſing from the Lord in their own conſcience, and enjoy the comfort of it, and all that ſpiritual peace which reſults from it, and which they could not find in the works of the law: *for by the works of the law ſhall no fleſh be juſtified*; reference ſeems to be had to *Pſ.* cxliii. 2. and contains a reaſon why theſe believing *Jews* relinquiſhed *Moſes* and his law, in whom they formerly truſted, and looked to, and depended on Chriſt for their juſtification, becauſe that by obedience to the law of works no ſinful mortal man can be juſtified in the ſight of God.

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[l] Mattanot Cehunah in Vajikra Rabba, fol. 164. 3.

[m] Harpocratian. Lex. p. 93.

Ver. 17. *But if while we ſeek to be juſtified by Chriſt*, &c.] As they did, and not only ſought for, but obtained what they ſought for, becauſe they ſought for it at the hands of Chriſt, and not as it were by works, but by faith, even a juſtifying righteouſneſs in him. *We ourſelves alſo are found ſinners*: that is, either we ſhould be ſo, were we not to reſt here, but ſeek to join our own works with Chriſt's righteouſneſs for our juſtification, and ſo make Chriſt the miniſter of ſin, of an imperfect righteouſneſs, which can't juſtify, which God forbid ſhould ever be done by us; or we are reckoned ſinners by you, judaizing Chriſtians, for leaving the law, and going to Chriſt for righteouſneſs; and if ſo, Chriſt muſt be the miniſter of ſin, for he has directed and taught us ſo to do; but God forbid that any ſuch thing ſhould be ſaid of him: or if we are ſtill ſinners, and unjuſtified perſons, notwithſtanding we ſeek to Chriſt to be juſtified by him, but need the law, and the works of it to juſtify us, then Chriſt, inſtead of being a miniſter of righteouſneſs, is a miniſter of the law, the ſtrength of ſin, which accuſes for it, and is the miniſtration of condemnation and death, on account of it; which God forbid ſhould ever be: or this is an objection of the adverſary to the doctrine of free juſtification by the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, as if it made void the law, diſcouraged the performance of good works, opened a door to licentiouſneſs that men might continue ſinners, and live as they liſt, being under no reſtraints of the law, or under obligation to obedience to it, and by ſuch doctrine make *Chriſt the miniſter of ſin*; who hereby teaches men to live in ſin, and in the neglect of duty; to which the Apoſtle anſwers, *God forbid*; as holding ſuch conſequences in the utmoſt abhorrence and deteſtation; ſee *Rom.* vi. 1, 2, 15. and vii. 7.

Ver. 18. *For if I build again the things which I deſtroyed*, &c.] Which muſt be underſtood not of good things, for formerly he deſtroyed the faith of the Goſpel, at leaſt as much as in him lay, and now he built it up, eſtabliſhed, and defended it; in doing which he did no evil, or made himſelf a tranſgreſſor, but the reverſe; he ſhewed himſelf a faithful miniſter of Chriſt: but of things not lawful, ſuch as the rites and ceremonies of the law of *Moſes*, which were now abrogated, and he had declared to be ſo all over the *Gentile* world; and therefore ſhould he go about to eſtabliſh theſe things as neceſſary to ſalvation, or teach men to join the obſervance of them with Chriſt's righteouſneſs for juſtification, then, ſays he, *I make myſelf a tranſgreſſor*: for he could not be otherwiſe, be the caſe how it would with reſpect to the abrogation, or non-abrogation of the law; for if the law was not aboliſhed, then he made himſelf a tranſgreſſor of it, by neglecting it himſelf, and teaching others to do ſo; and if it was aboliſhed, then it muſt be criminal in him to enforce the obſervance of it as neceſſary to a ſinner's juſtification before God. Now though the Apoſtle transfers this to himſelf, and ſpoke in his own perſon to decline all invidious reflections and characters; yet he tacitly regards *Peter*, and his conduct, who had been taught by the viſion the abrogation of the ceremonial law, and acted accordingly by converſing and eating with the *Gentiles*, and had declared that law to be an inſupportable yoke of bondage, which the *Gentiles* were not obliged to come under; and yet now by his practice and example, built up and eſtabliſhed thoſe very things he had before deſtroyed; and therefore could not exculpate himſelf from being a tranſgreſſor: or theſe things may regard ſins and immoralities in life and converſation; and the Apoſtle's ſenſe be, that ſhould he, or any other, take encouragement to ſin from the doctrine of free juſtification by the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, as if he was the author and miniſter of ſin, and allowed perſons in it; this would be to eſtabliſh ſin, which the righteouſneſs of Chriſt juſtifies from, and engage in a living in ſin, to which, by Chriſt's righteouſneſs, they are dead unto; than which nothing can be a greater contradiction, and which muſt unavoidably make them not only tranſgreſſors of the law, by ſinning againſt it, but apoſtates, as the word παραβατης here uſed ſignifies, from the Goſpel; ſuch muſt act quite contrary to the nature, uſe, and deſign of the Goſpel in general, and this doctrine in particular, which teaches men to deny ungodlineſs and worldly luſts, and that being dead to ſin, they ſhould live unto righteouſneſs.

Ver. 19. *For I through the law am dead to the law*, &c.] The Apoſtle further replies to the objection againſt the doctrine of juſtification, being a licentious one, from the end of his, and other believers being dead to the law: he owns he was dead unto it, not in ſuch ſenſe as not to regard it as a rule of walk and converſation, but ſo as not to ſeek for life and righteouſneſs by it, nor to fear its accuſations, charges, menaces, curſes, and condemnation: he was dead to the moral law as in the hands of *Moſes*, but not as in the hands of Chriſt; and he was dead to it as a covenant of works, tho' not as a rule of action, and to the ceremonial law, even as to the obſervance of it, and much more as neceſſary to juſtification and ſalvation: and ſo he became *through the law*; that is, either thro' the law or doctrine of Chriſt; for the *Hebrew* word, תורה, to which νομος anſwers, ſignifies properly doctrine, and ſometimes evangelical doctrine, the Goſpel of Chriſt; ſee *Iſ.* ii. 3. and xlii. 4. *Rom.* iii. 27. and then the ſenſe is, that the Apoſtle by the doctrine of grace was taught not to ſeek for pardon, righteouſneſs, acceptance, life, and ſalvation, by the works of the law, but in Chriſt; by the doctrine of the Goſpel, which ſays, believe on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt and thou ſhalt be ſaved; he became dead to the law, which ſays, do this and live: or thro' the books of the law, and the prophets, the writings of the Old Teſtament, which are ſometimes called the law, he learnt that righteouſneſs and forgiveneſs of ſins were only to be expected from Chriſt, and not the works of the law; things, tho' manifeſted without the law, yet are witneſſed to by the law and prophets: or thro' the law of his mind, the principle of grace formed in his ſoul, he became dead to the power and influence of the law of works, he being no longer under the bondage of that, but under grace, as a governing principle in his ſoul: or the word law, here twice uſed, may ſignify one and the ſame law of works; and the meaning be, either that thro' Chriſt's fulfilling the law in his room and ſtead, aſſuming an holy human nature the law required, and yielding perfect obedience to it, and ſubmitting to the penalty of it, he became dead to it; that is, thro' the body of Chriſt, ſee *Rom.* vii. 4. and thro' what he did and ſuffered in his body to fulfil it; or thro' the uſe, experience, and knowledge of the law, when being convinced of ſin by it, and ſeeing the ſpirituality of it, all his hopes of life were ſtruck dead, and he entirely deſpaired of ever being juſtified by it. Now the end of his being dead unto it, delivered from it, and being directed to Chriſt for righteouſneſs, was, ſays he, *that I might live unto God*; not in ſin, in the violation of the law, in neglect and defiance of it, or to himſelf, or to the luſts of men, but to the will of God revealed in his word, and to his honour and glory; whence it moſt clearly follows, that tho' believers are dead to the law, and ſeek to be juſtified by Chriſt alone, yet they do not continue, nor do they deſire to continue in ſin, or indulge themſelves in a vicious courſe of living, but look upon themſelves as under the greater obligation to live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly in this preſent world.

Ver. 20. *I am crucified with Chriſt*, &c.] Not literally, for ſo only the two thieves were crucified with him, but myſtically; Chriſt was crucified for him in his room and ſtead, and ſo he was crucified with him, and in him, as his head and repreſentative. Chriſt ſuſtained the perſons of all his people, and what he did and ſuffered was in their name, and on their account, and ſo they were crucified and ſuffered with him, as they are ſaid to be buried with him, and to be riſen with him, and to ſit together in heavenly places in him. Moreover, their old man was crucified with him; when he was crucified, all their ſins, the whole body of them were laid upon him, and he bore them, and bore them away, deſtroyed and made an end of them; they received their mortal wound by his crucifixion and death, ſo as never to be able to have any damning power over them; and in conſequence of this the affections and luſts are crucified, and the deeds of the body of ſin mortified by the Spirit and grace of God in regeneration and ſanctification, ſo as not to have the dominion over them; the world is crucified to them, and they to the world; and this is another reaſon, proving that juſtification by Chriſt is no licentious doctrine. This clauſe is in the *Vulgate Latin*, *Syriac*, *Arabic*, and *Ethiopic* verſions, put at the end of the preceding verſe. *Nevertheleſs I live*; which is to be underſtood, not of his natural, but of his ſpiritual life; the life of juſtification he lived, by faith, on the righteouſneſs of Chriſt; and the life of ſanctification which he had from Chriſt, by the quickening influences of his Spirit, by virtue of which he walked in newneſs of life. The believer is a mere paradox, he is dead to the law, and *yet lives* to God; he is crucified with Chriſt, and yet lives by him; yea, a crucified Chriſt lives in him. *Yet not I*; not the ſame I as before, but quite another man, a new creature: he did not now live as in his ſtate of unregeneracy, and whilſt in *Judaiſm*; he was not now *Saul* the blaſphemer, the perſecutor, and injurious perſon; nor did he now live *Saul* the *Phariſee*: or the life he had was not of his own obtaining and procuring; his life of righteouſneſs was not of himſelf, but Chriſt; his being quickened, or having principles of life and holineſs implanted in him, was not by himſelf, but by the Spirit; and the holy life and converſation he lived, was not owing to himſelf, to his power and ſtrength, but to the grace of God: or it was not properly himſelf, or ſo much he that lived, *but Chriſt liveth in me*; who was not only the author and maintainer of his ſpiritual life, but the life itſelf; he was formed in his ſoul, dwelt in his heart, was united to him, was one with him, whence all vital principles and vital actions ſprung, and all the communion and comforts of a ſpiritual life flowed. *And the life which I now live in the fleſh*; in the body, whilſt in this mortal ſtate, whereby he diſtinguiſhes that ſpiritual life he had from Chriſt, and thro' Chriſt's living in him, both from the natural life of his body, and from that eternal life he expected to live in another world: and which he ſays, *I live by the faith of the Son of God*; meaning, not that faith which Chriſt, as man, had, but that of which he is the author and object, by which the juſt man lives; not upon it, for the believer don't live upon any of his graces, no, not upon faith, but by faith on Chriſt the object; looking to him for pardon, righteouſneſs, peace, joy, comfort, every ſupply of grace, and eternal ſalvation: which object is deſcribed as *the Son of God*; who is truly God, equal with his Father; ſo that he did not live upon a creature, or forſake the fountain of living waters, but upon the only-begotten Son of God, who is full of grace and truth: of whom he further ſays, *who loved me*; before the foundation of the world, from everlaſting, prior to his love to him; and freely, without any regard to worth or merit, and tho' he was a blaſphemer and a perſecutor; and him perſonally, and particularly, in a diſtinguiſhing manner, of which he had a ſpecial knowledge and application by the Spirit of God; and was a reaſon and argument conſtraining him, and prevailing on him to live to him who loved him, and died for him, or, as he adds, *and gave himſelf for me*; his whole ſelf, his ſoul and body, as in union with his divine perſon, into the hands of juſtice, and unto death, in his room and ſtead, as an offering and ſacrifice for ſin, and which he did freely and voluntarily; and is a ſtrong and full proof of his love to him. Now tho' Chriſt gave his life a ranſom for many, and himſelf for his whole church, and all the members of his myſtical body, yet the Apoſtle ſpeaks of this matter as ſingularly reſpecting himſelf, as if almoſt he was the only perſon Chriſt loved and died for; which ſhews that faith deals with Chriſt not in a general way, as the ſaviour of the world, but with a ſpecial regard to a man's ſelf: this is the life of faith; and theſe conſiderations of the perſon, love, and grace of Chriſt, animate and encourage faith in its exerciſes on him.

Ver. 21. *I do not fruſtrate the grace of God*, &c.] Or *caſt it away*, as the *Vulgate Latin* verſion reads it; or *deny it*, as the *Syriac* and *Arabic*; or *deſpiſe*, *reject*, and *make it void*, as other verſions; meaning either the grace of the Son of God in giving himſelf for him, juſt mentioned by him; or the particular doctrine of grace, juſtification, he is ſpeaking of, as proceeding from the grace of God, upon the foot of the righteouſneſs of Chriſt; or the whole Goſpel, all and each of which would be denied, deſpiſed, rejected, made null and void, be in vain, fallen and departed from, ſhould juſtification be ſought for by the works of the law: but this the Apoſtle did not do, and therefore did not fruſtrate the grace of God; which to do would be to act the moſt ungenerous and ungrateful part to God, and Chriſt, and to that love and grace which are ſo largely diſplayed in the free juſtification of a ſinner. *For if righteouſneſs come by the law*; if a juſtifying righteouſneſs is to be attained unto by the works of the law, or men can be juſtified by their obedience to it, *then Chriſt is dead in vain*; there was no neceſſity for his dying; he died without any true reaſon, or juſt cauſe; he died to bring in a righteouſneſs which might have been brought in without his death, and ſo his blood and life might have been ſpared, his ſufferings and death being entirely unneceſſary; which to ſay, is to caſt contempt upon the wiſdom, love, and grace of God in this matter, and to offer the greateſt indignity to the perſon, character, ſufferings and death of Chriſt. Wherefore it may be ſtrongly concluded, that there is no righteouſneſs by the law of works, nor to be attained that way, otherwiſe Chriſt had never died; and that juſtification is ſolely and alone by his righteouſneſs.

CHAP. III.

IN this chapter the Apoſtle reproves the *Galatians* for their diſobedience to the Goſpel, and departure from it; confirms the doctrine of juſtification by faith, by various arguments; ſhews the uſe of the law, and the abrogation of it, and makes mention of ſeveral privileges which belong to believers in Chriſt. He begins with a ſharp reproof of the *Galatians*, and repreſents them as fooliſh and bewitched, and charges them with diſobedience to the truth of the Goſpel, which is aggravated by the clearneſs of the Goſpel-miniſtry, in which a crucified Chriſt, and juſtification by him, had been ſo evidently ſet before them, ver. 1. and by the fruit and effect of it, they having received the Spirit by it, and not by the preaching of the law of works, ver. 2. and it ſtill increaſed their folly, that whereas they had begun with the Spirit of God, and ſet out in a dependance on him and his grace, they ſeemed now as if they would end in a carnal and legal way, ver. 3. To which is added, the conſideration of their having ſuffered many things for the ſake of the Goſpel, which muſt be ſuffered in vain ſhould they relinquiſh the Goſpel, though the Apoſtle hoped otherwiſe of them, ver. 4. nay, they had not only received thro' the preaching of the Goſpel the Spirit, and his graces, but even extraordinary gifts attended it, for the confirmation of it, ver. 5. ſo that this caſe of theirs was a very aggravated one, and they were guilty of great folly and madneſs: from hence the Apoſtle paſſes to the main thing in diſpute, the great truth of juſtification by faith in the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, which theſe perſons were departing from, and which he eſtabliſhes by ſeveral arguments; and firſt from the inſtance and example of *Abraham*, who was juſtified by faith, as appears from that which he believed, being imputed to him as his juſtifying righteouſneſs, ver. 6. and as many as are believers in Chriſt are his ſpiritual children, and ſo undoubtedly are juſtified the ſame way their father was, ver. 7. and particularly, that the *Gentiles* are juſtified by faith, is clear from the preaching of the Goſpel to *Abraham*, and the promiſe made unto him, that in his ſeed all nations ſhould be bleſſed; that is, with the bleſſing of juſtification, ver. 8. The concluſion of which inſtance and example is, that as faithful *Abraham* was bleſſed with a juſtifying righteouſneſs thro' faith, ſo all that believe are bleſſed along with him with the ſame bleſſing, ver. 9. and that no man can be juſtified by the works of the law is certain, ſince the law is ſo far from juſtifying any on account of obedience to it, that it pronounces a curſe upon all that do not perfectly and conſtantly fulfil it, ver. 10. And this is ſtill further evident from a paſſage in the propheſy of *Habakuk*, ch. ii. 4. which declares, that the juſt live by faith, or that thoſe who are truly righteous are ſuch who are juſtified by it, ver. 11. And this is illuſtrated by the law and faith being contrary; for if a juſt man lives by faith, then not by the law, for the law does not direct a man to believe, but to work, and to live by his works, ver. 12. And the Apoſtle having ſpoken of the law as a curſing law, takes the opportunity of ſhewing how believers are delivered from the curſe of it, which is done by Chriſt's being made a curſe for them; and that he was, appears from his being crucified and hanged on a tree; the ends of which were, that the ſame bleſſing of juſtification *Abraham* had, might come upon the *Gentiles* thro' Chriſt, and that they might by faith receive the promiſe of the Spirit, ver. 13, 14. ſo that it is clear from hence, that the bleſſing of juſtification is thro' Chriſt's being made a curſe, and is received by faith, and is not by the works of the law. The Apoſtle next argues from the inheritance being by covenant, teſtament, or promiſe, and therefore not by the law: he obſerves, that a man's covenant or teſtament, when confirmed, can neither be diſanulled, nor have any thing added to it, and much leſs can the covenant or teſtament of God, confirmed of him in Chriſt, be diſanulled by the law, or the promiſe in it be made of none effect by that which was ſeveral hundred years after a declaration of it to *Abraham*, to whom, and to whoſe ſeed the promiſes were made; ſo that it unavoidably follows, that ſince the inheritance or bleſſing of life is by promiſe, as is clear from its being given to *Abraham* by promiſe, then it is not of the law, ver. 15, 16, 17, 18. And whereas an objection might ariſe, if this be the caſe, of what uſe and ſervice can the law be? to what purpoſe, or for what end was that given? The Apoſtle anſwers, that it was added becauſe of tranſgreſſions; and that it was to endure until Chriſt ſhould come, to whom the promiſe was made; and accordingly it was publiſhed in a very grand and ſolemn manner by angels, and was put into the hands of a mediator, *Moſes*, who ſtood between God as one party, and the people of *Iſrael* as another, ver. 19, 20. Moreover, as it might be further objected, that according to this way of reaſoning, the law is againſt the promiſes; the Apoſtle replies in a way of deteſtation and abhorrence of any ſuch thing, and by an argument from the inſufficiency of the law to juſtify, ſince it can't give life, ver. 21. And then proceeds to point out another uſe of the law, which is to conclude men under ſin, or convince men of it, that they, ſeeing their need of righteouſneſs and life by Chriſt, might receive the promiſe of it thro' faith in him, ver. 22. and ſo far were men from being juſtified by the law under the former diſpenſation, that they were kept under it as in a garriſon, and ſhut up in it as in a priſon, until Chriſt, the object of faith, was revealed, and releaſed them, ver. 23. and was moreover as a rigid and ſevere ſchool-maſter; and ſo it continued until the times of Chriſt; and theſe therefore being the uſes of the law, it is a clear caſe that juſtification is by faith, and not by that, ver. 24. Beſides, Chriſt being now come, the *Jews* themſelves are no more under this law as a ſchool-maſter;

it is now aboliſhed, and therefore there's no juſtification by it, ver. 25. And that this is the caſe of true believers in Chriſt, is evident, becauſe ſuch are the children of God, and are taught and led by the Spirit of God, and are free, and not under the law as a ſchool-maſter, ver. 26. Beſides, as they are baptized into Chriſt, they have put him on, as the Lord their righteouſneſs, and ſo profeſs to be juſtified by him, and him only, ver. 27. and theſe, let them be of what nation, ſex, ſtate, and condition ſoever, are all one in Chriſt, and are all juſtified in one and the ſame way; and being Chriſt's, they are *Abraham*'s ſpiritual ſeed, and ſo heirs of the ſame promiſe of righteouſneſs and life as he, ver. 28, 29.

Ver. 1. *O fooliſh Galatians*, &c.] Referring not to any national character, as ſome have thought, by which they were diſtinguiſhed from others for their rudeneſs in knowledge, their ignorance and folly, as the *Cretians* for their lying, *&c.* nor to their former ſtate in unregeneracy, it being common to all men, to God's elect themſelves before converſion to be *fooliſh*, in a moral and ſpiritual ſenſe; but to their preſent ſtupidity about the article of juſtification, it being an inſtance of moſt egregious folly to leave Chriſt for *Moſes*, the Goſpel for the law, and the doctrine of free juſtification by the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, which brings ſo much ſolid peace and comfort with it, for the doctrine of juſtification, by the works of the law, which naturally leads to bondage. Now this was ſaid, not raſhly, nor in anger, or on purpoſe to reproach and provoke, and ſo not at all contrary to *Matt.* v. 22. but in like manner as Chriſt ſaid to his diſciples, *O fools, and ſlow of heart to believe*, &c. *Luke* xxiv. 25. So the Apoſtle here, as pitying the *Galatians*, grieved for them, and as one ſurprized and aſtoniſhed that ever people of ſuch light, that had had the Goſpel ſo clearly preached to them, ſhould ever give into ſuch a notion. *Who hath bewitched you?* ſome falſe teacher, or another had, or it can't be conceived how their heads ſhould ever have been turned this way; which muſt be underſtood, not in a literal and proper ſenſe, as *Simon Magus* bewitched the people of *Samaria* with his ſorceries, but in a figurative and improper one; that as ſorcerers and inchanters caſt a miſt before peoples eyes, or by ſome evil arts, or juggling tricks, deceive their ſight, and make objects ſeem to appear which do not, or in a different form than they really do, ſo theſe deceitful workers, who had transformed themſelves into the Apoſtles of Chriſt, as ſatan ſometimes transforms himſelf into an angel of light, had ſet this doctrine in a falſe light before them, thereby to corrupt their minds from the ſimplicity that is in Chriſt. Tho' the Apoſtle reproves the *Galatians* for their folly and weakneſs in giving in ſo eaſily to ſuch deceptions, yet he imputes the chief fault unto, and lays the greateſt blame on the falſe teachers; whom he repreſents as ſorcerers and enchanters, and their doctrine, particularly that of juſtification by works, as witchcraft; it being pleaſing to men, a gratifying of carnal reaſon, and operating as a charm upon the pride of human nature. What *Samuel* ſaid to *Saul*, 1 *Sam.* xv. 22, 23. may be applied to the preſent caſe, *to obey* the truth *is better than ſacrifice*, than all the rituals of the ceremonial law, *and to hearken* to the Goſpel of Chriſt, *than the fat of rams*, or any of the legal inſtitutions; *for rebellion* againſt, and oppoſition to any of the doctrines of the Goſpel, and eſpecially to this of juſtification by the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, *is as the ſin of witchcraft.* The *Greek* word, βασκαινω, ſignifies *to envy*, and hence, *to bewitch*; becauſe the miſchief, by witchcrafts, generally proceeds from envy; and ſo the *Syriac* verſion, which the *Arabic* follows, renders it, מנו חסם בכון, *who hath envied you*, which ſuggeſts this ſenſe, that the falſe Apoſtles envying their light and knowledge in the Goſpel, their faith, peace, comfort, and happineſs, had endeavoured to introduce another doctrine among them, ſubverſive of all this. *That ye ſhould not obey the truth.* This clauſe is left out in the *Alexandrian* copy, and in ſome others, and in the *Syriac* verſion. By *the truth* is meant, either the whole Goſpel, often ſo called, in oppoſition to the law, and the types and ſhadows of it; and becauſe it is contained in the ſcriptures of truth, and comes from the God of truth; the ſubſtance of it is Chriſt, who is the truth, and is what the Spirit of truth leads into; or elſe particularly the doctrine of juſtification by the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, which is the truth the Apoſtle is eſtabliſhing, and theſe *Galatians* ſeemed to be going off from, thro' the artful inſinuations of the falſe teachers. Formerly theſe people had not only heard this truth, but embraced it; they received the love of it, were ſtrongly affected to it, and firmly believed it; but now they began to heſitate and doubt about it; they were not ſo fully perſuaded of it as heretofore; they ſeemed ready to let it go, at leaſt did not hold it faſt, and the profeſſion of it, without wavering as before; they were fallen from ſome degree of the ſtedfaſtneſs of their faith in, and of the obedience of it to this truth, which is what was the deſign of the falſe Apoſtles, and is here charged upon the *Galatians.* The aggravations of which follow in this, and in ſome ſubſequent verſes, *before whoſe eyes Jeſus Chriſt hath been evidently ſet forth*; meaning in the miniſtry of the Goſpel, in the clear preaching of it by the Apoſtle; Jeſus Chriſt was the ſum and ſubſtance of his miniſtry, in which he was ſet forth and deſcribed, and as it were painted to the life by him; the glories and excellencies of his divine perſon, the nature of his office, as mediator, the ſuitableneſs of him as a ſaviour, the fulneſs of his grace, the efficacy of his blood, ſacrifice, and righteouſneſs, were ſo fully, and in ſuch a lively manner expreſſed, that it was as if Chriſt was perſonally and viſibly preſent with them; yea, he was ſo deſcribed in his ſufferings and death, as hanging, bleeding, dying on the accurſed tree, that he ſeemed to be as it were, as the Apoſtle adds, *crucified among you*: for this can't be underſtood literally, for he was crucified without the gates of *Jeruſalem*; nor does it reſpect the ſin of the *Galatians* in departing from the Goſpel, as if that was a crucifying of him again, and a putting him to open ſhame; nor their ſufferings for the ſake of Chriſt, as if he, in that ſenſe, was crucified in them, and with them: but it intends the clear Goſpel-revelation of a crucified Chriſt, in the preaching of him by the Apoſtle, which was ſuch that no picture, no image, no crucifix could come up to, and which, where ſuch preaching is, are altogether vain and needleſs; and the clear view theſe ſaints had, by faith, in the glaſs of the Goſpel of Chriſt, and him crucified, which ſo realized the object, as if it was preſent and before the natural eye. Now this was an aggravation of their weakneſs and folly, that after ſuch clear preaching, and clear ſight, they had of the Goſpel, and of Chriſt in it, that they ſhould in the leaſt degree depart from it.

Ver. 2. *This one thing would I learn of you*, &c.] Tho' there were many things he could have put to them, yet he would only aſk this one queſtion, which if rightly attended to, and honeſtly anſwered, muſt expoſe their folly, and put an end to the controverſy upon this head: *received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?* This queſtion ſuppoſes they had received the Spirit; that is, the Spirit of God, as a ſpirit of wiſdom and knowledge in the revelation of Chriſt; as a ſpirit of regeneration and ſanctification; as a ſpirit of faith and adoption; and as the earneſt, ſeal, and pledge of their future glory. Now the Apoſtle aſks, whether they received this Spirit *by the works of the law*; meaning, either whether they could imagine, that they by their obedience to the law had merited and procured the Spirit of God; or whether they thought that the Spirit came to them, and into their hearts, thro' the doctrine or preaching of the law: the former could not be true, for if they could not obtain righteouſneſs and life by the works of the law, then not the Spirit; beſides, works done without the Spirit of God, are not properly good works: not the latter, for tho' by the law is the knowledge of ſin, yet this leaves nothing but a ſenſe of wrath and damnation in the conſcience; it is the killing letter, and a miniſtration of condemnation and death, and not of the Spirit, and of life; this belongs to the Goſpel, or *the hearing of faith*; for by *faith* is meant the Goſpel, and particularly the doctrine of juſtification by faith in Chriſt's righteouſneſs; and by *the hearing* of it, the preaching of it, the report of it, *Iſ.* liii. 1. which, in the *Hebrew* text is שמעתנו, *our hearing*, that by which the Goſpel is heard and underſtood. Now in this way the Spirit of God is received; while the Goſpel is preaching he falls on them that hear it, conveys himſelf into their hearts, and begets them again by the word of truth: and in this way the *Galatians* came by the Spirit, and which is another aggravation of their folly, that they ſhould enjoy ſo great an advantage by the Goſpel, and yet be ſo eaſily removed from it.

Ver. 3. *Are ye ſo fooliſh*, &c.] Is it poſſible you ſhould be ſo ſtupid? and do you, or can you continue ſo? *having begun in the Spirit*; that is, either in the Spirit of God, whom they had received thro' the preaching of the Goſpel. They ſet out in a profeſſion of religion in the light, under the influence, and by the aſſiſtance of the Spirit; they began to worſhip the Lord in ſpirit, and in truth, without any confidence in the fleſh; they entered upon the ſervice of God, and a newneſs of life, a different converſation then before, a ſpiritual way of living in a dependance on the grace and help of the divine Spirit: or in the Goſpel, which is the Spirit that gives life, is the miniſtration of the Spirit of God, and contains ſpiritual doctrines, and gives an account of ſpiritual bleſſings, and is attended with the Holy Ghoſt, and with power. This was firſt preached unto them, and they embraced it; this they begun and ſet out with in their Chriſtian profeſſion, and yet it looked as if they ſought to end with ſomething elſe: *are ye now made perfect by the fleſh?* or *in* it; not in carnality, in the luſts of the fleſh, as if they now walked and lived after the fleſh, in a carnal, diſſolute, wicked courſe of life; for the Apoſtle is not charging them with immoralities, but complaining of their principles: wherefore, by *the fleſh* is meant, either the ſtrength of mere nature, in oppoſition to the Spirit of God, by which they endeavoured to perform obedience to the law; or elſe the law itſelf, in diſtinction from the Goſpel; and particularly the ceremonial law, the law of a carnal commandment, and which conſiſted of carnal ordinances, and only ſanctified to the purifying of the fleſh; and alſo their obedience to it; yea, even all their own righteouſneſs, the beſt of it, which is but fleſh, merely external, weak, and inſufficient to juſtify before God. This is a third aggravation of their folly, that whereas they begun their chriſtian race depending upon the Spirit and grace of God, now they ſeemed to be taking a ſtep as if they thought to finiſh it in the mere ſtrength of nature: and whereas they ſet out with the clear Goſpel of Chriſt, and ſought for juſtification only by his righteouſneſs, they were now verging to the law, and ſeeking to make their juſtifying righteouſneſs perfect, by joining the works of the law unto it, which needed them not, but was perfect without them.

Ver. 4. *Have ye ſuffered ſo many things in vain?* &c.] Theſe *Galatians* had ſuffered great reproach, many afflictions and perſecutions for the ſake of the Goſpel, as all that embrace it muſt expect to do; and which to them that perſevere in the faith of the Goſpel will not be in vain, they will be followed with eternal life and glory; not that theſe things are meritorious of ſuch happineſs, or deſerve ſuch a reward; the reward of them is not of debt, but of grace. But, if ſuch who have made a profeſſion, and have ſuffered for it, ſhould after all relinquiſh it, their ſufferings for it are in vain; they'll come ſhort of that glory which is promiſed to them that ſuffer for righteouſneſs ſake: and this is another aggravation of the folly of theſe perſons, that they ſhould ſuffer ſo much perſecution for the Goſpel, which if not true, they muſt have ſuffered in vain, and might as well have avoided it; and if true, by relinquiſhing it not only ſuſtain a great loſs, but bring great hurt and damage to themſelves: *if it be yet in vain*; by which words the Apoſtle does, as it were, correct himſelf, and expreſſes his hope of them, that they would ſee their miſtake, revoke their error, and abide by the truth of the Goſpel.

Ver. 5. *He therefore that miniſtreth to you the Spirit*, &c.] By whom he means not himſelf, nor any other miniſter of the Goſpel, in whoſe power it does not lie to miniſter the Spirit, either the ordinary or the extraordinary gifts of it unto men; but either God or Chriſt who had miniſtred, and ſtill continued to miniſter the grace of the Spirit thro' the preaching of the Goſpel; or rather the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, which were miniſtred at the firſt preaching of the Goſpel to them for the confirmation of it, and which they were ſtill ſupplied with, as the following words ſhew: *and worketh miracles among you*; ſo that this is a diſtinct argument from that in ver. 2. and a further proof and aggravation of the folly and ſtupidity of the members of this church, who had not only received thro' the Goſpel the Spirit, as a Spirit of regeneration, at leaſt many of them, but had ſeen the Goſpel confirmed by the extraordinary gifts, ſigns, and wonders of the Holy Ghoſt, and which were ſtill among them; and yet they were departing from this Goſpel, thro' which all this was done: for 'tis aſked, *doth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?* and the Apoſtle's meaning is, that theſe extraordinary gifts of the Spirit and theſe miracles done among them, did not attend the preaching of the law, or the doctrine of juſtification by works, taught by the falſe Apoſtles, but the doctrine of faith, of juſtification by faith in the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, delivered by him and others, for the truth of which he appeals to themſelves; and therefore they muſt be guilty of the moſt egregious folly, once to think of, or take any one ſtep towards a departure from that doctrine. The

Alexandrian copy reads here, as in ver. 2. *received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?*

Ver. 6. *Even as Abraham believed God,* &c.] The Apoſtle having obſerved, that the ſpecial grace and extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, were received not through the preaching of the law, but through the doctrine of faith; by an eaſy tranſition, paſſes on to a further confirmation of the doctrine of juſtification by faith, by producing the inſtance of *Abraham*, what the ſcripture ſays of him, and the promiſe made unto him; which is very appoſite to his purpoſe, ſince *Abraham* was certainly a righteous man, the firſt of the circumciſion, and the head of the *Jewiſh* nation; and whom the falſe teachers much gloried in, and boaſted of their being his ſeed, and of being circumciſed as he was; and would fain have perſuaded the *Gentiles* to the ſame practice, in imitation of him, and as neceſſary to their juſtification before God; whereas the Apoſtle here ſhews, referring to *Gen.* xv. 6. that *Abraham* was juſtified by faith, and not by any works whatever, much leſs by circumciſion; for what he here refers to, was many years before his circumciſion; and ſince therefore he was a juſtified perſon, declared to be ſo, before it and without it, it was not neceſſary to his juſtification, nor is it to any other perſons: he *believed God.* The object of faith is God, Father, Son, and Spirit; here Jehovah the Son ſeems principally intended, who in *Gen.* xv. 1. is called *the Word of the Lord*; the eſſential Word, who was with God from everlaſting, and was God, and in the fulneſs of time was made fleſh and dwelt among men; and *Abraham's ſhield*, the ſame the Apoſtle in *Epheſ.* vi. 16. calls *the ſhield of faith*; meaning not the grace of faith, but Chriſt the object of faith; which faith lays hold on, and makes uſe of as a ſhield againſt the temptations of ſatan: and alſo his *exceeding great reward*; his all in all, being made to him, as to all believers, wiſdom, righteouſneſs, ſanctification, and redemption: him he believed, not only that he was God, but he believed his word of promiſe, and in his power and faithfulneſs to fulfil it; which regarded not only his natural offspring, and a numerous race, the enjoyment of the land of *Canaan*, and many temporal good things in it, but the Meſſiah, and ſpiritual bleſſings in him: he *believed in the Lord*, *Gen.* xv. 6. in Jehovah the Word, in him as his ſhield, and exceeding great reward, in him as the Lord his righteouſneſs: *and it was accounted to him for righteouſneſs*; that is, by God, whom he believed; for the ſenſe is, not that *Abraham* aſcribed righteouſneſs to God, and celebrated his juſtice and faithfulneſs, as ſome; nor as others, that *Abraham* was accounted a righteous man by the world; but that ſomething was accounted by God to *Abraham* as his righteouſneſs, which could not be the act of his faith; for faith is not a man's righteouſneſs, neither in whole nor in part; faith and righteouſneſs are two diſtinct things, and are often diſtinguiſhed one from another in ſcripture: beſides, that which was accounted to *Abraham* for righteouſneſs, is imputed to others alſo; ſee *Rom.* iv. 23, 24. which can never be true of the act of his faith; but is of the object of it, the Word of the Lord, his ſhield and exceeding great reward, the Lord his righteouſneſs and ſtrength, who is made or accounted, as to him, ſo to others, righteouſneſs. The righteouſneſs of Chriſt whom he believed in, was accounted to him as his juſtifying righteouſneſs: now for faith to be accounted for righteouſneſs, is all one as to be juſtified by faith; that is, by Chriſt, or by his righteouſneſs imputed and received by faith; and if *Abraham* was juſtified this way, as he was, the Apoſtle has his argument againſt the falſe teachers.

Ver. 7. *Know ye therefore,* &c.] Or *ye know*; this is a thing known by you, at leaſt may, or ſhould be; it ought not to be contradicted or diſputed, it is ſo plain a caſe, and ſo clear a point: *that they which are of faith*; of the faith of *Abraham*, as in *Rom.* iv. 16. have the ſame faith as he had, for nature and kind; though it may be not to the ſame degree, yet exerciſed on the ſame object, *Jehovah* the Word, the Lord our righteouſneſs, and wrought by the ſame Spirit; or who are of the faith of Chriſt, believers in him with all their hearts, and for themſelves; who look to him for righteouſneſs and life, who ſeek for juſtification by his righteouſneſs, and truſt in him alone for it, and not in the works of the law: *the ſame are the children of Abraham*; his ſpiritual ſeed, though they may not be his natural offſpring; for he is the father of all that believe, whether of the circumciſion or the uncircumciſion, and of none elſe in a ſpiritual ſenſe: in this the Apoſtle ſtrikes at the falſe teachers, who boaſted of their being the ſeed of *Abraham*, his natural deſcendants, which they might be, and yet not his ſpiritual children; for none are ſuch, but they that are of faith, or ſeek for righteouſneſs by faith; not they that are of the law, or ſeek for juſtification by the works of it, and ſo not heirs of the bleſſing; were they, faith would be made void, and the promiſe of none effect, *Rom.* iv. 14. and his view herein is to prove, that the *Gentiles* who believe, are the true ſeed of *Abraham*, the children of the promiſe, thoſe in many nations, he was promiſed to be the father of; and his further view is to obſerve, that as the father of the faithful was juſtified, ſo are all his children; and that as he was juſtified by faith, ſo are they.

Ver. 8. *And the ſcripture foreſeeing,* &c.] This ſeems to agree with the *Jewiſh* forms of citing paſſages of ſcripture, מה ראה הכתוב, *what does the ſcripture foreſee?* and מה ראתה תורה [a], *what does the law foreſee?* The ſcripture here by a *proſopopeia*, is repreſented as foreſeeing an event that would come to paſs, and accordingly ſpoke of it before-hand, and deſigns God the author of the ſcripture; and ſo the *Syriac* verſion renders it, *for ſeeing*, דקדם ידע אלהא, *that God foreknew*, &c. and means either the Holy Spirit, who ſearches the deep things of God, is privy to all his counſels and decrees, and to this of the juſtification of the *Gentiles*; or God the Father, who juſtifies the uncircumciſion through faith, according to his own previſion and pre-determination of it, before the world was; for he was in Chriſt, reconciling the world, his elect among the *Gentiles*, from all eternity; when he reſolved not to impute their ſins to them, but to his Son, who engaged to be their ſurety: or rather the Son of God, ſince he was the preacher of this to *Abraham*; who lay in the boſom of the Father, and was not only acquainted with all his purpoſes and determinations, but entered into a covenant with him, for, and on the behalf of the people, the choſen ones, among the *Gentiles* as well as *Jews*; and undertook to bring in a righteouſneſs for them, by which, being received by faith, they ſhould evidentially, manifeſtatively, in the court of their own conſciences, be juſtified: wherefore the wiſdom of God, the eternal Logos, having ſuch a certain foreſight, both as God and as mediator, concerned in the covenant of grace for his people, *that God would juſtify the Heathen through faith*; that is, that whereas a righteouſneſs would be wrought out, and brought in, for the juſtification of all God's elect, and the doctrine of it be preached among the *Gentiles*, to whom faith would be given to lay hold on, and receive this righteouſneſs, God would hereby, and hereupon pronounce the ſentence of juſtification in the court of conſcience; from whence follow peace and joy in the Holy Ghoſt; the ſcripture, the author, and ſubſtance of it, God the Word, *preached before the Goſpel unto Abraham*; for not to the Father or the Spirit, as to the Son, can preaching be ſo well aſcribed: Chriſt was the firſt preacher of the Goſpel that ever was; he firſt preached it to *Adam* and *Eve* in the garden, and afterwards to *Abraham*: it was Goſpel, it was good news to him, that the Meſſiah ſhould ſpring from him, and all nations be bleſſed in him; he rejoiced at it, and by faith ſaw Chriſt's day and was glad; and particularly that part of the Goſpel, and which is a principal part of it, juſtification by faith; and that as it concerned the *Gentiles*, was preached unto him; and before his circumciſion, of which that was a ſign and ſeal, namely, that the righteouſneſs of faith ſhould be upon the uncircumciſed *Gentiles*; and before the law of works was given on mount *Sinai*, and long before the doctrine of juſtification by faith was preached unto the *Gentiles*, and they enjoyed the comfort of it; which ſhews this to be the Goſpel, and to be no new doctrine, nor different from what was ſo early taught; the ſum and ſubſtance of which lies in theſe words, *in thee ſhall all nations be bleſſed*; the paſſage referred to, is in *Gen.* xii. 3. and is repeated, ch. xviii. 18. and in ch. xxii. 18. is thus expreſſed, *in thy ſeed ſhall all the nations of the earth be bleſſed*; which ſhews, that this is not to be underſtood of *Abraham* perſonally, but of his ſeed; and which cannot intend *Iſaac*, the immediate ſeed of *Abraham*, in whom it was never verified; and beſides, is carried down to his ſeed, *Gen.* xxvi. 4. as not terminating in him; and for the ſame reaſon it cannot deſign *Jacob*, the immediate ſeed of *Iſaac*; ſee *Gen.* xxviii. 14. nor the whole body of the *Jews*, the poſterity of *Jacob*, in whom it never had its completion; for when and how, have the nations of the earth been bleſſed in them? either whilſt in their own land, when they would have no converſation with them, neither on a civil or ſacred account, unleſs they conformed to their rites; or ſince their diſperſion, ſo far from it, that their name is uſed by way of reproach, and as a proverb, a taunt, and a curſe every where; but it is to be underſtood of the Meſſiah, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who is the ſon of *Abraham*, took upon him the ſeed of *Abraham*, and to whom it is applied, ver. 16. as by the Apoſtle *Peter*, *Acts* iii. 25, 26. The phraſe being *bleſſed in* him, does not ſignify a bleſſing of themſelves or others, or a proverbial expreſſion that ſhould be uſed among the *Gentiles*, *God bleſs thee as Abraham*, or *the God of Abraham bleſs thee*, or *God bleſs you* as *he did the Iſraelites*, or *ſeed of Abraham*; for no one inſtance can be produced, of the nations of the world ever uſing ſuch a form of bleſſing; no hiſtory, ſacred or profane, makes mention that theſe, or any other *Jewiſh* forms of bleſſing, were ever uſed among the *Gentiles*: but here it deſigns bleſſings in Chriſt, and not temporal, but ſpiritual ones, even all ſpiritual bleſſings; as redemption, reconciliation, peace, pardon, adoption, ſanctification, and eternal life, and particularly juſtification; this is the bleſſedneſs more eſpecially intended, which comes not upon the circumciſion only, but the uncircumciſion alſo; and they that partake of this, are bleſſed indeed; for they are juſtified from all ſin, are free from condemnation, ſecure from the wrath of God, have a title to eternal life, and ſhall certainly be glorified: and when it is ſaid that *all nations* ſhall be thus bleſſed, the meaning is, not that every individual of all nations ſhall enjoy this happineſs, for all are not in Chriſt, nor have his righteouſneſs imputed to them, nor have faith in him, there are many that will be condemned with the world; but ſome of all nations, that God will have ſaved, and Chriſt has redeemed by his blood; and theſe are the many he juſtifies, even all the elect of God, in the ſeveral nations of the world.

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[a] Bemidbar Rabba, Paraſh. 10. fol. 201. 4. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 122. 1.

Ver. 9. *So then they which be of faith*, &c.] This is the Apoſtle's concluſion upon the whole, from the inſtance of *Abraham*, and the promiſe made to him; and is an explanation of the preceding clauſe, and ſhews that it muſt be taken in a limited ſenſe, and underſtood not of every individual; only of thoſe who are of the ſame faith with *Abraham*, are believers in Chriſt, and ſeek for juſtification by faith in him, and not by the works of the law: theſe *are bleſſed with faithful Abraham*; in his ſeed Chriſt; they are bleſſed with a juſtifying righteouſneſs in Chriſt as he was, and will be bleſſed with eternal life as he is; they ſhall ſit with him, and with *Iſaac* and *Jacob* in the kingdom of heaven. The character of *faithful* given to him, reſpects not his uprightneſs and integrity among men, but his faith in God; and does not ſuppoſe that he was bleſſed for his faith, but that it was through faith that he received the bleſſing of juſtification, and not by the works of the law; and that in the ſame way, all that believe enjoy the ſame favour, for to them it is limited and reſtrained: nor can the *Jews* of all men find fault with this interpretation of the Apoſtle's, ſince they themſelves interpret the above clauſe of ſome particular perſons of the nations of the world, and ſay in ſo many words, that "the "meaning is, not that all the men of the world "ſhould be bleſſed, but that every family that is "in the world, שהתקרב למשמעתו ואמונתו, *that* "*comes to the obedience and faith of him* (God,) to "it ſhall adhere the bleſſing and providence *."

Ver. 10. *For as many as are of the works of the law*, &c.] The Apoſtle does not ſay, *as many as were of the law*, to whom it belonged, who were born and brought up in it, and to whom it was given, the *Jews*; for there were ſome of them who believed in Chriſt, were bleſſed with *Abraham*, and not under the curſe of the law; nor does he ſay, *as many as do the works of the law*: for the works of the law are to be done, though not in order to obtain righteouſneſs and life by them; yet it is not the doing of them, but the not doing of them, that entails the curſe on men: his meaning is, that as many as ſeek for juſtification by the works of the law, and truſt in their own righteouſneſs for acceptance with God, theſe are ſo far from being bleſſed or juſtified hereby, that they *are under the curſe*, that is, of the law; they are under its ſentence of condemnation and death, they are deſerving of, and liable to the ſecond death, eternal death, the wrath of God, here meant by the curſe; to which they are expoſed, and which will light upon them, for aught their righteouſneſs can do for them; for truſting in their works, they are truſting in the fleſh, and ſo bring down upon themſelves the curſe threatened to the man that truſts in man, and makes fleſh his arm; not only that truſts in a man of fleſh and blood, but in the works of man; his own, or any other mere creature's: beſides, by ſo doing, he rejects Chriſt and his righteouſneſs, whereby only is deliverance from the curſe of the law; nor is it poſſible by his preſent obedience to the law, be it ever ſo good, that he can remove the guilt of former tranſgreſſions, and free himſelf from obligation to puniſhment for them; nor is it practicable for fallen man, to fulfil the law of works, and if he fails but in one point, he's guilty of all, and is ſo pronounced by the law; and he ſtands before God convicted, his mouth ſtopped, and he condemned and curſed by that law, he ſeeks for righteouſneſs by the deeds of: *for it is written*, Deut. xxvii. 26. *curſed is every one that continues not in all things written in the book of the law to do them.* The law requires doing; it is not content with mere theory without practice; it is not enough to know it, or hear it, it muſt be done. The *Jews* boaſted of their knowledge, and truſted much to the hearing of it read every ſabbath-day; but not thoſe who had a form of knowledge, and of the truth in the law, or were hearers of it, were juſt before God, but the doers of it are juſtified; and it requires perfect obedience, an obſervance of all things contained in it, which can never be performed by fallen man. The *Jews* pretend [p], that *Abraham* their father, קיים כל התורה כולה, *fulfilled all the whole law*; and the ſame they ſay [q] of the *Iſraelites* in common, than which nothing is more untrue; for in many things, all men offend: moreover, the law requires conſtant perfect obedience; not only that a man ſhould do all the things commanded in it, but that he ſhould continue to do them from his infancy, to the day of his death; and in failure hereof, it pronounces every man curſed, without any reſpect to perſons, or any regard to pleas, taken from the infirmity of human nature, the ſincerity of the heart, or repentance for tranſgreſſions. It ſhould be obſerved, that the word *all* is not in the *Hebrew* text, in *Deut.* xxvii. 26. but is manifeſtly implied, an indefinite propoſition being equal to an univerſal one; and agreeable to the true ſenſe of the words, it is inſerted by the Apoſtle here, as it is in the *Septuagint* and *Samaritan* verſions there; and perfectly accords with the ſenſe of the beſt interpreters among the *Jews*; one of them has this Gloſs upon the words [r], כאן כלל את כל התורה כולה, *here he* (Moſes) *comprehends all the whole law*; and another [s] ſays the ſame thing, almoſt in the ſame words; "this, ſays he, includes all the commandments "which are in the law:" and the note of a third is [t], "there are ſome that ſay, this is to be underſtood, על כל התורה, *of the whole law*; and "there are others that ſay, it is to be underſtood "of thoſe things that are mentioned (above,) but "they ſay nothing, for it is written *to do them*; "and it is right in my eyes, that he curſes for the "negative commands mentioned, and he curſes "him who does not keep even ſecretly the affirmative precepts, wherefore he ſays *to do them*:" to which may be added, the obſervation of another of them [u], that theſe words intimate, that a man ought to honour the law, במחשבת ובדיבור ובמעשה, *in thought, and in word, and in deed*: nor ſhould this be thought to be too ſevere, that the law of God curſes men for non-performance of the whole. The *Athenians* [w] formerly, condemned perſons as guilty, though they had not broke the whole law, yet if they had tranſgreſſed but one ſyllable of it: upon the whole it is a clear point, that there can be no juſtification by the works of the law, ſince it curſes in caſe of want of perfect and conſtant obedience to it.

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* Abarbinel in Pentateuch, fol. 54. 1, 2. Vid. R. Iſaac Chizzuk, Emuna, par. 1. c. 13. p. 135.

Ver. 11. *But that no man is juſtified*, &c.] There are ſome that are juſtified, as all God's elect are, in his own mind and will from eternity; which will of his to juſtify them, upon the righteouſneſs of his Son, undertook by him to bring in, is their juſtification in the court of heaven; and all that believe in Chriſt, are openly and manifeſtatively juſtified in the court of conſcience, under the teſtimony of the Spirit of God: but no one is juſtified *by the law*; 'tis in the *Greek* text, *in the law*; there were many juſtified before the law was given, as *Noah*, *Job*, *Abraham*, and all the *Ante-Moſaic* believers; and there were many juſtified *in*, or under the legal diſpenſation; but none of them were juſtified by their obedience to the law, but by the righteouſneſs they believed they had in the Lord: eſpecially no man is juſtified *in the ſight of God*; who ſees the heart, knows the ſpring of actions, and whoſe judgment is according to truth; that is, by the law and the deeds of it, however they may before men: *it is evident*; 'tis a clear caſe, out of all diſpute, as appears from *Hab.* ii. 4. *for the juſt ſhall live by faith*; which may be read either, *the juſt by faith, ſhall live*; that is, the man who is juſt by faith, or juſtified by faith, not by it as a principle or act, or as the cauſe or matter of his juſtification, but by the object of his faith, Chriſt and his righteouſneſs apprehended by faith, and ſo not juſt or juſtified by works; he ſhall live a life of juſtification, through that righteouſneſs his faith receives; he ſhall live comfortably, with much peace and joy in the Holy Ghoſt, as the reſult of his being juſtified by faith; and ſhall live eternally, and never die the ſecond death: or *the juſt ſhall live by faith*; he that is righteous, not by his own works, but by the obedience of Chriſt, ſhall live not upon his faith, but by it on Chriſt, and his righteouſneſs, which is revealed from faith to faith; and this makes it a clear point, that he is not juſtified by the law, for if he was, he would not live by faith on Chriſt, but in and by the deeds of the law.

Ver. 12. *And the law is not of faith*, &c.] The *Arabic* verſion adds, *but of man*; which as it is an addition to the text, ſo it contains falſe doctrine; for though the law is not of faith, yet not of man, but of God; the law does not conſiſt of faith in Chriſt, nor does it require it, and that a man ſhould live by it upon his righteouſneſs; it is the Goſpel that reveals the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, and directs and encourages men to believe in him and be ſaved; nor does the law take any notice of a man's faith; nor has it any thing to do with a man as a believer, but as a doer, in the point of juſtification: *but the man that doth them ſhall live in them*; the paſſage referred to, is in *Lev.* xviii. 5. the word *them*, relates to the ſtatutes and judgments, not of the ceremonial, but of the moral law, which are equally obligatory on *Gentiles* as on *Jews*. The *Jewiſh* doctors [x] obſerve on thoſe words, that "it is not ſaid, prieſts, *Levites*, and "*Iſraelites*, but האדם, *the man*; lo, you learn "from hence, that even a *Gentile* that ſtudies in "the law, is as an high-prieſt:" ſo that whatever man does the things contained in the law, that

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[p] Miſn. Kiddushin, c. 4. §. 14. T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 28. 2.

[q] T. Bab. Avoda Zara, fol. 3. 1.

[r] Jarchi in loc.

[s] Bechai in loc.

[t] Aben Ezra in loc.

[u] R. Abraham Seba, Tzeror Hammor, fol. 152. 3.

[w] Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 3. c. 5.

[x] T. Bab. Avoda Zara, fol. 3. 1.

is, internally as well as externally, for the law is ſpiritual, reaches the inward part of man, and requires truth there, a conformity of heart and thought unto it, and that does them perfectly and conſtantly, without the leaſt failure in matter or manner of obedience, ſuch ſhall live in them and by them; the language of the law is, do this and live; ſo life, and the continuation of that happy natural life which *Adam* had in innocence, was promiſed to him, in caſe of his perſiſting in his obedience to the law; and ſo a long and proſperous life was promiſed to the *Iſraelites* in the land of *Canaan*, provided they obſerved the laws and ſtatutes which were commanded them: but ſince eternal life is a promiſe made before the world began, is provided for in an everlaſting covenant, is revealed in the Goſpel, and is the pure gift of God's grace thro' Chriſt, it ſeems that it never was the will of God that it ſhould be obtained by the works of the law; and which is a further proof, that there can be no juſtification in the ſight of God by them, ſee ver. 21.

Ver. 13. *Chriſt hath redeemed us from the curſe of the law*, &c.] The Redeemer is Chriſt, the Son of God; who was appointed and called to this work by his Father, and which he himſelf agreed to; he was ſpoken of in prophecy under this character; he came as ſuch, and has obtained eternal redemption, for which he was abundantly qualified; as man, he was a near kinſman, to whom the right of redemption belonged; and as God, he was able to accompliſh it. The perſons redeemed are *us*, God's elect, both of *Jews* and *Gentiles*; a peculiar people, the people of Chriſt, whom the Father gave unto him; ſome out of every kindred, tongue, people, and nation: the bleſſing obtained for them, is redemption; a buying of them again, as the word ſignifies; they were his before by the Father's gift, and now he purchaſes them with the price of his own blood, and ſo delivers them *from the curſe of the law*; its ſentence of condemnation and death, and the execution of it; ſo that they ſhall never be hurt by it, he having delivered them from wrath to come, and redeemed them from the ſecond death, the lake which burns with fire and brimſtone. The manner in which this was done, was by being *made a curſe for us*; the ſenſe of which is, not only that he was like an accurſed perſon, and looked upon as ſuch by the men of that wicked generation, who hid and turned away their faces from him, as an abominable execrable perſon, calling him a ſinner, a *Samaritan*, and a devil; but was even accurſed by the law; becoming the ſurety of his people, he was made under the law, ſtood in their law-place and ſtead; and having the ſins of them all imputed to him, and he anſwerable for them, the law finding them on him, charges him with them, and curſes him for them; yea, he was treated as ſuch by the juſtice of God, even by his Father, who ſpared him not, awoke the ſword of juſtice againſt him, and gave him up into his hands; delivered him up to death, even the accurſed death of the croſs, whereby it appeared that he was made a curſe: *made*, by the will, counſel, and determination of God, and not without his own will and free conſent; for he freely laid down his life, and gave himſelf, and made his ſoul an offering for ſin: *for it is written*, Deut. xxi. 23. *curſed is every one that hangeth on a tree*; it is in the *Hebrew* text, תלוי, *he that is hanged*; which is the very name the *Jews*[y] commonly call Chriſt by way of reproach; that is, *every one that hangeth*, as the Apoſtle rightly renders it; which is always the ſenſe of an indefinite phraſe, unleſs a reſtriction is put: adding out of the ſame verſe, *on the tree*, by way of explanation; for which he cannot upon any account be found fault with, ſince it is manifeſt one hanged on a tree is meant, who *is accurſed of God*, or *the curſe of God*; the curſe of God in vindicating his righteous law, was viſibly on ſuch a perſon; as it was on Chriſt, when he hung on the croſs, in the room and ſtead of his people; for he was made a curſe, not for himſelf, or for any ſins of his own, but *for us*; in our room and ſtead, for our ſins, and to make atonement for them: upon the whole, the *Jew*[z] has no reaſon to find fault as he does, either with the Apoſtle's ſenſe, or citation of this paſſage; for whether it be rendered *hangeth*, or is *hanged*, the ſenſe is the ſame; and though the Apoſtle leaves out the word *God*, it is clear from what he ſays, that his meaning is, that the curſe of God lighted upon Chriſt as the ſurety of his people, ſtanding in their law-place and ſtead, in order to redeem them from the law and its curſe; ſince he ſays, he was *made a curſe for* them, which muſt be done by the Lord himſelf: and whereas the *Jew* objects, that it is impoſſible that any one, even an *Iſraelite*, ſhould be delivered from the curſes of the law, but by the obſervance of it, this ſhows his ignorance of the law, which in caſe of ſin, requires a penalty, and which is its curſe; and it is not future obſervance of the law will free from that: and as for the *Gentiles*, he ſays, to whom the law was not given, and who were never under it, they are free from the curſes of it, without a redemption; but as this is to be underſtood not of the ceremonial, but of the moral law, it is a miſtake; the *Gentiles* are under the moral law, and being guilty of the violation of it, are liable to its curſe; and can't be delivered from it, but through the redemption that is in Chriſt Jeſus; by vertue of which, they have a part and portion in the bleſſings promiſed as follows.

Ver. 14. *That the bleſſing of Abraham*, &c.] The ſame bleſſing *Abraham* enjoyed, even juſtification by the righteouſneſs of Chriſt; and what was promiſed to *Abraham*, that in him, his ſeed, that is Chriſt, the *Gentiles* ſhould be bleſſed, or juſtified; for though this bleſſing may in general comprize every ſpiritual bleſſing, yet it chiefly regards that of juſtification, or a deliverance from the curſe of the law, and which is the end of Chriſt's being made a curſe, that this bleſſedneſs *might come on the Gentiles*; the uncircumciſion, as well as the circumciſion; ſee *Rom.* iv. 9. that is, upon as many of them as were ordained unto eternal life, and in conſequence of that believe in Chriſt; quite contrary to a *Jewiſh* notion, that "no bleſſing dwells "but upon an *Iſraelite*[a]:" now though this bleſſing, as all other ſpiritual ones, were laid up in the covenant of grace, put into the hands of Chriſt, and God's elect bleſſed therewith, as conſidered in him, yet the curſe of the law for their tranſgreſſions, ſtood in the way of their perſonal enjoyment of it, to their peace and comfort in their own ſouls; wherefore Chriſt is made a curſe for them, to make way for the bleſſing to take place upon them; which is by an act of God's grace imputed to them, and is received by faith: *through Jeſus Chriſt*; or *in Jeſus Chriſt*, as the words may be read; meaning either, that this bleſſing comes upon the *Gentiles* that were in Chriſt, choſen in him, in union with him, and repreſented by him, both in the covenant and on the croſs; or elſe that Chriſt is the mediator, as from whom, ſo through whom, this, as every bleſſing of grace, comes to the children of God: *that we might receive the promiſe of the Spirit through faith*; *Beza* puts the copulative *and* to this clauſe, reading it, *and that we, &c.* as does the *Ethiopic* verſion; thereby more clearly pointing out this to be another end, of Chriſt's being made a curſe for us: by *the promiſe of the Spirit* may be meant, either by an *hypallage*, the Spirit of promiſe, who opens and applies the promiſes; or the Spirit promiſed, not as a Spirit of regeneration, converſion, and faith; for as ſuch, he cannot be received by faith; ſince antecedent to his being ſo, there can be no faith; but rather as a Spirit of adoption, in reſpect to which he is ſaid to be received, *Rom.* viii. 15. and this bleſſing of adoption, as in conſequence of redemption from under the law, its curſe and condemnation, *Gal.* iv. 4, 5, 6. Or elſe a ſpiritual promiſe, in diſtinction from the temporal promiſe of the land of *Canaan*, made to *Abraham* and his natural ſeed, and means the promiſe of eternal life and happineſs in the world to come; which promiſe is now received by faith, and that in conſequence of the ſufferings and death of Chriſt the teſtator; ſee *Heb.* ix. 15.

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[y] Vid. Buxtorf. Lexic. Talmudic. col. 2596.

[z] R. Iſaac Chizzuk, Emuna, par. 2. c. 89. p. 469.

[a] Zohar in Exod. fol. 51. 3.

Ver. 15. *Brethren*, &c.] Whereas in ver. 1. he calls them *fooliſh Galatians*, which might ſeem too harſh and ſevere, therefore to mitigate and ſoften their reſentments, he ſtiles them brethren; hoping ſtill well of them, and that they were not ſo far gone, but that they might be recovered; and imputing the blame and fault rather to their leaders and teachers, than to them: *I ſpeak after the manner of men*; agreeable to a *Talmudic* form of ſpeech in uſe among the *Jews*, דברה תורה כלשון בני אדם, *the law ſpeaks according to the language of the children of men*, or *after the manner of men* [b], when they argue from any ſcripture, in which a word is repeated, and the latter word ſeems to point out ſomething peculiar; but the Apoſtle's meaning is, that the thing he was about to ſpeak of, was taken from among men, in common uſe with them, and what was obvious to the common ſenſe and underſtanding of men, and might eaſily be applied and argued from, as it is by him: *though it be but a man's covenant*, or *teſtament*, *yet if it be confirmed, no man diſannulleth or addeth thereto*; if a covenant made between men, or a man's will and teſtament be confirmed, ſigned, ſealed, and witneſſed in a proper manner; no other man can make them void, or take any thing from them, or add any thing to them, only the parties concerned by their own will and conſent; and if this be the caſe among men, much leſs can the covenant of God, confirmed by two immutable things, his word and oath, or his will and teſtament, or any branch of it, be ever diſannulled, or be capable of receiving any addition thereunto. The Apoſtle ſeems to have a particular reſpect to that branch of the covenant and will of God, which regards the juſtification of men in his ſight by the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, to which the falſe teachers were for adding the works of the law.

Ver. 16. *Now to Abraham and his ſeed were the promiſes made*, &c.] The promiſes deſign the promiſes of the covenant of grace mentioned in the next verſe, which are exceeding great and precious, better than thoſe of any other covenant; and which are all yea and amen in Chriſt, and are chiefly of a ſpiritual nature; though all the temporal bleſſings of God's people come to them in a covenant way, and by vertue of the promiſe; for godlineſs has the promiſe of this life, that God will verily feed them, withold no good thing from them proper for them, ſanctify all their afflictions, ſupport under them, and never leave nor forſake them: but the promiſes here intended principally, are ſuch as theſe, that God will be their God, and they ſhall be his people; the promiſe of Chriſt as a Saviour and Redeemer of them; of the Spirit ~~as~~ their ſanctifier, and the applier of all grace unto them; of juſtification by Chriſt's righteouſneſs, and pardon by his blood; of adoption through free rich grace; of perſeverance in grace, and of the eternal inheritance: now theſe promiſes were made, ερρηθησαν, *were ſaid unto*, or *ſpoken of*, to *Abraham* and his ſeed; that is, they were diſcovered, made manifeſt, and applied to *Abraham*, the father of many nations; and were declared to belong to him and his ſpiritual ſeed, even all that believe, whether *Jews* or *Gentiles*; for the Apoſtle is not ſpeaking of the original make and conſtitution of the covenant of grace and its promiſes, which were made from all eternity; the grand promiſe of life was made before the world began, and Chriſt was ſet up as Mediator from everlaſting, before ever the earth was, which ſuppoſe a covenant in which this promiſe was granted, and of which Chriſt was the Mediator as early; it was made long before *Abraham*, or any of his ſpiritual ſeed were in being; nor was it made with any ſingle perſon, any mere creature, *Abraham*, or any other, but with Chriſt, as the head and repreſentative of the whole election of grace: but what is here treated of is, the declaration and manifeſtation of the covenant, and its promiſes to *Abraham*; which was frequently done, as upon the call of him out of the land of *Chaldea*, upon his parting with *Lot*, when he was grown old, and when *Eliezar* his ſervant was like to be his heir, and juſt before the giving of him the covenant of circumciſion, and again upon the offering up of his ſon *Iſaac*: *he ſaith not unto ſeeds, as of many*; in the plural number, as if *Jews* and *Gentiles*, were in a different manner his ſpiritual ſeed: *but as of one*; uſing the ſingular number: *and to thy ſeed, which is Chriſt*; meaning not Chriſt perſonal, though he was of the ſeed of *Abraham*, a ſon of his, as was promiſed; but the covenant and the promiſes were not now made with, and to Chriſt, as perſonally conſidered, this was done in eternity; but Chriſt myſtical, the church which is the body of Chriſt, of which he is the head, and is called by his name, 1 *Cor.* xii. 12. and deſigns all *Abraham*'s ſpiritual ſeed, both *Jews* and *Gentiles*; who are all one in Chriſt, and ſo *Abraham*'s ſeed, and heirs according to the promiſe: hence there's no room for the objection of the *Jew*, to the Apoſtle's application of this paſſage to Chriſt [c], that the ſcripture ſpeaks not of any particular perſon, but of ſeed in a general and collective ſenſe, of a large and numerous offſpring; ſince the Apoſtle deſigns ſuch a ſeed by Chriſt, as numerous as the ſtars of the ſky, and the ſand on the ſea-ſhore, even all believers in all nations, *Abraham* is the father of; though did the Apoſtle mean Chriſt particularly, and perſonally conſidered, there are inſtances to be given, where the word *ſeed* is uſed, not in a collective ſenſe, but of a ſingle perſon, as in *Gen.* iv. 25. and xv. 3. and xxi. 13. Nor has the *Jew* [d] any reaſon to charge him with a miſtake, in obſerving that the word is not in the plural, but in the ſingular number, when it is the manner of the *Hebrew* language, to ſpeak of ſeed only in the ſingular number; but this is falſe, the word is uſed in the plural number, and ſo might have been here, had it been neceſſary, as in 1 *Sam.* viii. 15. concerning ſeed ſown in the earth, from whence the metaphor is here taken. The firſt tract in the *Jews Miſna*, or oral law, is called, זרעים, *ſeeds*; and the word even as ſpoken of the poſterity of men, is uſed in the plural number in their *Talmud*[e]; where they ſay, "pecuniary judgments are not as capital ones; in pecuniary judgments, a man gives his money, and it atones for him; in capital judgments, his blood, and the blood, זרעותיו, *of his ſeeds*, or *poſterity*, hang on him to the end of the world; for we ſo find in *Cain*, who ſlew his brother; as it is ſaid, *the bloods of thy brother crieth*; it is not ſaid, the blood of thy brother, but the bloods of thy brother, his blood, and the blood זרעותיו, *of his ſeeds*."

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[b] T. Bab. Ceritot, fol. 11. 1. Bava Metzia, fol. 94. 2. Sanhedrin, fol. 90. 2. Maccot, fol. 12. 1. Vid. Halicot Olam, tract. 4. c. 3. p. 199.

[c] Chizzuk Emuna, par. 1, c. 13. p. 134.

[d] Ib. par. 2. c. 90. p. 468.

Ver. 17. *And this I ſay*, &c.] Aſſert and affirm as a certain truth, that is not to be gainſayed: *that the covenant that was confirmed before of God in Chriſt, the law which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot diſannul*; by *the covenant* is meant, not the covenant made with *Adam*, as the federal head of all his poſterity; for this was made two thouſand years before the law was given; nor that which was made with the *Iſraelites* at mount *Sinai*, for that itſelf is the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after this covenant; nor the covenant of circumciſion given to *Abraham*, for that was not ſo long by ſome years, before the giving of the law, as the date here fixed: but *a covenant confirmed of God in Chriſt*; a covenant in which Chriſt is concerned; a covenant made with him, of which he is the ſum and ſubſtance, the mediator, ſurety, and meſſenger; and ſuch is what the ſcriptures call the covenant of life and peace, and what we commonly ſtile the covenant of grace and redemption; becauſe the articles of redemption and reconciliation, of eternal life and ſalvation, by the free grace of God, are the principal things in it. This is ſaid to be *in Chriſt*, εις Χριστον, *with reſpect to Chriſt*; though the *Vulgate Latin* and *Ethiopic* verſions leave out this clauſe, nor is it in the *Alexandrian* copy, and ſome others; meaning either that this covenant has reſpect to Chriſt perſonal, he having that concern in it, as juſt now mentioned, and as it was made manifeſt and confirmed to *Abraham*, was promiſed in it to ſpring from him; or rather, that it has reſpect to Chriſt myſtical, as before, to all *Abraham*'s ſpiritual ſeed, both *Jews* and *Gentiles*: and this is ſaid to be *confirmed of God*, with reſpect thereunto; which muſt be underſtood, not of the firſt eſtabliſhment of the covenant, in and with Chriſt, for that was done in eternity; nor of the confirmation of it by his blood, which was at his death; nor of the confirmation of it in common to the ſaints by the Spirit of God, who is the ſeal of the covenant, as he is the Spirit of promiſe; but of a peculiar confirmation of it to *Abraham*, either by a frequent repetition thereof, or by annexing an oath unto it; or rather by thoſe rites and uſages, and even wonderful appearances, recorded in *Gen.* xv. 9, 10, 12, 13, 17, 18. and which was *four hundred and thirty years before* the law was given, which are thus computed by the learned *Pareus*; from the confirmation of the covenant, and taking *Hagar* for his wife, to the birth of *Iſaac*, 15 years; from the birth of *Iſaac*, to the birth of *Jacob*, 60 years, *Gen.* xxv. 26. from the birth of *Jacob*, to his going down into *Egypt*, 130 years, *Gen.* xlvii. 9. from his going down to *Egypt*, to his death, 17 years, *Gen.* xlvii. 28. from the death of *Jacob*, to the death of *Joſeph* in *Egypt*, 53 years, *Gen.* l. 26. from the death of *Joſeph*, to the birth of *Moſes*, 75 years; from the birth of *Moſes*, to the going out of the children of *Iſrael* from *Egypt*, and the giving of the law, 80 years, in all 430 years. The *Jews* reckoned the four hundred years ſpoken of to *Abraham*, *Gen.* xv. 13. and mentioned by *Stephen*, *Acts* vii. 6. from the birth of *Iſaac*; but they reckon the four hundred and thirty years, the number given by *Moſes*, *Exod.* xii. 40. and by the Apoſtle here, to begin from the confirming the covenant between the pieces, though ſomewhat differently counted; ſays one of their chronologers[f], we reckon the 430 years, from the 70th year of *Abraham*, from whence to the birth of *Iſaac* were 30 years, and from thence to the going out of *Egypt*, 400 years; and another[g] of them ſays, "they are to be reckoned from the time that the bondage was decreed, in the ſtanding between the pieces; and there were 210 years of them from thence, to the going down to *Egypt*, and theſe are the particulars; the 105 years which remained to *Abraham*, and the 105 years *Iſaac* lived after the death of *Abraham*, and there were 10 years from the death of *Iſaac*, to the going down to *Egypt*, and it remains that there were 210 years they ſtaid in *Egypt*:" another[h] of their writers ſays, "that from the time that the decree of the captivity of *Egypt* was fixed between the pieces, to the birth of *Iſaac*, were 30 years; and from the birth of *Iſaac*, to the going down of the children of *Iſrael* into *Egypt*, 400 years; take out from them the 60 years of *Iſaac*, and the 130 years that *Jacob* had lived when he went into *Egypt*, and there remains 210." *Joſephus* reckons[i] theſe years from *Abraham*'s coming into the land of *Canaan*, to the departure of the children of *Iſrael* out of *Egypt*, and makes them four hundred and thirty, agreeable to *Exod.* xii. 40. and to the Apoſtle here, and to the *Talmud*; ſee the note on *Acts* vii. 6. However, be theſe computations as they will, 'tis certain, that the law which was ſo long after the confirming of the covenant to *Abraham*, could not make it null and void: or *that it ſhould make the promiſe of none effect*; the particular promiſe of the covenant, reſpecting the juſtification of *Abraham* and his ſpiritual ſeed, by faith in the righteouſneſs of Chriſt.

Ver. 18. *For if the inheritance be of the law*, &c.] By *the inheritance* is meant, either the eternal inheritance, everlaſting life and happineſs in heaven, which is the gift of God through Chriſt, and not attained to and enforced by the works of the law; or particularly the bleſſing of juſtification, promiſed in the covenant to *Abraham*, and his ſpiritual ſeed; even to the *Gentiles*, and inherited by them; which is not obtained through obedience to the law of works, nor does it belong to thoſe who ſeek for it by the deeds of the law, for theſe are not heirs of it; ſee *Rom.* iv. 14. For was this the caſe, *it is no more of promiſe*; it can't be by merit and by promiſe, by works and grace too; theſe can never be reconciled, and conſiſt together; if it is by promiſe, then not of the law; and if it is of the law, it is not by promiſe: *but* nothing is more certain than this, that *God gave it*, freely, without any conſideration of the works of the law, *to Abraham by promiſe*; wherefore juſtification is not by works, but by the free grace of God, through faith in the righteouſneſs of Chriſt; and in this way, men become heirs according to the hope of eternal life: all which is directly oppoſite to the notion of the *Jews*, who ſay, that, בשכר מצות ירשו גן עדן, "*for the reward of the commandments, men ſhall inherit paradiſe*[k]."

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[e] T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 37. 1.

[f] Ganz Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 7. 1.

[g] Juchaſin, fol. 156. 2.

[h] Jarchi in T. Bab. Megilla, fol. 9. 1.

[i] Antiqu. l. 2. c. 15. §. 2.

Ver. 19. *Wherefore then ſerveth the law?* &c.] If this be the caſe, might an objector ſay, why was the law given? what ends and purpoſes are to be ſerved by it? of what uſe can it be? there had as good been no law at all, if the inheritance is not of it, and there's no juſtification by it. To which it is anſwered, *it was added becauſe of tranſgreſſions*; four hundred and thirty years after the covenant made with *Abraham*; it did not ſucceed it, nor take the place of it, and ſo make it null and void; but was over and above added unto it, for the ſake of reſtraining tranſgreſſions; which had there been no law, men would not have been accountable for them; and they would have gone into them without fear, and with impunity; but the law was given, to lay a reſtraint on men, by forbidding ſuch and ſuch things, on pain of death; and alſo for the detecting, diſcovering, and making known tranſgreſſions, what they are, their nature and conſequences; theſe the law charges men with, ſets them before them, in their true light and proper colours; and convicts them of them, ſtops their mouths, and pronounces them guilty before God: moreover, this law entered in, over and above any other revelation God was pleaſed to make, *that the offence might abound*, *Rom.* v. 20. either that particular offence the ſin of *Adam*, the Apoſtle is there ſpeaking of; the heinous nature of which, its aggravated circumſtances, and the juſtneſs of its imputation to his poſterity, were more clearly diſcerned by this law; and ſo the *Syriac* verſion here renders it in the ſingular number, מטל מסטינותא, *becauſe of tranſgreſſion*; or all other offences and tranſgreſſions, which are increaſed through the multiplicity of precepts, and attended with more aggravating circumſtances, than if no law was given, and more eagerly purſued after, through the prohibition of them; ſuch being the corrupt nature of man, that the more any thing is forbidden, the more deſirous it is of it: add to all this, that the law was given for the puniſhing of tranſgreſſions, for which it curſes, and threatens with death, and inflicts it on Chriſtleſs ſinners: hence it is clear there can be no juſtification by it, and yet it is not uſeleſs and inſignificant: *till the ſeed ſhould come, to whom the promiſe was made*; either Chriſt the ſeed of the woman, and of *Abraham*, who was to come in the fleſh, and is come; and to whom the grand promiſe of life, and all the promiſes of the covenant were made; not for himſelf, but for thoſe he repreſented, and in whom they are all ſecure; until whoſe coming to finiſh tranſgreſſion, and bring in everlaſting righteouſneſs, the law was to continue in the form in which, and the uſe for which it was added, and then to ceaſe as the miniſtration of *Moſes*; for through the coming of Chriſt, it received its full accompliſhment, and came to an end; the ceremonial law was utterly aboliſhed, and the moral law ceaſed to be a covenant of works, though it continues a rule of walk and converſation; and the whole *Moſaic* œconomy was no more: or elſe the ſeed here, intends the ſpiritual ſeed of *Abraham*; particularly among the *Gentiles*, to whom the promiſe of bleſſedneſs, of juſtification, and eternal life was made; and the ſenſe be, that till ſuch time that a generation of faithful men, of believers in Chriſt, ſhould ariſe among the *Gentiles*, the law was to continue with the *Jews*; but when they ſhould ſpring up, the middle wall of partition ſhould be broken down, and *Abraham*'s ſpiritual ſeed among *Jews* and *Gentiles*, make up one body, one people, and be fellow-heirs and partakers of the promiſe of God in Chriſt, through the Goſpel: *and it was ordained by angels*; not *Moſes* and *Aaron*, and *Joſhua*, as ſome ſay; for though *Moſes* was concerned in the giving of the law, yet not *Aaron* nor *Joſhua*, nor are any of them ever called angels; but the holy elect angels are here meant, the ten thouſands of ſaints, or holy ones, God came to mount *Sinai* with, and the Lord was among, in the holy place; ſee *Deut.* xxxiii. 2. *Pſal.* lxviii. 17. and ſo the *Jews* ſay[l], that the Lord appeared on mount *Sinai* glorioſly, עם כיתיה דמלאכיא, *with companies*, or *troops of angels*, to give the law to his people: and this may be ſaid to be *ordained* by them, inaſmuch as it might be written and ſpoken by them, as the inſtruments and miniſters God made uſe of; for though the tables are ſaid to be the work of God, and the writing the writing of God, and to be written with the finger of God, and he is ſaid to ſpeak all the words of it, yet this hinders not, but that all this might be done, by the means of angels; who might be employed in diſpoſing and fitting the ſtones in the form they were, and in writing the law upon them; hence it is ſaid to be given by the diſpoſition of angels, *Acts* vii. 53. and certain it is, that it was ſpoken by them, *Heb.* ii. 2. they forming in the air thoſe articulate and audible ſounds, when the law was delivered; who were alſo concerned in the thunderings and lightenings, and in the blowing of the trumpet, that waxed louder and louder at that time: *in the hand of a mediator*; not Chriſt, as many interpreters ancient and modern have thought; for though he was preſent at the giving of the law, as appears from *Acts* vii. 38. and *Pſal.* lxviii. 17, 18. and is the mediator between God and man, and had the law in his hand, out of which it went forth as the lawgiver; and as the ſurety of his people has fulfilled it, and by ſo doing put an end to it, and delivered them from the curſe and condemnation of it; yet he is the mediator of the new and better covenant, not the miniſtration of death, but of life; and ſo *Moſes* and Chriſt, the law and Goſpel, the old and the new covenant, are continually oppoſed to each other; beſides, the mediator here ſeems to be repreſented as inferior to the angels, and as receiving the law into his hands from them, by whom it was ordained; which to conceive of Chriſt, is very much to the demeaning and leſſening of him. *Moſes* is the mediator here meant, who ſtood between God and the people of *Iſrael*; not to make peace between them, but to ſhew the word of God from him to them, and this at their own requeſt; ſee *Deut.* v. 5, 23—27. and in his hand the tables of the law were, when he came down from the mount, and was a typical mediator of Chriſt. So the *Jews* ſay of him, that "he was, אמצעי, *a mediator* between them and God[m]."

Ver. 20. *Now a mediator is not a mediator of one*, &c.] A mediator ſuppoſes two parties he ſtands between, and theſe at a diſtance from, or diſagreeing with each other; where there is but one party, there can be no need of, nor any reaſon for a mediator; ſo Chriſt is the mediator between God and men, the day's man, that lays his hands upon them both; and *Moſes*, he was the mediator between God and the *Iſraelites*: *but God is one*; not in perſon, for there are three perſons in the Godhead, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghoſt, and theſe three are one, in nature and eſſence; ſo that though there are three perſons, there is but one God, and who is the God both of *Jews* and *Gentiles*; who is of one mind concerning them, and has taken them into one and the ſame covenant, and makes uſe of one and the ſame method in the juſtification of them: but the true ſenſe of the phraſe here is, that whereas a mediator ſuppoſes two parties at variance, *God is one of the two*, as the *Ethiopic* verſion reads the words; he is a party offended, that ſtands off, and at a diſtance, which the law given by angels in the hand of a mediator ſhews; ſo that that is rather a ſign of diſagreement and alienation, and conſequently that juſtification is not to be expected by it.

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[k] Tzeror Hammor, fol. 152. 3.

[l] Targum in 1 Chron. xxix. 11.

[m] Tzeror Hammor, fol. 136. 1, 2.

Ver. 21. *Is the law then againſt the promiſes of God?* &c.] If the law was added becauſe of tranſgreſſions, and curſes for them, and if the inheritance is not of it, but by promiſe, were it, it would not be by promiſe, then ſays an objector, it is againſt the promiſes: theſe are contrary to one another, and God in giving the one and the other, muſt contradict himſelf: to which it is replied, *God forbid*; a way of ſpeaking the Apoſtle uſes, when he would expreſs his abhorrence and deteſtation of any thing, as here; for though the law and promiſes are diſtinct things, and have their ſeparate uſes, yet they are not contradictory to each other; the law has its uſe, and ſo have the promiſes; the promiſes do not ſet aſide the law as uſeleſs on all accounts, nor does the law diſannul the promiſes, but is ſubſervient to them: *for if there had been a law which could have given life, verily righteouſneſs ſhould have been by the law*; but the law cannot give life, ſpiritual life to a dead ſinner; God only can do this, Father, Son, and Spirit; ſo far is the law from giving it efficiently, that it is not ſo much as the means of it; it is not made uſe of this way; God makes uſe of the law to kill, but not to make alive; he makes uſe of the law to ſtrike dead all a man's hopes of happineſs, by the deeds of it; but 'tis the Goſpel he uſes to quicken and comfort; that is the Spirit that giveth life. The law requires as much of a dead ſinner, as it did of *Adam* in innocence, but gives him no life, activity, and ſtrength to perform; could it quicken him, and enable him to do all its demands perfectly, then there would be righteouſneſs, and ſo juſtification by it, as by the promiſe; whence it appears, that there is no contrariety in the law to the promiſes: the reaſon why there is no righteouſneſs, is, becauſe it can't give life, ſpiritual life and ſtrength; and if ſo, then not eternal life; which is the free gift of God, and not the merit of mens works: this is directly contrary to a notion of the *Jews*, who cry up the law as a life-giving law; ſay they [n], "great is the law, "שהיא נותנת חיים לעושיה, *for it giveth life to* "*them that do it*, in this world, and in the world "to come:" and elſewhere [o], "the law is a tree "of life to all that ſtudy in it, למיהב לון חיי, *to* "*give unto them life* in this world, and *to give unto* "*them life* in the world to come."

Ver. 22. *But the ſcripture hath concluded all under ſin*, &c.] By *the ſcripture* is meant, either the writing of the law in particular, the killing letter, or the whole ſcripture, or God in it; and who by and in it, has ſhewn, declared, and proved, that all the individuals of human nature, *Jews* and *Gentiles*, and all that is in them, and done by them, are under the power and dominion of ſin, defiled by it, and involved in the guilt of it; for it is not παντας all perſons, but παντα all things, belonging to all perſons; all the members of their bodies, and faculties of their ſouls; all their thoughts, inclinations, and intentions; all their works and ſervices, even their beſt righteouſneſs, which is as filthy rags; all are declared to be ſinful and polluted, and men on account of them to be guilty before God, and liable to puniſhment; from whence there can be no eſcape, by the law of works; for they are like men concluded, or ſhut up in a priſon, from which there is no apparent likelihood of deliverance: now the Spirit of God, diſcovering to men this their wretched and deſperate condition, under the law and ſin, reveals Chriſt and his righteouſneſs to them, and enables and encourages them to believe in him, by whom only they can be juſtified from all things, they cannot by the law of *Moſes*, in which they ſee themſelves ſhut up, as in a priſon: *that the promiſe by faith of Jeſus Chriſt might be given, to them that believe*; by the *promiſe* is intended, the promiſe of life and ſalvation, and particularly of a juſtifying righteouſneſs; which is *given*, not merited; righteouſneſs is a gift, a gift of grace, a free gift, and ſo is eternal life; ſalvation in all its parts, is of free grace; Chriſt is a free gift, and ſo are all things along with him; yea, faith itſelf, by whom they are received, it is not of ourſelves, 'tis the gift of God; Chriſt is the author and finiſher, as well as the object of it; and therefore here called, the *faith of Jeſus Chriſt*; and ſuch that have it, to them the promiſe, or the things promiſed, righteouſneſs and life are given, which the law could not give; not to them that work, but to them that believe: thus the law is ſo far from being againſt the promiſes of God, that it is ſubſervient to them; for though the law has no tendency in itſelf to bring perſons to Chriſt, and to believe in him for righteouſneſs, yet this concluding men under ſin, ſhewing them their deſperate and hopeleſs and helpleſs condition, the Spirit of God takes occaſion from hence to reveal Chriſt unto them, and to enable them as periſhing creatures to venture on him, and lay hold on the hope ſet before them in the Goſpel; and ſo they come to enjoy the grand promiſe of it, even life and ſalvation by Chriſt.

Ver. 23. *But before faith came*, &c.] This is to be underſtood, not of the grace of faith, which was under the former diſpenſation, as now; the Old Teſtament ſaints had the ſame ſpirit of faith, and the ſame grace of faith, as for its nature, object, and uſe, as New Teſtament ſaints have; *Adam*, *Abel*, *Enoch*, *Noah*, *Abraham*, &c. believed in Chriſt, and were juſtified by faith in his righteouſneſs, as we are. It is much better to underſtand it of the doctrine of faith, which though preached to *Adam*, and by *Noah*, and to *Abraham*, and by *Iſaiah*, and others, yet not ſo clearly, largely, and fully, as by Jeſus Chriſt and his Apoſtles; ſo that the times of the Goſpel may be called the times of faith, in compariſon of the times of the law, and which ſome think is here meant; but it is beſt to interpret it of Chriſt, the object of faith, who was to come, and is come in the fleſh, to fulfil the law; and by ſo doing, has put an end to it; and to redeem his people from under it, and to ſave them with an everlaſting

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[n] Pirke Abot, c. 6. §. 6.

[o] Zohar in Gen. fol. 70. 3. & in Num. fol. 62. 1.

ing ſalvation; for before this his coming in the fleſh, the people of the *Jews*, of whom the Apoſtle was one, were under the law: *we were kept under the law*; as perſons in a garriſon, as the word ſignifies; they were kept diſtinct and ſeparate from the reſt of the nations of the world, and had neither civil nor religious converſation with them; and ſo were preſerved in ſome meaſure both from their impieties and idolatries, which otherwiſe they were naturally prone to; and as a diſtinct people, unto the coming of the Meſſiah, who was to ariſe from among them; ſo that their being kept under the law in this ſenſe, was both for their honour and their ſafety: though the meaning may alſo be, that they were kept under it as perſons under a military guard, as the word likewiſe imports; and ſignifies, that the law kept a ſtrict guard and a watchful eye over them, as the *Roman* ſoldier had over *Paul*, that kept him, and held faſt the chain in his hand, with which he was bound, that he might not get looſe and eſcape from him; ſee *Acts* xxviii. 16, 20. to which the Apoſtle ſeems here to allude; the law kept them cloſe to the diſcharge of their duty, and held them faſt as priſoners; and which is more fully expreſſed in the next clauſe, *ſhut up*. The *Syriac* verſion reads this in connection with the former, thus, נמוסא נטר הוא לן כד חבישינן, *the law kept us ſhut up*, as in a priſon; and the ſame way reads the *Arabic* verſion; which ſhews the ſtate and condition the *Jews* were in under the law, and how they were treated by it; not as good and righteous perſons, but as perſons in debt, as criminals and malefactors; a priſon is made, and ſo the law for ſuch ſort of perſons; the law conſidered and uſed them as ſinners, as criminals convict and condemned; it did itſelf accuſe, convict, and pronounce them guilty, and adjudged them to puniſhment; and detained them as priſoners in its dark dungeon, where they had little light and comfort; and were as in a pit, wherein is no water; though they lay here as priſoners of hope, in expectation of the Meſſiah's coming; who was to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the priſon to them that are bound, and to ſay to the priſoners come forth, and to them that ſit in darkneſs ſhew yourſelves. Alſo the alluſion may be to the cuſtom of the *Eaſtern* nations, in the uſage of their ſlaves and captives; who in the day-time uſed to grind at a mill in a priſon-houſe, and in the night-time were put down into a pit and ſhut up, and a mill-ſtone put to the mouth of the pit [p]; and ſo deſcribes the ſtate of bondage and ſlavery the *Jews* were in under the law, who differed nothing from ſervants, to whom the ſaints under the Goſpel diſpenſation are oppoſed, ver. 26. as being the children of God by faith in Chriſt. And in this uncomfortable condition they continued, *unto the faith which ſhould afterwards be revealed*; that is, until Chriſt the object of faith came, who was to be revealed, or made manifeſt in the fleſh; who before his incarnation, not only lay in the boſom of the Father, but was in a great meaſure hid under the types and prophecies of the Old Teſtament; which though they gave ſome hints of him, yet but obſcure ones, in compariſon of the revelation made of him by his appearance in human nature; by the teſtimonies of his Father by a voice from heaven of angels, of *John* the *Baptiſt*, and others; and by his own doctrines and miracles, and by the Spirit of wiſdom and revelation in the knowledge of him.

Ver. 24. *Wherefore the law was our ſchool-maſter unto Chriſt*, &c.] So the words ſhould be read, as they are by the *Syriac* and *Ethiopic* verſions; for the words *to bring us* are a ſupplement of our tranſlators, and have nothing to anſwer to them in the original; and the ſenſe of the paſſage is, that the law performed this office of a ſchool-maſter until the coming of Chriſt; which ſhews that till that time the church was in its minority, that the *Jews* were but children in knowledge and underſtanding, and therefore ſtood in need, and were under the care of a ſchool-maſter, the law, by which the whole *Moſaic* adminiſtration is deſigned. They were taught by the moral law, the letter, the writing on the two tables, with other ſtatutes and judgments; their duty to God and men, what is to be done and to be avoided, what is righteouſneſs and what is not, the nature of ſin, its demerit and conſequences; but theſe gave them no inſtructions about a ſaviour, and life, and righteouſneſs by him. The ceremonial law gave them ſome hints of the Goſpel-ſcheme, and the way of ſalvation by Chriſt, but in a manner ſuited to their eſtate of childhood; by ſights and ſhows, by types and figures, by rites and ceremonies, by ſhadows and ſacrifices; it taught them by divers waſhings the pollution of their nature, their need of the blood of Chriſt to cleanſe from all ſin; by circumciſion, the neceſſity of regeneration, and the internal circumciſion of the heart; by the paſſover, the daily ſacrifice and other offerings, the doctrines of redemption, ſatisfaction and atonement; and by the brazen ſerpent, the neceſſity of looking to Chriſt for life and ſalvation, and by various other things in that branch of the legal œconomy: but beſides inſtruction the law gave, it made uſe of diſcipline as a ſchool-maſter does; it kept a ſtrict eye and hand over them, and them cloſe to the performance of their duty; and reſtrained them from many things their inclinations led them to, threatning them with death in caſe of diſobedience, and inflicting its penalties on delinquents; hence they that were under its diſcipline, were thro' fear of death it threatned them with, all their life-time ſubject to bondage: even the ceremonial law had ſomething awful and tremendous in it; every beaſt that was ſlain in ſacrifice, was not only an inſtruction to them that they deſerved to die as that creature did; but carried in it a tacit acknowledgment and confeſſion of their own guilt; and the whole was an hand-writing of ordinances againſt them. Moreover, the law being called a ſchool-maſter, ſhews that the uſe of it was but temporary, and its duration but for a time; children are not always to be under, nor deſigned to be always under a ſchool-maſter, no longer than till they are come to a proper age for greater buſineſs and higher exerciſes of life; ſo the law was to continue, and did continue, to be of this uſe and ſervice to the *Jewiſh* church during its minority, until Chriſt came, the ſubſtance of all it taught and directed to: both the *Jeruſalem Targum* and that of *Jonathan ben Uzziel*, on *Numb*. xi. 12. uſe the very *Greek* word the Apoſtle does here, concerning *Moſes*, rendering the words, as a *pedagogue* or *ſchool-maſter* bears a ſucking child into the land, *&c. That we might be juſtified by faith*; by Chriſt the object of faith, by his righteouſneſs, which faith looks unto and receives, and not by the law and the works of it; the people of the *Jews* were in ſuch a ſtate under the law, and the law of that uſe unto them before the coming of Chriſt, as above repreſented, that it might be made manifeſt, be a clear point, and out of all diſpute, that there is no ſuch thing as juſtification by the law; for how could ever ſuch a bleſſing be expected from it, when men were kept under it as under a military guard; when they were ſhut up in it as in a priſon, and were treated by it as malefactors, convicted and condemned; and when they were under the diſcipline of it, as a rigid and ſevere ſchool-maſter; this being their caſe till Chriſt came, when it ceaſed to be all this to them, he being the end of it for righteouſneſs, it became a thing ſelf-evident, that juſtification is only by him and his righteouſneſs, and ſo the end here mentioned was anſwered.

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[p] Schindler. Lex. Pentaglott. in voce רוח, col. 1712.

Ver. 25. *But after that faith is come*, &c.] That is, ſince Chriſt the object of faith is come in the fleſh, and has fulfilled the law, and redeemed them that were under it from its bondage, curſe, and condemnation: *we are no longer under a ſchool-maſter*; under the law as ſuch; as no longer under it as a military guard, nor in it as a priſon, ſo neither under it as a ſchool-maſter; not needing its inſtructions, or its diſcipline; ſince Chriſt is come as a prophet to teach and inſtruct, as a prieſt to atone for ſin, and make interceſſion for tranſgreſſors, and as a king to rule and govern; in whoſe hands, and not in the hands of *Moſes*, the law now is, as a rule of walk and converſation.

Ver. 26. *For ye are all the children of God*, &c.] Not by nature, as Chriſt is the Son of God, for he is the only-begotten of the Father, and in ſuch ſenſe as neither angels nor men are the ſons of God; nor by creation, as *Adam* and all mankind, and the angels are; but by divine adoption, by an act of God's rich and ſovereign grace, putting them among the children; in ſaying this the Apoſtle directs himſelf to the *Gentiles* for their comfort, and ſays this of them all in a judgment of charity, they being under a profeſſion of faith; leſt they ſhould think becauſe they were not *Abraham*'s ſeed according to the fleſh, nor were ever trained up under the law as a ſchool-maſter, that they were not the children of God: whereas they were ſuch not by the law, as none indeed are, but *by faith in Chriſt Jeſus*; not that faith makes any the children of God, or puts them into ſuch a relation; no, that is God's own act and deed; of his free rich grace and goodneſs, God the Father has predeſtinated his choſen ones to the adoption of children, and has ſecured and laid up this bleſſing for them in the covenant of grace; Chriſt by redemption has made way for their reception and enjoyment of it; the Spirit of God in conſequence of their ſonſhip, as a Spirit of adoption bears witneſs to it; and faith receives it, as it does all other bleſſings of grace made ready to its hand; and ſo ſuch perſons become evidently and manifeſtatively the children of God by faith in Chriſt; and which carries in it a ſtrong reaſon and argument, proving that they are not under the law as a ſchool-maſter, in which light it is here ſet by the Apoſtle; ſince they are ſons and not ſervants, and ſo free from the bondage of the law; they are ſons grown up into the faith of Chriſt, and are led and taught by the Spirit of God, as they are that are the children of God by faith; and as is promiſed to the ſaints under the Goſpel, that they ſhall be *all taught of God*; and therefore ſtood in no need of the law as a ſchool-maſter, which only was concerned with the *Jews*, whilſt they were children under age; and h[illegible] nothing to do with ſuch, whether *Jews* or *Gentiles* who believe in Chriſt, and are growing up into him their head, till they come to the meaſure of the ſtature of the fulneſs of him.

Ver. 27. *For as many of you as have been baptized into Chriſt*, &c.] Not that it is to be imagined that theſe churches of *Galatia*, or any of the primitive churches conſiſted of baptized and unbaptized perſons; for this would be acting contrary to the commiſſion of Chriſt and the order of the Goſpel: but this way of ſpeaking ſuppoſes that there might be ſome of them, who tho' baptized in water, yet not into Chriſt; and that thoſe who are truly and rightly baptized, who are proper ſubjects of it, and to whom it is adminiſtred in a proper manner, are baptized into Chriſt: not that by baptiſm they are brought into union with Chriſt, but into communion with him; for they are not merely baptized in his name, and by his authority, and according to his command, and into his doctrine, and a profeſſion of him; but into a participation of the bleſſings of grace which are in him, and come thro' his ſufferings and death; for they that are baptized into Chriſt are baptized into his death and reſurrection from the dead; they are led by faith to behold the cleanſing of their ſouls, and the remiſſion of their ſins by his blood, and their juſtification by his righteouſneſs; how he was delivered for their offences, died for their ſins, was buried in the grave, and their iniquities with him, and roſe again for their juſtification; of all which baptiſm, performed by immerſion, is a lively emblem; and this is to be baptized into Chriſt, namely being baptized believing in him, and calling on his name: and ſuch *have put on Chriſt*; both before and at baptiſm: before it they put him on as the Lord their righteouſneſs; his righteouſneſs is compared to a garment, is called the beſt robe, the wedding garment, fine linnen clean and white, the robe of righteouſneſs, a garment down to the feet; this is imputed to the elect of God by the Father, thro' a gracious act of his, and what they are cloathed and covered with by the Son, and is put upon them and applied unto them by the Spirit; and which faith receiving puts off its own rags of righteouſneſs, and makes uſe of this as its proper dreſs to appear in before the moſt high; and ſuch thro' divine grace are enabled to put off the old man and put on the new; that is, walk in their outward lives and converſation, not according to the dictates of corrupt nature, but according to the principles of grace, of the new man formed in the ſoul, for righteouſneſs and holineſs, and in imitation of Chriſt; having him for an example, and deſiring to walk as he walked; which is another ſenſe of putting on Chriſt, namely a following of him in the exerciſe of grace and diſcharge of duty; ſee *Rom.* xiii. 14. and ſuch perſons, as they are the proper ſubjects of baptiſm, who have believed in Chriſt for righteouſneſs, and walk worthy of him; ſo in baptiſm they may alſo be ſaid to put him on, as they thereby and therein make a publick profeſſion of him, by deeds as well as words, declaring him to be their Lord and king; and afreſh exerciſe faith upon him, as their ſaviour and redeemer, and imitate and follow him in it, as their pattern; who himſelf ſubmitted to it, leaving them an example that they ſhould tread in his ſteps; which when they do, they may be ſaid to put him on. The alluſion is either to the putting off and putting on of cloaths at baptiſm, which being performed by immerſion, required ſuch actions, which no other mode does; or to the prieſts putting off their common cloaths, and then bathing or dipping themſelves in water, and putting on the garments of the prieſthood before they entered on their ſervice; concerning which take the following rules preſcribed by the *Miſnic* doctors[q]; “ no man may enter the court for ſervice, “ tho' clean, עד שיטבול, *until he dips himſelf* “ five times, and waſhes his hands and feet ten “ times;” for every time he immerſed himſelf, he waſhed his hands and feet before and after: again, “ there is a vail of fine linen between him “ (the high-prieſt) and the people; he puts off his “ cloaths, ירד וטבל עלה, *he goes down and dips* “ *himſelf, he comes up*, and wipes himſelf; then “ they bring him the golden garments, and *he* “ *puts them on*, and waſhes his hands and his feet; “ then they bring him the daily ſacrifice, *&c.*” and a little after, “ they bring him (the high-prieſt “ on the day of atonement) to the houſe of *Parvah*, “ and in the holy place there was a vail of fine “ linen between him and the people; he waſhes “ his hands and his feet, and puts off his garments: “ *R. Meir* ſays, he puts off his garments, and “ then waſhes his hands and his feet; *he goes down* “ *and dips himſelf, he comes up again*, and wipes “ himſelf; then they bring him the white garments, “ and he *puts them on*, and waſhes his hands and “ his feet:” all which may ſerve to illuſtrate this paſſage, and point out to us what the Apoſtle alludes unto, as well as to obſerve to us the diſtinction the *Jews* made between the immerſion of the whole body, and a waſhing of a part of it.

Ver. 28. *There is neither Jew nor Greek*, &c.] Not but that there were ſuch in being, and in the churches of Chriſt, for the primitive churches conſiſted of both; but the meaning is, that there is no difference between them, the middle wall of partition being broken down, and that in the buſineſs of juſtification and ſalvation, it ſignified nothing whether a man was a *Jew* or a *Greek*; he was never the better for being a circumciſed *Jew*, nor never the worſe for being an uncircumciſed *Gentile*; both by nature are equally ſinners, and ſtand in need of the juſtifying righteouſneſs of Chriſt, and the regenerating grace of the Spirit. The Goſpel was equally preached to both, and was made uſeful to ſome of the one and of the other; and who believing in Chriſt, had a right to the ſame ordinances and priviledges of the Goſpel, and ſhared in the ſame bleſſings of grace. *There is neither bond nor free.* There were ſuch perſons in the world then, and in the churches too; nor does the Goſpel diſſolve the civil and natural relations and obligations men are in and under to one another, it confirms and ſecures them; but the ſenſe is, that God in calling, juſtifying and ſaving men, is no reſpecter of perſons, as being high and low, rich and poor, bond or free, ſervants or maſters: he calls, juſtifies, and ſaves men of every ſtation and condition of life; and bond-ſlaves and ſervants called by grace are Chriſt's free men, and have an equal right as thoſe that are free to all the immunities of the Goſpel: in ſome heathen nations bond-ſlaves and ſervants were not admitted, only freemen to be preſent at the ſacred ſervice, and worſhip of their deities[r]; but the Goſpel makes no ſuch diſtinction of men in its doctrine, worſhip and ordinances, which lie open to all ranks and orders of men: *there is neither male nor female*; among the heathens[s] alſo females were not admitted to ſome of their ſacred rites and ceremonies; and among the *Jews* the males only were concerned in many things both of a civil and religious nature; no female might be heir to an inheritance with a male[t]; females had no ſhare in the civil government, nor in the prieſthood; males were to appear three times a year before the Lord, and according to their oral law, women and ſervants were exempted[u]; the mark of circumciſion, the ſign of the covenant made with *Abraham* and his natural ſeed, was only upon the males; but now under the Goſpel-diſpenſation there is no diſtinction made between male and female as to divine things; as they are alike called by the grace of God, they have the ſame right to Goſpel-ordinances, baptiſm and the Lord's ſupper, and to every ſpiritual priviledge. The Apoſtle's deſign is to ſhew the common right of believers, of every nation, condition, and ſex, and to encourage the *Gentiles*, and demoliſh the pride, vanity, and boaſting of the *Jews*, their men eſpecially, who valued themſelves upon theſe *three* very things which the Apoſtle here makes no account of; as that they were *Iſraelites* and not *Gentiles*, freemen and not ſervants, men and not women; and in their public prayers they give thanks to God in this form, “ bleſſed be the Lord our “ God, the King of the world, that he hath made “ me an *Iſraelite*; bleſſed be the Lord, *&c.* who “ hath not made me a *Gentile*; bleſſed be the “ Lord, *&c.* who hath not made me a *ſervant*; “ bleſſed be the Lord, *&c.* who hath not made “ me *a woman*;” inſtead of which laſt the women ſay, “ bleſſed be the Lord, *&c.* who hath made “ me as he pleaſed:”[w] *for ye are all one in Chriſt Jeſus*; being alike choſen in him, united to him, redeemed by his blood, juſtified by his righteouſneſs, regenerated by his Spirit, the children of God by faith in him, and heirs of the ſame grace and glory, they make, both *Jews* and *Gentiles*, bond and free, male and female, as it were but one new man in him; one body of which he is the head, one ſpiritual ſeed of *Abraham* and of Chriſt.

Ver. 29. *For if ye be Chriſt's*, &c.] Or ſeeing ye are his, not by creation only, but by the Father's gift to him, by the purchaſe of his own blood, by the power of his grace, making them willing to give up themſelves to him; not only his by profeſſion, ſaying they are the Lord's, calling themſelves by his name; but by poſſeſſion, Chriſt dwelling in their hearts by faith, and they having his Spirit as a Spirit of regeneration and adoption: *then are ye Abraham's ſeed*; not his natural but his ſpiritual ſeed, the ſeed that ſhould come, and to whom the promiſes were made, ver. 16, 19. and ſo were upon an equal foot even with the *Jews* that believed: *and heirs according to the promiſe*; being the children of God, they are heirs of God; and being the ſpiritual children of *Abraham*, the children of the promiſe, which are counted for the ſeed, they are according to the promiſe made to *Abraham* and his ſpiritual ſeed, heirs of the bleſſings of the grace of life, and of the eternal inheritance; of the bleſſing of juſtification of life, and of everlaſting ſalvation; of this world and of the world to come; of all the ſpiritual bleſſings of the covenant of grace, and of the incorruptible and undefiled inheritance of the ſaints in light; to which they are begotten thro' the abundant mercy of God, for which they are made meet by the grace of Chriſt; and to which they have a right by his juſtifying righteouſneſs.

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[q] Miſn. Yoma, c. 3 §. 3, 4, 6. Vid. Miſn. Tamid, c. 1. §. 1, 2.

[r] Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dierum, l. 2. c. 14. Aurel. Victor. de orig. Gent. Rom. c. 8. Ariſtophanis Theſmophor. & Bourdin in ib. p. 782.

[s] Alex. ab Alex. ib. Aurel. Victor, c. 6.

[t] Maimon. Nechalot, c. 1. §. 1, 2.

[u] Miſn. Chagiga, c. 1. §. 1.

[w] Seder Tephillot, fol. 2. 2. Ed. Baſil. fol. 4. 1. Ed, Amſt. T. Hieroſ. Beracot, fol. 13. 2.

CHAP. IV.

IN this chapter the Apoſtle diſcourſes concerning the abrogation of the ceremonial law, under which the Old Teſtament ſaints were, being as children under tutors; blames the *Galatians* for returning to it when they were freed from it; puts them in mind of their former affection to him and to his miniſtry; deſcribes the falſe Apoſtles, who had been the occaſion of their departure from the truth, and by a beautiful allegory ſets forth the difference between the legal and Goſpel-diſpenſations. And whereas in the latter part of the preceding chapter he had compared the law to a ſchoolmaſter, under which the *Jews* were till Chriſt came; he here makes uſe of another ſimile to expreſs the ſame thing by, which is that of an heir whilſt under age being under tutors and governors, until the time fixed by the parents will, ver. 1, 2. an accommodation of which ſimile is in ver. 3. by which the *Jews* under the former diſpenſation are repreſented as children, and as in a ſtate of bondage to the ceremonial law, from which there is a deliverance by Chriſt at the appointed time of the Father, by whom he was ſent for that purpoſe; the act of ſending is aſcribed to God the Father; the perſon ſent is deſcribed as the Son of God; the time when is called the fulneſs of time; and the circumſtances under which he was ſent, were, that he was made of a woman, and made under the law, ver. 4. the ends of his being ſent were to redeem his people from it, who were under it; and that they might receive the adoption of children, the priviledge and ſpirit of it, ver. 5. Hence becauſe they were the ſons of God, and as a fruit and effect of the redemption of them by Chriſt, the Spirit of God is ſent down into their hearts, to make known and witneſs their adoption, ver. 6. and the benefits ariſing from hence are, that ſuch are or ſhould be no longer the ſervants of the law, but are children and free from it, and are heirs of God, ver. 7. and that the grace of God might appear the more illuſtrious in this privilege of ſonſhip, and the folly of the *Galatians* be more manifeſt in returning to the ceremonial law, notice is taken of what they were and did before converſion, and what they were inclined to now; that whereas whilſt they were ignorant of God, they ſerved nominal fictitious deities, ſuch as were not by nature Gods; and yet now tho' they knew God, and were known of him, ſeemed deſirous of being in a ſtate of ſervitude and bondage to the weak and beggarly elements of the ceremonial law, ver. 8, 9. of which inſtances are given in their obſerving days, months, times and years, ver. 10. which gave the Apoſtle a great deal of concern, fearing his labour among them was in vain, and to no purpoſe, ver. 11. wherefore he intreats them as his brethren to imitate him, who being a *Jew*, yet had relinquiſhed the obſervation of the ceremonial law, ver. 12. and then he reminds them of their former regard unto him; how that tho' he preached the Goſpel to them thro' much weakneſs, yet they did not deſpiſe him and reject him on account of his infirmities, but received him with all the tokens of reſpect imaginable, as if he had been an angel; yea, as if he had been Chriſt himſelf, ver. 13, 14. who then reckoned themſelves happy perſons on account of the Goſpel he preached to them, and then had ſuch an affection for him, that if it had been needful they would have given their eyes unto him; and yet now he was become their enemy for preaching the ſame truths he did then, juſtification by faith in Chriſt's righteouſneſs and the abrogation of the law, ver. 15, 16. next he gives an account of the falſe Apoſtles, who pretended a zealous affection for the *Galatians*; which was not a good one, nor with right views, ver. 17. tho' zeal in a good cauſe, and which continues, is very commendable, ver. 18. and ſuch a conſtant and hearty attachment had the Apoſtle to them; wherefore he calls them his little children, ſays he travailed in birth on their account, it being his earneſt deſire that Chriſt might appear to be formed in them, ver. 19. wherefore ſince he was in doubt and diſtreſs about them, he was very deſirous of being with them, and alter his way of arguing with them; and from the law, and not the Goſpel, ſhew them their miſtake and folly, ver. 20, 21. which he does in the following allegorical way, by obſerving that *Abraham* had two ſons, the one by a ſervant maid, the other by his lawful wife; the one was after the fleſh, the other by promiſe; which allegorically ſignified the two covenants of *Sinai* and of *Sion*, ver. 22, 23, 24. *Agar* the bond-maid repreſented the covenant made at mount *Sinai* in *Arabia*, under which the carnal *Jews* and their poſterity were in a ſtate of bondage; and *Sarah* the free woman, the covenant of grace under the Goſpel-diſpenſation and the Goſpel-church-ſtate, which is from above, free, fertile, and numerous, ver. 25, 26. which is confirmed, ver. 27. by a paſſage out of *Iſ.* liv. 1. and as theſe two women were typical of the two covenants, ſo their reſpective offſpring repreſented the two ſorts of profeſſors, legaliſts and evangelical chriſtians. True believers in Chriſt are like *Iſaac* the children of the promiſe; legaliſts are like *Iſhmael*, men after the fleſh, and of the ſame perſecuting ſpirit with him: wherefore as it was then, that carnal *Iſhmael* perſecuted ſpiritual *Iſaac*, ſo at this time the carnal *Jews* perſecuted the real chriſtians, ver. 28, 29. nevertheleſs for the comfort of the latter, 'tis obſerved out of the ſcripture that the former ſhall be caſt out, and not be heir with them, ver. 30. and the concluſion of the whole is, that the ſaints under the Goſpel-diſpenſation are not in bondage to the law, but are made free by Chriſt; to which freedom they are called, and in which they ſhould ſtand, ver. 31.

Ver. 1. *Now I ſay*, &c.] To illuſtrate what he had ſaid of the law's being a ſchool-maſter to the *Jews* until the coming of Chriſt, and then ceaſing as ſuch, he propoſes the caſe of an heir during his minority, till he come to the proper time of enjoying his eſtate: *that the heir as long as he is a child*; any one that is an heir to his father's eſtate, or another's, whilſt under age, being reckoned as a child, as he is from his infancy to his manhood, *differeth nothing from a ſervant*; he is not his own man, nor at his own diſpoſe; he can't do as he pleaſes; he is under reſtraint; he is kept to ſchool or to buſineſs, and is liable to correction and chaſtiſement according as he behaves; nor can he have the free uſe of his father's eſtate, *tho' he be Lord of all*; of all the ſervants, according to the *Arabic* verſion; or of the whole eſtate his father left him, of which he is Lord in right, but not in poſſeſſion; he is right heir to it, tho' as yet it is not in his hands, nor can he do with it as he will.

Ver. 2. *But is under tutors and governors*, &c.] The word rendered *tutors*, is adopted by the *Jewiſh Targumiſts* and *Rabbins*, into their language; and by the former is uſed [x] for any ruler and governour, civil or domeſtic; and by the latter, for ſuch as are guardians of infants, fatherleſs children, and ſuch as are under age, as it is here uſed; and who were either appointed by the will of the deceaſed, or by the *Sanhedrim*, of whom they ſay [y], אפוטרופא לדיקנני לא מוקמינן, *we don't appoint a tutor* or *guardian*, *for a bearded perſon*; that is, an adult perſon, one that is grown up to man's eſtate; but מוקמינן ליה אפוטרופא לינוקא, *we appoint a guardian for an infant*; and they had not uſed to appoint women or ſervants, or ſuch as were minors themſelves, or any of the common people; but men of ſubſtance, integrity and wiſdom [z]; a fatherleſs child had two tutors [a]; the power that guardians ſo appointed had, is at large deſcribed by *Maimonides* [b]. *Governors* were ſuch as acted under the tutors or guardians, and were employed by them for the improvement of their eſtates and minds, as ſtewards, ſchool-maſters, *&c.* *until the time appointed of the father*; by his laſt will and teſtament, which might be ſooner or later, as he pleaſed; but if he died inteſtate, the time of minority, and ſo the duration of tutors and guardians, were according to the laws of the nation; which with the *Romans* was until a man was twenty-five years of age; and with the *Jews* for a male, was until he was thirteen years of age and one day; and for a female, until ſhe was twelve years of age and one day, if the ſigns of ripeneſs of age appeared; but if they did not, the time was protracted until they were twenty, and even ſometimes till they were thirty-five years of age before the matter was determined [c].

Ver. 3. *Even ſo we*, &c.] *Jews*, for of ſuch the Apoſtle is only ſpeaking, and to whom he applies the above caſe of heirs in minority; it was to the *Jews* he had ſpoken of the law, as being a military guard, a priſon, and a ſchool-maſter to them; and then having addreſſed the *Gentiles*, as being the children of God, baptized into Chriſt, one in him, intereſted in him, the ſpiritual ſeed of *Abraham*, and heirs of all the bleſſings of grace and glory; he returns to the *Jews*, and repreſents their eſtate and condition under the law by the above ſimile, which he here makes an application of: *when we were children*; not in age, but in knowledge of divine, ſpiritual, and evangelical things; which muſt be underſtood not of every individual perſon among them, for there were ſome grown men, men of great faith, light, knowledge, and experience; but of the bulk and generality of the people of the *Jews*, and that alſo in compariſon of the clear underſtanding of the ſaints under the Goſpel-diſpenſation. The *Jews* were like children, peeviſh, froward and perverſe, and often ſtood in need of correction and chaſtiſement; and as children are pleaſed with pictures, ſhows, ſights, and gaudy amuſements, ſo they were taken with an external, pompous form of worſhip, and which they had, and was ſuited to their infant ſtate; and which infant ſtate of the *Jewiſh* church commenced from the time of their coming up out of *Egypt*, and laſted until the times of the Meſſiah; ſee *Hoſea* xi. 1, 3. *Were in bondage under the elements of the world*; by which are meant, not the four elements of fire, water, earth, and air; nor the angels, who by ſome are thought to preſide over them; nor the ſun and moon, according to whoſe revolutions the feſtivals of the *Jews* were regulated; but the ſeveral inſtitutions of the *Moſaic* œconomy, which were to the *Jews*, what an A B C, or an alphabet of letters, is to one that is beginning to learn; or what an accidence and grammar be to ſuch, who are learning any language, and which contain the rudiments of it; as the phyſical elements are the firſt principles of nature, and the general rules of ſpeech and language are the rudiments thereof, ſo the *Moſaic* inſtitutions, were the elements, rudiments, or firſt principles of the *Jewiſh* religion, taught them by the law, as their ſchool-maſter, and by which they were uſed as children: theſe are called *elements*, in alluſion to the firſt principles of nature and learning; and the elements *of the world*, becauſe they lay in outward worldly and earthly things, as meats, drinks, divers waſhings, *&c.* and becauſe that hereby God inſtructed the world, at leaſt a part of it, the world of the *Jews*: or as the word κοσμος may be rendered *beauty*, or *elegancy*, theſe were elegant elements, which in a moſt beautiful manner taught the people of the *Jews*, the firſt principles of the doctrine of Chriſt: but nevertheleſs, whilſt they were under the inſtructions and diſcipline of the law as a ſchool-maſter, they *were in bondage*; referring not to their bondage in *Egypt*, nor in the ſeveral captivities into which they were carried by their neighbours; nor to the bondage of ſin and ſatan, common to all men in a ſtate of nature; but to the bondage which the law naturally gendered, led them to, induced upon them, and kept them in, through its ſanctions and penalties; for through fear of death, they were under a ſervile diſpoſition, and were all their life-time ſubject to bondage; they carried a yoke of bondage upon their necks, and were under a ſpirit of bondage unto fear; they were like children cloſely kept to ſchool to learn their letters, ſay their leſſons, and perform their taſks; and if not, receive due correction, which kept them in continual fear and bondage.

Ver. 4. *But when the fulneſs of time was come*, &c.] The time agreed and fixed upon between God and his Son from all eternity, in the council and covenant of peace, when the Son of God ſhould aſſume human nature; which time was diligently ſearched into by the Prophets, was revealed unto them, and predicted by them; as more generally that it ſhould be before the civil government ceaſed from *Judah*, and before the deſtruction of the ſecond temple; and more particularly by *Daniel* in his prophecy of the *ſeventy weeks*, towards and about the cloſe of which there was a general expectation among the *Jews* of the *Meſſiah*'s coming; and was the fullneſs of time here referred to, and what is ſometimes called the diſpenſation of the fullneſs of time, the end of the *Moſaic* diſpenſation and *Jewiſh* church-ſtate, the laſt days of that ſtate, and the end of the *Jewiſh* world, as to their eccleſiaſtical and civil polity. The *Jews* themſelves own that that time of the Meſſiah's coming is fixed, and that at the time he ſhall come, whether they are worthy or not, for ſo it is aſſerted in their *Talmud* [d]; " ſays *R.* " *Jochanan*, the ſon of *David* does not come, but " in an age which is all worthy, or all wicked; in a " generation which is all worthy, as it is written,

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[x] Targum Jon. ben Uzziel in Gen. xxxix. 4. & xli. 34, 35. & xliii. 15. Targum in Eſther i. 8. & 2, 3.

[y] T. Bab. Bava Metzia, fol. 39. 1, 2.

[z] Maimon. Hilch. Nechalot, c. 10. §. 6.

[a] Bartenora in Miſn. Peſachim, c. 8. §. 1.

[b] Hilch. Nechalot, c. 11.

[c] Ib. Hilch. Iſhot, c. 2. §. 1, 2.

[d] T. Bab. Sanhedrim, fol. 98. 1. Vid. Jarchi & Kimchi, in Iſ. lx. 22.

" *Iſ.* lx. 21. in a generation that is all wicked, as " it is written, *Iſ.* lxiii. 5. and it is written, *for my* " *name ſake will I do it*; ſays *R. Alexander*, *R.* " *Joſhua ben Levi* objects what is written, *Iſ.* lx. 22. " *in its time*; and it is written, *I will haſten it*; " if they are worthy I will haſten it, if they are " not worthy it ſhall be בעתה, *in its time*." And accordingly a more modern writer of theirs ſays [e], " our redemption upon all accounts ſhall be בזמנה, " *in its time*, whether worthy or wicked; but if " worthy its time will be haſtened;" it muſt be owned they do not always ſay ſo: this phraſe, *the fulneſs of time*, is an *Hebraiſm*, and is the ſame with מלאת ימי in *Ezek.* v. 2. which the *Septuagint* render την πληρωσιν των ημερων, *the fulneſs of days*, and we, *when the days were fulfilled*, when the time was up; and the ſame ſenſe it has here, and it is alſo the ſame with מועד, *the appointed time*, *Hab.* ii. 3. and anſwers to προθεσμια τȣ πατρος, *the time appointed of the father*, ver. 2. *God ſent forth his ſon*; God not abſolutely and eſſentially, but perſonally and relatively conſidered is here meant, namely God the father, as appears from the relation the perſon ſent ſtands in to him, *his ſon*; not by creation, as angels, *Adam*, and all men are the ſons of God; nor by adoption as ſaints are; or by office as magiſtrates be; or on account of his incarnation or reſurrection from the dead, for he was the Son of God before either; but by divine generation, being the only begotten of the Father, of his divine nature and eſſence, equal to him, and one with him: and who was *ſent* by him, not out of diſreſpect to him, but love to us; nor without his conſent or againſt his will, he readily and heartily agreeing to it; nor does it imply any local motion or change of place, but only deſigns the aſſumption of human nature; nor does it ſuppoſe any ſuperiority and inferiority, for tho' Chriſt as man, and in his office capacity, as mediator, is inferior to the Father, yet not as to his divine nature, or as the Son of God; but it ſuggeſts, that he exiſted before he was ſent, and that as a perſon, and as a diſtinct perſon from the Father, otherwiſe he could not with any propriety be ſaid to be ſent by him; and alſo that there was an entire harmony and agreement between them in this matter, the Father agreed to ſend his Son, and the Son agreed to be ſent; and that as to his taking upon him the office of mediator, and his aſſumption of human nature in order to obtain eternal redemption: all this was not of himſelf, but done in concert with his Father, from whom as mediator he had his miſſion and commiſſion: *made of a woman*; *made*, not created as *Adam* was; nor begotten by man, as men in common are; nor is he ſaid to be born, tho' he truly was, but *made*; which word the Holy Ghoſt chuſes, to expreſs the mighty power of God, in his myſterious incarnation, wonderful conception and birth; tho' ſome copies read, *born of a woman*; and ſo the *Arabic* and *Ethiopic* verſions: *of a woman*; whoſe ſeed he was from the beginning ſaid to be; of a woman, without a man; of a woman, a virgin, as was foretold; and not only made and formed in her, but of her, of her fleſh and blood, of which he took part; and which denotes the low eſtate and great humiliation of Chriſt, and ſhews that as ſin came into the world by the woman, the Saviour from ſin came alſo the ſame way: *made under the law*; under the civil and judicial law as a *Jew*, to which he was ſubject, paying tribute to the collectors of it; and which was neceſſary that it might appear he ſprung from that nation, to whom he was promiſed; and that he came before the civil government of that people was at an end; and to teach us ſubjection to the civil magiſtrate: and as a ſon of *Abraham* he was made under the ceremonial law, was circumciſed the eighth day, kept the ſeveral feaſts of tabernacles, paſſover, *&c.* and which was proper, ſince he was the principal end of it, in whom it centers, and for whoſe ſake it was made; and that he might compleatly fulfil it, and by ſo doing put a period to it: and he was made under the moral law, both as a man and the ſurety of his people, and was ſubject to all the precepts of it, and bore the penalty of it, death, in their room and ſtead, and thereby fulfilled it, and delivered them from its curſe and condemnation. So the *Targumiſt* [f], joins the incarnation of the Meſſiah and his ſubjection to the law together, as the Apoſtle here does; " the prophet ſaith to the houſe of *David*, " becauſe a child is born unto us, and a ſon is " given to us, וקביל אוריתא עלוהי למטרה, *and* " *he hath took upon him the law to keep it*, and his " name ſhall be called, *&c.*"

Ver. 5. *To redeem them that were under the law*, &c.] By whom are meant chiefly the *Jews*, who are elſewhere repreſented as in and under the law, in diſtinction from the *Gentiles* who were without it; ſee *Rom.* ii. 12. 1 *Cor.* ix. 20, 21. the *Gentiles* indeed, tho' they were not under the law of *Moſes*, yet were not without law to God, they were under the law of nature. The law was given to *Adam* as a covenant of works, and not to him as a ſingle perſon, but as a fœderal head to all his poſterity; hence he ſinning, and they in him, they all came under its ſentence of condemnation and death, God's elect not excepted, and who are the perſons ſaid to be redeemed; for Chriſt was not ſent to redeem all that were under the law; for as all mankind were included in it as a covenant of works made with *Adam*, and all are tranſgreſſors of it, the whole world is pronounced guilty before God by it, and liable to the curſe of it; but not all mankind, only ſome out of every kindred, tongue, people and nation are redeemed by Chriſt, even all the elect whether among *Jews* or *Gentiles*. The choſen among the *Jews* ſeem to be here principally deſigned; the redemption of them, which is the end of Chriſt's being ſent, intends not only a deliverance of them from ſin and ſatan, and the world to whom they were in bondage, but from the law under which they were; from the bondage of the ceremonial, and from the curſe and condemnation of the moral law: *that we might receive the adoption of children*; by which may be meant, both the grace, bleſſing, and priviledge of adoption, and the inheritance adopted to; both are received and that in conſequence of redemption by Chriſt; and ſuch as receive the one will alſo receive the other. Adoption, as a bleſſing of grace, exiſts before it is received; nor does the reception of it add any thing to the thing itſelf; it was in God's deſignation from all eternity, who predeſtinated his choſen ones unto it by Chriſt, according to the good pleaſure of his will; it was provided, laid up, and ſecured for them in the everlaſting covenant; and is part of that grace given them in Chriſt before the world began; but ſin intervening whereby the law was broken, obſtacles were thrown in the way of God's elect receiving and enjoying this priviledge in their own perſons; wherefore Chriſt was ſent to redeem them from ſin and the law, and by ſo doing remove theſe obſtructions, that ſo they might receive

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[e] Kimchi in Pſ. cviii. 4.

[f] In Iſ. ix. 6.

ceive this priviledge in a way conſiſtent with the righteouſneſs and holineſs of God, as well as with his grace and goodneſs: receiving of it ſhews it to be a gift, a free grace gift, and not owing to any merit of the creature; faith is the hand which receives it, as it does all other bleſſings, as Chriſt himſelf, grace out of his fulneſs, righteouſneſs, pardon, *&c.* and has no more cauſal influence on this than on any of theſe; faith does not make any the ſons of God, or put them among the children; but receives the power, the authority, the priviledge from God thro' Chriſt, under the witneſſings of the Spirit of adoption; whereby they become ſuch, and have a right to the heavenly inheritance, which they ſhall hereafter enjoy.

Ver. 6. *And becauſe ye are ſons*, &c.] That is of God, ſo ſome copies read; and the *Ethiopic* verſion, *inaſmuch as ye are his ſons*; not in ſo high a ſenſe as Chriſt is the Son of God; nor in ſo low a ſenſe as all men are his offspring; nor in ſuch ſenſe as magiſtrates are the children of the moſt high; nor merely on account of a profeſſion of religion, as the *ſons of God* was a phraſe very early uſed of the worſhippers of the true God; but by virtue of adoption, and which is not owing to the merits of men, who are by nature children of wrath, but to the free rich ſovereign grace of God. 'Tis a priviledge and bleſſing of grace in which all the three perſons are concern'd. The Father has predeſtinated to it, and in the covenant has provided and laid it up; he ſet up his ſon as the pattern to which theſe ſons ſhould be conformed, and propoſed the glory of his own grace, as the end; by virtue of which act of grace they were conſidered as the children of God, as early as the gift of them to Chriſt; and ſo by him when he partook of their fleſh and blood, and died to gather them together who were ſcattered abroad; ſee *Heb.* ii. 13, 14. *John* xi. 52. The Son of God has alſo an hand in this affair; for thro' his eſpouſing their perſons, they become the ſons and daughters of the Lord God Almighty; and thro' his aſſumption of their nature they become his brethren, and ſo to be in the relation of ſons to God; thro' his redemption, they receive the adoption of children, and at his hands the priviledge, the power itſelf to become ſuch. The Spirit of God not only regenerates them, which is an evidence of their ſonſhip, but as a Spirit of adoption manifeſts it to them, works faith in them to receive it, and frequently witneſſes to the truth of it; all which ſhew how any come and are known to be the ſons of God. This is a priviledge that exceeds all others; it is more to be a ſon than to be a ſaint; angels are ſaints, but not ſons, they are ſervants; it is more to be a child of God, than to be redeemed, pardoned, and juſtified; it is great grace to redeem from ſlavery, to pardon criminals, and juſtify the ungodly; but it is another and an higher act of grace to make them ſons; and which makes them infinitely more honourable, than to be the ſons and daughters of the greateſt potentate upon earth; yea, gives them an honour which *Adam* had not in innocence, nor the angels in heaven, who tho' ſons by creation, yet not by adoption. The conſequence, and ſo the evidence of it follows, *God hath ſent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying Abba father.* The *Syriac* and *Arabic* verſions read, *our father*; all the three divine perſons here appear, as having a concern in this buſineſs as before obſerved; here are God and his Son, and the Spirit of his Son, ſaid to be ſent; by whom is deſigned not any work of his upon the heart, nor any of his gifts and graces; but he himſelf in perſon, even the ſame Spirit of God that moved upon the face of the waters at the creation of the world, and moved holy men of God to write the ſcriptures; who formed and filled the human nature of Chriſt, and deſcended on him as a dove; and by whom Chriſt and his Apoſtles wrought their miracles; and who is called *the Spirit of his Son*; as he is frequently by the *Jews*[g], רוחו של מלך משיח, *the Spirit of the King Meſſiah*; and ſometimes[h], רוח מימריה, *the Spirit of his word*, the eſſential word of God; becauſe he proceeds from him as from the Father, and becauſe he dwells in him, in an eminent manner as mediator, and is ſent by virtue of his mediation and interceſſion; and he is the rather mentioned under this character, becauſe adoption proceeds upon the natural ſonſhip of Chriſt, and is what is the peculiar office of the Spirit to teſtify. When he is ſaid to be *ſent*, it does not ſuppoſe any local motion or change of place in him, who is a Spirit infinite, immenſe and omnipreſent; nor any inferiority to the Father that ſends him, or to the Son whoſe Spirit he is; for he is one God with the Father and Son, and with the Father is the ſender of Chriſt, *Iſ.* xlviii. 16. but it regards his peculiar office in this affair of adoption, by agreement of all the three perſons; the Father predeſtinated to it, the Son redeems that it might be received, and the Spirit is ſent to diſcover, apply, and bear witneſs to it; which is a wondrous inſtance of the grace of God. The place where he is ſent is *into* the *heart*; where he is as a principle of ſpiritual life, and which he furniſhes and ſupplies with all grace; where he dwells as in his temple, and is the evidence of God's dwelling there, and alſo of intereſt in Chriſt; is there as a pledge and an earneſt of future glory; and the whole is a ſurprizing inſtance of condeſcending grace. The work he does there is various, and conſiſts of divers parts; as convincing of ſin, and righteouſneſs, working faith, and acting the part of a comforter; but what is here referred to, is the diſcharge of his office as a Spirit of adoption, *crying Abba father.* The word *Abba* is an *Hebrew*, or rather a *Syriac* or *Chaldee* word, ſignifying *father*; and which is added for explanation ſake; and its repetition may denote the vehemency of filial affection, the ſtrength of faith and confidence as to intereſt in the relation; and being expreſſed both in *Hebrew* and *Greek*, may ſhew that God is the father both of *Jews* and *Gentiles*, and that there is but one Father of all; and if it might not be thought too curious an obſervation, it may be remarked that the word *Abba* read backwards or forwards is the ſame pronunciation, and may teach us that God is the father of his people in adverſity as well as in proſperity. The act of *crying*, tho' it is here aſcribed to the Spirit, yet is not properly his, but the believers; and is attributed to him becauſe he excites, encourages, and aſſiſts them as a Spirit of adoption to call God their father; and may be underſtood, both of the ſecret internal crying of the ſoul, or exerciſe of faith on God as its father, and of an open outward invocation of him as ſuch, with much confidence, freedom, and boldneſs.

Ver. 7. *Wherefore thou art no more a ſervant*, &c.] This is a benefit reſulting from adoption, and the manifeſtation of it to the children of God, and ſuppoſes them to have been formerly ſervants; as whilſt in a natural ſtate they were the ſervants of ſin, the vaſſals of ſatan, ſlaves to the world, and the luſts of it, and in bondage to the law; but now being declared to be the ſons of God under the witneſſings of the Spirit, they are freed from the ſervitude of ſin, from the captivity of ſatan, from the ſlavery of the world, and particularly from the law, and that ſpirit of bondage which it brought upon them, which is chiefly deſigned; and from which they are delivered by the Spirit of adoption, enabling and encouraging them to cry *Abba*, Father; ſo that they are now no more under the former ſervile ſpirit, the ſpirit of a ſervant, *but a ſon*; whoſe ſpirit, ſtate, and caſe are vaſtly different from thoſe of a ſervant: the ſervant has not that intereſt in his maſter's affections as the ſon has; nor that liberty of acceſs to him; nor is he fed, and cloathed as he is, or ſhares in the ſame privileges he does; nor is his obedience performed in the ſame free generous manner, from a principle of love and gratitude, but in a ſervile and mercenary way; and tho' he may expect his wages, he can't hope for the inheritance; nor does he always abide in the houſe as the ſon does. He that is once a ſon, is always ſo, and no more a ſervant: predeſtination to Sonſhip is immutable; 'tis God's act to put any among the children, and none can put them out; the covenant of grace, in which this bleſſing is ſecured, is unalterable; union with Chriſt the Son of God, on which it is founded, is indiſſoluble; the Spirit of adoption, where-ever he witneſſes, abides as ſuch. They that are the ſons of God may be corrected and chaſtized, as they often are, in a fatherly way; but theſe corrections are proofs for, and not againſt their Sonſhip; they may indeed judge themſelves unworthy to be called the ſons of God, and may be in ſuch frames of ſoul as to conclude, at leaſt fear, they are not; but ſtill the relation abides, and ever will. They'll never more be ſervants, but always ſons. The very learned Mr. *Selden* [i] thinks the Apoſtle alludes to a cuſtom among the *Jews*, who allowed only freemen, and not ſervants and handmaids, to call any *Abba*, Father ſuch-an-one, or *Imma*, Mother ſuch-an-one: but this ſeems to proceed upon a miſtaken ſenſe, and rendering of a paſſage in the *Talmud* [k], which is as follows, עבדים ושפחות אין קורין אותם אבא פלוני ואמא פלנית; which he thus renders, *neither ſervants nor handmaids uſe this kind of appellation, Abba*, or *Father ſuch-an-one*, and *Imma*, or *Mother ſuch-an-one*; whereas it ſhould be rendered, *ſervants and handmaids, they don't call them Abba, Father ſuch-an-one*, and *Imma, Mother ſuch-an-one*; this is clear from what follows. *The family of* R. Gamaliel *uſed to call them Father ſuch-an-one, and Mother ſuch-an-one*; which in the other *Talmud* [l] is, *the family of* R. Gamaliel *uſed to call their ſervants and their handmaids Father Tabi, and Mother Tabitha*; which were the names of the ſervant and handmaid of *Gamaliel*. Rather therefore reference is had to a tradition [m] of theirs, that "a ſervant, who is carried "captive, when others redeemed him, if under the "notion of a ſervant, or in order to be one, he "becomes a ſervant; but if under the notion of a "freeman, לא ישתעבד, *he is no more a ſervant*." Or to the general expectation of that people, that when they are redeemed by the Meſſiah, they ſhall be ſervants no more; for ſo they ſay [n], "your "fathers, tho' they were redeemed, became ſer-"vants again, but you, when ye are redeemed, "עוד אין אתם משתעבדין, *ſhall be no more ſervants*;" which in a ſpiritual ſenſe is true of all that are redeemed by Chriſt, and thro' that redemption receive the adoption of children, and is what the Apoſtle here means. *And if a ſon, then an heir of God thro' Chriſt*; which is another benefit ariſing from adoption. Such as are the children of God, they are heirs of God himſelf; he is their portion and exceeding great reward; his perfections are on their ſide, and engaged for their good; all his purpoſes run the ſame way, and all his promiſes belong to them; they are heirs of all the bleſſings of grace and glory, of righteouſneſs, of life, of ſalvation, and a kingdom and glory; and ſhall inherit all things, and all *thro' Chriſt*: he is the grand heir of all things; they are joint heirs with him; their ſonſhip is thro' him, and ſo is their heirſhip and inheritance; their inheritance is in his poſſeſſion, it is reſerved ſafe in him; and by him, and with him they ſhall enjoy it. The *Alexandrian* copy, and ſome others, only read, *an heir through God*, and ſo the *Vulgate Latin* verſion; and the *Ethiopic* verſion only, *an heir of God*.

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[g] Bereſhit Rabba, fol. 2. 4. & 6. 3. Vajikra Rabba, fol. 156. 4. See note on Rom. viii. 9.

[h] Targum in 2 Chron. ii. 6.

Ver. 8. *Howbeit then, when ye knew not God*, &c.] Whilſt in *Gentiliſm*, and in a ſtate of unregeneracy, they had no true knowledge of God; tho' they might know by the light of nature, and works of creation, that there was a God, yet they did not know who he was, but called either mortal men, or ſome one or other of the creatures, or ſtocks, and ſtones, and images of mens device, by this name; they knew not the God of *Iſrael*; they did not know God in Chriſt, and are therefore ſaid to be without him; and a common deſcription of them it is, that they knew not God: and whilſt this was their caſe, what follows was true of them, *ye did ſervice unto them which by nature are no Gods*; only by name, and in the opinion of men, but have no divinity in them, are only called Gods, mere nominal, fictitious deities, who have nothing of the nature and eſſence of God in them; for there is but one God by nature and eſſence, the Father, Son, and Spirit; all others have only the name and appearance, but not the truth of deity; and theſe the *Gentiles* in their times of ignorance did *ſervice* to, which is what the *Jews* call, עבודה זרה, *ſtrange ſervice*; that is, idolatry, concerning which there is a whole treatiſe in the *Talmud*, and which bears that name [o]. This ſervice lay in paying homage to them, worſhipping of them, and performing various rites and ceremonies in a way of adoration, and which they reckoned religious ſervice; and which, comparatively ſpeaking, whilſt in this ſtate of blindneſs, was excuſable in them; tho' it is a wonderful inſtance of grace that ſuch idolaters ſhould be the ſons of God.

Ver. 9. *But now after that ye have known God*, &c.] God in Chriſt, as their Covenant-God and Father, thro' the preaching of the Goſpel, and in the light of divine grace; God having cauſed light to ſhine in their dark hearts; and having given them the light of the knowledge of himſelf in the face of Chriſt, and having ſent down into their hearts the Spirit of his Son, crying *Abba*, Father. *Or rather are known of God*; for it is but little that the beſt of theſe, that have the greateſt ſhare of knowledge, know of him; and what knowledge they have, they have it firſt, originally, and wholly from him: that knowledge which he has of them is particular, diſtinct, and compleat; and is to be underſtood, not of his omniſcience in general, ſo all men are known by him; but of his ſpecial knowledge, joined with affection, approbation, and care: and the meaning is, that they were loved by him with an everlaſting love, which had been manifeſted in their converſion, in the drawing of them to himſelf, and to his Son; that he approved of them, delighted in them, had an exact knowledge, and took ſpecial care of them: but, oh, folly and ingratitude! *how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye deſire again to be in bondage?* meaning the ordinances of the ceremonial law, he before calls *the elements of the world*, and here *weak*, becauſe they could not give life, righteouſneſs, peace, joy, comfort, and ſalvation; and ſince the coming of Chriſt were become impotent to all the uſes they before ſerved; *and beggarly*, becauſe they lay in the obſervation of mean things, as meats, drinks, &c. and which were only ſhadows of thoſe good things, the riches of grace and glory, which come by Chriſt. The *Galatians* are ſaid to turn again to theſe; not that they were before in the obſervation of them, except the *Jews*, but becauſe there were ſome likeneſs between theſe, and the ceremonies with which they carried on the ſervice of their idols; and by ſhewing an inclination to them, they diſcovered a good-will to come into a like ſtate of bondage they were in before; than which nothing could be more ſtupid and ungrateful in a people that had been bleſſed with ſo much grace, and with ſuch clear Goſpel light and knowledge.

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[i] De Succeſſionibus ad Leg. Ebr. c. 4. p. 38.

[k] T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 16. 2. Vid. Maimon. Hilch. Nechalot, c. 4. §. 5.

[l] T. Hieroſ. Niddah, fol. 49. 2. Vid. Maſſech. Semachot, c. 1. §. 13.

[m] Miſn. Gittin, c. 4. §. 4.

[n] T. Hieroſ. Sheviith, fol. 37. 2.

[o] Avoda Zara.

Ver. 10. *Ye obſerve days, and months, and times, and years.*] Leſt the Apoſtle ſhould be thought to ſuggeſt, without foundation, the inclination of theſe people to be in bondage to the ceremonies of the law, he gives this as an inſtance of it; which is to be underſtood, not of a civil obſervation of times, divided into days, months, and years, for which the luminaries of the heavens were made, and into ſummer and winter, ſeeds time and harveſt, which is not only lawful, but abſolutely neceſſary; but of a religious obſervation of days, &c. not of the lucky and unlucky days, or of any of the feſtivals of the *Gentiles*, but of *Jewiſh* ones. By *days* are meant their ſeventh-day ſabbaths; for ſince they are diſtinguiſhed from months and years, they muſt mean ſuch days as returned weekly; and what elſe can they be but their weekly ſabbaths? Theſe were peculiar to the *Iſraelites*, and not binding on others; and being typical of Chriſt, the true reſt of his people, and he being come, are now ceaſed. By *months* are deſigned their new moons, or the beginning of their months upon the appearance of a new moon, which were kept by blowing trumpets, offering ſacrifices, hearing the word of God, abſtaining from work, and holding religious feaſts; and were typical of that light, knowledge, and grace the church receives from Chriſt, the ſun of righteouſneſs; and he, the ſubſtance being come, theſe ſhadows diſappeared. By *times* are intended the three times in the year, when the *Jewiſh* males appeared before the Lord at *Jeruſalem*, to keep the three feaſts of tabernacles, paſſover, and pentecoſt, for the obſervance of which there was now no reaſon; not of the feaſt of tabernacles, ſince the word was made fleſh, and tabernacled among us; nor of the paſſover, ſince Chriſt, our paſſover, is ſacrificed for us; nor of pentecoſt, or the feaſt of weeks, or of the firſt fruits of the harveſt, ſince the Spirit of God was poured down in a plenteous manner on that day upon the Apoſtles; and when the firſt-fruits of a glorious harveſt were brought in to the Lord, in the converſion of three thouſand ſouls. And by *years* are to be underſtood their ſabbatical years; every ſeventh year the land had a reſt, and remained untilled; there were no plowing and ſowing, and there was a general releaſe of debtors; and every fiftieth year was a jubilee to the Lord, when liberty to ſervants, debtors, &c. was proclaimed throughout the land: all which were typical of reſt, payment of debts, and ſpiritual liberty by Chriſt; and which having their accompliſhment in him, were no longer to be obſerved; wherefore theſe *Galatians* are blamed for ſo doing; and the more, becauſe they were taught to obſerve them, in order to obtain eternal life and ſalvation by them.

Ver. 11. *I am afraid of you*, &c.] Which ſhews the danger he apprehended they were in, by taking ſuch large ſteps from Chriſtianity to Judaiſm, and expreſſes the godly jealouſy of the Apoſtle over them; intimates he had ſome hope of them, and in the whole declares his great love and affection for them; for love is a thing full of care and fear: *leſt I have beſtowed upon you labour in vain*; in preaching the Goſpel among them with ſo much diligence and conſtancy, tho' ſo many afflictions and preſſures lay upon him. Faithful miniſters of the word are laborious ones; and ſuch an one was the Apoſtle; and who indeed laboured more abundantly than the reſt in all places where-ever he came; and ſuch will be concerned, as he was, leſt their labours ſhould be in vain, not to themſelves, but to the ſouls of others, whoſe everlaſting good and welfare they are ſeeking. But how is it that the Apoſtle ſhould fear that his labour in preaching the Goſpel would be in vain, and become of no effect thro' their obſervance of days, months, times, and years? becauſe that hereby the pure ſpiritual and evangelic worſhip of God was corrupted, they bringing into it that which God had removed, and ſo became guilty of will-worſhip; their chriſtian liberty was infringed, and they brought into bondage, a deliverance from which the Goſpel proclaims; the doctrine of free grace in pardon, juſtification, and ſalvation, was made void, they obſerving theſe things in order to procure them thereby; and it was virtually and tacitly ſaying, that Chriſt was not come in the fleſh, which is the main article of the Goſpel; for ſince theſe things had reſpect to him, and were to continue no longer than till his coming, to keep on the obſervation of them, was declaring that he was not come; which is in effect to ſet aſide the whole Goſpel, and the miniſtration of it; ſo that the Apoſtle might juſtly fear, that by ſuch a proceeding all his labour, and the pains he had took to preach the Goſpel, and ſalvation by Chriſt unto them, would be in vain.

Ver. 12. *Brethren, I beſeech you, be as I am*, &c.] Though they had gone ſo far backwards, yet ſtill hoping well of them that they would be reclaimed, he ſtiles them *brethren*; not in a carnal but ſpiritual relation, as being born of God, and belonging to his family; and out of his ſincere and hearty love for them as his brethren in Chriſt, he exhorts them to be as he was; which ſome underſtand of affection, as deſiring them to ſhew the ſame love to him as to themſelves, that he might be to them as another I, as a part of themſelves; ſo true friendſhip makes, and true friends look upon each other to be, as *Jonathan* and *David*, and the firſt chriſtians were, of one heart and ſoul. But this phraſe rather ſeems to have regard to likeneſs and imitation; and the ſenſe is, that he would have them to be as he was, and do as he did; to be as free from the law, and the ſervitude and bondage of it, as he was; to reckon themſelves dead unto it, as he did; and to relinquiſh the obſervance of days, and months, and times, and years, and any, and every part of the ceremonial law, and to account all theſe things as he had done, loſs and dung for Chriſt; and this he preſſes, not in an authoritative way, laying his commands as an Apoſtle upon them, but in a kind and gentle manner entreating them: and which he backs with the following reaſon or argument, *for I am as ye are*; as your very ſelves; I have the ſame love for you, you have for yourſelves; I love you as I do myſelf; this way go ſuch interpreters that underſtand the exhortation to regard love and affection: but rather the meaning is, be as I am, and do as I do, *becauſe I was as you are*; ſo the *Syriac* and *Arabic* verſions read the words. Some think that the Apoſtle particularly addreſſes the *Jews* in theſe churches; and that his ſenſe is, that he was born a *Jew*, as they were, was brought up in the *Jewiſh* religion, and in the obſervance of theſe things as they had been, and yet he had relinquiſhed them, therefore would have them do ſo likewiſe: or rather his intention is, that he had been as zealous for the obſervation of the ceremonial law, and all the rituals of it, as they now were; and tho' he was a *Jew* by birth, and had had a *Jewiſh* education, and ſo had been prejudiced in favour of theſe things, yet he had renounced them all; and therefore they who were *Gentiles*, and were never under obligation to them, ſhould never think of coming into bondage by them; and ſince he had accommodated himſelf to them, and had become all things to all, that he might gain ſome, whether *Jews* or *Gentiles*, ſo he hoped they would condeſcend to him, and follow his example: or this may have reſpect, not to his former but preſent ſtate, according to our verſion; and the ſenſe be, I am as you are, and you are as I am with reſpect to things ſpiritual; we are both alike in Chriſt, choſen in him, and redeemed by him; are equally regenerated by his Spirit, and are all the children of God by faith in him, and no more ſervants; are all equally Chriſt's free men, and have a right to the ſame privileges and immunities; and therefore be as I am, as free from obſerving the ceremonies of the law, and ſo from the bondage of it, ſince we are upon an equal foot, and upon the ſame foundation in Chriſt. *Ye have not injured me at all*; what injury they had done was to God, whoſe will it was that theſe things ſhould be aboliſhed; and to Chriſt, who had broken down the middle wall of partition; and to the Goſpel, which proclaimed liberty to the captives; and to their own ſouls, by entangling themſelves with the yoke of bondage; but no perſonal private injury was done to the Apoſtle by their compliance with the law. This he ſays, leſt they ſhould think that he ſpoke out of anger and reſentment, and on account of any perſonal affront offered to him; which leads him to take notice of their former kindneſs and reſpect to him, and which he deſigns as a reaſon why they ſhould pay the ſame deference to him now as then.

Ver. 13. *Ye know how thro' infirmity of the fleſh*, &c.] Meaning either their infirmity, to which the Apoſtle accommodated himſelf in preaching the Goſpel to them, delivering it in ſuch a manner as ſuited with their capacities, feeding them with milk, and not with ſtrong meat; or his own infirmity, reſpecting either ſome particular bodily infirmity and diſorder, as the head-ach, with which he is ſaid to be greatly troubled; or the weakneſs of his bodily preſence, the mean outward appearance he made, the contemptibleneſs of his voice, and the great humility with which he behaved; or rather the many reproaches, afflictions, and perſecutions which attended him, when, ſays he, *I preached the Goſpel unto you at the firſt*; not the law, but the Goſpel; and this he did at his firſt entrance among them, and was the firſt that preached it to them, and was the means of their converſion; and therefore being their ſpiritual father, they ought to be as he was, and follow him as they had him for an example.

Ver. 14. *And my temptation which was in my fleſh*, &c.] The ſame with the infirmity of his fleſh, and which was a trial of his faith and patience, and every other grace, as the afflictions of the ſaints be. The *Alexandrian* copy, and ſome others, and the *Vulgate Latin* verſion read, *your temptation in my fleſh*; that which was a trial of them, whether they would receive him or no. This *ye deſpiſed not*; nor the Apoſtle on the account of it, nor his miniſtry; they thought never the worſe of him, nor of the Goſpel he preached becauſe of this: *nor rejected*; him, nor the counſel of God declared by him, *but received me*; as they did, into their cities and places of worſhip, into their houſes, and into their hearts and affections: and that *as an angel of God*; with all that reverence and reſpect, that high eſteem, veneration, and affection, as if one of the celeſtial inhabitants had been ſent down from heaven to bring them the good tidings of the Goſpel: or *as a meſſenger of God*, as the phraſe may be rendered; as one that had his miſſion and commiſſion from God, which was not at all diſputed by them: but they looked upon him under that character, and regarded him as ſuch, *even as Chriſt Jeſus*; as his embaſſador, as perſonating him, as being in his ſtead; yea, if he had been perſonally preſent as man among them, they could not have ſhown greater reſpect to him as ſuch, than they did to the Apoſtle; for as for any religious worſhip and adoration, that they did not offer to him; and had they, he would have addreſſed them in like manner he did the inhabitants of *Lyſtra*, *Acts* xiv. 14, 15. Now ſince they ſhowed him ſo much reſpect, notwithſtanding all his infirmities, temptations, and afflictions, when he firſt preached the Goſpel; what ſhould hinder that they ſhould not pay the ſame regard to him now, by abiding in his doctrine and following his example, ſince he was the ſame man in his principles and practices now as then?

Ver. 15. *Where is then the bleſſedneſs you ſpake of?* &c.] Or, as ſome copies read, *what was then your bleſſedneſs?* what, and how great was it? meaning, when the Goſpel was firſt preached to them by him; when Chriſt was revealed to them as God's ſalvation; when the doctrines of free juſtification by the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, and full pardon by his blood, and atonement and ſatisfaction by his ſacrifice, were publiſhed among them; when the love of God was ſhed abroad in their hearts, and the Spirit of Chriſt was ſent thither, crying *Abba*, Father: but, alas! where was this bleſſedneſs now, ſince they were turning to the weak and beggarly elements of the ceremonial law, and were enclined to obſerve its ordinances, and bring themſelves thereby into a ſtate of bondage? They were happy perſons whilſt under the miniſtry of the Apoſtle; as a Goſpel-miniſtry, is a great happineſs to any that enjoy it; for this is the way to find eternal life, to have ſpiritual peace and pleaſure, joy and comfort, light and liberty, whereas a contrary doctrine leads to all the reverſe. The Apoſtle hereby puts them in mind how they were looked upon as happy perſons by himſelf at that time, whom they received with ſo much reſpect and reverence, and his miniſtry with ſo much readineſs and chearfulneſs, and to ſo much profit and advantage; and alſo by other churches who were ſenſible of the high favour they enjoyed, by having ſo great a preacher of the Goſpel among them; and even at that time they thought themſelves the happieſt perſons in the world, and that they could not have been more ſo, unleſs they had had Chriſt himſelf in perſon among them; ſo beautiful were the feet of this bringer of glad tidings to them: *for I bear you record, that if it had been poſſible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me*; ſo fully perſuaded was the Apoſtle of their ſtrong and ſincere affection for him at that time, that he was ready to atteſt the truth of this in any form to any perſons; that were it a poſſible thing for them, and could it have been of any advantage to him, they would even have plucked out their eyes, than which nothing is dearer, or more uſeful to a man, and have parted with them to him, and for his ſake; and doubtleſs perſons ſo affected would chearfully have laid down their lives for him; but things had taken another turn ſince.

Ver. 16. *Am I therefore become your enemy*, &c.] Not that he was an enemy to them, he had the ſame cordial affection for them as ever; he had their true intereſt at heart, and was diligently purſuing it; but they, through the inſinuations of the falſe teachers, had entertained an ill opinion of him, and an averſion to him, and treated him as if he had been an enemy to them, and as if they had a real hatred of him: and that for no other reaſon, as he obſerves, but *becauſe I tell you the truth*; the Goſpel ſo called, becauſe it comes from the God of truth, is concerned with Chriſt, who is truth itſelf, and is dictated, revealed, and bleſſed by the Spirit of truth; and is oppoſed unto, and is diſtinct from the law, which is only an image and ſhadow, and not truth itſelf: it chiefly reſpects the great truths of ſalvation alone by Chriſt, and juſtification by his righteouſneſs; and may alſo regard what he had ſaid concerning the abrogation of the law, blaming them for the obſervance of it, and calling its inſtitutions weak and beggarly elements; all which he told or ſpoke publickly, plainly, honeſtly, fully, and faithfully, boldly, conſtantly, and with all aſſurance, conſiſtently, and in pure love to their ſouls; and yet it brought on him their anger and reſentment. Telling the truth in ſuch a manner often brings many enemies to the miniſters of Chriſt; not only the men of the world, prophane ſinners, but profeſſors of religion, and ſometimes ſuch who once loved and admired them.

Ver. 17. *They zealouſly affect you*, &c.] Or *are jealous of you*; meaning the falſe Apoſtles, whoſe names, in contempt, he mentions not, being unworthy to be taken notice of, and their names to be tranſmitted to poſterity. Theſe were jealous of them, not with a godly jealouſy, as the Apoſtle was, leſt their minds ſhould be corrupted from the ſimplicity of the Goſpel; but they were jealous, leſt they ſhould love the Apoſtle more than they, and therefore repreſented him in a very bad light, and expreſſed great love and kindneſs for them themſelves: *but not well*; their zeal and affection were not hearty, and ſincere, and without diſſimulation, but were all feigned, were only in word and in tongue, not in deed, and in truth: this zealous affection neither proceeded from right principles, nor with right views; they ſought themſelves, and their own carnal worldly intereſt, their own pleaſure and profit, and not the good and welfare of the ſouls of theſe *Galatians*: *yea, they would exclude you*; that is, either from the Apoſtle, from bearing any love unto, and having any reſpect for him. What they were wiſhing and ſeeking for was to draw off the minds and affections of theſe perſons from him; or they were deſirous of removing them from the Goſpel of Chriſt unto another Goſpel, and did all they could to hinder them from obeying the truth; and particularly were for ſhutting them out of their chriſtian liberty, and bringing them under the bondage of the law; yea, were for ſeparating them from the churches, that they might ſet up themſelves at the head of them. Some copies read *us*, inſtead of *you*; and then the meaning is, that they were deſirous of excluding the Apoſtle from their company, and from having any ſhare in their affections, which makes little alteration in the ſenſe: and others, inſtead of *exclude*, read *include*; and which is confirmed by the *Syriac* verſion, which renders the word, למחבשכון, *but they would include you*; that is, either they would include, or impriſon you under the law, and the bondage of it; or they would monopolize you, and engroſs all your love to themſelves; and which is alſo the ſenſe of the *Arabic* verſion: *that you might affect them*; love them, ſhew reſpect to them, be on their ſide, follow their directions, imbibe their doctrines, and give up yourſelves wholly to their care, and be at their call and command.

Ver. 18. *But it is good to be zealouſly affected*, &c.] A zealous affection when right is very commendable, as the inſtances of *Phinehas*, *Elijah*, *John* the *Baptiſt*, and our Lord Jeſus Chriſt ſhew, and a contrary ſpirit is very diſagreeable. But then it muſt be expreſſed *in a good thing*; in a good cauſe, for God, and the things of Chriſt; for the Goſpel, and the ordinances of it, and for the diſcipline of God's houſe, and againſt immorality and prophaneneſs, errors and hereſies: and it ſhould be *always*; not at certain times, and upon ſome particular accounts, but it ſhould be conſtant, and always continue; it ſhould be ever the ſame towards God, Chriſt, and his miniſters: *and not only when I am preſent with you*; by which the Apoſtle ſuggeſts, that whilſt he was with them they were zealouſly attached to him and truth; but no ſooner was he gone from them, but their zealous affection abated, and was fixed on others, which diſcovered their weakneſs, fickleneſs, and inconſtancy; whereas he was always the ſame to them, and bore the ſame love to them, as the following words ſhew.

Ver. 19. *My little children*, &c.] A ſoft and tender way of ſpeaking, uſed by Chriſt to his diſciples, and frequently by that affectionate and beloved diſciple *John*. It is expreſſive of the Apoſtle's ſtrong love and affection for them, and points out their tenderneſs in the faith, and that ſmall degree of ſpiritual light and knowledge they had, as well as ſignifies that he had been, as he hoped, and in a judgment of charity believed, an inſtrument of their converſion, and was their ſpiritual parent: hence it follows, *of whom I travail in birth again*; he compares himſelf to a woman with child, as the church in bringing forth ſouls to Chriſt ſometimes is; and all his pains and labours in the miniſtry of the word to the ſorrows of a woman during the time of child-bearing, and at the birth. When he firſt came among them, he laboured exceedingly; he preached the Goſpel in ſeaſon, and out of ſeaſon; he followed his indefatigable endeavours with importunate prayers; and his miniſtry among them was attended with much weakneſs of body, and with many reproaches, afflictions, and perſecutions comparable to the birth-throws of a woman in travail: however, as he hoped he was the means of their being born again, of the turning of them from Heatheniſm to Chriſtianity, and from ſerving idols to ſerve the living God, and believe in his Son Jeſus Chriſt; but the falſe Apoſtles coming among them, had ſo ſtrangely wrought upon them, and they were ſo much gone back and degenerated, that they ſeemed to be like ſo many abortions, or as an informed fœtus; wherefore he laboured again with all his might and main, by writing to them, uſing arguments with them, ſometimes giving them good words, at other times rough ones, and fervently praying for them, if poſſible, to recover them from *Judaiſm*, to which they were inclined, to the pure Goſpel of Chriſt. *Until Chriſt be formed in you*; which is the ſame as to be created in Chriſt, to be made new creatures, or new men in him; or, in other words, to have the principle of grace wrought in the ſoul, which goes by the name of Chriſt formed in the heart; becauſe it is from him, he is the author of it, and it bears a reſemblance to him, and is that by which he lives, dwells, and reigns in the ſouls of his people. Now tho' as he hoped, this new man, new creature, or Chriſt was formed in them before, when he firſt preached the Goſpel to them; yet it was not a perfect man; particularly their knowledge of Chriſt, of his Goſpel, and Goſpel-liberty, was far from being ſo, in which they went backwards inſtead of forwards; and therefore he was greatly concerned, laboured exceedingly, and vehemently endeavoured, which he calls travailing in birth again, to bring them to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God unto a perfect man, unto the meaſure of the ſtature of the fulneſs of Chriſt. It is alſo the ſame as to be conformed to the image of Chriſt, which in regeneration is inſtamped upon the ſaints, and is gradually increaſed, and will be perfected in heaven; and that this might more manifeſtly appear, over which a vail was drawn, by their departure in any degree from the truths of the Goſpel, was what he earneſtly ſought after: once more, it is the ſame as to have the form of Chriſt; that is, of the Goſpel of Chriſt upon them, or to be caſt into the form of doctrine, and mould of the Goſpel, and to receive a Goſpel impreſſion and ſpirit from it; which is to have a ſpirit of liberty, in oppoſition to legal bondage; to live by faith on Chriſt, and not on the works of the law; to derive comfort alone from him, and not from any ſervices and duties whatever; to have repentance, and the whole courſe of obedience, influenced by the grace of God, and love of Chriſt; and to be zealous of good works, and yet have no dependance on them for juſtification and ſalvation. This is what the Apoſtle ſo earneſtly deſired, when, inſtead of it, theſe *Galatians* ſeemed to have the form of *Moſes*, and of the law.

Ver. 20. *I deſire to be preſent with you now*, &c.] His meaning is, either that he wiſhed he was perſonally preſent among them; that he had but an opportunity of ſeeing them face to face, and telling them all his mind, and in ſuch a manner as he could not in a ſingle Epiſtle; or that they would conſider him, when they read this Epiſtle, as if he was really among them; and as if they ſaw the concern of his mind, the agonies of his ſoul, the looks of his countenance, and heard the different tone of his voice: *and to change my voice*; when preſent with them, either by a different way of preaching; that whereas before he preached the Goſpel of the grace of God unto them, and his voice was charming to them like that of an angel, and even of Jeſus Chriſt himſelf; but they having turned their backs upon it, and ſlighted it, he would now thunder out the law to them they ſeemed to be ſo fond of; even that voice of words, which when the *Iſraelites* on mount *Sinai* heard, intreated they might hear no more; as theſe *Galatians* alſo muſt when they heard the true voice of it, which is no other than a declaration of wrath, curſe, and damnation; or by uſing a different way of ſpeaking to them, as neceſſity might require, either ſoftly or roughly, beſeeching or chiding them, which might more move and affect them than an Epiſtle could: *for I ſtand in doubt of you.* The *Vulgate Latin* reads it, *I am confounded in you*; and the *Syriac*, דתמיה, *I am ſtupified*; and to the ſame ſenſe the *Arabic*. He was aſhamed of them for their apoſtacy and degeneracy; he was amazed and aſtoniſhed at their conduct; or, as the word may be rendered, he was *perplex'd* on their account; he did not know what to think of them, and their ſtate; ſometimes he hoped well of them, at other times he was ready to deſpair; nor did he well know what courſe to take with them, whether to uſe them roughly or ſmoothly, and what arguments might be moſt proper and pertinent, in order to reclaim them.

Ver. 21. *Tell me, ye that deſire to be under the law*, &c.] Not merely to obey it, as holy, juſt, and good, from a principle of love, and to teſtify ſubjection and gratitude to God; ſo all believers deſire to be under the law: but theſe men ſought for juſtification and ſalvation by their obedience to it; they deſired to be under it as a covenant of works, which was downright madneſs and folly to the laſt degree, ſince this was the way to come under the curſe of it; they wanted to be under the yoke of the law, which is a yoke of bondage, an inſupportable one, which the *Jewiſh* fathers could not bear; and therefore it was egregious weakneſs in them to deſire to come under it: wherefore the Apoſtle deſires them to anſwer this queſtion, *do ye not hear the law?* meaning either the language and voice of the law of *Moſes*, what it ſays to tranſgreſſors, and ſo to them; what it accuſed them of, and charged them with; how it declared them guilty before God, pronounced them accurſed, and miniſtred ſententially condemnation and death unto them; and could they deſire to be under ſuch a law? or rather the books of the Old Teſtament, particularly the five books of *Moſes*, and what is ſaid therein; referring them, as Chriſt did the *Jews* to the ſcriptures, to the writings of *Moſes*, and to read, hear, and obſerve what is in them, ſince they profeſſed ſo great a regard to the law; from whence they might learn, that they ought not to be under the bondage and ſervitude of it. The *Vulgate Latin* verſion renders it, *have ye not read the law?* and ſo one of *Stephens*'s copies; that is, the books of the law, if you have, as you ſhould, you might obſerve what follows.

Ver. 22. *For it is written*, &c.] In *Gen.* xvi. 15. and xxi. 2. *that Abraham had two ſons*, not two ſons only; for beſides the two referr'd to, he had ſix more, *Gen.* xxv. 2. but it being only pertinent to the Apoſtle's purpoſe to take notice of theſe two, he mentions no more, tho' he does not deny that he had any more. Theſe two ſons were *Iſhmael* and *Iſaac*: *the one by a bondmaid.* *Iſhmael* was by *Hagar*, *Sarah*'s ſervant, who repreſented the covenant, the *Jewiſh* nation, was under the bondage of. *The other by a free woman.* *Iſaac* was by *Sarah*, *Abraham*'s proper and lawful wife, who was miſtreſs of the family, and figured out the covenant, and Goſpel church-ſtate, and all believers, *Gentiles* as well as *Jews*, as under the liberty thereof.

Ver. 23. *But he who was of the bond-woman*, &c.] *Iſhmael*, who was begotten and born of *Hagar*, *was born after the fleſh*; after the common order and courſe of nature, thro' the copulation of two perſons, the one able to procreate, and the other fit for the conception of children; and was typical of the *Jews*, the natural deſcendants of *Abraham*, who, as ſuch, and upon that account, were not the children of God, nor heirs of the eternal inheritance: *but he of the free woman was by promiſe*; by a previous promiſe made by God to *Abraham*, that he ſhould have a ſon in his old age, when his body was now dead, and when *Sarah* his wife, who had always been barren, was now grown old and paſt the time of bearing children; ſo that *Iſaac* was born out of the common order and courſe of nature; his conception and birth were owing to the promiſe and power of God, and to his free grace and favour to *Abraham*. This ſon of promiſe was a type of the ſpiritual ſeed of *Abraham*, whether *Jews* or *Gentiles*, the children of the promiſe that are counted for the ſeed; who are born again of the will, power, and grace of God, and are heirs according to the promiſe, both of grace and glory, when they that are of the law, and the works of it, are not. All which is farther illuſtrated in the following verſes.

Ver. 24. *Which things are an allegory*, &c.] Or *are allegorized*: ſo *Sarah* and *Hagar* were allegorized by *Philo* the *Jew* [p], before they were by the Apoſtle. *Sarah* he makes to ſignify virtue, and *Hagar* the whole circle of arts and ſciences, which are, or ſhould be, an handmaid to virtue; but theſe things reſpecting *Hagar* and *Sarah*, the bond-woman and the free, and their ſeveral offspring, are much better allegorized by the Apoſtle here. An allegory is a way of ſpeaking, in which one thing is expreſſed by another, and is a continued metaphor; and the Apoſtle's meaning is, that theſe things point at ſome other things; have another meaning in them, a myſtical and ſpiritual one, beſides the literal; and which the *Jews* call, מדרש, *Midraſh*, a name they give to the myſtical and allegorical ſenſe of ſcripture, in which they greatly indulge themſelves. An allegory is properly a fictitious way of ſpeaking; but here it deſigns an accommodation of a real hiſtory, and matter of fact to other caſes and things, and ſeems to intend a type or figure; and the ſenſe to be, that theſe things which were literally true of *Hagar* and *Sarah*, of *Iſhmael* and *Iſaac*, were types and figures of things to come; juſt as what befel the *Iſraelites* were types and figures of things that would be under the Goſpel diſpenſation, 1 *Cor*. x. 11. *for theſe are the two covenants*, or *teſtaments*; that is, theſe women, *Hagar* and *Sarah* ſignify, and are figures of the two covenants; not the covenant of works, and the covenant of grace. *Hagar* was no figure of the covenant of works, that was made and broke before ſhe was born; beſides, the covenant ſhe was a figure of was made at mount *Sinai*, whereas the covenant of works was made in paradiſe: moreover, the covenant of works was made with *Adam*, and all his poſterity, but the covenant which *Hagar* ſignified was only made with the children of *Iſrael*; ſhe repreſented *Jeruſalem* that then was with her children. Nor was *Sarah* a figure of the covenant of grace, for this was made long before ſhe had a being, even from everlaſting; but they were figures of the two adminiſtrations of one and the ſame covenant, which were to take place in the world ſucceſſively; and which following one the other, are by the author of the Epiſtle to the *Hebrews* called the firſt and the ſecond, the old and the new covenants. Now theſe are the covenants or teſtaments, the old and the new, and the reſpective people under them; which were prefigured by theſe two women, and their offspring. *The one from the mount Sinai*; that is, one of theſe covenants, or one of the adminiſtrations of the covenant, one diſpenſation of it, which is the firſt, and now called old, becauſe aboliſhed, took its riſe from mount *Sinai*, was delivered there by God to *Moſes*, in order to be communicated to the people of *Iſrael*, who were to be under that form of adminiſtration until the coming of the Meſſiah. And becauſe the whole *Moſaic* œconomy was given to *Moſes* on mount *Sinai*, it is ſaid to be from thence: hence, in *Jewiſh* writings we read, times without number, of הלכה למשה מסיני, a rite, cuſtom, conſtitution, or appointment given to *Moſes from mount Sinai*, the ſame phraſe as here. *Sinai* ſignifies *buſhes*, and has its name from the buſhes which grew upon it [q]; in one of which the Lord appeared to *Moſes*; for *Horeb* and *Sinai* are one and the ſame mount; one ſignifies waſte and deſolate, the other buſhy; as one part of the mountain was barren and deſert, and the other covered with buſhes and brambles; and may fitly repreſent the condition of ſuch that are under the law. *Which gendereth to bondage*; begets and brings perſons into a ſtate of bondage, induces on them a ſpirit of bondage to fear, and cauſes them to be all their life-time ſubject to it; as even ſuch were that were under the firſt covenant, or under the Old Teſtament diſpenſation: *which is Agar*; or this is the covenant, the adminiſtration of it, which *Hagar*, the bond-woman, *Sarah*'s ſervant, repreſented.

Ver. 25. *For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia*, &c.] The *Arabic* verſion, inſtead of *Arabia*, reads *Balca*. The *Syriac* verſion makes *Hagar* to be a mountain, reading the words thus, *for mount Hagar is Sinai, which is in Arabia*: and ſome have been of opinion that *Sinai* was called *Hagar* by the *Arabians*. It is certain, that חגר, which may be pronounced *Hagar*, does ſignify in the *Arabic* language a ſtone or rock; and that one part of *Arabia* is called *Arabia Petræa*, from the rockineſs of it; the metropolis of which was, חגרת, or *Agara*, and the inhabitants *Agarenes*; and *Hagar* was the name of the chief city of *Bahrein*, a province of *Arabia* [r]: and it may obſerved, that when *Hagar*, with her ſon, was caſt out, they dwelt in the wilderneſs of *Paran*, *Gen*. xxi. 21. which was near to *Sinai*, as appears from *Numb*. x. 12. *Deut*. xxxiii. 2. ſo that it is poſſible that this mount might be ſo called from her, tho' there is no certainty of it; and near to it, as *Grotius* obſerves, was a town called *Agra*, mentioned by *Pliny* [s] as in *Arabia*. However, 'tis clear, that *Sinai* was in *Arabia*, out of the land of promiſe, where the law was given, and ſeems to be mentioned by the Apoſtle with this view, that it might be obſerved and teach us, that the inheritance is not of the law. It is placed by *Jerom* [t] in the land of *Midian*; and it is certain it muſt be near it, if not in it, as is clear from *Exod*. iii. 1. And according to *Philo* the *Jew* [u], the *Midianites*, as formerly called, were a very populous nation of the *Arabians*: and *Madian*, or *Midian*, is by [w] *Mahomet* ſpoken of as in *Arabia*; and it may be obſerved, that they that are called *Midianites* in *Gen.* xxxvii. 36. are ſaid to be *Iſhmaelites*, *Gen.* xxxix. 1. the name by which the *Arabians* are commonly called by the *Jews*. The Apoſtle therefore properly places this mountain in *Arabia*. But after all, by *Agar*, I rather think the woman is meant; and that the ſenſe is, that this ſame *Agar* ſignifies mount *Sinai*, or is a figure of the law given on that mount. *And anſwereth to Jeruſalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children*; that is, agrees with and reſembles the inhabitants of *Jeruſalem*, and of all the cities and towns in *Judea*; and ſhe being a bondwoman, repreſented that ſtate of bondage the *Jews* were in, when the Apoſtle wrote this, who were in a ſtate of civil, moral, and legal bondage; in civil bondage to the *Romans*, being tributaries to the empire of *Rome*, and under the juriſdiction of *Cæſar*; in moral bondage to ſin, to ſatan, to the world, and the luſts of it, whoſe ſervants they in general were; and in legal bondage to the ceremonial law, which was a yoke of bondage! they were in bondage under the elements or inſtitutions of it, ſuch as circumciſion, a yoke which neither they, nor their forefathers could bear, becauſe it bound them over to keep the whole law; the obſervance of various days, months, times, and years, and the multitude of ſacrifices they were obliged to offer, which yet could not take away ſin, nor free their conſciences from the load of guilt, but were as an hand-writing of ordinances againſt them; every ſacrifice they brought declaring their ſin and guilt, and that they deſerved to die as the creature did that was ſacrificed for them; and beſides, this law of commandments, in various inſtances, the breach of it, was puniſhable with death, thro' fear of which they were all their life long ſubject to bondage: they were alſo in bondage to the moral law, which required perfect obedience of them, but gave them no ſtrength to perform; ſhewed them their ſin and miſery, but not their remedy; demanded a compleat righteouſneſs, but did not point out where it was to be had; it ſpoke not one word of peace and comfort, but all the reverſe; it admitted of no repentance; it accuſed of ſin, pronounced guilty on account of it, curſed, condemned, and threatened with death for it, all which kept them in continual bondage: and whereas the far greater part of that people at that time, the *Jeruſalem* that then was, the *Scribes*, *Phariſees*, and generality of the nation, were ſeeking for juſtification by the works of the law, this added to their bondage; they obeyed it with mercenary views, and not from love but fear; and their comforts and peace roſe and fell according to their obedience; and perſons in ſuch a way muſt needs be under a ſpiritual bondage.

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[p] De Cherubim, p. 108, 109.

[q] Pirke Eliezer, c. 41.

[r] Caſtel. Lex. Polyglot. col. 804.

[s] Nat. Hiſt. l. 6. c. 28.

[t] De locis Hebraicis, fol. 96. H.

[u] De Fortitudine, p. 741.

[w] Koran, c. 7. p. 126.

Ver. 26. *But Jeruſalem which is above*, &c.] This *Sarah* was a type and figure of; ſhe anſwered to, and agreed with this; which is to be underſtood, not of the church triumphant in heaven, but of the Goſpel church-ſtate under the adminiſtration of the new covenant; and that, not as in the latter day-glory, when the new *Jeruſalem* ſhall deſcend from God out of heaven, but as it then was in the Apoſtles time, and has been ſince. Particular reſpect may be had to the firſt Goſpel church at *Jeruſalem*, which conſiſted of perſons born from above, was bleſſed with a Goſpel ſpirit, which is a ſpirit of liberty, out of which the Goſpel went into all the world, and from among whom the Apoſtles and firſt preachers of the word went forth every where, and were the means of the converſion of multitudes, both among *Jews* and *Gentiles*; and ſo might be truly ſaid to be the mother of us all. The church in general, under the Goſpel, may be, as it often is, called *Jeruſalem*, becauſe of its name, the viſion of peace; being under the government of the prince of peace; the members of it are ſons of peace, who are called to peace, and enjoy it; the Goſpel is the Goſpel of peace, and the ordinances of it are paths of peace; and the new covenant, under the adminiſtration of which the ſaints are, is a covenant of peace. *Jeruſalem* was the object of God's choice, the palace of the great king, the place of divine worſhip, was compact together, and well fortified: the Goſpel church-ſtate conſiſts of perſons, who in general, are the elect of God, among whom the Lord dwells, as in his temple. Here his worſhip is obſerved, his word is preached, and his ordinances adminiſtred; ſaints laid on the foundation Chriſt, and being fitly framed together, grow up unto an holy temple in him, and are ſurrounded by him, as *Jeruſalem* was with mountains, and are kept by his power unto ſalvation. This is ſaid to be *above*, to diſtinguiſh it from the earthly *Jeruſalem*, the inhabitants of which were chiefly men of the world, carnal men; but this heavenly *Jeruſalem*, or Goſpel church-ſtate, chiefly conſiſts of perſons born from above, called with an heavenly calling, and who bear the image of the heavenly one, whoſe converſation is in heaven, who are ſeeking things above, and in a little time will be there themſelves; its conſtitution and form of government are from above, and ſo are its doctrines, and its ordinances. The *Jews* often ſpeak of ירושלם דלעילא, or עלאה, or של מעלה, *Jeruſalem above* [x], as diſtinguiſhed from *Jeruſalem* below: and to this diſtinction the Apoſtle ſeems to have reſpect here, who further ſays concerning this *Jeruſalem*, that ſhe *is free*; from the ſervitude of ſin, ſatan, and the world, from the yoke of the law, and from a ſpirit of bondage; having the Spirit of God, the ſpirit of adoption, who is a free ſpirit, and makes ſuch free that enjoy him; and where he is, there is true liberty. He adds, *which is the mother of us all*; that are born again, whether *Jews* or *Gentiles*, as particularly the church at *Jeruſalem* was, and the Goſpel church-ſtate in general may be ſaid to be; ſince here ſouls are born and brought forth to Chriſt, are nurſed up at her ſide, and nouriſhed with her breaſts of conſolation, the word and ordinances. This form of ſpeech is alſo *Jewiſh*: thus it is ſaid [y], that "*Zion*, אימן דישראל, *the mother of Iſrael*, "ſhall bring forth her ſons, and *Jeruſalem* ſhall re"ceive the children of the captivity." Again, explaining *Prov.* xxviii. 24. 'tis obſerved [z], that there is no Father, but the ever-bleſſed God, ואין אמו, *and no mother*, but the congregation of *Iſrael*. Some copies leave out the word *all*; and ſo do the *Vulgate Latin*, *Syriac*, and *Ethiopic* verſions, and only read, *the mother of us*, or *our mother*.

Ver. 27. *For it is written*, &c.] *Iſ.* liv. 1. which is cited to prove, that the heavenly *Jeruſalem*, or Goſpel church-ſtate, is the mother of us all, and has brought forth, and ſtill will bring forth, many ſouls to Chriſt, even many more than were under the legal diſpenſation by the *Jewiſh* church, tho' the Lord was an huſband to them, *Jer.* xxxi. 32. The words are, *rejoice thou barren that beareſt not, break forth and cry thou that travaileſt not, for the deſolate hath many more children than ſhe which hath an huſband*; by her that was *barren*, and *bore* not, and *travailed* not, and was *deſolate*, is not meant the *Gentile* world, which before the coming of Chriſt was barren and deſtitute of the knowledge of him, and from among whom very few were called by grace; but the Goſpel church in the firſt beginnings of it, in Chriſt's time, and eſpecially about the time of his death, and before the pouring forth of the Spirit on the day of *Pentecoſt*, when the number of its members were few; for the names of the diſciples together were but 120, when it ſeemed to be barren, and deſolate, and deprived of its huſband Chriſt, but was quickly to have a large acceſſion to it, both of *Jews* and *Gentiles*; and therefore is called upon to *rejoice*, *break forth*, and *cry*; that is, to break forth into ſongs of praiſe, and expreſs her ſpiritual joy, by ſinging aloud, and ſetting forth in hymns and ſpiritual ſongs, the glory of powerful and efficacious grace, in the converſion of ſuch large numbers of ſouls, the like of which had never been known under the former adminiſtration. Three thouſand were converted under one ſermon, and added to this firſt Goſpel-church; and the number of its members ſtill increaſed, and the number of the men that afterwards believed was about five thouſand; and after this we hear of more believers being added to the Lord, both men and women; and alſo, that a great company of the prieſts were obedient to the faith; and when out of this church, the Apoſtles, and other preachers of the Goſpel, went every where into the *Gentile* world, thouſands of ſouls were converted, and a large number of churches formed, and a ſpiritual ſeed has been preſerved ever ſince; and in the latter day, *Zion* will travail in birth, and bring forth a numerous offſpring; a nation ſhall be born at once, and the fulneſs of the *Gentiles* ſhall be brought in. Agreeable to this ſenſe the *Jewiſh* writers, *Jarchi*, *Kimchi*, and *Aben Ezra* underſtand this paſſage of *Jeruſalem*; as does alſo the *Chaldee Paraphraſe*, which renders it thus: "Praiſe, O *Jeruſalem*, which wer't as a barren woman that bringeth not forth; rejoice in praiſe, and be glad, who wer't as a woman which conceives not, for more are the children of *Jeruſalem* forſaken, than the children of the habitable city, ſaith the Lord."

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[x] Zohar in Gen. fol. 13. 2. & 16. 2. & 75. 4. & 77. 1. & 78. 2. & 114. 3. & 121. 1. & in Exod. fol. 6. 1. & 92. 2. T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 5. 1. Gloſſ. in T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 97. 2. Caphtor, fol. 14. 2. & 25. 2. & 65. 1. & 68. 2. & 71. 2. & 118. 2. Raziel, fol. 13. 1. & 27. 1. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 61. 3. & 150. 3. Niſhmat Chayim, fol. 26. 2. Kimchi in Hoſ. xi. 9.

[y] Targum in Cant. 8. 5.

[z] Sithre Tora in Zohar in Gen. fol. 55. 2. & Raya Mehimna in Zohar in Lev. fol. 34. 1.

Ver. 28. *Now we, brethren, as Iſaac was*, &c.] The *Ethiopic* verſion reads, *you, brethren*; and ſo one of *Stephens*'s copies. As the two women, *Hagar* and *Sarah* might be, and are allegorized; ſo likewiſe their reſpective offſpring. *Iſaac* ſignified, and was a type and figure of *Abraham*'s ſpiritual ſeed, whether *Jews* or *Gentiles*, under the Goſpel-diſpenſation: and as he was, ſo they are, *the children of promiſe*; as *Iſaac* was promiſed unto *Abraham*, ſo were this ſpiritual ſeed, when it was ſaid unto him, that he ſhould be the father of many nations, as he is the father of us all, even of all them that believe, be they of what nation ſo ever; and as *Iſaac* was born by virtue, and in conſequence of a promiſe made to *Abraham* of God's free good-will and pleaſure, and his generation and conception were beyond the ſtrength and courſe of nature, were the effects of a divine power, and were ſomething ſupernatural; ſo this ſpiritual ſeed are born again, by virtue, and in conſequence of a promiſe, not only made to *Abraham*, but to the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the head of the covenant, that he ſhould ſee his ſeed, enjoy a numerous offſpring, and which ſhould endure for ever; and alſo to the church, of whom it is ſaid, that this and that man ſhould be born in her; and particularly in conſequence of the promiſe cited in the foregoing verſe, from whence theſe words are an inference, deduction, or illuſtration: and theſe children of the promiſe, ſo called from hence, are born again, above and beyond the ſtrength of nature; not thro' the power and free will of man, but thro' the abundant mercy and ſovereign will of God, by his powerful and efficacious grace, and by the word of promiſe, the Goſpel, as a means. Moreover, to theſe children, or ſpiritual ſeed of *Abraham*, ſignified by *Iſaac*, do all the promiſes belong, as that of God, as a Covenant-God unto them; of Chriſt, as a ſaviour and redeemer; of the holy Spirit, as a ſanctifier and comforter; and of all good things, of temporal mercies, ſo far as are for their real good; and of all ſpiritual bleſſings, as righteouſneſs, peace, pardon, comfort, all ſupplies of grace, and eternal life: and theſe likewiſe receive theſe promiſes; the holy Spirit, as a Spirit of promiſe, opens and applies them to them, puts them into the hand of faith, and enables them to plead them with God, and to believe the performance of them; ſo that this character in all reſpects agrees with them.

Ver. 29. *But as then*, &c.] In the times of *Abraham*, when *Hagar* and *Sarah*, the types of the two diſpenſations of the covenant, and *Iſhmael* and *Iſaac*, the figures of the two different ſeeds, the natural and ſpiritual ſeed of *Abraham*, legaliſts and true believers, were living: *he that was born after the fleſh*; which was *Iſhmael*, who was a type, or an allegorical repreſentation of ſuch who were under the *Sinai* covenant, and were ſeeking for righteouſneſs by the works of the law; as he was born after the fleſh, according to the ordinary courſe of nature, and was, as he was born a carnal man; ſo are ſelf-juſticiaries, notwithſtanding all their pretenſions to religion and righteouſneſs, juſt as they were born; there is nothing but fleſh in them; they are without God, and Chriſt, and the Spirit, and have neither true faith, nor hope, nor love, nor any other grace; they have no internal principle of goodneſs in them; fleſh, or corrupt nature, has the government of them, is the reigning principle in them; their minds are fleſhly, and ſo are their tenets; and ſuch is their converſation, they truſt in the fleſh, in outward performances, in their own righteouſneſs, and ſo come under the curſe; for as many as truſt in an arm of fleſh, or are of the works of the law, are under the curſe of it: *perſecuted him that was born after the Spirit*; by whom is meant *Iſaac*, who, tho' he was not conceived under the over-ſhadowings of the holy Spirit, without the help of man, as Chriſt was; yet becauſe of the divine power which was ſo eminently diſplayed in his conception and generation, under all the difficulties, and diſadvantages, and ſeeming impoſſibilities of nature, he is ſaid to be born after the Spirit: and beſides, he was alſo regenerated by the Spirit of God, was a good man, and one that feared the Lord, as the whole account of him ſhews; and in this alſo fitly pointed out the ſpiritual ſeed, true believers, under the Goſpel-diſpenſation, who are born again of water, and of the Spirit, and are renewed in the ſpirit of their minds; in whom the work of the Spirit is begun, and grace is the governing principle; in whom the Spirit of God dwells and operates; and whoſe converſation is ſpiritual, and who walk not after the fleſh, but after the Spirit. The perſecution of *Iſaac* by *Iſhmael*, was by *mocking* him, *Gen.* xxi. 9. the *Hebrew* word there made uſe of, is in alluſion to *Iſaac*'s name, which ſignifies *laughter*; and *Iſhmael* laughed at him, jeer'd and derided him. The *Jewiſh* doctors are divided about the ſenſe of this: ſome ſay that the word rendered mocking, is expreſſive of idolatry, according to *Exod.* xxxii. 6. and that *Iſhmael* would have taught *Iſaac*, and drawn him into it; others that it ſignifies uncleanneſs, according to *Gen.* xxxix. 17. and that he talked to him in a laſcivious and indecent manner, in order to corrupt his mind: others that it deſigns murder, according to 2 *Sam.* ii. 14. and that he intended to kill him, and attempted it [a]; it is pretty much received by them, that either he finding him alone, or they going out to the field together, he took his bow and drew it, and ſhot an arrow at him, with an intention to kill him [b], though he pretended it was but in play; and one of their writers on the text ſays [c], that the word uſed, by *Gematry*, that is, by the arithmetic of the letters, ſignifies להרוג, *to ſlay*; ſo that this perſecution was not by words only, but by deeds: but others [d] of them more rightly think, that it means a contention about the inheritance, which *Sarah*'s words to *Abraham* ſeem to confirm; and that *Iſhmael* claimed the birthright, and deſpiſed *Iſaac* as the younger ſon; inſiſted upon the right to the inheritance, and mocked at the promiſe of God, with reſpect to *Iſaac*; and might threaten what he would do to him, ſhould he claim it thereupon: mocking has been always reckoned a ſpecies of perſecution; ſo the Old Teſtament ſaints, among other inſtances of perſecution, had trial of *cruel mockings*; thus our Lord was perſecuted, and alſo his Apoſtles: *and even ſo it is now.* The carnal *Jews*, who truſted in themſelves that they were righteous, and deſpiſed others, perſecuted the ſpiritual ſeed that believed in Chriſt, both by words and deeds; they confiſcated their goods, impriſoned their perſons, and even put them to death; and the falſe teachers, though they did not, and could not go ſuch lengths, yet as perſons fitly repreſented by *Iſhmael*, they derided the Apoſtles, and mocked at the doctrines of grace preached by them, and deſpiſed thoſe that embraced them; and pleaded that the inheritance belonged to them, upon the foot of the works of the law: and ſo it is at this day; though there is no perſecution of mens perſons and eſtates, yet there never was a greater perſecution of the doctrines of grace, and of the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, and the ſaints more mocked at and derided for maintaining them; and that by perſons juſt of the ſame complexion as thoſe in the Apoſtle's time, ſignified by *Iſhmael*, carnal profeſſors, and ſelf-righteous perſons.

Ver. 30. *Nevertheleſs, what ſaith the ſcripture,* &c.] This is a *Talmudic* form of citing ſcriptures, and anſwers to, מאי קראה, *what ſays the ſcriptures* [e]*?* the paſſage referred to, is *Gen.* xxi. 10. and which are the words of *Sarah* to *Abraham*; but inaſmuch as ſhe ſpake them under divine inſpiration, and they were approved of and confirmed by God, as appears from ver. 12. they are aſcribed to God ſpeaking in the ſcripture: *caſt out the bond-woman and her ſon, for the ſon of the bond-woman ſhall not be heir with the ſon of the free-woman.* There is very little difference in the citation, from the original. The Apoſtle omits the word *this* in both clauſes, which though very proper to be expreſſed by *Sarah*, to point out the perſon ſhe meant, and as being in a vehement paſſion, was not abſolutely neceſſary to be retained by the Apoſtle, ſince by the context there is no difficulty of knowing who is meant by her; though the *Alexandrian* copy has the word in it: and inſtead of *with my ſon, with Iſaac*, the Apoſtle ſays, *with the ſon of the free-woman, Sarah*; there ſpeaking of herſelf, whoſe character the Apoſtle gives, in oppoſition to the bond-woman: in like manner a *Jewiſh* writer [f] reads and interprets it, "for the ſon of this woman ſhall not "be heir, עם בן הגבירה, *with the ſon of the miſ*"*treſs.*" The caſting of *Hagar* and *Iſhmael* out of *Abraham*'s family, was a type and emblem of the rejection of the carnal and ſelf-righteous *Jews*, from the Goſpel-church ſtate; nor ought any carnal perſons, any that are after the fleſh, unregenerate ones, or that truſt to their own righteouſneſs, to be in a Goſpel church; as they will alſo be excluded and thruſt out of the kingdom of heaven, into which no unregenerate and unrighteous, or ſelf-righteous perſons ſhall enter. The *Jews* make this ejection of *Hagar* and her ſon, to be both out of this world, and that which is to come [g]. The reaſon given why the one ſhould not be heir with the other, perfectly agrees with the *Jewiſh* canons; which was not becauſe he was the ſon of a concubine, for the ſons of concubines might inherit, if they were *Iſraelites*, and free, but becauſe he was the ſon of a bond-woman, for thus they run [h]; "all that are near of kin, though by iniquity, are "heirs, as they that are legitimate; how? thus "for inſtance, if a man has a ſon that is ſpurious, "or a brother that is ſpurious, lo, theſe are as the "other ſons, and the other brethren for inheri"tance; but if, בנו מן שפחה, *his ſon is by an* "*handmaid*, or by a ſtrange woman, he is no ſon "in any of theſe matters, ואינו יורש כלל, *and no* "*heir at all*:" and again [i], "an *Iſraelite* that hath "*a ſon by an handmaid*, or by a *Gentile*, ſeeing he "is not called his ſon, he that he has after him by "an *Iſraelitiſh* woman, בכור בנחלה, *is the firſt*"*born for inheritance*, and takes the double por"tion." The reaſon aſſigned for non-inheritance in the text, implies that the children of the free-woman, the ſpiritual ſeed of *Abraham*, ſhall inherit the privileges of God's houſe, the bleſſings of grace, and eternal glory; they are children of the promiſe, and heirs according to it; when the children of the bond-woman, ſelf-righteous ones ſhall not; for the inheritance is not of the law, neither are they heirs who are of the works of it; nor is it to be enjoyed by mixing the law and Goſpel, grace and works, in the buſineſs of ſalvation.

Ver. 31. *So then brethren,* &c.] This is the concluſion of the whole allegory, or the myſtical interpretation of *Agar* and *Sarah*, and their ſons: *we are not children of the bond-woman*; the figure of the firſt covenant, which gendered to bondage, and typified the *Jews* in a ſtate, and under a ſpirit of bondage to the law; New Teſtament ſaints are not under it, are delivered from it, and are dead unto it: *but of the free*; of *Sarah*, that was a type of the new and ſecond covenant; and anſwered to the Goſpel church, which is free from the yoke of the law; and whoſe children believers in Chriſt are, by whom they are made free from all thraldom and ſlavery; ſo the children of the miſtreſs and of the maid-ſervant, are oppoſed to each other by the *Jews* [k]. The *Vulgate Latin* verſion adds to this verſe from the beginning of the next chapter, *with the liberty wherewith Chriſt hath made us free*; and the *Ethiopic* verſion, *becauſe Chriſt hath made us free*; and begin the next chapter thus, *therefore ſtand, and be not entangled*, &c. and ſo the *Alexandrian* copy, and three of *Stephens*'s.

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[a] Jarchi in Gen. xxi. 9. Bereſhit Rabba, §. 53. fol. 47. 4.

[b] Jarchi & Bereſhit Rabba, ib. Pirke Eliezer, c. 30.

[c] Baal Hatturim, in loc.

[d] Jarchi & Bereſhit Rabba ut ſupra.

[e] T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 9. 2.

[f] R. Abraham Seba. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 21. 3.

[g] Pirke Eliezer, c. 30.

[h] Maimon. Hilch. Nechalot, c. 1. §. 7.

[i] Ib. c. 2. §. 12.

CHAP. V.

IN this chapter the Apoſtle exhorts to ſtand faſt in chriſtian liberty, and warns againſt the abuſe of it; and directs to ſhun various vices, and encourages to the exerciſe of ſeveral graces, and the obſervance of ſeveral duties; and concludes with a caution againſt vain glory, provocation to wrath, and envy: and whereas in the latter part of the preceding chapter, he had made it appear that the believers under the Goſpel diſpenſation were free from the bondage of the law, he begins this with an exhortation to continue ſtedfaſtly in the liberty of the Goſpel; and the rather, ſince it was what Chriſt obtained for them, and beſtowed on them; and to take care, that they were not again brought under the bondage of the ceremonial law, particularly the yoke of circumciſion, ver. 1. and diſſuades from ſubmitting to it, by obſerving, that it tended to make Chriſt unprofitable to them, ver. 2. and that it laid them under an obligation to keep the whole law, ver. 3. and that it made Chriſt wholly uſeleſs to them; and that ſuch who ſought for juſtification by obedience to the ceremonial law, were apoſtates from the Goſpel of the grace of God, ver. 4. as alſo by ſhewing, that it was contrary to the general faith and expectation of the ſaints, who were looking for, and expecting eternal glory and happineſs, not by the works of the law, but by faith in Chriſt, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, ver. 5. nor were circumciſion or uncircumciſion of any avail, but the true faith in Chriſt, which ſhews itſelf by love to him and to his people, ver. 6. and likewiſe by reminding them, how well they ſet out at their firſt converſion, and proceeded; nor had they any to hinder them from obeying the truth, and therefore it was ſhameful in them, to go back to the beggarly elements they had firſt relinquiſhed, ver. 7. nor was the preſent opinion they had imbibed, of God that called them, or what they received when firſt effectually called by grace, but what had been ſince taken up, ver. 8. and whereas it might be objected, that it was only in a ſingle article concerning the ceremonial law, and which was embraced only by a few perſons, and therefore not to be regarded, the Apoſtle puts them in mind of a proverb, that a little leaven leavens the whole lump, and therefore not to be connived at, ver. 9. however, a little to mitigate the ſharpneſs of his reproof, he expreſſes his good opinion and confidence of them, that upon a mature conſideration of things, they would not be otherwiſe minded than they formerly had been, or he now was; and lays the blame of all upon the falſe teacher, or teachers, that troubled them, and who ſhould bear their own judgment or condemnation, ver. 10. and whereas it was inſinuated, that the Apoſtle himſelf had preached up circumciſion as neceſſary to ſalvation, he removes this calumny by obſerving, that were it true, he would not ſuffer perſecution as he did, nor would the *Jews* be offended at his preaching as they were, ver. 11. and then out of zeal for the glory of God, and hearty affection to the *Galatians*, he wiſhes thoſe falſe teachers that troubled them with their pernicious doctrines, were cut off, either by the Lord, or from the church, ver. 12. and next he directs to the right uſe of chriſtian liberty, to which they were called, and cautions againſt the abuſe of it; that they ſhould not uſe it as an occaſion to the fleſh, but on the contrary, ſerve one another in love, ver. 13. giving this as a reaſon, becauſe love is the fulfilling of the law, ver. 14. whereas a contrary ſpirit and conduct, are attended with pernicious conſequences, even the deſtruction of each other, ver. 15. and therefore adviſes them to walk in the Spirit, whoſe fruit is love, and then they would not fulfil the luſt of the fleſh, ver. 16. for theſe two, fleſh and ſpirit, are contrary the one to the other, and the ſpirit hinders the performance of the luſts of the fleſh, ver. 17. beſides, ſuch who give up themſelves to the conduct of the Spirit, and are led thereby, are not under the law, the bondage of it, nor liable to its curſe, ver. 18. and having made mention both of fleſh and Spirit, he takes notice of the works and fruits of the one, and of the other, by which they are known; and as for the works of the fleſh he obſerves, that they are manifeſt, and gives an enumeration of them in *ſeventeen* particulars; and to deter from them declares, that whoever lives in the commiſſion of them, ſhall not inherit the kingdom of God, ver. 19, 20, 21. and as for the fruits of the Spirit, theſe are alſo well known by ſpiritual men, *nine* of which are particularly mentioned, and againſt which there is no law, ver. 22, 23. and from the whole concludes, that ſuch as are true believers in Chriſt, and are led by his Spirit, and have the fruits of it, have the fleſh with its affections and luſts crucified, ver. 24. and ends the chapter with ſome exhortations to walk in the Spirit, and not be ambitious of worldly honour, nor provoke one another to wrath, nor envy each others happineſs, ver. 25, 26.

Ver. 1. *Stand faſt therefore in the liberty*, &c.] There is the liberty of grace, and the liberty of glory; the former of theſe is here meant, and lies in a freedom from ſin; not from the indwelling of it, but from the dominion, guilt, and damning power of it; from the captivity and tyranny of ſatan, though not from his temptations and inſults; from the law, the ceremonial law, as an hand-writing of ordinances, a rigid ſevere ſchool-maſter, and a middle wall of partition, and from all its burdenſome rites and inſtitutions; from the moral law as a covenant of works, and as adminiſtered by *Moſes*; and from the curſe and condemnation of it, its bondage and rigorous exaction, and from all expectation of life and righteouſneſs by the deeds of it; but not from obedience to it, as held forth by Chriſt, and as a rule of walk and converſation; and from the judicial law, or thoſe laws which concerned the *Jews* as *Jews*: moreover, this liberty lies in the free uſe of things indifferent, as eating any ſort of food without diſtinction, ſo be it it be done in faith, with thankfulneſs to God, in moderation, and with temperance, and ſo as that the peace and edification of fellow-chriſtians are not hurt; alſo in the free uſe of Goſpel ordinances, which they that are fellow-citizens with the ſaints, have a right unto, but not to lay aſide or neglect at pleaſure; which is not to uſe, but to abuſe their liberty: again, another branch of it is acceſs to God, with freedom and boldneſs at the throne of grace, through the mediator, under the influences of the divine Spirit; to which may be added, a deliverance from the fears of death corporal, who is a king of terrors to Chriſtleſs ſinners, and which kept Old Teſtament ſaints, all their life-time ſubject to bondage; and eternal, or the ſecond death, by which Chriſt's freemen are aſſured they ſhall not be hurt: now in this liberty, the children of the free-woman, believers under the Goſpel diſpenſation, are very pertinently exhorted to *ſtand faſt*, in conſequence and conſideration of their character; that is, they ſhould highly prize and eſteem it, as men do their civil liberty; and maintain it and defend it, at all hazards; abide by the doctrine of it without wavering, and with intrepidity; not giving up any one part of it, however, and by whomſoever it may be oppoſed, maligned, and reproached; and keep up the practice of it, by obeying from the heart the doctrine of it, by becoming the ſervants of righteouſneſs, by frequent attendance at the throne of grace, and continual obſervance of the ordinances of Chriſt; and then ſhould take heed of every thing that tends to break in upon it, as any doctrine or commandment of men; particularly the doctrine of juſtification by works, and all ſorts of ſuperſtition and will-worſhip: and the rather, becauſe of the concern Chriſt has in this liberty, 'tis that *wherewith Chriſt hath made us free*; we are not free-born, but on the contrary home-born ſlaves, as *Ephraim* was; nor could this liberty in any of its branches be obtained by us, by any merit, righteouſneſs, act, or acts of ours, but is wholly of Chriſt's procuring for us, both by price and power; whereby he has ranſomed and delivered us out of the hands of all our ſpiritual enemies, ſin, ſatan, the law, and death; and it is of his proclaiming in the Goſpel, and of his applying by his Spirit, whom he ſends down into our hearts as a free Spirit, to acquaint us with it, and lead us into it, who works faith in us to lay hold upon, and receive this bleſſing of grace as others: *and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.* The metaphor is taken from oxen put under a yoke, and implicated with it, from which they cannot diſengage themſelves: ſome of the members of this church had been *Jews*, who had formerly been under the yoke of the law, and ſeemed deſirous to return to their former ſtate of bondage, from which the Apoſtle diſſuades, and therefore uſes the word *again*; or elſe he may refer to the bondage of corruption and idolatry, in which they as *Gentiles* were in, before their converſion; and intimates, that to give in to the obſervance of *Jewiſh* rites and ceremonies, would be involving themſelves in a ſtate of bondage again; for by *the yoke of bondage*, he means the law, which the *Jews* frequently call, עול מצות, *the yoke of the commandments* [l]; particularly the ceremonial law, as circumciſion; which *Peter*, *Acts* xv. 10. repreſents as a yoke intolerable; the obſervation of days, months, times, and years; the multitude of ſacrifices, and which could not take away ſin; but proclaimed their guilt and obligation to puniſhment, and were an hand-writing of ordinances againſt them, and thereby they were held and kept in bondage: and ſuch a yoke is the moral law, as delivered by *Moſes*, requiring perfect obedience, but giving no ſtrength to perform, nor pointing where any is to be had; ſhewing a man his ſin and miſery, and ſo working wrath in his conſcience, but giving not the leaſt intimation of a ſaviour, or of life and righteouſneſs by another; accuſing, pronouncing guilty, curſing and condemning; hence ſuch as ſeek for righteouſneſs by it, are in a miſerable ſubjection to it, and are ſadly implicated and entangled with the yoke of it: every doctrine and ordinance of men, is a yoke of bondage which ſhould not be ſubmitted to; nay, any action whatever, performed in a religious way, and in order for a man's acceptance with God, and to obtain his favour, and according to his obſervance of which he judges of his ſtate, and ſpeaks peace and comfort to himſelf, or the reverſe, is a yoke of bondage; as for inſtance, prayer at ſuch and ſo many times a day, reading ſuch a number of chapters in the bible every day, faſting ſo many times in the week, and the like; ſo that what are branches of chriſtian liberty, ſuch as frequent prayer to God, reading the ſacred writings for inſtruction and comfort, and the free uſe of the creatures, are turned into a yoke of bondage, which ſhould be guarded againſt.

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[k] Tzeror Hammor, fol. 152. 1.

Ver. 2. *Behold, I Paul ſay unto you*, &c.] The Apoſtle proceeds to give ſome reaſons and arguments to enforce the above exhortation and diſſuaſion: the firſt of which is introduced with a note of attention, *behold*; what he was about to ſay being matter of great moment and importance; and alſo mentions himſelf by name, as the aſſertor of it; and that either becauſe his name was well known to them, and the rather becauſe of his apoſtolical authority; and to ſhew his full aſſurance of this matter, and his intrepidity, and that he was no ways aſhamed of it, they might if they pleaſed, ſay it to whomſoever they would, that *Paul* the Apoſtle affirmed, *that if ye be circumciſed, Chriſt ſhall profit you nothing*: he ſpeaks of circumciſion, not as when it was an ordinance of God, but as it was now aboliſhed by Chriſt; and that not as ſingly performed on ſome certain accounts, for he himſelf circumciſed *Timothy* for the ſake of the *Jews*; but as done in order to ſalvation, or as neceſſary unto it; which was the doctrine the falſe Apoſtles taught, and theſe *Galatians* were ready to give into: now circumciſion ſubmitted to on this conſideration, and with this view, rendered Chriſt unprofitable, made his death to be in vain, his ſacrifice of no effect, and his righteouſneſs uſeleſs: beſides, Chriſt is a whole ſaviour, or none at all; to join any thing with him and his righteouſneſs, in the buſineſs of juſtification and ſalvation, is interpreted by him as a contempt and neglect of him, as laying him aſide, and to ſuch perſons he is of no profit; and if he is not, what they have, and whatſoever they do, will be of no advantage; wealth and riches, yea, the whole world could it be gained, their works and righteouſneſs, whatever ſhow they make before men, God has declared ſhall not profit them; and truſting to theſe, render Chriſt unprofitable to them. This is directly contrary to the notions of the *Jews*, who think they ſhall be ſaved for their circumciſion, and that that will ſecure them from hell; they ſay [m] no circumciſed perſon goes down to hell, and that whoever is circumciſed, ſhall inherit the land; but there's none ſhall inherit the land, ſave a righteous perſon; but every one that is circumciſed, is called a righteous man [n]; ſo that circumciſion is their righteouſneſs, on account of which they expect heaven and happineſs.

Ver. 3. *For I teſtify again to every man*, &c.] This is the form of an oath, a calling God to witneſs,

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[l] Miſn. Beracot, c. 2. §. 2. T. Hieroſ. Beracot, fol. 4. 2.

[m] Shemot Rabba, §. 19. fol. 104. 4.

[n] Zohar in Exod. fol. 10. 2.

neſs, ſwearing by the living God, and declaring as in his preſence to every man, whether *Jew* or *Gentile*, whoever he be: *that is circumciſed*; in order to obtain ſalvation, and as neceſſary to it: *that he is a debtor to do the whole law*; and this it is that made circumciſion an inſupportable yoke, for that itſelf might be bore, and was bore by children of eight days old; but the fulfilling of the whole law cannot be done by any man; and yet every one that is circumciſed, in order to procure righteouſneſs and life, is bound to keep the whole law; becauſe the law is only his righteouſneſs, when he obſerves all that is required in it, and as the Lord has commanded; if he does not, he is pronounced accurſed: and this proves what was before ſaid, that Chriſt is of no profit to ſuch perſons; becauſe they reject him and his righteouſneſs, and as much as in them lie, make void his obedience, ſufferings, and death: hence the ſame thing is repeated, though not in the ſame words, in the next verſe.

Ver. 4. *Chriſt is become of no effect unto you*, &c.] Or *ye are aboliſhed from Chriſt*; or as others by an *hypallage* read the words, *Chriſt is aboliſhed unto you*; for by their ſeeking for juſtification by their own works, it was all one to them, as if there was no Chriſt, and no righteouſneſs in him, and no ſalvation by him; they had nothing to do with him, nor he with them: *whoſoever of you are juſtified by the law*; that is, who ſought to be juſtified by their obedience to the law, or who thought they were, and truſted in themſelves that they were righteous; for otherwiſe by the deeds of the law, no fleſh living can be juſtified: *ye are fallen from grace*; that is, either from that grace which they profeſſed to have; for there might be ſome in theſe churches, as in others, who were only nominal chriſtians, and formal profeſſors; who had declared, they ſaw themſelves loſt and undone ſinners, deſtitute of a righteouſneſs, and profeſſed to believe in Chriſt alone for righteouſneſs and ſtrength, but now truſted in themſelves, and in the works of the law: or from the ſcheme of grace in the whole of man's ſalvation, which will admit of no mixture of works; either 'tis one or the other, it can't be both; wherefore by their taking on the ſide of works, they ſhewed that they had entirely dropped the ſcheme of grace: or elſe from the Goſpel of the grace of God, from whence they were removed, through the influence of falſe teachers; particularly the doctrine of free juſtification by the grace of God, through the righteouſneſs of Chriſt; which was entirely ſet aſide by their ſeeking to be juſtified by the works of the law; and from this they might be ſaid to be fallen, who were on ſuch a bottom.

Ver. 5. *For we through the Spirit wait*, &c.] Who have believed in Chriſt, chriſtians in general, and the Apoſtle and the brethren with him in particular; who alſo were *Jews* born, and brought up ſuch; and yet they did not look for, and expect heaven and happineſs through circumciſion, or any of the works of the law, but through the righteouſneſs of Chriſt received by faith, under the influence and teſtimony of the Spirit of God, and therefore much leſs ſhould *Gentiles*: *for the hope of righteouſneſs by faith*; by which is meant, not the believer's juſtifying righteouſneſs, as if it was ſomething future he is waiting for; for this is already wrought out, and brought in by Chriſt, the end of the law for righteouſneſs; is revealed in the Goſpel from faith to faith; is diſcovered and applied to the ſaints by the Spirit of God; is put upon them, and imputed to them by the Father; and is what they now have, not in hope, but in hand; their faith having received it, as their juſtifying righteouſneſs; in which they will ever be found, living and dying: but eternal glory and felicity is here intended, called *hope*; becauſe it is the object of hope, or is what is hoped for; it is unſeen, as what is hoped for is; it is future, and what is to be enjoyed hereafter, and therefore hoped for; it is certain, poſſible to be enjoyed, though with difficulty; which gives room for hope, and exerciſes and tries that grace; the foundation and encouragement of hope, in it are the perſon, blood, ſacrifice, and righteouſneſs of Chriſt, who is our hope: and hence it is ſtiled *the hope of righteouſneſs*, becauſe none but righteous perſons ſhall enjoy it; and that by virtue, and in conſequence of their being juſtified by the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, which gives them their title to it; and hence they look for it, and ſhall enjoy it, on the foot of juſtice, as well as of grace and goodneſs: *waiting* for it, ſuppoſes it to be certain, real, ſolid, ſubſtantial, valuable, and worth waiting for; which when poſſeſſed, will be with the utmoſt pleaſure, and be abundantly ſatisfying; and that the perſons that wait for it, have knowledge, and at leaſt hope of intereſt in it; and do highly value and eſteem it, having their hearts ſet on it, and looking with contempt on the things of time and ſenſe, in compariſon of it: the manner in which they wait is, *through the Spirit*, and *by faith*; the *Syriac* verſion reads, *through the Spirit, which is of faith*; that is, by the Spirit received through faith; ſee ch. iii. 14. but it is beſt to conſider them apart; believers look and wait for heaven, under the influence and encouragement of the Spirit of God; who is the author of the faith by which they look for it, and of the hope which is concerned with it; and who is the revealer and applier of the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, the foundation of it; and which gives ſome glimpſes of the heavenly glory to the ſaints, ſhews them their intereſt in it, witneſſes to their ſonſhip, and ſo to their heirſhip; and is the pledge and earneſt of their inheritance; all which gives great ſtrength and encouragement to *faith*, *by* which they alſo expect it; believing not only the reality of it, but their own intereſt in it; and ſo walk by faith in the believing views thereof, until they receive the end of it.

Ver. 6. *For in Chriſt Jeſus*, &c.] The *Arabic* verſion reads, *in the religion of Chriſt*; in the religion of *Moſes*, or of the *Jews* under the former diſpenſation, the things after mentioned were of ſome moment and conſideration; but are of no account in the chriſtian religion, and under the Goſpel diſpenſation: circumciſion and uncircumciſion make no difference in the church of Chriſt, or are any bar to communion with it; nor do they make any alteration in the love and favour of Chriſt, who is all in all to his people, whether *Jews* or *Gentiles*; nor have they any influence at all on ſalvation, Chriſt being a common Saviour to the circumciſed and uncircumciſed; nor are they any evidence for or againſt a perſon's being in Chriſt, or having an intereſt in him: *neither circumciſion availeth any thing*; not now as a command and ordinance of God, being aboliſhed by Chriſt; nor as a type, having its accompliſhment in him, and his people; nor as a privilege, giving any preference in any reſpect to the *Jew* above the *Gentile*; nor is it of any weight or conſequence, or has any concern in the buſineſs of ſalvation: *nor uncircumciſion*; it is no hindrance to the enjoyment of the Goſpel, to entrance into a Goſpel-church ſtate, or to admiſſion to the ordinances of it; nor to the participation of the bleſſings of grace, as juſtification, pardon, adoption,

tion, and eternal life: *but faith which works by love*; faith has a concern in juſtification and ſalvation, not by way of cauſal influence, but as it is that grace which receives the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, through which we are ſaved, and kept by the power of God unto ſalvation; yet not any ſort of faith, but that which is operative, is attended with good works; and which works itſelf by love to God, to Chriſt, to his people, ways, worſhip, truths, and ordinances. The *Syriac* verſion renders it, דמתגמרא, *which is perfected by love*; that is, is ſhewed to be right, true, and genuine thereby; ſee *James* ii. 22.

Ver. 7. *Ye did run well*, &c.] In the chriſtian race; when they firſt ſet out in a profeſſion of religion, they embraced and held faſt, and were zealouſly attached to the truths of the Goſpel; they were in the lively exerciſe of grace on its proper object, and very diligent in the diſcharge of duty; they made great proficiency in the knowledge of divine things, and ran with chearfulneſs and without wearineſs in the ways of Chriſt, and in the paths of truth and holineſs. The metaphor is taken from runners in a race; ſee 1 *Cor.* ix. 24. ſo far this is ſaid to their commendation, but this ſhould have been perſiſted in: *who did hinder you*; not the Apoſtle, or any of his brethren; no, they encouraged them to go on, and gave them all the aſſiſtance they could, to help them forward; but it was the falſe Apoſtles that hindered them, who did all they could to remove them to another Goſpel, and turn them aſide out of the right way: *that ye ſhould not obey the truth?* of the Goſpel, particularly the truth of juſtification by the righteouſneſs of Chriſt; which they did not ſo chearfully embrace, and ſhew ſuch a reſpect unto, they had formerly done; ſee ch. iii. 1. and which he ſays not by way of enquiry, but of complaint and concern; and with ſome indignation againſt the perſons who had been the means of hindering their chriſtian progreſs, and with a view to reclaim the *Galatians* if poſſible.

Ver. 8. *This perſuaſion cometh not of him that calleth you.*] That is, the opinion they were perſuaded to believe; and which the *Syriac* verſion renders, פיסכון, *your perſuaſion*; this is not of God, who had called them into the grace of Chriſt; nor of Chriſt, who had called them to the knowledge of himſelf, and communion with him; nor of the Spirit of Chriſt, who had called them with an holy calling, and who ſtill continued to call them to repentance; nor of any faithful miniſter of the Goſpel, who had been concerned as an inſtrument in their effectual vocation; meaning the notion they were perſuaded to give into, that circumciſion and the works of the law, were neceſſary to ſalvation, and that theſe were to be joined with the righteouſneſs of Chriſt for juſtification; ſuch a conceit as this could never be of God, nor any evangelical miniſter, but muſt be of ſatan or his emiſſaries, the falſe Apoſtles.

Ver. 9. *A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.*] A proverbial expreſſion pretty much in uſe with the *Jews*; ſee 1 *Cor.* v. 6. reſpecting either perſons or things; and is in anſwer to, or prevents an objection that might be made, or ſomething that might be ſaid, in favour of theſe churches; that their caſe was not ſo bad, or the danger they were in ſo great, as was repreſented by the Apoſtle; ſince they were only a few perſons that propagated this notion, and but few that received it, at leaſt thoroughly gave into it; and that if it was an error, it was but a ſmall one, and only regarded a ſingle ritual, or a few rituals of the law; to which the Apoſtle replies, by ſuppoſing, but not granting this to be the caſe, ſince they were pretty generally declined, and the error was not a ſlight one, that as a little ſour leaven influences and ferments a large maſs, or lump of dough, and makes it of the ſame nature with it, ſo a ſmall error in doctrine, as it may be thought to be, increaſes to more ungodlineſs, and eats as doth a canker; and though a few hands may be firſt concerned in propagating it, and but few be infected with it, yet theſe may ſoon ſpread the contagion through the whole ſociety: wherefore errors and falſe teachers ſhould be nipped in the bud, and ſtopped in their beginnings, how inconſiderable ſoever they and their tenets may be judged to be.

Ver. 10. *I have confidence in you through the Lord*, &c.] Though the Apoſtle had ſaid many things which carried in them the appearance of roughneſs and ſeverity, yet he ſtill entertained hopes of them, that they were not ſo far gone, but that they might be brought back again; and he here expreſſes his confidence of it. This confidence in them is not of faith, for no truſt is to be put in men; no, not in the beſt; but of charity, or love, which hopes all things, and believes all things; and which proceeded upon a thorough perſuaſion he had, that there was ſome good thing *in* them; and therefore was confident, that he that had begun the good work, would perform it, and not ſuffer them to be carried away finally and totally, with the error of the wicked: and this confidence he had, *through the Lord*; either through the Spirit of the Lord, whoſe office it is to lead into all truth, as it is in Jeſus; and who had ſuggeſted this to the Apoſtle, and poſſeſſed him of this confidence; ſo that it was not a conjecture and fancy of his, but an intimation from the Spirit of the Lord: or through the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, or *in the Lord*, Chriſt, as the phraſe may be rendered; that is, on account of their being in Chriſt, which the Apoſtle hoped and believed; where they were ſafe and ſecure from a final and total ſeduction; he was confident, that whatever they might ſeem to be now, things would take a different turn in time: *that you will be none otherwiſe minded*; than he was, and they formerly were, when the Goſpel was firſt preached to them, and embraced by them; and particularly in the doctrine of juſtification by the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, which was the doctrine then called in queſtion, and in debate: *but he that troubleth you*; he ſeems to have reſpect to ſome particular perſon, who was the principal of the falſe teachers, and moſt famous for his learning, knowledge, gifts, and abilities; and who had done, and was likely to do the moſt miſchief among them; and was a troubler of God's *Iſrael*, and of the pure waters of the ſanctuary; he unſettled their minds, and cauſed them to halt between two, *Moſes* and Chriſt, law and Goſpel, and the doctrines of juſtification by works, and by the righteouſneſs of Chriſt; the one being what gave true ſolid peace and comfort, the other introduced confuſion, diſtreſs, and fears: the Apoſtle threatens him, and declares that he *ſhall bear his judgment*; or condemnation, or damnation, his puniſhment in this, or the other world; for the judgment, or condemnation of ſuch that bring in damnable hereſies, and pernicious errors, lingreth not, will not be long delayed; and their damnation ſlumbreth not, but in a little time will ſeize upon them; when as they have rejected Chriſt as a ſinbearing and atoning ſaviour, and his righteouſneſs as the juſtifying one, they will, agreeable to their own doctrine, be left to bear their puniſhment themſelves, which will be intolerable, and to all eternity; nor ſhall any eſcape it, *whoſoever he be*; tho' ever ſo knowing and learned, and let his parts and abilities be what they will; or he be ever ſo famous among men, and cried up as a moſt excellent preacher.

Ver. 11. *And I brethren, if I yet preach circumciſion*, &c.] The Apoſtle was traduced by the falſe teachers, as a preacher of circumciſion himſelf in ſome places; and this they did partly to ſhew him to be a variable and inconſtant man, who preached one doctrine in one place, and another in another place, and ſo not to be attended to; and partly with others, to draw them into their ſcheme upon his authority: what might give them the handle, or at leaſt what they improved to this purpoſe, might be his circumciſing of *Timothy*; but tho' he did this as a thing indifferent, and for the ſake of the *Jews* to make them eaſy; yet he never preached it after his converſion, and much leſs as neceſſary to juſtification and ſalvation, as theſe men did. This calumny he refutes by putting the following queſtion or queſtions; *why do I yet ſuffer perſecution?* as is clear he did, for being againſt it, and preaching it down; great part of the perſecutions the Apoſtle endured was from the *Jews*, and that on account of his teaching them every where that were among the *Gentiles* to forſake *Moſes*, and that they ſhould not circumciſe their children, and walk after the cuſtoms of their nation; a clear point this, that he did not preach it, had he, perſecution from this quarter would not have followed him; and could he have done it with a good conſcience, he muſt act a very weak part in ſuffering perſecution on that account. The *Arabic* verſion gives the words a very different turn, and yet furniſhes an anſwer to the calumny; *why do I perſecute him that uſes it?* that is, if I am a preacher of it, why am I ſo warm and violent an oppoſer of thoſe that ſubmit to it? theſe things are ſo oppoſite that there is no reconciling them; to the ſame purpoſe is the *Ethiopic* verſion: *then is the offence of the croſs ceaſed.* The laſt mentioned verſion reads it, *the croſs of Chriſt*; and ſo the *Alexandrian* copy; meaning not the croſs of affliction, reproach, and perſecution, which Chriſt has enjoined every follower of his to take up and bear for his ſake, and is offenſive to the carnal man; nor the croſs on which he ſuffered, or the ſufferings of the croſs; but the doctrine of ſalvation by a crucified Chriſt, which was an offence and a ſtumbling block to the *Jews:* now if the Apoſtle had preached circumciſion as neceſſary to ſalvation, the other doctrine muſt have been dropped, and conſequently the offence taken at it muſt have ceaſed whereas it was not. The *Syriac* verſion reads by way of queſtion, *is the offence of the croſs ceaſed?* no it is not, a plain caſe then this, that the Apoſtle did not preach circumciſion, but only a crucified Chriſt, as neceſſary to ſalvation. Moreover, the *Jews* that believed, would not have been ſo offended as they were at his preaching, had he preached the one as well as the other; their offence was not that he preached Chriſt crucified, but that he preached, that by the croſs of Chriſt circumciſion and the other rituals of the ceremonial law were not aboliſhed.

Ver. 12. *I would they were even cut off which trouble you.*] Theſe words are a ſolemn wiſh of the Apoſtle's, with reſpect to the falſe teachers, or an imprecation of the judgment of God upon them; that they might be cut off out of the land of the living by the immediate hand of God, that they might do no more miſchief to the churches of Chriſt: this he ſaid not out of hatred to their perſons, but from a concern for the glory of God, and the good of his people. The word here uſed, anſwers to the *Hebrew* word קפח, and which is often made uſe of by the *Jews* in ſolemn imprecations; we read [o] of a righteous man מקפח את בניו, *that cut off his children*; the *Gloſs* upon it is, “ he “ uſed to ſay when he made any imprecation, “ אקפח את בני, *may I cut off my children*;” that is, may they die, may they be cut off by the hand of God, and I bury them; “ ſays *R. Tarphon* [p], “ may my children be *cut off*, if theſe books of “ hereticks come into my hands, that I will burn “ them; and ſays the ſame *Rabbi* [q], may I *cut off* my children, or may my children be cut off, if this ſentence or conſtitution is cut off, or ſhould periſh. There is another uſe of this word, which may have a place here, for it ſometimes ſignifies to confute a perſon, or refute his notion [r]. “ 'Tis “ a tradition of the *Rabbins*, that after the departure of *R. Meir*, *R. Judah* ſaid to his diſciples, “ let not the diſciples of *R. Meir* come in hither, “ for they are contentious; and not to learn the “ law do they come, but לקפחני בהלכות, *to cut* “ *me off*; (*i. e.* as the *Gloſs* ſays, to ſhew how “ ſharp they are that none can ſtand againſt them) “ to confute and overcome me, *by their ſentences,* “ *or conſtitutions.*” So the Apoſtle here might wiſh that the mouths of theſe falſe teachers were ſtopped, their notions refuted, that they might give them no more trouble; to which agrees the *Arabic* verſion; *they that trouble you I wiſh they were dumb*; or that their mouths were ſtopped, as ſuch vain talkers ſhould be; ſee *Tit.* i. 10, 11. or the ſenſe of the Apoſtle is, that it was his will and deſire that theſe men ſhould be cut off from the communion of the church; with which views he mentions the proverbial expreſſion in ver. 9. with which compare 1 *Cor.* v. 6, 7. or that they would cut themſelves off, by withdrawing from them, going out from among them, and leaving them, as theſe men ſometimes did.

Ver. 13. *For brethren, ye have been called unto liberty*, &c.] He calls them *brethren*, to teſtify his affection to them, and to put them in mind of their relation to one another, which required mutual love, a thing he is about to preſs them to; he aſſerts that they were *called* not merely externally, but internally, by the effectual grace of God, out of bondage to ſin, ſatan, and the law, unto the liberty of the Goſpel and of the grace of God; that liberty wherewith Chriſt had made them free, ver. 1. this he ſaid in a judgment of charity, hoping well of them: *only uſe not liberty for an occaſion to the fleſh*; corrupt nature, which in unregenerate men takes encouragement from, and makes an ill uſe of the beſt of things, as the mercy and patience of God; and not only takes an occaſion by the law, forbidding ſin to work and ſtir up all manner of concupiſcence; but alſo by the Goſpel, and the doctrines of it, ſuch as eternal election, free juſtification, *&c.* which tho' the ſource and fountain, the barrier and ſecurity of all true and real holineſs, are improved and abuſed by wicked minds, under the influence and inſtigation of ſatan to vile purpoſes; and tho' regenerate perſons are not in the fleſh, and don't live after it, yet that is in them, and there is a proneneſs in them to ſin; and ſatan is watching all opportunities and advantages againſt them; ſo that there is need for ſuch a caution as this, that they do not miſuſe their chriſtian liberty by indulging the fleſh and the luſts of it, which is apt to take an occaſion to cheriſh its luſts, and eſpecially when given: Chriſt's free men ſhould not do ſo, for that is to diſgrace the doctrine of chriſtian liberty, to enthral themſelves in bondage inſtead of uſing their liberty aright, and to give the enemy occaſion to blaſpheme: the doctrine of chriſtian liberty may be abuſed, or uſed as an occaſion to the fleſh, and to fulfil the luſts of it; when under a pretence thereof men think themſelves exempt from obedience to the civil magiſtrate, which is uſing this liberty as a cloke of maliciouſneſs; or that they are free from obedience to the law of God, as a rule of walk and converſation; or from ſubjection to the ordinances of the Goſpel; or when they uſe the creatures God has given them the free uſe of without thankfulneſs, and in an immoderate manner; and when they make things indifferent which are not, or uſe indifferent things to the prejudice of others; and their liberty becomes a ſtumbling-block to weak chriſtians, which the Apoſtle ſeems greatly to regard here; ſince he adds, *but by love ſerve one another:* the *Vulgate Latin* verſion reads, *by the love of the Spirit*; and ſo ſome copies; Goſpel liberty and the ſervice of the ſaints are not all inconſiſtent; as it becomes them to love one another, as the new command of Chriſt, their profeſſion of religion, and their relation to each other require, ſo they ſhould ſhew their love by their ſervice; as by praying one with and for another, by bearing each other's burdens, ſympathizing with and communicating to each other in things temporal and ſpiritual; in forbearing with and forgiving one another; by admoniſhing each other when there is occaſion for it, in a meek, tender, and brotherly way; by inſtructing and building up one another on their moſt holy faith, and by ſtirring up one another to all the duties of religion, private and publick.

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[o] T. Bab. Bava Metzia, fol 85. 1.

[p] T. Bab. Sabbat. fol. 116. 1.

[q] Ib. fol. 17. 1. Miſn. Oholot, c. 16. §. 1. & Maimon. & Bartenora in ib.

[r] T. Bab. Kidduſhin, fol. 52. 2. Nazir, fol. 49. 2.

Ver. 14. *For all the law is fulfilled in one word*, &c.] Not the ceremonial law, to which acts of mercy, kindneſs, and love are oppoſed, and from which they are diſtinguiſhed; but the law of the decalogue given to *Moſes* on mount *Sinai*, and by him to the people of the *Jews*; and intends either only the ſecond table of it, ſince only love to the neighbour is mentioned; or elſe the whole of it, both tables, ſince 'tis ſaid, *all the law*; which by Chriſt is reduced to two heads, love to God, and love to the neighbour; and tho' the former is not here expreſſed, it is implied as a cauſe in the effect, for the love of God is the cauſe, and ſo the evidence of love to the neighbour; nor can there be the one without the other. The two tables of the law conſiſt of עשרת הדברים, *ten words*; as the [s] *Jews* commonly call them, and we the decalogue, and yet they are fulfilled in one; that is, they are to be brought into ſuch a compendium, reduced to ſuch an head; or as the Apoſtle in a parallel place ſays, they may *briefly be comprehended in this ſaying*, *Rom.* xiii. 9. The *Jews* make the commandments of the law to be a very large number indeed, but at laſt reduce them to one, as the Apoſtle here does, "ſix hundred and thirteen commandments, "they ſay [t], were given to *Moſes*——*David* came "and reduced them to eleven, *Pſal.* xv. *Iſaiah* "came and reduced them to ſix, *Iſ.* xxxiii. 15. "*Micah* came and reduced them to three, *Mic.* vi. 8. "*Iſaiah* came and reduced them to two, *Iſ.* lvi. 1. "*Amos* came and reduced them to one, *Amos* v. 4. "but this being objected to, 'tis obſerved that "*Habakuk* came והעמידן על אחת, *and reduced "them to one*, *Hab.* ii. 4." that is faith, as here the Apoſtle reduces them to love: *even in this, thou ſhalt love thy neighbour as thy ſelf:* theſe words are taken out of *Lev.* xix. 18. and which *R. Akiba* ſays [u], agreeable with the Apoſtle, whoſe cotemporary he was, is כלל גדול בתורה, *the grand general rule in the law*; or the grand comprehenſive of the law: the object of love the *neighbour*, ſignifies not only as there the *Jews* explain it, thoſe of their own people, or proſelytes to their religion; but all ſorts of men, whether in a natural, civil, or ſpiritual relation; and whether thoſe that do us good or do us ill, friends or enemies: the meaſure or rule of love is, *as thyſelf*; and deſigns not an equality of affection, but a likeneſs of effects; that is, to do the ſame kind acts of love to others, one would chuſe to have done to ourſelves: and this is the fulfilling of the law; that is, ſo far as a man loves aright, ſo far he fulfills the law; not that he does it perfectly, for man in his fallen ſtate is unable to do that, for the law is exceeding broad, and reaches to thoughts, deſires, and inclinations, as well as to words and deeds; and beſides, love ſaid to be the fulfilling of it, is imperfect: hence then there can be no juſtification by works of charity, nor by any ſervices of men, which at beſt are imperfect; nor are they done in their own ſtrength, and without the grace of God; nor is there any that can be ſaid to have fulfilled the law perfectly but Chriſt, and to him muſt we look for a juſtifying righteouſneſs. Theſe words contain a reaſon engaging to love one another, and to do all kind of offices of love to each other; ſince 'tis a main and principal thing contained in the law, and to which that may be reduced.

Ver. 15. *But if ye bite and devour one another*, &c.] Another reaſon inducing to love, is taken from the pernicious conſequences of a contrary ſpirit and conduct. The alluſion is to beaſts of prey falling upon and devouring one another: for wolves or dogs to worry ſheep is not ſtrange; but for ſheep to diſtreſs one another, is unnatural. The Apoſtle does not ſay, if grievous wolves ſhould enter in among you and not ſpare the flock; but ſuggeſts if they themſelves ſhould act the part of wolves to one another; having reference to their controverſies about the law and circumciſion, and the neceſſity thereof to juſtification and ſalvation; which were managed with great heat and bitterneſs, occaſioned great contentions, and threatned them with diviſions, parties, and factions; and were attended with envy and malice, with reproachful words, biting ſarcaſms, ſcandalous invectives, and injurious actions, which muſt be of bad conſequence: hence he adds, *take heed that ye be not conſumed one of another*; that is, either beware leſt each others particular peace and comfort be deſtroyed, which is oftentimes done this way, tho' a perſon's ſtate and condition Godward may be ſafe; or leſt their church-ſtate ſhould be deſtroyed and come to nothing, ſince love is the cement of it, which being looſened, threatens a diſſolution; for as no civil community, either publick or private, divided againſt itſelf, can ſtand long, ſo no religious one; and for want of love the Lord threatens to remove, and ſometimes does remove the candleſtick out of its place.

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[s] Exod. xxxiv. 28. Vid. Targum Onk. & Jon. in ib.

[t] T. Bab. Maccot, fol. 23. 2. & 24. 1. Tzeror Hanmor, fol. 151. 1.

[u] In Jarchi in Lev. xix. 18.

Ver. 16. *This I ſay then, walk in the Spirit*, &c.] The advice the Apoſtle thinks fit to give, and which he would have obſerved is, to *walk in the Spirit*, that is, either after the Spirit of God; making the word inſpired by him the rule of behaviour, which as it is the ſtandard of faith, ſo of practice, and is the lamp unto our feet, and the light unto our path; taking him himſelf for a guide, who not only guides into all truth, but in the way of holineſs and righteouſneſs unto the land of uprightneſs; and depending upon his grace and ſtrength for aſſiſtance throughout the whole of our walk and converſation: or in the exerciſe of the graces of the Spirit of God; as in the exerciſe of faith upon the perſon and grace of Chriſt, of which the Spirit is the author; and in love to God, Chriſt, and one another, which is a fruit of the Spirit; and in humility, lowlineſs of mind, meekneſs and condeſcenſion; all which is to walk in the Spirit, or ſpiritually, and ſtrengthens the argument for love the Apoſtle is upon: and this he encourages to by obſerving, *and ye ſhall not fulfil the luſt of the fleſh*; he does not ſay there ſhall be no fleſh, nor any luſt of the fleſh in them if they walk ſpiritually; or that the fleſh ſhould not act and operate in them; or that they ſhould do no ſinful action; all which is only true of Chriſt; and the contrary is to be found and obſerved in all true chriſtians, tho' ever ſo ſpiritual; but that they ſhould not fulfil or perfect the luſt of the fleſh; ſhould not give up themſelves entirely to the power and dictates of the fleſh, ſo as to be under it and at its command, and be obedient ſervants and ſlaves unto it; for in this ſenſe only, ſuch that are ſpiritual do not commit ſin, they don't make a trade of it, it is not their conſtant employ or courſe of converſation.

Ver. 17. *For the fleſh luſteth againſt the Spirit*, &c.] By *fleſh* is meant, not the carnal or literal ſenſe of the ſcripture, which is *Origen*'s Gloſs, as militating againſt the ſpiritual ſenſe of it; nor the ſenſual part of man rebelling againſt his rational powers; but the corruption of nature, which ſtill is in regenerate perſons: and is ſo called becauſe it is propagated by carnal generation; has for its object carnal things; its luſts and works are fleſhly; and tho' it has its ſeat in the heart, it ſhews itſelf in the fleſh or members of the body, which are yielded as inſtruments of unrighteouſneſs; and it makes and denominates men carnal, even believers themſelves ſo far as it prevails: by *the Spirit* is meant the internal principle of grace in a regenerate man, and is ſo called from the author of it, the Spirit of God, whoſe name it bears, becauſe it is his workmanſhip; and from the ſeat and ſubject of it, the ſoul or ſpirit of man; and from the nature of it, it is ſpiritual, a new heart and a new ſpirit; its objects are ſpiritual, and it minds, ſavours, and delights in ſpiritual things: and the meaning of the *luſting* of the one againſt the other, for it is reciprocal, hence it follows, *and the Spirit againſt the fleſh*, is that the one wills, chuſes, deſires and affects what is contrary to the other; ſo the fleſh, or the old man, the carnal I, in regenerate perſons, wills, chuſes, deſires and loves carnal things which are contrary to the Spirit or principle of grace in the ſoul; and on the other hand, the Spirit or the new man, the ſpiritual I, wills, chuſes, deſires, approves and loves ſpiritual things, ſuch as are contrary to corrupt nature; and this ſenſe is ſtrengthened by the *Oriental* verſions. The *Syriac* verſion reads, *for the fleſh deſires that* דנכא *which hurts*, or is contrary to *the Spirit*; *and the Spirit deſires that which hurts*, or is contrary to the *fleſh*; and much in the ſame way the *Arabic* verſion renders it, *for the fleſh deſires that which militates againſt the Spirit, and the Spirit deſires that which militates againſt the fleſh*; to which the *Ethiopic* verſion agrees, reading it thus, *for the fleſh deſires what the Spirit would not, and the Spirit deſires what the fleſh would not*; the reaſon whereof is ſuggeſted in the next clauſe: *and theſe are contrary the one to the other*; as light and darkneſs, fire and water, or any two oppoſites can be thought to be; they are contrary in their nature, actings, and effects; there is not only a repugnancy to each other, but a continual war, conflict and combat, is maintained between them; the fleſh is the law in the members or force of ſin, which wars againſt the Spirit, the law in the mind, or the force and power of the principle of grace; theſe are the company of two armies, to be ſeen in the *Shulamite*, fighting one againſt the other. So the *Jews* ſay[w] of the good imagination, and of the evil one, by which they mean the ſame as here, that they are like *Abraham* and *Lot*; and that "tho' they are brethren, joined "in one body הם אויבים זה לזה, *they are enemies* "*to one another*:" hence it follows, *ſo that ye cannot do the good that ye would*; which may be underſtood both of evil things and of good things. The former ſeems to be chiefly the Apoſtle's ſenſe; ſince the whole of this text is a reaſon given why thoſe who walk ſpiritually ſhall not fulfil the luſts of the fleſh, becauſe they have a powerful governing principle in them, the Spirit or grace; which tho' the fleſh luſts againſt, and oppoſes itſelf unto, yet that alſo riſes up againſt the fleſh, and often hinders it from doing the works and luſts of it. There is in regenerate men a propenſity and inclination to ſin, a carnal I that wills and deſires ſin, and wiſhes for an opportunity to do it, which when it offers, the fleſh ſtrongly ſolicites to it; but the Spirit, or the internal principle of grace, oppoſes the motion; and like another *Joſeph* ſays, how can I commit this great wickedneſs and ſin againſt a God of ſo much love and grace? it is a voice behind and even in a believer, which when he is tempted to turn to the right hand or the left, ſays this is the way walk in it, and will not ſuffer him to go into crooked paths with the workers of iniquity; and ſo ſin cannot have the dominion over him, becauſe he is under grace, as a reigning principle; and the old man cannot do the evil things he would, being under the reſtraints of mighty grace. This is the Apoſtle's principal ſenſe, and beſt ſuits with his reaſoning in the context; but inaſmuch as the luſting and oppoſition of theſe two principles are mutual and reciprocal, the other ſenſe may alſo be taken in; as that oftentimes by reaſon of the prevalence of corrupt nature, and power of indwelling ſin, a regenerate man does the evil he would not, and cannot do the good he would; for he would always do good and nothing elſe, and even as the angels do it in heaven; but he cannot, becauſe of this oppoſite principle, the fleſh.

Ver. 18. *But if ye be led by the Spirit*, &c.] That is of God, who is the guide and leader of his people. 'Tis a metaphor taken from the leading of perſons that are blind; as ſuch are before converſion, and whom the Spirit of God leads in ways they knew not, and in paths they had not known: or from the leading of children, and teaching them to go; ſo the Spirit leads regenerate perſons and teaches them to walk by faith in Chriſt. This act of leading ſuppoſes life in the perſons led, for dead men can't be led; the Spirit is firſt a Spirit of life from Chriſt before he is a leader; and alſo it ſuppoſes ſome ſtrength, tho' a good deal of weakneſs; were there no ſpiritual ſtrength derived from Chriſt, they could not be led; and if there was no weakneſs, there would be no need of leading; it is an inſtance of powerful and efficacious grace upon them, yet not contrary to their wills, tho' they are led, they are not forced; they go freely, being led, as there is good reaſon for it; for the Spirit of God always leads for their profit and advantage, and for the ſpiritual delight, pleaſure and comfort of their ſouls; he leads out of the ways of ſin, and ſo of ruin and deſtruction, and from mount *Sinai*, and all dependance on a legal and moral righteouſneſs; he leads to Chriſt, to his perſon for ſhelter, ſafety and ſalvation, to his blood for pardon and cleanſing, to his righteouſneſs for juſtification, and to his fulneſs for every ſupply of grace; he leads into the preſence of God, and to his houſe and ordinances; he leads into the covenant of grace, to the bleſſings, promiſes and mediator of it; he leads into all truth as it is in Jeſus, in the ways of faith and truth, and in the paths of righteouſneſs and holineſs, and always in a right way, tho' ſometimes in a rough one, to the city of their habitation; he leads from one degree of grace to another, and at laſt to glory: all which he does gradually; he leads by little and little into a man's ſinfulneſs, and to ſee his intereſt in Chriſt, and by degrees into the doctrines of the Goſpel, and the everlaſting love of the three perſons; and proportionable to the ſtrength he gives, and as they are able to bear: now ſuch perſons as theſe have nothing to fear from the law of God: *ye are not under the law*; ſuch are not only delivered from the law in fact, but in their own apprehenſions; they have the comfortable knowledge and experience of it; the law is no terrifying law to them; it works no wrath in them; they are delivered from the ſpirit of bondage to fear, by the Spirit of God, by whom they are led; nor are they under it, nor do they need it as a preſſing forcing law to duty; they delight in it, and chearfully ſerve it, being conſtrained by love, and not awed by fear; nor are its accuſations and charges regarded, or to be regarded by ſuch who are led by the Spirit to Chriſt, the end of the law for righteouſneſs; and they are entirely freed from its curſe and condemnation, tho' they are under it, and deſire to be under it, as held forth by Chriſt the king of ſaints; and under the Spirit's influence and guidance, yield a chearful and evangelical obedience to it.

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[w] Tzeror Hammor, fol. 15. 3.

Ver. 19. *Now the works of the fleſh are manifeſt*, &c.] By *fleſh* is meant, corrupt nature as before, and by *the works* of it, not only external acts of ſin, but inward luſts; for ſuch are here mentioned among its works, as *hatred*, *wrath*, *envyings*, &c. and both external and internal acts are ſo called, becauſe they ſpring from the fleſh, or corrupt nature, and are what that urges and ſolicites to, and are wrought thereby, and are what denominate and ſhew men to be carnal: theſe are ſaid to be *manifeſt*; not that they are all, and always publickly done, and are open to the ſight of men; for they are works of darkneſs, and often done in ſecret, tho' they are always manifeſt to God the ſearcher of hearts, and will be brought to light in the day of judgment; but they are known to be ſins in ſome meaſure by the light of nature, and eſpecially by the law of God; and a clear caſe it is, that they are contrary to the Spirit, both to the Spirit of God, and to the principle of grace he forms in the heart; and that ſuch who live in the commiſſion of them are not led by him, nor are under the influence of his grace: *which are theſe*; tho' all are not mentioned, only ſome of the chief, by which judgment may be made of the reſt: *adultery*; this is left out in the *Vulgate Latin*, *Syriac*, and *Ethiopic* verſions, and in the *Alexandrian* copy; it is a defilement of the marriage-bed, and is the ſin of uncleanneſs committed by two perſons, one of which at leaſt is in a married ſtate, and is condemned by the law of God and light of nature: *fornication*; which tho' by many of the *Gentiles* was reckoned no ſin, or a very ſmall one, ſtands here among the works of the fleſh, that are manifeſt and to be avoided; it is the ſin of uncleanneſs committed by perſons in a ſingle ſtate: *uncleanneſs*; it is a general name for all unchaſtity, in thought, word, or action; and may here deſign more eſpecially all unnatural luſts, as *ſodomy*, ſelf-pollution, *&c.* *laſciviouſneſs*; or wantonneſs, all luſtful dalliance, every thing that leads on to acts of uncleanneſs, or attend them, as impure words, filthy geſtures, and the like.

Ver. 20. *Idolatry*, &c.] Which ſome underſtand of covetouſneſs, which is ſo called; but rather it means the worſhipping of other Gods, or of graven images: *witchcraft*; any real or pretended league and aſſociation with the devil, ſeeking to converſe with familiar ſpirits, to gain unlawful knowledge, or to do hurt to fellow-creatures; which as it is doing honour to ſatan, detracts from the glory of God, and rightly follows idolatry; conjuration, ſoothſaying, necromancy, and all kind of magic are included and condemned hereby: *hatred*; internal hatred of any man's perſon, even of our very enemies is forbidden; in the original text it is *enmities*, as the carnal mind is nothing elſe, but enmity againſt God and Chriſt, againſt law and Goſpel, and all good men, and every thing that is good: *variance* or *contentions*; fighting and quarrelling, by words ſcandalous and reproachful, what we commonly call ſcolding: *emulations* or *zeals*; not good, but bad; a boiling and riſing up of the ſpirits and paſſions, at the honour and happineſs of another: *wrath* or *wraths*; violent emotions of the mind, moving to revenge, and ſeeking the hurt and miſchief of others: *ſtrife* or *ſtrifes*; perpetual contradictions and cavillings, either expreſſed by words, or working in the mind; for this ſtrife may be in a man's heart, according to *Jam.* iii. 14, 16. *ſeditions* or *diviſions*; ſchiſms and factions, diſſentions in things domeſtic, civil, and religious: *hereſies*; bad principles and tenets, relating to doctrine, which are ſubverſive of the fundamentals of the Goſpel and the chriſtian religion; and are the produce of a man's own invention, and the matter of his choice, without any foundation in the word of God; and theſe are works of the fleſh, for they ſpring from a corrupt and carnal mind, and are propagated with carnal views, as popular applauſe, worldly advantage, and indulging the luſts of the fleſh.

Ver. 21. *Envyings*, &c.] Uneaſy diſtreſſing tortures of the mind, grieving at the good of others, that any ſhould be in an equal, or in a better condition than themſelves: *murders*; deſtroying of mens lives, which is often the conſequence of the above evils: *drunkenneſs*; exceſs in drinking of wine or ſtrong drink, whereby the ſtomach is overcharged, the mind is intoxicated, and the body enfeebled and unable to perform its office; this is often the ſource of many, or all of the works of the fleſh before-mentioned: *revellings*; exceſs in food, nocturnal riotings in eating, drinking, dancing, ſinging, chambering and wantonneſs. The *Syriac* verſion renders it, זמרא, *laſcivious ſinging*; and the *Arabic* verſion, *ſongs*; which are a part of the nightly revels: *and ſuch like*; which are of the ſame nature and kind; ſo the Apoſtle ſhuts up the account, it being too tedious to give an enumeration of all the works of the fleſh; nor was it neceſſary, judgment may be made of the reſt by theſe; nor might it be ſo proper, ſince the carnal heart is but the more pleaſed with, and irritated by, the mention of evil things: *of the which I tell you before*; before the judge comes and the awful judgment proceeds, when theſe will all be made manifeſt, and every man will be judged according to his works: this the Apoſtle did, as putting them in mind of the evil nature of theſe things, and aſſuring them of the bad conſequences that would follow, if grace prevented not: *as I have alſo told you in time paſt*; when he firſt preached among them, and warned them to flee from the wrath to come; he then laid before them the evil nature of theſe things, the dreadful effects of them, and ſhewed that there was no ſalvation from them, but by Chriſt: and *that they which do ſuch things, ſhall not inherit the kingdom of God*; by which is meant the heavenly glory, called a *kingdom*, becauſe of the grandeur and magnificence of that ſtate; and *of God*, becauſe it is of his preparing and giving, what he calls his to by his grace, and puts them into the poſſeſſion of, and where he reigns and will reign for ever, and ſhew forth the glory of his majeſty: this is poſſeſſed in a way of inheritance, which ſhews it to be a bequeſt of our heavenly Father's, a free-grace gift of his, and not to be obtained by the works of the law, or merits of men; but what belongs, and is peculiar to the children of God, who are ſo by adopting grace: now they that do ſuch works of the fleſh as before enumerated; that is, that live in the commiſſion of theſe things, whoſe whole lives are employed in ſuch work, living and dying in ſuch a ſtate, without repentance towards God and faith in Chriſt, ſhall never enjoy eternal life and happineſs; tho' ſuch who have done theſe things, being brought to a ſenſe of them, and to the blood and righteouſneſs of Chriſt, for pardon and juſtification, for life and ſalvation; ſuch notwithſtanding the works of the fleſh done by them, ſhall thro' the free grace of God, and the propitiatory ſacrifice of Chriſt, inherit the kingdom and glory of God.

Ver. 22. *But the fruit of the Spirit*, &c.] Not of nature or man's free-will, as corrupted by ſin, for no good fruit ſprings from thence; but either of the internal principle of grace, called the Spirit, ver. 17. or rather of the holy Spirit, as the *Ethiopic* verſion reads it; the graces of which are called *fruit* and not *works*, as the actions of the fleſh are; becauſe they are owing to divine influence, efficacy and bounty, as the fruits of the earth are, to which the alluſion is; and not to a man's ſelf, to the power and principles of nature; and becauſe they ariſe from a ſeed, either the incorruptible ſeed of internal grace, which ſeminally contains all graces in it, or the bleſſed Spirit who is the ſeed that remains in believers; and becauſe they are in the excerciſe of them acceptable unto God thro' Chriſt, and are grateful and delightful to Chriſt himſelf, being *his pleaſant fruits*; which as they come from him, as the author of them, they are exerciſed on him as the object of them, under the influence of the Spirit; and becauſe they are profitable to them that are poſſeſſed of them, ſeeing the promiſe of this life and that which is to come is annexed to them; and the good works which are done in conſequence of them, are profitable to men: once more, as the works of the fleſh are the unfruitful works of darkneſs, and make men ſo, and therefore can't be called fruit properly; theſe, as they are fruits, and are rightly and properly ſo called, ſo they make men fruitful, and to abound in divine things, and are as follow: *Love*. This the Apoſtle begins with, it being the fulfilling of the law, the bond of perfectneſs, and without which a profeſſion of religion is inſignificant; it may be underſtood of love to God, of which every man's heart is deſtitute, being enmity againſt God, until regenerated by the Spirit of God; when he ſheds abroad the love of God in the heart, and which is the ground and reaſon of any man's truly loving God; and alſo of love to Chriſt, which the natural man feels nothing of till the Spirit of wiſdom and revelation, in the knowledge of Chriſt, opens his eyes to ſee the lovelineſs of his perſon, the ſuitableneſs of his grace, righteouſneſs and fulneſs, and the neceſſity of looking to him for life and ſalvation; and likewiſe of love to the ſaints, which a carnal man is a ſtranger to, until he is renewed by the Holy Ghoſt, who in regenerating him teaches him to love the brethren; and which is the evidence of his having paſſed from death to life, thro' the mighty power of his grace. Moreover, love to the houſe and worſhip of God, to the truths and ordinances of the Goſpel, all which men have naturally an averſion to may be included in this firſt fruit of the Spirit: the next follows, which is *joy*, even that which is in the Holy Ghoſt, and has him for its author. The object of it is God, not as an abſolute God, but as a covenant God and Father in Chriſt; as the God of ſalvation, as clothing with the robe of his Son's righteouſneſs, and as pardoning iniquity, tranſgreſſion and ſin, full atonement being made by the ſacrifice of Chriſt; who alſo is the object of this joy in his perſon, fulneſs, righteouſneſs, offices, relations, and when beheld, embraced, and enjoyed in a way of communion. This joy likewiſe, which is the produce of the Spirit, lies in ſpiritual things, and ariſes from an apprehenſion or good hope of intereſt in them, as juſtification, pardon, peace, adoption, and eternal glory; and is peculiar to ſuch who have the Spirit, for a ſtranger intermeddles not with this joy, nor can he form any judgment of it, and is even unſpeakable by the believer himſelf. Moreover, joy in the good of others, of fellow-creatures and fellow-chriſtians, in their outward and inward proſperity, in their temporal, ſpiritual, and eternal good, which as it is a grace of the Spirit, may well enough be thought to be at leaſt part of the ſenſe of the word here; ſince it follows upon, and is joined with love, and ſtands between that and *peace*, which is another fruit of the Spirit: and deſigns peace with God in a man's own conſcience, produced there by the Spirit of God, in conſequence of peace being made by the blood of Chriſt; and that thro' the application of the blood of Chriſt for pardon, and of his righteouſneſs for juſtification to the ſoul of a ſenſible ſinner by the bleſſed Spirit, the effect of which is peace, quietneſs and tranquillity of mind; alſo peace with men, with the ſaints, and with all others; for ſuch who are under a work of the Spirit of God, and are influenced and led by him, ſeek after the things which make for peace and edification among the brethren, and are deſirous if poſſible to live peaceably with all men: hence appears another grace in them, *long-ſuffering*; which intends not ſo much a patient waiting for good things to come, for more grace, and for glory, thro' the Spirit; but a patient bearing and enduring of preſent evils with joyfulneſs, being ſtrengthened by the Spirit with all might, according to his glorious power; being ſlow to anger, ready to forgive injuries, put up with affronts, and bear with, and forbear one another: and which is uſually accompanied with *gentleneſs*, humanity, affability, courteouſneſs, ſhewn both in words, geſtures, and actions; in imitation of the gentleneſs of Chriſt, and agreeable to that wiſdom, that heavenly doctrine of the Goſpel, which, among other things, is ſaid to be gentle, and eaſy to be intreated. To which is added *goodneſs*; and what elſe can come from the good Spirit of God, the author of the good work of grace upon the ſoul? and which diſpoſes it to acts of goodneſs unto men, in a natural, civil, moral, ſpiritual, and evangelic way, for the benefit both of ſoul and body; and which muſt here be underſtood, and which is well-pleaſing to God when done in the exerciſe of the following grace, *faith*; for tho' fidelity, both in words and actions, which is very ornamental to the Goſpel, and a profeſſion of religion may be meant; yet faith in Chriſt is not to be excluded, as it is generally by interpreters; for this is not of a man's ſelf, nor have all men it: it is a gift of God, the operation of his power, and the work of his Spirit, whence he is ſtiled the Spirit of faith; and which therefore muſt have a place among his fruits; and which lies and ſhews itſelf in believing in Chriſt for ſalvation, in embracing the doctrines of the Goſpel, and making a profeſſion of them, which is called the profeſſion of faith; all which, when right, comes from the Spirit of God.

Ver. 23. *Meekneſs*, &c.] Humility and lowlineſs of mind, of which Chriſt is an eminent example and pattern; and which the holy Spirit from him tranſcribes into the heart of a regenerate perſon; and lies in having mean thoughts of himſelf, in walking humbly with God, acknowledging every favour, being thankful for every bleſſing, and depending on his grace, and in behaving with modeſty and humility among men. The laſt of the fruits of the Spirit mentioned is *temperance*, or *continence*; and deſigns both chaſtity and ſobriety, and particularly moderation in eating and drinking. It may be obſerved, that theſe fruits of the Spirit are oppoſed to the works of the fleſh. So love is oppoſed to hatred; joy to emulations and envying; peace to variance, ſtrife and ſeditions; long-ſuffering, gentleneſs, goodneſs, and meekneſs to wrath and murders; faith to idolatry, witchcraft, and hereſies; and temperance to adultery, fornication, uncleanneſs, laſciviouſneſs, drunkenneſs, and revellings. *Againſt ſuch there is no law*; meaning, againſt ſuch fruits, graces, and good things; theſe being perfectly agreeable to the law of God, which is holy, juſt, and good, and ſpiritual; and are ſo far from being forbidden by it, that they are highly eſteemed and approved of by it: or againſt perſons that are poſſeſſed of ſuch fruits; for theſe appear to be in the Spirit, and to be led by the Spirit; and therefore are not under the law, and have nothing to fear from it, as a terrifying, accuſing, curſing, and condemning law. The works of the fleſh, and they that are of the fleſh, are ſuch that come under the notice and laſh of the law; and not the fruits of the Spirit, and they that are after the Spirit, as ſuch are who partake of his fruit.

Ver. 24. *And they that are Chriſt's*, &c.] Not all as yet that are ſecretly ſo, who are choſen in him, and by him, are given by the Father to him in covenant, and whom he has purchaſed by his blood, and conſiders as his people, his ſheep, and his children, tho' as yet they are not called by his grace; of theſe, as yet, what follows cannot be ſaid, and therefore muſt mean ſuch as are openly Chriſt's, whom he has laid hold on as his own in effectual vocation, who have his Spirit as a ſpirit of regeneration and ſanctification, who have truly believed in Chriſt, and have given up themſelves unto him. *Have crucified the fleſh with the affections and luſts*: by the *fleſh* is meant, not the natural body to be macerated and afflicted with faſtings, watchings, *&c.* but the corruption of nature, the old man and carnal heart. The *Vulgate Latin* verſion reads, *their own fleſh*; and ſo do the *Syriac* and *Ethiopic* verſions; their concern lying with their own, and not with the corruptions, affections, and luſts of others. By *the affections and luſts* are intended, not the natural affections and paſſions of the ſoul, and the deſires of it; but its vile and inordinate affections, its corrupt inclinations, evil deſires, and deceitful luſts; all which are *crucified* firſt *with Chriſt*, as the *Arabic* verſion reads; ſee *Rom.* vi. 6. and which are ſo aboliſhed, done away, and deſtroyed, by the ſacrifice of Chriſt, that the damning power of them over his people is entirely gone. And in conſequence of this crucifixion of the body of ſin, with Chriſt upon the croſs, when he finiſhed and made an end of it, ſin, with its paſſions and luſts, is crucified by the Spirit of God in regeneration and ſanctification; ſo that it loſes its governing power, and has not the dominion it had before: not but that the fleſh, or corrupt nature, with its evil affections, and carnal luſts, are ſtill in being, and are alive; as a perſon faſtened to a croſs may be alive, tho' he can't act and move as before, being under reſtraints, ſo the old man, tho' crucified, and under the reſtraints of mighty grace, and can't reign and govern as before, yet is alive, and acts, and operates, and oftentimes has great ſway and influence; but whereas he is deprived of his reigning power, he is ſaid to be crucified: and tho' this act is aſcribed to them that are Chriſt's, yet not as done by them in their own ſtrength, who are not able to grapple with one corruption, but as under the influence of the grace of Chriſt, and thro' the power of his Spirit; ſee *Rom.* viii. 13.

Ver. 25. *If we live in the Spirit*, &c.] Or *by the Spirit*, as all do that are ſpiritually alive. Sin has not only brought on men a corporal death, and made them liable to an eternal one, but has alſo induced upon them a ſpiritual or moral death; they are dead in treſpaſſes and ſin, nor can they quicken themſelves, nor can any creature give them life; not the miniſters of the word, nor the angels in heaven, only the bleſſed Spirit is the ſpirit of life from Chriſt; who entering into them, frees them from the law of ſin and death, and implants a principle of ſpiritual life in them, whereby they live a life of faith on Chriſt, of holineſs from him, and communion with him: and this the Apoſtle makes uſe of, as an argument with believers to walk after the Spirit, *let us alſo walk in the Spirit*; or *by the Spirit*; by his help and aſſiſtance, according to the rule of his word, and under his influence and direction as a guide, to which he had before adviſed in ver. 18.

Ver. 26. *Let us not be deſirous of vain glory*, &c.] Ambitious of being thought wiſer, and richer, and more valuable than others; of having the pre-eminence in the management of all affairs, and of having honour, eſteem, and popular applauſe from men: this may well be called vain-glory, ſince it is only in outward things, as wiſdom, riches, ſtrength, and honour, and not in God the giver of them, and who can eaſily take them away; and therefore is but for a time, and is quickly gone, and lies only in the opinion and breath of men. *Provoking one another*; not to good works, which would be right, but to anger and wrath, which is contrary to chriſtian charity, or true love; which, as it is not eaſily provoked, ſo neither will it provoke others to evil things. The *Syriac* verſion renders it by מקלין, *ſlighting*, or *deſpiſing one another*; and the *Arabic* verſion, *inſulting one another*; vices to which men, and even chriſtian brethren in the ſame communion, are too prone. *Envying one another*; their gifts and abilities, natural and ſpiritual; their rank and ſtation in the world, or in the church. Theſe were ſins the *Galatians* very probably were ſubject to; and where they prevail, there's confuſion, and every evil work, and therefore to be watched and guarded againſt.

CHAP. VI.

IN this chapter the Apoſtle exhorts to the exerciſe of various things, which greatly become profeſſors of religion, ſuch as meekneſs towards backſliders, love to the ſaints, modeſty in themſelves, and beneficence to others; expoſes the hypocriſy and ambition of the falſe teachers, in order that the *Galatians* might beware of them, and not be enſnared by them; and gives an account of his own diſpoſition, conduct, and ſufferings, as a rule and example to them, and by which they might judge of the difference between him and the falſe Apoſtles; and concludes the Epiſtle with his apoſtolical ſalutation and benediction. Having mentioned the fruits of the Spirit in the preceding chapter, he ſingles out ſome of them, and a little enlarges upon them; and begins with meekneſs, as that ſhould be uſed by ſpiritual men to fallen believers, which he perſuades to, not only becauſe they are brethren, and but men, and have been overtaken in ſin unawares; but becauſe, tho' they themſelves are ſpiritual, yet ſhould conſider they are liable to be tempted, ver. 1. And next he adviſes to ſhow their love to one another, by bearing each others burdens, which he enforces by this argument, it being a fulfilling the law of Chriſt, ver. 2. And whereas pride and haughtineſs lie in the way of ſuch a deportment, he diſſuades from a vain opinion of a man's ſelf, that being no other than ſelf-deception, ver. 3. and obſerves, that a man will have the beſt view of himſelf, and ſee what occaſion he has for glorying, when he conſiders himſelf ſimply and nakedly, and not in compariſon with others, ver. 4. and there is good reaſon why he ſhould do ſo, ſeeing every man muſt give an account of his own actions, be judged according to them, and receive his reward or puniſhment, ver. 5. Hence the Apoſtle paſſes to liberality and beneficence, and firſt to teachers of the word, to whom, ſuch as are taught by them, ſhould communicate, and that in good things, and in all good things, ver. 6. The arguments uſed to enforce this exhortation are, that to do otherwiſe is a deception of themſelves, and is a mocking of God; and beſides, they ſhall be treated according to their actions, the uſe or abuſe of what God has given them, ſignified by a proverbial expreſſion, what a man ſows that ſhall he reap, ver. 7. which is enlarged upon and illuſtrated, by obſerving, that he that ſpends his ſubſtance merely on himſelf, and on carnal pleaſures, and to indulge the fleſh, the iſſue of things to him will be ruin, temporal and eternal; but he that lays out his ſubſtance on ſpiritual things, and for ſpiritual purpoſes, the iſſue will be life everlaſting, ver. 8. Wherefore the Apoſtle renews the exhortation to be bountiful without wearineſs, ſeeing there is a reaping time a coming, ver. 9. and then points out the perſons in general to whom good is to be done as opportunity offers, even all men, but eſpecially ſuch as are believers in Chriſt, are of his family, and particularly ſtewards there, as miniſters of the Goſpel are, ver. 10. And thus the Apoſtle having finiſhed what he chiefly intended in this Epiſtle, obſerves to the *Galatians* the great regard he had to them, ſhown in writing to them ſo long a letter, and that with his own hand, ver. 11. And as his chief view was to detect the falſe Apoſtles, he can't conclude without taking ſome further notice of them, which he does by expoſing their hypocriſy and ambition; they only made a ſhow of religion outwardly, and obliged others to do that, which they did not chuſe themſelves, namely, to be circumciſed; and their ends in all this were, that they might be free from perſecution, and have matter of glorying in the proſelytes they made, ver. 12, 13. but the Apoſtle was of a quite different temper and diſpoſition; ſo far was he from glorying in his own fleſh, or others, that his determination was to glory only in Chriſt, and in his croſs, and that for this reaſon, becauſe the world thereby was crucified to him, and he unto the world, ver. 14. as alſo, becauſe circumciſion, which the falſe teachers obliged to, and gloried in, and likewiſe uncircumciſion, were of no avail in religious, ſpiritual, and eternal affairs, but a new creature, ver. 15. and this is what every one ought to attend unto as the rule of his walk and conduct, ſince upon ſuch ſhall be mercy and peace, as upon the *Iſrael* of God, ver. 16. And whereas the falſe Apoſtles boaſted of the fleſh, and circumciſion in it, the Apoſtle oppoſes thereunto the marks of his ſufferings for Chriſt, which he bore in his body; and therefore with great gravity and authority charges, that no man ſhould give him any further trouble about what had been the ſubject-matter of this Epiſtle, ver. 17. and cloſes it with his uſual ſalutation, expreſſing his affection for the *Galatians*, as his brethren, wiſhing the beſt of bleſſings for them, the grace of Chriſt, and that this might be in their hearts, and with their ſpirits, ver. 18.

Ver. 1. *Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault*, &c.] Or *be taken before* in one; not as *Grotius* thinks, before this Epiſtle ſhould come to them, which is a very jejune and empty ſenſe of the words; nor before the converſion of the man, becauſe ſins before converſion don't come under the notice and cognizance of a church, or are liable to its reproofs and cenſures; but before the man is aware, thro' negligence and imprudence, for want of caution and circumſpection, and ſo is carried away, either thro' the treachery of his own heart, and the power of corruption; or thro' the temptations of ſatan, who goes about, and comes on the back of them, lays ſnares for them, and attacks them unawares, and takes all advantages of them; or by the ill examples of others, whereby they are drawn aſide, and into ſin. The Apoſtle has no particular

particular reſpect by a *fault* to ſchiſms in the church, or to any errors or hereſies in doctrine, tho' the reſtoration of ſuch in meekneſs ſhould be endeavoured; but rather to immorality in life and converſation, and indeed to any of the works of the fleſh mentioned in the preceding chapter; and eſpecially he means any *fall* of profeſſors, as the word uſed ſignifies, into ſin, thro' inadvertency and want of care and watchfulneſs, in diſtinction from a wilful, obſtinate, and continued courſe of ſinning; and intends not any man in the world, for thoſe that are without, churches, and members of churches, have nothing to do with in a church-way; but any man that is a brother, a church-member, that ſtands in ſuch a relation to them, when he falls into ſin, is to be taken notice of by them. And ſo the *Syriac* verſion reads, *any one of you*; as does one of *Stephens*'s copies. *Ye that are ſpiritual*; meaning not ſuch who had greater ſpiritual gifts than others, their miniſters, paſtors, and eccleſiaſtical governors, though theſe may be ſo called; and to them it belongs to reprove and rebuke, recover and reſtore backſliders, which they ſhould do in gentleneſs and meekneſs; but the Apoſtle here addreſſes the brethren in general, the ſeveral members of the church, even all but thoſe that were fallen: nor does he mean ſuch as have more ſpiritual knowledge than others, in oppoſition to babes; nor regenerate perſons, and ſuch as had the Spirit of God, in diſtinction from carnal men; but ſuch as live and walk in the Spirit, and are ſtrong, and ſtand by the power and grace of the Spirit of God, as oppoſed to the weak, and who were fallen thro' the prevalency of the fleſh, and force of temptation; whoſe duty it is, and on whom it lies, to *reſtore ſuch an one*, that is overtaken and fallen. The alluſion is to the ſetting of bones that are broken, or out of joint, which is done with great care and tenderneſs. Profeſſors fallen into ſin, are like broken and diſlocated bones; they are out of their place, and loſe both their comfort and uſefulneſs, and are to be reſtored by gently telling them of their faults, and mildly reproving them for them; and when ſenſible of them, and troubled for them, by ſpeaking comfortably to them, and by bringing them again, and reſettling them in their former place in the church, and reſtoring them to their former uſefulneſs and good conduct: and which is to be done *in the ſpirit of meekneſs*; in the exerciſe of that grace which is a gift and fruit of the Spirit of God; or with a meek and humble ſpirit, not bearing hard upon them, and treating them in a ſupercilious and haughty manner, upbraiding them with their faults, aggravating them, and uſing them roughly, and with ſharpneſs, which in ſome caſes is neceſſary, but not in this: *conſidering thyſelf, leſt thou alſo be tempted*; a ſpiritual man ſhould conſider himſelf as in the body, and as carrying about with him a body of ſin, a corrupt and treacherous heart, that is full of deceitful luſts, by which he may be tempted alſo, and drawn away and enticed; and as being liable to the temptations of ſatan, and of being overcome by them, againſt which he ſhould watch and pray; and ſhould think with himſelf what he would chuſe, and ſhould deſire to be done to him in ſuch a caſe, and do the like to others that are in it. This is a reaſon enforcing the exhortation; and indeed almoſt every word in the text carries an argument engaging to it. The relation the ſaints ſtand in to one another, as *brethren*, ſhould excite them to ſeek each other's welfare, and to reſtore any that are fallen, and to abſtain from all roughneſs and ſeverity. The perſons addreſſed are *ſpiritual*, and therefore ſhould behave as ſuch as have the fruits of the Spirit, and among the reſt that of meekneſs; and ſince they are ſtrong, ſhould help the weak, and raiſe up the fallen: the perſons recommended to them, as the objects of their pity, care, and concern, are not ſuch who have given up themſelves to ſin, but are circumvented by it, and *overtaken* in it, ſuddenly, and at unawares. And beſides, are *men*, frail ſinful men, liable to ſin, encompaſſed with infirmities, and expoſed to ſnares and temptations, which are common to human nature, and therefore ſhould be uſed gently and tenderly. The Apoſtle having given an enumeration in the foregoing chapter, of the works of the fleſh, and fruits of the Spirit, directs ſuch as are in the exerciſe of the latter, how to behave towards thoſe that fall into the commiſſion of any of the former, which may be expected, ſince there is fleſh as well as ſpirit in the beſt.

Ver. 2. *Bear ye one another's burdens*, &c.] Which may be underſtood either of ſins, which are heavy burdens to ſenſible ſinners, to all that are partakers of the grace of God; Chriſt is only able to bear theſe burdens, ſo as to remove them and take them away, which he has done by his blood, ſacrifice, and ſatisfaction; ſaints bear one another's, not by making ſatisfaction for them, which they are not able to do, nor by conniving at them, and ſuffering them upon them, which they ſhould not do, but by gently reproving them, by comforting them when over-preſſed with guilt, by ſympathizing with them in their ſorrow, by praying to God for to manifeſt his pardoning grace to them, and by forgiving them themſelves, ſo far as they are faults committed againſt them: or elſe the frailties and infirmities of weak ſaints, which are troubleſome, and apt to make uneaſy, are meant; and which are to be bore by the ſtrong, by making themſelves eaſy with them, and by accommodating themſelves to their weakneſs, and by abridging themſelves of ſome liberties, which otherwiſe might be lawfully taken by them; or afflictions may be deſigned, which are grievous to the fleſh, and are bore by others, when they adminiſter help and relief under them, whether in a temporal or ſpiritual way; and when they condole them, and ſympathize with them, bear a part with them, and make others griefs and ſorrows their own: *and ſo fulfil the law of Chriſt*; which is the law of love to one another, *John* xiii. 34, 35. in oppoſition to the law of *Moſes*, the *judaizing Galatians* were ſo fond of, and by which Chriſt's diſciples may be diſtinguiſhed from thoſe of *Moſes*, or any others. This is a law or doctrine which Chriſt has clearly taught, and recovered from the falſe gloſſes of the *Phariſees*; it is his new commandment, which he has ſtrengthened and enforced by his own example in dying for his people, and which he, by his Spirit, inſcribes upon their hearts. The *Jews* ſpeak of the law of the Meſſiah as preferable to any other. "The law, "they ſay [x], which a man learns in this world is "vanity, in compariſon of, תורתו של משיח, *the* "*law of the Meſſiah*, or *Chriſt*;" by *fulfilling* it is meant, doing it, acting in obedience to it, and not a perfect fulfilling it, which can't be done by ſinful creatures.

Ver. 3. *For if a man think himſelf to be ſomething*, &c.] Of himſelf; to have any thing of himſelf, to do any thing of himſelf, and of himſelf to attain to life and ſalvation: *when he is nothing*; of himſelf; not even as a creature, but owes his being and preſervation, and all the mercies of life, to another, even to God; has no grace nor gifts of himſelf, but what he has received, and can do no good thing, not think a good thought, or perform a good action of himſelf, and much leſs of himſelf procure eternal life and ſalvation: *he deceiveth himſelf*; and will find himſelf ſadly miſtaken, and wretchedly diſappointed another day; or whoever thinks himſelf to be ſome famous and excellent perſon, to be ſomething more, and better than others, of a more excellent nature, and of greater abilities, that he is free from ſin, or at leaſt holier than others, and not liable to fall as others, whom he looks upon with diſdain and contempt, wanting that charity which the law, and new commandment of Chriſt, requires, when he is nothing but ſin and vanity, he's deſtitute of the grace of God, he deceives himſelf, and the truth is not in him. This the Apoſtle ſays to depreſs pride, and a ſwelling conceit of themſelves, and all uncharitable, rough, and ſevere uſages of others. A ſaying like this the *Jews* have[y]; "whoever he is that is ſomething, "or thinks in himſelf that he is, כלום, *ſomething*, "it would be better for him if he had never been "created."

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[x] Midraſh Kohelet, fol. 83. 1.

Ver. 4. *But let every man prove his own work*, &c.] Not concern himſelf about the actions and works of others; let him review his own heart and actions; let him examine, try, and prove his whole conduct in life by the rule of God's word, when he'll find enough at home, without bearing hard upon, and cenſuring others: *and then ſhall he have rejoicing in himſelf alone, and not in another*; which is either ironically ſaid, he'll then ſee what reaſon he has to rejoice and glory in his own works, and vaunt over others, and to boaſt of his performances, and deſpiſe others; ſo far from it, that he'll have reaſon to be aſhamed of himſelf, and to own and acknowledge his unworthineſs and unprofitableneſs: or if upon ſuch a review, examination, and probation of his works, it ſhall appear that he has had his converſation in the world, by the grace of God, in ſimplicity and godly ſincerity, this teſtimony of his conſcience will be his rejoicing; ſee 2 *Cor.* i. 12. He may rejoice *in himſelf*, in his own works, as the fruits of grace, but not as the effects of his own power and ſtrength; and may glory and boaſt of them before men, in vindication of his cauſe and character, and as evidences of the truth of grace, but not before God, as if they were the matter of his juſtification and acceptance: *and not in another*; that is fallen into ſin; making uſe of his ſins and faults to ſet off himſelf, and to encreaſe his own praiſe and commendation; rejoicing in this, that he is better than others, and is not as the *Phariſee* ſaid, as other men are, as wicked as they, or has not fallen into ſuch ſins as others have done. He'll have no occaſion to take ſuch a method as this, if his converſation will bear the teſt; he'll have rejoicing in the teſtimony of his own conſcience, and will have no need to compare himſelf with others; his glorying will be on account of his own actions, and not thro' a compariſon of other mens. This no ways contradicts a man's glorying in God, and rejoicing in Chriſt Jeſus alone, in the buſineſs of ſalvation. It only regards a man's glorying before men, in a modeſt and humble manner, of what he is enabled to do, by the grace of God, without fetching in the characters of other men that are wicked, or have fallen, to illuſtrate his own.

Ver. 5. *For every man ſhall bear his own burden.*] That is, either do his own work which God has allotted him to do, whether in a more publick or private ſtation of life; which becauſe it is generally troubleſome to the fleſh, is called a *burden*, and *his own*, being peculiar to himſelf, and in which no other is concerned; and which he ſhould patiently bear, chearfully attend to, and conſtantly and faithfully perform whilſt in this world: or he ſhall give an account of his own actions, and not another's, to God, in the other world; he ſhall be judged according to his own works, what they are in themſelves, and not by a compariſon of other mens who have been more wicked than he; which will be no rule of judgment with God, nor of any advantage to man. Every wicked man will bear his own burden; that is, the puniſhment of his own ſins, and not another's; ſo the judgments of God, inflicted on men in this world, are often called, משא, *a burden*; ſee *Iſ.* xiii. 1. and xv. 1. and xvii. 1. and xix. 1. and xxi. 1. 11. and ſo may the puniſhment of the wicked in another world, which will be grievous and intolerable. The ſaints will be exempt from bearing this burden, becauſe Chriſt has bore it for them, even all their ſins, and all the puniſhment due unto them; but another burden, if it may be ſo called, even an exceeding and eternal weight of glory ſhall be bore by them; and every man ſhall receive his own reward, and not another's, and that according to his own works and labour, and not another's; not indeed for his works, but according to them, the nature of them, according to the grace of God, from whence his works ſpring, and by which they are performed. This the Apoſtle ſays to take off men from dwelling upon, and cenſuring the actions of others, and from making uſe of them to ſet off their own, and buoy themſelves up with vain hopes, becauſe they are better than others; and alſo to engage them to attend ſtrictly to their own actions, and conſider them ſimply and abſolutely as in themſelves, and not as compared with other mens, ſince they will be accountable for their own actions, and not other mens; and will be judged according to their own works, and not in a comparative view to others.

Ver. 6. *Let him that is taught in the word*, &c.] Inſtructed in the knowledge of the word, either of the eſſential Word, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, of his perſon, office, and grace; or rather of the written word, particularly the Goſpel, which is ſometimes called the word, without any additional epithet, which diſtinguiſhes it, and directs to the ſenſe of it; and ſometimes with ſuch, as the word of truth, the word of faith, the word of righteouſneſs, the word of reconciliation, and the word of this ſalvation, ſo called from the nature, uſe, and ſubject-matter of it. He that is taught in this, is according to the original word uſed here, *a catechumen*; and which deſigns not one that is juſt beginning to learn the firſt principles of the oracles of God, but any one that is inſtructed in it, as this word is rendered in *Rom.* ii. 18. whether more or leſs, or whether internally or externally; one that is internally taught in and by the word, is one that has been taught to know himſelf, and his loſt ſtate by nature; to know Chriſt, and ſalvation by him; to know the truths of the Goſpel, and to deny ungodlineſs, and worldly luſts, and to live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly. It may include every one that is only outwardly taught, that is but an external hearer; and ſo the *Syriac* verſion renders the clauſe, דשמע מלתא, *he that hears the word*: of which there are many ſorts, and on whom it is an incumbent duty to *communicate to him that teacheth*; who is commiſſioned, and qualified, and ſent forth by Chriſt, and whoſe office in the church is to teach the word, to preach the Goſpel, to inſtruct men in the truths of it, and teach them their duty alſo to God and men, ſuch are to be communicated to; that is, ſuch as are under their inſtructions ought to impart of their worldly ſubſtance to them, for their honourable and comfortable ſupport and maintenance; for ſince they ſpend their time, and make uſe of their talents, gifts, and abilities, for their inſtruction in ſpiritual things, it is but reaſonable, and no ſuch great matter, that they partake of their carnal things; and eſpecially ſince it is the will and ordinance of Chriſt, that they that preach the Goſpel ſhould live of it. The Apoſtle adds, *in all good things*; which may be either connected with the word *teacheth*, and ſo be deſcriptive of the teacher, as the *Arabic* verſion reads, *him that teacheth all his good things*; good doctrines, excellent truths, the wholeſome words of Chriſt, which he is entruſted with, has a knowledge and experience of; and who freely and faithfully imparts them, and conceals and keeps back nothing, but declares the whole counſel of God, all that he knows, and that is good and profitable; and carries in it a very ſtrong argument why he ſhould be communicated to: or elſe with the word *communicate*; and the ſenſe either be, let him be a partaker of, and join with him in every thing he ſays or does that is good, but not in any thing that is evil, which is a ſenſe ſome give into; or rather let him impart of his temporal good things unto him: temporal things are good as they are of God, and in themſelves, and when rightly uſed anſwer good purpoſes; all a man's good things are not to be communicated, only a part, according to his ability, and in proportion to others; and yet the communication ſhould be large and liberal, ſufficient to ſupport the teacher in an honourable manner, and to ſupply him with all the neceſſaries of life, that his mind may be free from ſecular cares, and he be at leiſure to attend to the inſtructing of others.

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[y] Midraſh Kohelet, fol. 79. 1.

Ver. 7. *Be not deceived*, &c.] By falſe teachers, who in order to engroſs all to themſelves, diſſuaded the *Galatians* from communicating to their honourable paſtors, and faithful miniſters of the word; or by themſelves, who being of a tenacious and covetous diſpoſition, deviſed various things to excuſe them from performing this their duty to the preachers of the Goſpel; as that they had families of their own to maintain, that their circumſtances were ſuch that they could give little or nothing this way, and that others, who were of better abilities in life, ought to bear this charge; and with ſuch like things endeavoured to ſatisfy their conſciences in the neglect of their duty: but this was all ſelf-deception, for *God is not mocked*; nor will he be; men may deceive themſelves, and others, with ſuch excuſes and falſe appearances, yet they cannot deceive God, who knows their hearts as well as their worldly ſubſtance, and that the omiſſion of their duty ariſes not from want of ability, but from a covetous temper; and who looks upon with-holding from his miniſters that which is due unto them, as a mocking of him, and which he will not ſuffer with impunity: *for whatſoever a man ſoweth, that ſhall be alſo reap*; as to kind, quality and quantity, generally ſpeaking; if he ſows wheat he reaps wheat, if he ſows barley he reaps barley; no man can expect to reap another ſort than what he ſows; and if it is good ſeed he may hope for a good crop; and if he ſows bountifully, he ſhall reap bountifully; but if he ſows ſparingly, he ſhall reap ſparingly; and if he ſows nothing, he can never reap any thing. This is a proverbial expreſſion, and may be applied to all actions, good and bad, and the reward and puniſhment of them, and particularly to acts of beneficence, and the enjoying of the fruits thereof; ſee the note on 2 *Cor.* ix. 6.

Ver. 8. *For he that ſoweth to his fleſh*, &c.] Not that taking due care of a man's body, ſeeking the preſervation of its health, providing proper food and raiment for himſelf, and all neceſſaries for the good and ſupport of his family, is to be called ſowing to his fleſh, nor is he to be called a carnal ſower; but he is ſuch an one that pampers his fleſh, gratifies and indulges the luſts of it, who minds the things of the fleſh, lives after it, and does the works of it, who ſpends his ſubſtance in a luxurious way upon himſelf and family; or whoſe whole bent, and ſtudy, and employment is to increaſe his worldly riches, to aggrandize himſelf and poſterity, to the neglect of his own ſoul, the intereſt of religion, the poor of the church, and miniſters of the Goſpel: *ſhall of the fleſh reap corruption*; ſhall by ſuch carnal methods procure for himſelf, in this world, nothing but what is corruptible, as ſilver and gold be, and ſuch treaſure as moth and ruſt corrupt; ſuch ſubſtance as will not endure, but is periſhing, and may be by one providence or another taken from him; ſo that all his care in ſowing comes to nothing, and is of no advantage to himſelf, nor to his poſterity; ſee *Hagg.* i. 4, 5, 6. and ſhall fall into the pit of corruption, and be puniſhed with everlaſting deſtruction, and die the ſecond death in the world to come. *But he that ſoweth to the Spirit*; not his own, but the Spirit of God; or that ſoweth ſpiritual things, that minds and ſavours the things of the Spirit, lives in the Spirit, and walks in the Spirit; that lays out his worldly ſubſtance in promoting ſpiritual things, in encouraging the ſpiritual miniſters of the word, in ſupporting the intereſt of ſpiritual religion, in relieving the poor of Chriſt's churches, in contributing to the ſpread of the Goſpel, and the adminiſtration of the word and ordinances in other places, as well as where he is more immediately concerned: *ſhall of the Spirit reap life everlaſting*; in the uſe of ſuch ſpiritual means, tho' not as meritorious, or as cauſes, he ſhall attain to, and enjoy eternal happineſs in the other world; or of, and by the Spirit of God, by whoſe grace and ſtrength he ſows, and does all the good things he does, by and of him ſanctifying him, and making him meet for it, and not of himſelf, or any works of righteouſneſs done by him, ſhall he inherit eternal life; which is the pure gift of God thro' Jeſus Chriſt, and beſtowed as a reward of his own grace.

Ver. 9. *And let us not be weary in well doing*, &c.] This may be underſtood of well doing, or doing good works in general, of every ſort; which are ſuch as are done according to the will of God, from a principle of love to him, in faith, and in the name and ſtrength of Chriſt, and with a view to the glory of God: or elſe acts of beneficence to Chriſt's miniſters and poor in particular; which are agreeable to the mind of God, and well pleaſing in his ſight; and in doing which, men ſhould not be weary; nor are they, when their ſpiritual ſtrength is renewed, and grace is in exerciſe, though they may meet with many things which tend to diſcourage and make them weary; ſuch as change in their own circumſtances, loſſes in the world, the multitude of objects, the ungratefulneſs of ſome, and unworthineſs of others: *for in due time we ſhall* *reap*; either in this world, ſooner or later; in proper time, in God's own time, by enjoying an increaſe of the fruits of righteouſneſs; for the ſeed ſown, ſhall ſpring up again; the bread that is caſt on the waters, will be found after many days; and ſuch as honour the Lord with their ſubſtance, ſhall be bleſſed with plenty of temporal good things, either they or theirs: or elſe in the other world, or at the end of this; which will be the harveſt-time, the reaping-time, the time of enjoying eternal life: *if we faint not*; but continue to the end, perſevere conſtantly in doing acts of beneficence, and patiently wait as the huſbandman does, for the precious fruits of the earth; for there muſt be a diſtance of time between ſowing and reaping; men muſt not expect to reap as ſoon as they ſow; and therefore ſhould not be weary of ſowing, nor impatient in waiting, though they don't ſee as yet the appearance of the fruits thereof; for in their ſeaſon, they'll be ſeen and enjoyed.

Ver. 10. *As we have therefore opportunity*, &c.] Or *ability*, ſo the phraſe is ſometimes uſed[z]; as occaſion requires, objects offer, as there is ability of well doing, and that continues; while the time of life laſts, which is the time for ſowing, or doing good works: *let us do good unto all men*; not only to our relations, friends, and acquaintance, but to all men; to them that are ſtrangers to us, of whatſoever nation, *Jew* or *Gentile*; and of whatſoever religion or ſect, yea, even to our very enemies: *eſpecially unto them who are of the houſhold of faith*; the children of God, that belong to his family, are true believers in Chriſt, hold the doctrine of faith, make a profeſſion of it, and keep it faſt; theſe are more eſpecially, to be the objects of chriſtian beneficence and liberality. The Apoſtle may have ſome reference to a practice among the *Jews*, who took a particular care of the children of good men that were poor; "there were two chambers "in the temple, the one was called the chamber "of ſecrets, and the other the chamber of veſſels: "into the chamber of ſecrets, religious men uſed "to put privately, whereby were privately maintained, the poor, בני טובים, *of the children of* "*good men*[a]." The *Targumiſt* on *Jer.* v. 3. has a phraſe much like to this applied to God, paraphraſing the paſſage thus; is it not, O Lord, revealed before thee, לאוטבא לעבדי הימנותא, *to do good to the ſervants of faith?*

Ver. 11. *Ye ſee how large a letter*, &c.] Whether it be read as imperative, *ſee ye*, obſerve, take notice; or as indicative, *ye ſee*, ye do ſee, or you may ſee with your own eyes, it is of no great conſequence: *how large a letter*, or *with what letters*; which ſome underſtand of the largeneſs of the characters he wrote in; others of the deformity of them, he not writing a good hand, being an *Hebrew*, and not uſed to writing *Greek*; others of the grand and ſublime matter which it contained; tho' neither of theſe ſeem to be the Apoſtle's meaning; but he intends the length of the epiſtle, the prolixity of his writing; and which he mentions, as an inſtance and expreſſion of his love to them, care of them, and concern for them; inaſmuch as he took ſo much pains, to write ſo long a letter to them, in order to ſet things right in their view, and recover them from error: not but that he had ſent as long, or longer letters to other churches, as to the *Romans*, the *Corinthians*, and *Hebrews*: but then it is to be obſerved what follows, *I have written unto you with my own hand.* The epiſtle to the *Romans* was written by *Tertius*, though dictated by the Apoſtle, *Rom.* xvi. 22. as very likely the others were by *Timothy*, or ſome other *Amanuenſis*. The Apoſtle only put his name, and wrote his ſalutation, which was his token in all his epiſtles, of the truth and genuineneſs of them; 2 *Theſſ.* iii. 17. but this was not only dictated by him, but wrote with his hand, which very probably the *Galatians* knew; and ſince it was not uſual for him to do ſo, it was the greater proof of his affection for them; that amidſt ſo much work, and ſuch labours he was employed in, he ſhould ſit down and write ſo long an epiſtle to them with his own hand, in order to expoſe the errors of the falſe teachers, and reclaim them.

Ver. 12. *As many as deſire to make a fair ſhew in the fleſh*, &c.] By whom are meant the falſe Apoſtles, who are here deſcribed, and their views, aims, and ends opened and expoſed. Theſe were very deſirous to carry a good face of things outwardly, of appearing outwardly righteous before men, and to be accounted ſo by them; and therefore did all they did to be ſeen of them, and gain applauſe from them. They were ſuch as the *Syriac* verſion renders the words, as deſired, דנשתבהרון, *to glory in the fleſh*; in their carnal deſcent and privileges, in their being *Hebrews*, the ſeed of *Abraham*, of the ſtock of *Iſrael*; and in the circumciſion of their fleſh; or in their external gifts, their natural parts, acquired abilities, learning, eloquence, and the like: moreover, as the *Vulgate Latin* verſion reads, *they were willing to pleaſe in the fleſh*; to pleaſe carnal men, *Iſrael* after the fleſh, in carnal and fleſhly things; they ſought not to pleaſe God or Chriſt, but men, and ſo were not the ſervants of either. They were deſirous, as the *Arabic* verſion renders the words, *that honour ſhould be done them in the fleſh*; they ſought external glory from men, and to be outwardly and publickly honoured by them; and all their religion was a mere outward ſhow, a piece of pageantry; which lay in the obſervation of carnal ordinances, ſuch as reſpected meats and drinks, circumciſion in the fleſh, and other carnal commandments: *they conſtrain you to be circumciſed*; not by uſing any outward force and violence; but either by their example, which had great influence, as that has both with reſpect to the embracing of evil principles, and giving in to bad practices: or by their doctrine; the arguments they made uſe of to perſuade them to it, being formed and managed with great art and ſubtlety, wrought ſtrongly upon them: or rather by overawing them, with threatnings of hell and damnation; affirming, that unleſs they were circumciſed, they could not be ſaved: and their end was, *only leſt they ſhould ſuffer perſecution for the croſs of Chriſt*, or *by the croſs of Chriſt*; meaning either the manner in which perſecution might be ſuffered, as by being reproached, ill uſed, and ſuffering death as Chriſt did; or by bearing the croſs of affliction and tribulation Chriſt has appointed for, and calls his followers to; or elſe the object for which it is endured, the preaching of the croſs, or the Goſpel of ſalvation by a crucified Chriſt; for this doctrine, and the preaching and profeſſing of it, and living a life anſwerable to it, always bring perſecution with them: and that perſecution which is more eſpecially here regarded, was what came from the *Jews*, who in general, were greatly offended at the preaching of a crucified Chriſt; and particularly from the profeſſing part among them, who though

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[z] See Hammond on Phil. iv. 10.

[a] Miſn. Shekalim, c. 5. §. 6.

they believed in Chriſt, and were not diſpleaſed at preaching in his name; yet were greatly affronted at, and highly reſented, and as much as in them lay, by reproaches and hard cenſures, and the like, perſecuted thoſe who oppoſed circumciſion, and the ceremonies of the law; and to avoid the ill-will, contempt, and perſecution of theſe, the falſe teachers preached up circumciſion, and obliged their people to ſubmit to it.

Ver. 13. *But neither they themſelves that are circumciſed*, &c.] That is, the pleaders for, and preachers of circumciſion, whether they themſelves were actually circumciſed, or no; it means thoſe that were of the circumciſion, on that ſide of the queſtion, whether heartily or not: *keep the law*; of circumciſion, as perſons may preach up that, which they themſelves don't practice; as did the *Phariſees*, the predeceſſors of theſe men; or if they did keep the law, and ſubmit to it, yet this might be done, not out of regard unto it, and zeal for it, but for ſome other end; as *Simon Magus* ſubmitted to baptiſm, and others preached Chriſt of envy and contention, and not of good-will; or if they did do it in obedience to the law, yet this was not keeping the whole law, which circumciſion obliged to; and which unleſs they did ſo keep it, would ſignify nothing; and this no man is capable of keeping perfectly, and conſequently no righteouſneſs, life, and ſalvation, can be had hereby: beſides, though theſe men were ſo zealous for the lighter matters of the law, the rites and ceremonies of it, as circumciſion, *&c.* they diſregarded the weightier and more material parts of it, as judgment, mercy, and faith; theſe they kept not, nor attended to; and many of them lived very diſſolute lives and converſations, at leaſt ſecretly, if not openly; which abundantly proved, that they were far from keeping the law; and that their pleading for it, and ſubmitting to ſome of the rituals of it, were not out of pure love and ſtrict regard to it, but for ſome other end: *but deſire to have you circumciſed, that they may glory in your fleſh*; that is, in the circumciſion of it; or as the *Ethiopic* verſion, *in your bodies*. Their view in bringing perſons to ſubmit to circumciſion was, that they might have occaſion to glory among the *Jews*, and boaſt to them of the numbers of proſelytes they brought, and of the ſervice they did to *Judaiſm*, and ſo increaſe their fame and glory among them.

Ver. 14. *But God forbid that I ſhould glory*, &c.] The Apoſtle on the contrary, expreſſes his averſion to glorying in any thing theſe men did; not in his outward carnal privileges as a *Jew*; nor in his moral, civil, and legal righteouſneſs; nor in his gifts and attainments; nor in his labours and ſucceſs, as of himſelf; nor in the fleſh of others, or in any outward corporal ſubjection to any ordinance, legal or evangelical; his glorying and rejoicing, were rather in the ſpirituality, the faith, hope, love, patience, order, and ſtedfaſtneſs of the ſaints, than in any thing in the fleſh, either his own or others: and indeed, he choſe not to glory in any thing, *ſave in the croſs of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*; meaning either the infirmities, reproaches, tribulations, and perſecutions, which he endured for the ſake of Chriſt, and the preaching of his Goſpel; or the Goſpel, the doctrine of the croſs of Chriſt, and ſalvation by it; or rather a crucified Chriſt himſelf, whom he preached; though counted fooliſhneſs by ſome, and was a ſtumbling to others: he gloried in him, and determined to know, and make known none but him, in the buſineſs of ſalvation; he gloried in him as crucified, and in his croſs; not in the wood of the croſs, but in the effects of his crucifixion; in the peace, pardon, righteouſneſs, life, ſalvation, and eternal glory, which come through the death of the croſs; he gloried in Chriſt as his wiſdom, righteouſneſs, ſanctification, and redemption: *by whom the world is crucified to me*; ſo that he feared not the worſt men, and things in it, any more than he would one that was faſten'd to a croſs, or dead; ſince Chriſt by his crucifixion and death, had overcome the world, the prince of it, the men and malice of it, the ſin that was in it, and had made him more than a conqueror alſo; his faith in a crucified Chriſt, overcame the world likewiſe; ſo that he looked upon it as the *Iſraelites* ſaw the *Egyptians*, dead on the ſea-ſhore; nor did he affect and love, but trampled upon and deſpiſed, as crucified perſons generally are, thoſe things in it which are the moſt alluring to the fleſh, the luſts of it; the doctrine of grace, of a crucified Chriſt, taught him to deny the riches, honours, pleaſures, profits, and applauſe of the world; which were to him as droſs, in compariſon of the knowledge of Chriſt Jeſus his Lord: the ceremonial law alſo, the elements of the world, were dead unto him, being nailed to the croſs of Chriſt, to be of no further uſe and ſervice unto men: *and I unto the world*; that is, am crucified to the world, as the *Syriac* and *Arabic* verſions expreſs it; that is, he was deſpiſed by the world for the ſake of a crucified Chriſt, as the world was by him, in compariſon of him; the world had no affection for him, as he had none for the world; and as the ceremonial law was dead to him, ſo he was dead to that, through the body of Chriſt, and had nothing to do with theſe beggarly elements, nor they with him, which ſenſe is confirmed by the following words.

Ver. 15. *For in Chriſt Jeſus*, &c.] Theſe words are omitted in the *Syriac* and *Ethiopic* verſions; ſee the note on ch. v. 6. and 1 *Cor.* vii. 19. they contain a reaſon why the Apoſtle gloried in a crucified Chriſt, and looked upon the world as dead to him, and he to that, in every ſenſe of it; particularly as it may deſign *the worldly ſanctuary* of the *Jews*, and all the rites and ceremonies appertaining to it; and among the reſt *circumciſion*, which *availeth not any thing*; neither as a command, type, or privilege; or in the buſineſs of ſalvation, being aboliſhed by Chriſt: *nor uncircumciſion*; being now no bar to the Goſpel, Goſpel ordinances, or a Goſpel church-ſtate; or to any of the bleſſings of the everlaſting covenant, which come upon the uncircumciſion, as well as the circumciſion. But to apply theſe words to baptiſm and non-baptiſm, is a wretched perverſion, and making a very ill uſe of them, whereby the minds of men are worked up to an indifference to a chriſtian inſtitution; for though baptiſm is of no avail in the buſineſs of ſalvation, yet it can't be ſaid of it, as of circumciſion, that it avails not any thing as a command, for it is a ſtanding ordinance of Chriſt; or as an emblem and ſign, for it is ſignificative of the death and burial, and reſurrection of Chriſt; or as a privilege, for it is of uſe to lead the faith of God's people to his blood and righteouſneſs, for pardon and juſtification; for he that believes and is baptized, ſhall be ſaved; and it is neceſſary to church communion: and on the other hand, it can't be ſaid that non-baptiſm avails not; it is a bar to church fellowſhip; and a neglect of baptiſm in thoſe who are the proper ſubjects of it, is reſented by Chriſt, and is a rejecting of the counſel of God againſt themſelves; which was the caſe of the *Phariſees*, in the times of *John* the *Baptiſt*: *but a new creature*. The phraſe is *Rabbinical*; ſee the note on 2 *Cor.* v. 17. by which is meant, not a new creation of a man, as a man, of the members of his body, or of the faculties of his ſoul; nor of an external reformation, or a walking in newneſs of life, which is the fruit and effect of this new creation work; but an internal principle of grace, a good work of God begun in the ſoul, called the hidden man of the heart, the new man, Chriſt formed in us, of which faith that works by love is a part: this is called a *creature*, and ſo not of man, but God; for none can create but himſelf; and in which work man is purely paſſive, as the heavens and the earth were in their creation: 'tis *but* a creature, and therefore needs divine ſupport, freſh ſtrength from God, and frequent ſupplies of grace to maintain and preſerve it; nor is it to be truſted in, but the grace which is in Chriſt, from whence it comes, and by which it is ſecured. This is a *new* creature, in oppoſition to the old man; and becauſe it is a principle in man, which never was there before; it conſiſts of a new heart and ſpirit, of new eyes, ears, hands, and feet, expreſſive of new principles and actions, of new light, life, love, deſires, joys, comforts, and duties: now this is of avail; 'tis a branch of the new covenant of grace, which God has therein promiſed to beſtow on his people; 'tis an evidence of intereſt in Chriſt, the new and living way to the Father, and eternal life; ſuch are new-born babes, regenerated perſons, and have a right and meetneſs for the kingdom of God; ſhall poſſeſs the new *Jeruſalem*, ſhall dwell in the new heavens and new earth; they are called by the Lord's new name, the adopted children of God; and have a new ſong put into their mouths, which none but redeemed and new-born ſouls can ſing; and ſhall drink the new wine of endleſs joys and everlaſting pleaſures, with Chriſt in his Father's kingdom. Theſe words are ſaid to be taken out of the *Apocalypſe* of *Moſes*, a ſpurious book, but without any foundation.

Ver. 16. *And as many as walk according to this rule*, &c.] Or *canon*; meaning not the canon of the ſcriptures in general, which is the perfect rule, and only ſtandard of faith and practice; according to which we are to walk, believe and act; but either the doctrine of juſtification by the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, the ſubject of this epiſtle, the truth the Apoſtle had been explaining, vindicating, and confirming; and which to depart from, is going out of the way of truth; and an abiding by it, is walking in it; and is a good rule and ſtandard, by which to diſtinguiſh between truth and error; for whatever is contrary to that article of faith, cannot be true: or elſe the rule delivered in the preceding verſe, declaring circumciſion and uncircumciſion to be of no avail in ſalvation, but a new creature; and to walk according to this rule, is to renounce all truſt in, and dependance upon any outward things; to believe alone in Chriſt, for righteouſneſs and life; to live by faith upon him, and to walk in newneſs of life, under the influences of his Spirit and grace: *peace be on them, and mercy.* This is the Apoſtle's godly wiſh, unfeigned deſire, and hearty prayer for all ſuch perſons, be they who they will; *Jews* or *Gentiles*, circumciſed or uncircumciſed: by *peace* he means, a view of their peace with God, made by the blood of Chriſt; peace in their own conſciences, which paſſes all underſtanding, and ariſes from a comfortable ſenſe of juſtification by the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, of pardon by his blood, and atonement by his ſacrifice; and which is enjoyed in a way of believing; and alſo peace with one another, among themſelves as brethren, which is a very deſirable bleſſing: in ſhort, it includes all proſperity and happineſs, inward and outward, temporal, ſpiritual, and eternal: and by *mercy*, he deſigns the love and grace of God, to ſinful miſerable creatures in themſelves, which is the ſpring and fountain of all peace and proſperity; and which is diſplayed in the covenant of grace, and all the bleſſings of it; in the miſſion and incarnation of Chriſt, and redemption by him; in regeneration, forgiveneſs of ſin, and compleat ſalvation; and intends a freſh diſcovery, manifeſtation, and application of the mercy of God to his children; who often ſtand in need thereof, being diſtreſſed with the guilt of ſin; or are under deſertions or afflictive providences, at which time to have mercy ſhewed them, is exceeding ſuitable and agreeable: when the Apoſtle wiſhes theſe to be *on* them, it ſignifies that theſe bleſſings come from above, as every good gift does; that they deſcend as a cloud, and reſt upon them, and abide with them, refreſhing, comforting, and protecting them: he adds, *and upon the Iſrael of God*; which is a further deſcription of the perſons, for whom he prays for theſe bleſſings; and is not to be underſtood by way of diſtinction from them, but as an amplification of their character; and as pointing out the *Iſrael*, by way of emphaſis, the *Iſrael*, or *Iſraelites* indeed, the ſpiritual *Iſrael*, as diſtinct from *Iſrael* according to the fleſh; ſee 1 *Cor.* x. 18. The *Iſrael of God*, or as the *Arabic* verſion reads it, *Iſrael the propriety of God*; which he has a right unto, and a claim upon; who are choſen by him, *Iſrael* his elect; who are redeemed by him, out of every kindred, tongue, people, and nation; who are called by his grace, and are ſtiled *Iſrael* his called; who are juſtified in his Son, and by his righteouſneſs; and for whoſe ſake he is exalted as a prince and a ſaviour, to give them repentance and remiſſion of ſin; and who are, or will be ſaved by him, with an everlaſting ſalvation; and is a name that includes all God's elect, whether *Jews* or *Gentiles:* though it may have a particular reſpect to ſuch of the *Iſraelites*, or *Jews*, God had foreknown and reſerved for himſelf; and who believed in Chriſt, and walked as new creatures, without confidence in the fleſh. The *Jews* themſelves own, that ſtrangers, or proſelytes, ſhall be called by the name of *Iſrael*; ſo they [b] explain *Iſa.* xliv. 5. latter part.

Ver. 17. *From henceforth let no man trouble me*, &c.] Having ſo clearly ſtated and explained the doctrine of juſtification, and ſo largely proved that it is not by works, but by faith, and that circumciſion, and other rituals of the ceremonial law were not neceſſary to it, he deſires, nay, in an authoritative way he requires, that they give him no further trouble on that head; ſignifying, that he expected they would be ſatiſfied with what he had wrote, and abide by the truth and obey it, as they had formerly done; that he ſhould hear no more objections from them, or complaints of them: nor need they further enquire his ſenſe of theſe things; by this they would fully know his faith and practice; as indeed they might alſo, by his ſuffering perſecutions on the account of his faith, and his preaching the Goſpel of Chriſt, and particularly this part of it: *for I bear in my body, the marks of the Lord Jeſus*; by which he means, not the marks in Chriſt's hands, feet, and ſide; but the reproachful characters the Apoſtle was ſtigmatized with; or the real ſcars in his body, made by beating, ſcourging, and ſtoning of him; or his ſufferings and perſecutions in general, which he endured for the ſake of Chriſt and his Goſpel; ſee 2 *Cor.* xi. 23—28. The alluſion is either to ſervants and ſoldiers, who when taken into ſervice, uſed to have ſome particular mark put upon them, that they might be known to be ſuch an one's ſervant, or ſoldier[c]; as the *Hebrew* ſervant, who was willing to ſerve his maſter, had his ear bored through with an awl, *Exod.* xxi. 6. ſo the Apoſtle was known to be a firm and faithful ſervant, and a good ſoldier of Chriſt, by the reproaches and afflictions which he underwent for his ſake; or elſe to thoſe marks, which by way of reproach and puniſhment, were made upon fugitive ſervants, or ſoldiers, that deſerted; as the ſufferings of the Apoſtle were deſigned as reproaches to him, and puniſhments of him, for preaching the Goſpel of Chriſt; but theſe he gloried in, and bore and carried as trophies and marks of honour. Juſt as veteran ſoldiers, ſhow their ſcars and wounds they have received in battle, as tokens of their valour and courage, in facing and fighting the enemy in greateſt danger: theſe he is ſaid to bear *in his body*; not in the bodies of others, he gloried not in their fleſh, as the falſe Apoſtles did; nor in the circumciſion of his own fleſh, the ſcar that left there the mark of *Moſes* and of a *Jew*; but in thoſe things which were marks of his being a diſciple of Chriſt, and not of *Moſes*, and which he bore for his ſake: and ſince therefore it was ſo eaſy to diſcern on which ſide of the queſtion he was, from his ſuffering perſecution for the croſs of Chriſt; and ſince he had ſo many and ſuch great trials and exerciſes, he with apoſtolical gravity and authority, commands them to give him no more trouble from the time of their reception of the epiſtle, hence forward.

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[b] Jarchi & Abarbinel in Iſa. xliv. 5.

Ver. 18. *Brethren*, &c.] So he calls them, to teſtify his affection for them, notwithſtanding their infirmity and inſtability, and the roughneſs with which he had treated them; and to ſhew his great humility and condeſcenſion in owning the relation, and putting them on a level with himſelf, which the pride of the falſe teachers would not ſuffer them to do. *The grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt be with your ſpirit*; which is his concluding benediction and uſual ſalutation and token in all his epiſtles: he wiſhes, that more gifts of grace might be beſtowed upon them; that the Goſpel of the grace of God might be continued with them; that the love of Chriſt might be ſhed abroad in their hearts; that they might receive out of his fulneſs, grace for grace; that there might be an increaſe of grace in their ſouls; that it might abound in them, and they grow in the exerciſe of it: he does not pray that the law of *Moſes*, or the righteouſneſs of works, but that the grace of Chriſt might be with them; not in the mere notion of it, but in the ſpiritual experience of it; that it might be in their hearts, and with their ſpirits, quickening, comforting, and ſtrengthening them; making them more ſpiritual and evangelical in their frames and duties, and freeing them from a carnal and legal ſpirit: to all which he ſets his *Amen*; ſignifying his deſire that ſo it might be, and his faith that ſo it would be. The ſubſcription of the letter follows, *unto the Galatians, written from Rome*; where perhaps he was then a priſoner; the *Arabic* verſion adds, *by Titus and Luke*; who might be ſent with it, but the ſubſcriptions of the epiſtles are not to be depended on.

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[c] Vid. Lydium de re militare, l. 1. c. 6.

AN
EXPOSITION, &c.

The Epiſtle of PAUL the Apoſtle to the *EPHESIANS*.

THE city of *Epheſus* is, by *Pliny* [a], called the other light of *Aſia*; *Miletus* was one, and *Epheſus* the other: it was the metropolis of the leſſer *Aſia*, and one of the twelve cities of *Ionia*, and the firſt and chief of them: it is ſaid to be built by the *Amazons* [b]: it was famous for the magnificent temple of *Diana*; and the inhabitants of it were very much given to ſuperſtition and idolatry, and even to deviliſh arts, *Acts* xix. 19. It abounded with orators and philoſophers, and men of great wiſdom and learning [c]; and was formerly a very rich, trading, flouriſhing city, but now a village, and a poor deſolate place; it retains the name of *Eſeſo*, tho' the *Turks* call it *Aia Salik*. Hither the Apoſtle *Paul* firſt went after he had been at *Corinth*, tho' he then made but a ſhort ſtay; when he came thither again, he found twelve diſciples, and was the inſtrument of making a great many more: here he continued two or three years, and formed a Goſpel-church, very large and flouriſhing, to whom he writes this Epiſtle; and which was written by him when he was a priſoner at *Rome*, as appears by ſeveral paſſages in it, ch. iii. 1. and iv. 1. and vi. 20. and ſeems to have been written much about the ſame time as were the Epiſtles to the *Philippians*, and to the *Coloſſians*, and to *Philemon*. Dr. *Hammond* thinks it was written about the year 58, and Dr. *Lightfoot* places it in 59, and the fifth year of *Nero*. The occaſion of it was the foreſight the Apoſtle had of falſe teachers that would ſpring up in this church, after his death, and ſpread their pernicious doctrines, and draw away diſciples after them, and do great miſchief in the church; wherefore the deſign of this Epiſtle is to eſtabliſh the ſaints in the doctrines of the Goſpel, that ſo they might not be carried away with the errors of the wicked: the ſubject-matter of it is moſt excellent; it treats of the moſt ſublime doctrines of grace, of divine predeſtination, and eternal election, of redemption by Chriſt, and of peace and pardon by his blood, of converſion by the power of efficacious grace, and of ſalvation by the free grace of God, in oppoſition to works: it alſo very largely treats of the nature and uſefulneſs of the Goſpel-miniſtry, and of gifts qualifying for it, and of the ſeveral duties of religion incumbent on chriſtians; and the method which is uſed is exceeding apt and beautiful, for the Apoſtle firſt begins with the doctrines of the Goſpel, which he diſtinctly handles and explains, and then proceeds to enforce the duties belonging to men, both as men and chriſtians.

CHAP. I.

IN this chapter are contained the inſcription of the Epiſtle, the ſalutation of the perſons to whom it is written, the Apoſtle's thankſgiving for bleſſings received by him, and them; in which the efficient, moving, procuring, and final cauſes of ſalvation are taken notice of, and the ſeveral parts and branches of it obſerved; and the whole is concluded with prayers for the *Epheſians*; in which mention is made of various things to the comfort of the ſaints, and to the glory of Chriſt. The inſcription is in ver. 1. in which the author of the Epiſtle puts his name, declares his office, and how he came into it; and deſcribes the perſons to whom he wrote it, by their religious characters, and the place of their abode. The ſalutation is in ver. 2. which is common to all his Epiſtles; and in ver. 3. is the thankſgiving to God, as the God and Father of Chriſt, for ſpiritual bleſſings in Chriſt in general; and then he proceeds to particulars, and begins with election, which is repreſented as an act of God the Father, as of particular perſons, as done in Chriſt, and from the foundation of the world, the end of which is perfect holineſs and love, ver. 4. and which is further illuſtrated under the name of predeſtination; the bleſſing which that is an appointment to, is the adoption of children; the moving cauſe of it, is the good pleaſure of the divine will; the inſtrumental cauſe or means, is Chriſt Jeſus; the end with God is for himſelf, ver. 5. and which, in the next verſe, is explained of the glory of his grace; to which grace, acceptance with him in Chriſt is owing; and which is another ſpiritual bleſſing, or a branch of election and predeſtination, ver. 6. To which is added another, and that is redemption; the author of which is Chriſt; the price, or procuring and meritorious cauſe of it is his blood; a branch of which is forgiveneſs of ſins; and the whole is according to the plenteous and free grace of God, ver. 7. the entire plan and ſcheme of which is the produce of abundant wiſdom and prudence, ver. 8. and is no other than the myſtery of the will of God revealed in the Goſpel, according to his ſovereign will and purpoſe, ver. 9. which lay hid within himſelf until the fulneſs of times, or the Goſpel-diſpenſation, in which Chriſt being ſent, has gathered all together in himſelf, ver. 10. thro' whom the ſaints enjoy the inheritance they are adopted to in predeſtination, which is the effect of an unfruſtrable purpoſe, and a wiſe counſel and will, ver. 11. The end of which is, that thoſe predeſtinated, redeemed, and adopted ones, ſhould be to the praiſe and glory of God, ver. 12. and who are deſcribed as ſuch, who firſt truſted in Chriſt upon hearing the Goſpel; and after they had believed in him, were ſealed by the holy Spirit, ſaid to be the Spirit of promiſe, ver. 13. and who is alſo ſpoken of as the earneſt and pledge of the ſaints inheritance, and who will continue ſo until all the people of God are redeemed from the grave in the reſurrection-morn, which will alſo iſſue in the praiſe and glory of God, ver. 14. and now on account of all theſe bleſſings of predeſtination, adoption, redemption, vocation, and the ſealing of the Spirit; as alſo, becauſe of their faith in Chriſt, and love to the ſaints, theſe believers were poſſeſſed of, the Apoſtle gave thanks, and continued to give thanks to God in his prayers to him, ver. 15, 16. The object of his prayers is deſcribed, as the God of Chriſt, and Father of glory; the petitions to him are for an increaſe of knowledge of Chriſt from the Spirit, as a Spirit of wiſdom and revelation, ver. 17. and that they might have a clearer view of the nature of that glory they were called unto, and were hoping for, ver. 18. and obſerve the wonderful diſplay of the power of God in their converſion and faith; which is illuſtrated, by comparing it with that power which was ſhewn in raiſing Chriſt from the dead, ver. 20. which leads the Apoſtle to take notice of the exaltation of Chriſt at the right hand of God in heaven, conſequent on his reſurrection; where he is advanced above angels and men, and has all things in ſubjection to him for the good of his church, of which he is the head, and which is his body and fulneſs, ver. 21, 22, 23.

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[a] L. 5. c. 29.

[b] Plin. ib. Juſtin ex Trogo, l. 2. c. 4.

[c] Philoſtrat. Vita Apollon. l. 8. c. 3.

Ver. 1. *Paul an Apoſtle of Jeſus Chriſt by the will of God*, &c.] See the notes on *Rom.* i. 1. 1 *Cor.* i. 1. 2 *Cor.* i. 1. and *Gal.* i. 1. *To the ſaints which are at Epheſus*; of this place, ſee the note above upon the title of the Epiſtle, and on *Acts* xviii. 19. The perſons reſiding there, to whom the Epiſtle is written, are deſcribed by their character, as *ſaints*; being ſeparated by the grace of God the Father in eternal election; whoſe ſins were expiated by the blood and ſacrifice of Chriſt; and to whom he himſelf was made ſanctification; and who were internally ſanctified by the Spirit of God, and lived holy lives and converſations. The *Alexandrian* copy, and ſome others, and the *Vulgate Latin* verſion read, *to all the ſaints*; whether officers of the church, or private members, whether rich or poor, bond or free, ſtrong or weak believers, of greater or leſſer abilities. *And to the faithful in Chriſt Jeſus*; who were in Chriſt, not only by electing grace, but were openly and manifeſtatively in him, thro' converting grace; and abode in him as branches in the vine; continued conſtant, and perſevered in faith and holineſs; and were faithful to the cauſe and intereſt of Chriſt, and to his Goſpel and ordinances; and were hearty and ſincere in the profeſſion of their faith in Chriſt, and love to him and his: or, as the *Arabic* verſion renders it, *and to them that believe in Jeſus Chriſt*; with all their hearts, to the ſaving of their ſouls; who look unto him, venture on him, rely upon him, and truſt in him for life and ſalvation, and who ſhall certainly be ſaved; of ſuch the church at *Epheſus* conſiſted, to whom this Epiſtle was written: of the church there, ſee the note on *Acts* xx. 17.

Ver. 2. *Grace be to you, and peace from God*, &c.] See the note on *Rom.* i. 7.

Ver. 3. *Bleſſed be the God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, &c.] God, the firſt perſon in the Trinity, is the God of Chriſt, as Chriſt is man and mediator; he choſe and appointed him to be the mediator, and made a covenant with him as ſuch; he formed and prepared an human nature for him, and anointed it with the Holy Ghoſt above meaſure, and ſupported it under all its trials and ſufferings, and at laſt glorified it: and Chriſt, as man, prayed to him as his God, believed, hoped, and truſted in him as ſuch, and loved him as in ſuch a relation to him, and chearfully obeyed his commands. And the ſame is the Father of Chriſt, as Chriſt is God; as ſuch he is the Son of God; not by creation, as angels and *Adam*, nor by adoption as ſaints, but by natural generation; he being the only-begotten of the Father, his own proper Son, of the ſame nature and perfections with him, and equal to him. Now to *bleſs* God is neither to invoke nor confer a bleſſing on him; for there is none greater than he to be called upon; nor does he need any thing, nor can he receive any thing from his creature; but it is either to congratulate his greatneſs and goodneſs, to aſcribe bleſſing, glory, and honour to him, or to give thanks unto him, both for temporal and ſpiritual mercies. And the reaſons why he is bleſſed, or praiſed by the ſaints as the God and Father of Chriſt, are; becauſe theſe are his New Teſtament titles, under which he is more clearly made known, and in which he delights; and becauſe he is their God and Father in Chriſt; nor can they come to him in any other way, but thro' him; and becauſe it is thro' him that all their bleſſings come to them, and therefore all their praiſes muſt go this way, as follows: *who hath bleſſed us with all ſpiritual bleſſings in heavenly* places *in Chriſt*; God is the author and giver of all bleſſings; and he bleſſes his people with them, as he is the God and Father of Chriſt, and as he is their Covenant-God and Father in Chriſt; and he only can bleſs, if he bleſſes not, none can; and if he bleſſes, they are bleſſed indeed: the *us* that are bleſſed, are ſuch who deſerve, according to the tenor of the law, to be curſed; and are not all men, but ſome diſtinct from others; and who are before deſcribed as ſaints, and faithful in Chriſt Jeſus; and include both *Jews* and *Gentiles*, who belong to the election of grace. And the bleſſings ſuch are bleſſed with are *ſpiritual*, ſo called to diſtinguiſh them from temporal bleſſings. The *Jews* have the like diſtinction of טובות זמניות, *temporal bleſſings*, and טובות רוחניות, *ſpiritual bleſſings* [d]; which latter are ſolid, ſubſtantial, and laſting bleſſings; and which concern the good of the ſoul or ſpirit of man; and

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[d] Tzeror Hammor, fol. 79. 2.

are agreeable to, and deſired by a ſpiritual man; and are applied by the holy Spirit of God; and ſo the *Ethiopic* verſion renders it, *with every bleſſing of the holy Spirit*: and which are very comprehenſive, and take in all the fulneſs of grace in Chriſt; all the bleſſings, and ſure mercies of the everlaſting covenant; all things pertaining to life and godlineſs, ſuch as juſtification, peace, pardon, adoption, ſanctification, and eternal life: and with theſe the ſaints are bleſſed *in heavenly* places; God that bleſſes them is in heaven, and ſo is Chriſt in whom they are bleſſed; and the completion of their bleſſedneſs will be in heaven, where their hope is laid up, and their inheritance is reſerved: and this phraſe may denote the ſafety of them, being out of the reach of any enemy, ſin, ſatan, or the world, to deprive them of them, as well as the nature of them; for it may be read, *in heavenly things*, and ſo diſtinguiſhes theſe bleſſings from ſuch as are of an earthly kind; and points at the original of them, being ſuch as deſcend from above, come down from heaven; and alſo the tendency of them, which is to heaven; and being what give a right unto, and a meetneſs for the kingdom of heaven: and theſe they are bleſſed with *in Chriſt*; as he is their head and repreſentative, and as they are members in him, and partakers of him; thro' whom, and for whoſe ſake they are conveyed unto them, and who himſelf is the ſum and ſubſtance of them. Agreeable to this way of ſpeaking the *Targumiſt*, *Jonathan ben Uzziel* on *Numb.* vi. 27. paraphraſes the laſt clauſe thus, *I will bleſs them*, במימרי, *in my word*. The date of theſe bleſſings, *hath bleſſed us*, may reſpect either firſt converſion, when the diſcovery and application of the bleſſings of grace are made to God's people; or the making of the covenant with Chriſt, their head, to whom all grace was then given, and to them in him, and their election was in Chriſt, as follows.

Ver. 4. *According as he hath choſen us in him*, &c.] This choice cannot be underſtood of a national one, as *Iſrael* of old were choſen by the Lord; for the perſons, the Apoſtle writes to, were not a nation; nor does he addreſs all the inhabitants of *Epheſus*, only the ſaints and faithful in Chriſt that reſided there; nor are they all intended here, if any of them. However, not they only, ſince the Apoſtle includes himſelf, and perhaps ſome others, who did not belong to that place, nor were of that country: nor does this choice regard them as a church; for though the ſaints at *Epheſus* were in a church-ſtate, yet the Apoſtle does not write to them under that formal conſideration, but as ſaints and faithful; nor are theſe perſons ſaid to be choſen to church privileges, but to grace and glory, to be holy and blameleſs: beſides, from ver. 3. to ver. 12. incluſive, the Apoſtle ſeems to ſpeak of himſelf, and ſome others, who firſt truſted in Chriſt, as diſtinct from the believers at *Epheſus*, ver. 13. nor is this choice of perſons to an office, for all that are here intended were not Apoſtles, or paſtors, or deacons: nor can it deſign effectual vocation, or the call of perſons in time by efficacious grace; becauſe this was before the foundation of the world, as follows: but it intends an eternal election of particular perſons to everlaſting life and ſalvation; and which is the firſt bleſſing of grace, and the foundation one, upon which all the reſt proceed, and *according* to which they are diſpenſed; for according to predeſtination are vocation, juſtification, and glorification. The author of this choice is God, God the Father, who is diſtinguiſhed from Chriſt, in whom this act is made; and it is according to his fore-knowledge, and is an act of his grace, and is entirely ſovereign: the objects of it, *us*, are not angels, but men, conſidered as unfallen with reſpect to the end, and as fallen with reſpect to the means; and theſe not all mankind: to chuſe, implies the contrary; and they that are choſen are diſtinguiſhed from others, and are repreſented as few; nor do all men partake either of the means or end appointed in the decree of election; and yet ſome of all nations, *Jews* and *Gentiles*, are included in it; tho' none for any previous qualifications in them, as not for their good works, faith, holineſs, or perſeverance therein; for theſe are fruits and effects of election, and therefore can't be cauſes or conditions of it: and this choice is made in Chriſt; and the perſons choſen are choſen in him, and by being choſen they come to be in him; for this refers not to their open being in him at converſion, as believers, but to their ſecret being in him before time. Chriſt, as mediator, is the object of election himſelf; and all the elect were choſen in him as their head, in whoſe hands their perſons, grace, and glory are, and ſo are ſafe and ſecure in him: the *Arabic* verſion renders it, *by him*; not as the meritorious cauſe, for Chriſt's merits are not the cauſe of election, tho' they are of redemption and ſalvation; but as the means, in order to the end: the *Ethiopic* verſion renders it, *to him*; to ſalvation by him, and to the obtaining of his glory; as if he and his benefits, being the end of this choice, were intended; which was made *before the foundation of the world*: and that it was ſo early, is certain, from the love of God to his people, which this is the effect of, and which is an everlaſting love; and from the covenant which was made with Chriſt from everlaſting, on account of theſe choſen ones, when Chriſt was ſet up as the head and repreſentative of them; and from the proviſion of all ſpiritual bleſſings for them in it, which proceed according to this choice; and from the preparation of a kingdom for them from the foundation of the world; and from the nature of God's decrees, which are eternal; for no new will, or act of will, can ariſe in God, or any decree be made by him, which was not from eternity: God's fore-knowledge is eternal, and ſo is his decree, and is no other than himſelf decreeing. The end of this choice follows, *that we ſhould be holy, and without blame, before him in love*; the objects of it are not choſen becauſe they were holy, but that they might partake of the ſanctification of the Spirit; that they might be ſanctified by him here, and be perfectly holy hereafter; and be without fault and blame, both in this life, as juſtified by the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, and as waſhed in his blood; and in the life to come, being entirely freed from all ſin, and without ſpot, or wrinkle, or any ſuch thing; and appear ſo in the ſight of Chriſt, who will preſent them to himſelf, and in the ſight of his Father, to whom they will alſo be preſented by him, even in the ſight of divine juſtice: and this will be all *in love*; or *through love*, as the *Syriac* verſion renders it; or *thro' his love*, as the *Arabic* verſion; for the love of God is the ſource and ſpring of election itſelf, and of holineſs and happineſs, the end of it; and which is ſhed abroad in the hearts of God's people now; and will be more fully comprehended and enjoyed in the other world; and which cauſes love again in them to him. A phraſe ſomewhat like this is uſed by the *Targumiſt* on *Eccl.* xi. 6. where, ſpeaking of a man's children, ſays; “ it is not known unto thee “ which of them, אתבחר למהוי טב, *is choſen to* “ *be good*, this, or that, or both of them, to be

“ alike good.” Some copies put the ſtop at *before him*; and read the phraſe, *in love*, in connexion with the words following, thus, *in love*, or *by love hath predeſtinated us*; ſo the *Syriac* verſion.

Ver. 5. *Having predeſtinated us*, &c.] Predeſtination, taken in a large ſenſe, includes both election and reprobation, and even reaches to all affairs and occurrences in the world; to the perſons, lives, and circumſtances of men; to all mercies, temporal or ſpiritual; and to all afflictions, whether in love or in wrath: and indeed providence, or the the diſpenſations of providence, are no other than the execution of divine predeſtination; but here it is the ſame with election, and is concerned with the ſame perſons, and has regard to a ſpecial bleſſing, the elect are appointed to, as follows; *unto the adoption of children by Jeſus Chriſt unto himſelf*; by which is meant, either the grace of adoption, which is an act of the Father's love, a bleſſing provided and ſecured in the covenant of grace; and is of perſons to an inheritance, to which they have no legal right; and is entirely free, there being no need on the adopter's part, and no worth on the part of the adopted: or rather the inheritance they are adopted to; which exceeds all others, is incorruptible, undefiled, and fades not away; and lies among the ſaints in light, and belongs to all the children of God: and this they are predeſtinated unto by God the Father, who takes them into his family, puts them among the children, and gives them a goodly heritage: and that *by Jeſus Chriſt*; or through him; for both the grace of adoption, and the kingdom and glory they are adopted to, come by and through him as mediator; through his eſpouſing their perſons, aſſuming their nature, and redeeming them from under the law and its curſes; through his giving them a power and privilege, openly to be the ſons of God; and through faith in him, whereby they are manifeſtatively ſuch: the phraſe *unto himſelf*, either refers to God the Father, who has choſen, ſet apart, formed and reſerved his people and children for himſelf, for his peculiar treaſure, and for his own glory; or to Jeſus Chriſt, that he might have ſome brethren, and they be conformed to him, and he be the firſt-born among them, and in all things have the preeminence; and that they might be with him, and behold his glory, and he be glorified in them: and this act of divine predeſtination, was *according to the good pleaſure of his will*: the will of God is the rule of all his actions, and of all his acts of grace and goodneſs; and the good-pleaſure of it appears, in the predeſtination of men to grace and glory: and from hence it is manifeſt, that foreſeen faith, holineſs, and good works, are excluded from being the moving cauſes of predeſtinating grace; and that it is wholly to be reſolved into the good-will and pleaſure of God; the view in it being entirely as follows,

Ver. 6. *To the praiſe of the glory of his grace*, &c.] The *grace* of God manifeſtly appears, in the predeſtination of men to adoption; in that God had no need of ſons, he having a dear and well-beloved one, in whom he is well pleaſed; and in that thoſe he adopts, are ſo unworthy of the relation; and in that men and not angels, ſhould be taken by him into his family; and that ſome, and not others of the ſame race; and that this ſhould be before the world was; and in providing Chriſt as a redeemer, to open the way for the reception of this grace and happineſs; and in appointing the grace of faith to be the receiver of it: and the *glory* of the grace of God appears herein; the glory of God, is the ſupreme end of all he does; and the glory of his grace, and not his power, or other perfections of his, and the manifeſtative glory of that is here intended; yea, the *praiſe* of that glory: and this end is anſwered, when the children of God aſcribe their adoption to the free grace of God; and when they admire it, and are thankful for it, and walk worthy of the relation they are brought into: *wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved*; the *Vulgate Latin* and *Ethiopic* verſions read, *his own beloved Son*, and ſo the *Claromontane* exemplar; the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who is the beloved of God the Father; and was ſo from everlaſting, and will be ſo to everlaſting; which has appeared by his nearneſs to him, lying in his boſom; by his being privy to all his counſels, purpoſes, and deſigns; in putting all things into his hands, and in ſhewing him all that he does; and by his giving him honour and glory, as man and mediator: and he is the beloved of the ſaints, for the tranſcendent excellencies that are in him, and for his love to them, and for what he has done for them, and is unto them; and in him is their acceptance: which is to be underſtood of the acceptance of their perſons, as founded in the blood and righteouſneſs of Chriſt, and ſo of their ſervices in him; of God's act of delight and complacency in them, as conſidered in Chriſt; who looks upon them, and is well pleaſed with them, and reſts in his love towards them; which is an amazing inſtance of grace: it was grace that gave them a being in Chriſt, and which has provided in predeſtination every thing to make them grateful to God; and the very act of acceptance is of mere grace; for internal grace, or grace infuſed, is not here meant, but the free favour of God: ſome read not *in which*, but *which* εχαριτωσεν, *he freely gave us in the beloved*; ſo the *Alexandrian* copy, and ſome others, and the *Syriac* and *Arabic* verſions.

Ver. 7. *In whom we have redemption through his blood*, &c.] Redemption ſuppoſes captivity and ſlavery, and is a deliverance out of it; God's elect by nature, are in bondage to ſin, ſatan, and the law; through the grace of Chriſt, they are redeemed from all iniquity; ranſomed out of the hands of him that is ſtronger than they; and are freed from the law, its bondage, curſe, and condemnation, and from every other enemy: and this benefit Chriſt is the author of; he was called to be the redeemer of his people from all eternity; and he was ſent in the fulneſs of time, to procure the redemption of them; to which he had a right, being their near kinſman; and for which he was every way fit, being God as well as man; and which he has obtained by his obedience, ſufferings, and death: and *in whom* it reſides, as in its proper ſubject and author; who by imputation, is made redemption to all the choſen ones; for not angels but men, ſhare in this redemption; and not all men, but elect men; ſuch as are choſen in Chriſt, predeſtinated to the adoption of children by him, and who are accepted in the beloved: and this comes to them through the blood of Chriſt, which was freely ſhed on the croſs to procure it; and was a ſufficient ranſom, or redemption price; it being not only the ſame blood with thoſe who are redeemed, but the blood of an innocent perſon; and not of a mere man, but of one who is truly and properly God, as well as man; ſee more of this in the note on *Col.* i. 14. A branch of this redemption follows, or a bleſſing that comes by it, and along with it, *the forgiveneſs of ſins*; of all ſins, original and actual, paſt, preſent, and to come;

and this is through the blood of Chriſt, which was ſhed for the ſame: and yet is *according to the riches of his grace*; for God of his rich grace found the ranſom price, and gave his Son, as well as he gave himſelf, his life, a ranſom for many; and how much ſoever it coſt Chriſt to procure redemption and pardon, they are free to his people; who are redeemed without money and price of theirs, and whoſe ſins are forgiven freely for Chriſt's ſake.

Ver. 8. *Wherein he hath abounded toward us*, &c.] That is, in the grace which is ſo abundantly diſplayed in redemption and forgiveneſs of ſin, through the blood of Chriſt: *in all wiſdom and prudence*; this may be underſtood, either of the aboundings of grace in the Goſpel; which may be called all wiſdom and prudence, becauſe it is the wiſdom of God; it is the produce of his wiſdom, and a diſplay of it; the doctrines it contains are full of wiſdom, and are the means of communicating it to men, and of making them wiſe unto ſalvation; and it may be ſo called, to ſet forth the excellency and perfection of it, as greatly tranſcending all human wiſdom; and in this the grace of God has much abounded, for the Goſpel is a declaration of the free grace of God, in the ſalvation of ſinners by Chriſt; in the free juſtification of them by his righteouſneſs; and in the full pardon of their ſins through his blood; and is a kind invitation and free promiſe of grace, to all ſenſible ſinners: or elſe of the aboundings of grace in converſion; all men by nature are fooliſh and unwiſe; in converſion God makes men to know wiſdom in the hidden part, which he puts there; and for which purpoſe, the Spirit is given as a Spirit of wiſdom; and ſome part of the work of ſanctification, lies in ſpiritual light, knowledge, and underſtanding; and the *Syriac* verſion reads the laſt clauſe, *and in all ſpiritual underſtanding*; and faith particularly may be intended, which is ſometimes expreſſed by knowledge; and now the grace of God is exceeding abundant with faith and love, in regeneration, ſanctification, and converſion: or rather this may be underſtood of the diſplay of divine wiſdom, in the work of redemption and ſalvation by Chriſt; and which is to be ſeen, in pitching upon a proper perſon to be the mediator, to become a ſacrifice, and make interceſſion, who is the Son of God, truly God and man, and ſo every way able to perform the buſineſs of ſalvation; and in the manner of its being effected, in a way wherein grace and mercy are highly exalted, and yet in no wiſe reproachful to the holineſs of God, or injurious to his juſtice, but to the honour of them, in which ſatan is greatly mortified, and ſin is condemned, and yet the ſinner ſaved; and in the ſeveral parts of it, in the juſtification of the ungodly without works, by the righteouſneſs of another, in pardoning their ſins in a way of juſtice and faithfulneſs, and yet according to the riches of grace, and in the ſecurity of the perſons of God's elect, and of their grace and glory in Chriſt; and in the ſubjects of this ſalvation, who are the fooliſh things of this world, ungodly ſinners, the chief of ſinners; and laſtly, in making faith the receiver of all the bleſſings of ſalvation, that ſo it might appear to be all of grace.

Ver. 9. *Having made known unto us the myſtery of his will*, &c.] The Goſpel, which is a myſtery, a hidden myſtery, the myſtery of God and of Chriſt, and the myſtery of the Goſpel; the ſeveral doctrines of it, are called the myſteries of the kingdom of heaven; ſuch as are concerning the Trinity of perſons in the Godhead, the union of the two natures in Chriſt, his ſonſhip and incarnation, the ſaints union and communion with him, the work of the Spirit of God upon the ſoul, the calling of the *Gentiles*, and the converſion of the *Jews*, the reſurrection of the dead, and the change of living ſaints: and the Goſpel is the myſtery of the will of God; of his will in ſaving ſinners by Chriſt; and it declares that he does all things in ſalvation, according to his ſovereign will and pleaſure; chooſes, redeems, juſtifies, pardons, and calls whom he pleaſes; and this is made known by the miniſtry of the word, and by the Spirit, as a Spirit of wiſdom and revelation, in the knowledge of Chriſt and his Goſpel: the diſcovery of which is, *according to his good pleaſure, which he hath purpoſed in himſelf*; both with reſpect to the perſons to whom it is made known, and with reſpect to the time when he makes it known; both theſe are as he pleaſes, and as he has purpoſed in his own breaſt; the Goſpel is ſent when and where he has determined within himſelf it ſhall go; and perſons are called by it according to his purpoſe and grace.

Ver. 10. *That in the diſpenſation of the fulneſs of times*, &c.] Or *according to the diſpenſation, &c.* as the *Alexandrian* copy reads; the fulneſs of time appointed by God, and fixed in the prophets; after many times and ſeaſons were elapſed, from the creation of the world; at the moſt ſuitable and convenient time, when a new œconomy or diſpenſation began, within which all this was to be effected, hereafter mentioned: *he might gather together in one all things in Chriſt*; this ſuppoſes, that all things were once united together in one; angels and men were united to God by the ties of creation, and were under the ſame law of nature, and there were peace and friendſhip between them; and this union was in Chriſt, as the beginning of the creation of God, in whom all things conſiſt: and it ſuppoſes a diſunion and ſcattering of them; as of men from God, and from good angels, which was done by ſin; and of *Jews* and *Gentiles* from one another; and of one man from another, every one turning to his own way; and then a gathering of them together again: the word here uſed, ſignifies to reſtore, renew, and reduce to a former ſtate; and ſo the *Vulgate Latin* and *Syriac* verſions render it; and according to this ſenſe, it may ſeem to have reſpect to the times of the reſtitution of all things, the reſtoration and renovation of the univerſe; when there will be new heavens and a new earth, and new inhabitants in them: the word is alſo uſed to recapitulate, or ſum up the heads of a diſcourſe; and according to this ſenſe, it may intend the meeting together, and ſumming up of all things in Chriſt, that had been before; as of all the promiſes and bleſſings of the covenant; of all the prophecies and promiſes of the Old Teſtament; of all the types and ſhadows, and ſacrifices of the former diſpenſation; yea, all the ſins of Old Teſtament ſaints, and all the curſes of the law, met on him: the word is likewiſe uſed for the collection of numbers into one ſum total; and Chriſt is the ſum total of elect angels and men; or the whole number of them is in him; God has choſen a certain number of perſons unto ſalvation; theſe he has put into the hands of Chriſt, who has a particular and perſonal knowledge of them; and the exact number of them will be gathered and given by him: once more, it ſignifies to reduce, or bring under one head; and Chriſt is an head of eminence and of influence, both to angels and men; and there is a collection of theſe together in one, in Chriſt; by virtue of redemption by Chriſt, and grace from him, there is an entire friendſhip between elect angels and elect men; they are ſocial worſhippers now, and ſhall ſhare in the ſame happineſs of the viſion of God and of Chriſt hereafter: hence it follows, *both which are in heaven, and which are on earth*, even *in him*; by things in heaven are not meant, the ſouls of ſaints in heaven; though it is true, that the ſouls of departed ſaints are in heaven; and that the ſaints in heaven and on earth were gathered together in Chriſt, and repreſented by him, when he hung upon the croſs; and that they all make up one body, of which Chriſt is the head; and that they will be all collected together one day; and that their ſouls which are in heaven, and their bodies which are in the earth, will come together and be re-united, and dwell with Chriſt for ever; but rather the angels are meant, whoſe original is heaven; where they have their reſidence, and from whence they never fell; and whoſe employment is in heaven, and of an heavenly nature: and by things on earth, are not intended every creature on earth, animate and inanimate; nor all men, but all elect men, whether *Jews* or *Gentiles*; and ſome of all ſorts, ranks, and degrees; whoſe origin is of the earth, and who are the inhabitants of it: all theſe angels in heaven, and elect men on earth, are brought together under one head, even in him, in Chriſt Jeſus, and by him; and none but he was able to do it, and none ſo fit, who is the creator of all, and is above all; and was typified by *Jacob*'s ladder, which reached heaven and earth, and joined them together, and on which the angels of God aſcended and deſcended.

Ver. 11. *In whom alſo we have obtained an inheritance*, &c.] Or a part and lot; that is, have obtained one in Chriſt, in his perſon, and in his fulneſs of grace, in the bleſſings and promiſes which are in him; or have obtained to be the Lord's clergy, or heritage, to be his portion and inheritance; or rather to have an inheritance in him by lot, meaning the incorruptible and eternal inheritance of glory and happineſs in heaven; to which elect men are choſen in Chriſt, and are begotten to a lively hope of through his reſurrection from the dead; and which his righteouſneſs gives a right unto, and his grace a meetneſs for; and which is now in his hands, and will be given to them thro' him: and this is ſaid to be obtained by lot, as the word ſignifies, in alluſion to the land of *Canaan*, which was divided by lot to the children of *Iſrael*; and to ſhew, that it is not by works of righteouſneſs done by men, but by the ſovereign diſpoſal of God; and that every one ſhall have his ſhare, and that certainly; for this is not deſigned to repreſent it as a caſual, or contingent thing. The *Alexandrian* copy reads, *in whom alſo we are called*; and ſo the *Vulgate Latin* verſion, *in whom alſo we are called by lot*; and the *Syriac* verſion, *in him*, or *by him, we are choſen*, which agrees with the next clauſe: *being predeſtinated according to the purpoſe of him, who worketh all things after the counſel of his own will*; predeſtination is not only to ſonſhip, but to an inheritance; it not only ſecures the grace of adoption, but prepares and provides an heavenly portion: and this act of predeſtination, proceeds according to a purpoſe; according to a purpoſe of God, which can never be fruſtrated; and according to the purpoſe of *that God*, as one of *Stephens*'s copies reads; that is the author of all things but ſin; of the works of creation and of providence, and of grace and ſalvation; and who works all theſe according to his will, juſt as he pleaſes, and according to the counſel of it, in a wiſe and prudent manner, in the beſt way that can be deviſed; for he is wonderful in counſel, and excellent in working; wherefore his counſel always ſtands, and he does all his pleaſure: and hence the inheritance which the ſaints obtain in Chriſt, and are predeſtinated to, is ſure and certain.

Ver. 12. *That we ſhould be to the praiſe of his glory*, &c.] This is the end of predeſtination to the inheritance; and the ſenſe is, either that the praiſe of the glory of God in his grace and goodneſs, might be diſcovered and made known unto the ſaints, as it is diſplayed in election, redemption, juſtification, pardon, adoption, regeneration, and eternal ſalvation; or that they ſhould praiſe and glorify him on account of theſe things, by aſcribing all to his grace, and nothing to themſelves; by giving him thanks for all his benefits; by ordering their converſations aright, as become the Goſpel; and by doing all things, with a view to his glory: *who firſt truſted in Chriſt*; the *Jews*, the Apoſtle, and others of the *Jewiſh* nation; *who before hoped in Chriſt*, as the words may be rendered; who hoped in Chriſt before the *Gentiles* did; and indeed, the people of *Iſrael* hoped for Chriſt before he came; the promiſes of the Meſſiah were made to them, and he was the peculiar hope and expectation of that people; and to them he firſt came, and to them the Goſpel was firſt preached; and ſome of them firſt believed in Chriſt, and truſted in him, and not in their own righteouſneſs, ſtrength, wiſdom, and riches, nor in their own hearts, nor in any mere creature, nor in their carnal privileges; all which they renounced confidence in, and dependance on, when they came to the knowledge of Chriſt; in whoſe perſon they truſted for acceptance, and in his righteouſneſs for juſtification, and in his blood for pardon, and in his fulneſs for ſupply, and in his power for protection and perſeverance: this ſuppoſes knowledge of him, and a ſenſe of the frailty and vanity of all other objects; and was a betaking themſelves to him, a leaning and ſtaying on him, a committing all unto him, and an expectation of all good things from him.

Ver. 13. *In whom ye alſo* truſted, &c.] The *Gentile* believers, the *Epheſians*, whom the Apoſtle now particularly addreſſes; and who participated of the ſame grace and privileges with the believing *Jews*; the ſame promiſe belonged to all that God called, whether afar off or nigh; and the ſame common ſalvation was ſent to one, as to another; and the ſame faith was wrought in one, as in the other; and they were intereſted in the ſame Chriſt, and were heirs of the ſame inheritance; the *Alexandrian* copy reads *we*: *after that ye heard the word of truth*; the Goſpel; and which is ſo called, on account of its divine original, coming from the God of truth, who cannot lye; and becauſe of the concern which Chriſt has in it, who is truth itſelf, and was the author, ſubject, and preacher of it, and who confirmed it by his miracles, and his death; and on account of the Spirit of God, the dictator of it, and who leads into all truths, and owns and bleſſes them for converſion and comfort; and becauſe it contains nothing but truth, and particularly that eminent one, ſalvation alone by Chriſt, for the chief of ſinners; and in contradiſtinction from the law, which was typical and ſhadowy; מלה דקשוט, *the word of truth*, is a phraſe uſed by the *Jews*[*], for ſublime and heavenly doctrine: now by the hearing of this, faith came; and this the *Epheſians* heard, not only externally, but internally; ſo as to underſtand, approve, and believe it, and to put it in practice: and which is alſo called *the Goſpel of your ſalvation*; becauſe it is a declaration and publication of ſalvation by Chriſt, and gives an account of the author of ſalvation, of his ability and willingneſs to ſave, and of the nature of this ſalvation, and deſcribes the perſons who ſhall be ſaved; and becauſe it is the means of ſalvation, when attended with the Spirit and power of God; and the inſtrument in God's hand, of ſhewing to ſouls their ſpecial and particular intereſt in ſalvation: *in whom alſo after that ye believed*; which may refer either to the Goſpel of ſalvation, in which they believed upon hearing it; or rather to Chriſt, the ſaviour revealed, in whom they believed to the ſaving of their ſouls: and this ſhows, that the ſealing work of the Spirit after mentioned, and with which this ſtands in connexion, is a diſtinct thing from faith, or indeed any other work of the Spirit; as illumination, regeneration, ſanctification, *&c.* it is what follows believing, and is a work that paſſes upon the ſoul after it; and ſo is ſomething over and above, and more than faith, at leaſt than firſt believing: and from hence it alſo appears, that there may be true faith, where this is not as yet; and that none but believers in Chriſt, enjoy the following privilege: *ye were ſealed with that Holy Spirit of promiſe.* This cannot have reſpect to the Father's ſealing his people in election, with the ſeal of his foreknowledge, 2 *Tim.* ii. 19. for that is before faith, and is within himſelf, and not on them, and is diſtinct from the Spirit's work; and for the ſame reaſons it cannot deſign the Son's affection to them, ſetting them as a ſeal on his arm and heart, *Cant.* viii. 6. or his aſſerting his property in them, and the ſecurity and protection of them, *Cant.* iv. 12. *Rev.* vii. 3. nor the Spirit's finiſhing and compleating his own work of grace upon the ſoul, in which ſenſe the word is uſed, *Rom.* xv. 28. for this as yet was not done upon theſe believing *Epheſians*; nor the confirming the Goſpel, and the ſaints in it, by the extraordinary effuſion of the Spirit on the day of *pentecoſt*, or by his extraordinary works, which attended the miniſtry of the word, to the eſtabliſhing of it, and the faith of men in it; ſince theſe were not common to believers, nor did they continue; whereas the believing *Epheſians* in common, were ſealed; and the Spirit of God continues ſtill as a ſealer of his people, and as an earneſt and pledge of their inheritance until the day of redemption; but it is to be underſtood of the confirming, certifying, and aſſuring the ſaints, as to their intereſt in the favour of God, and in the bleſſings of grace, of every kind, and their right and title to the heavenly glory; ſee the note on 2 *Cor.* i. 22. and the ſeal of theſe things is not circumciſion, nor baptiſm, nor the Lord's ſupper, nor even the graces of the Spirit; but the Spirit himſelf, who witneſſes to the ſpirits of believers, the truth of theſe things, and that as a *Spirit of promiſe:* ſo called, both becauſe he is the Spirit promiſed, as the *Syriac* and *Ethiopic* verſions render it, whom the Father and Chriſt had promiſed, and who was ſent by them; and becauſe he uſually ſeals, or certifies believers of the truth of the above things, by opening and applying a word of promiſe to them: and which he does alſo, as the *Holy* Spirit; for this ſealing work of his, leaves a greater impreſs of holineſs upon the ſoul, and engages more to acts of holineſs; wherefore the doctrine of aſſurance, is no licentious doctrine; no perſons are ſo holy, as thoſe who are truly poſſeſſed of that grace; and as for ſuch who pretend unto it, and live in ſin, it is a certain thing that they in reality know nothing of it.

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[*] Zohar in Num. fol. 76. 3.

Ver. 14. *Which is the earneſt of our inheritance,* &c.] The incorruptible and never fading one in heaven, or the heavenly kingdom; this is the Father's gift, his bequeſt, and belongs only to children; it comes to them through the death of the teſtator, Chriſt, and is for ever; and of this, the Spirit of God is the pledge and earneſt: an earneſt, is what confirms an agreement, and aſſures the right to the thing agreed to, and is a part of it, and leſſer than it, and is never returned; ſo the Spirit of God certifies the right to the heavenly inheritance, as well as gives a meetneſs for it; he is the firſt-fruits of eternal glory and happineſs, and of the ſame kind with it; and as he is enjoyed in meaſure by the ſaints now, is leſſer than the communion which they ſhall have with him, and with the Father, and the Son, hereafter, for the beſt things are reſerved till laſt; and being once given into the heart as an earneſt, he always continues, he never removes more, or is ever taken away: *until the redemption of the purchaſed poſſeſſion,* or *of the peculiar people*; ſee 1 *Pet.* ii. 9. for this is not to be underſtood of heaven, which is never ſaid to be purchaſed, nor can it with any propriety be ſaid to be redeemed; but of ſaints, of the church of God, who are bought with a price, and are purchaſed with his blood; and who, as they were redeemed from ſin, ſatan, and the law, when they were purchaſed, ſo will be redeemed again in the reſurrection-morn, which is called the day of redemption, ch. iv. 30. ſee *Luke* xxi. 28. and which will be a redemption of them from the weakneſs, corruption, and mortality of the body; from their preſent ſtate of abſence and pilgrimage; from the body of ſin and death; from all ſorrows and afflictions, both inward and outward; from the reproaches and perſecutions of men; from a tempting devil, and an unbelieving heart; from all doubts and fears; and from death and the grave: and ſo the *Syriac* verſion very juſtly renders it, *until the redemption of them that are ſaved.* Now till ſuch time, the Spirit of God abides as an earneſt, even until the whole felicity is enjoyed both in ſoul and body; and this ſhews the perpetuity of the Spirit's inhabitation, and grace, the final perſeverance of the ſaints, and the ſecurity of the inheritance to them. *Unto the praiſe of his glory*; as to the glory of the Father, by whom the ſaints are choſen and predeſtinated, ver. 6. and to the glory of the Son, by whom they are redeemed, in whom they obtain the inheritance, and in whom they truſt, ver. 12. ſo to the glory of the holy Spirit, by whom they are ſealed, and who is their earneſt; for he muſt have his ſhare of glory in the ſalvation of the elect, as well as the other two perſons.

Ver. 15. *Wherefore I alſo,* &c.] As well as others: *after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jeſus*; who is the immediate object of faith, and a very proper and ſuitable one; having every thing in him that is agreeable to the caſe and circumſtances of thoſe that truſt in him. And the grace of faith, which terminates on him, is a ſeeing him, a beholding the glory of his perſon, and the fulneſs of his grace; a going to him, and venturing on him; a laying hold upon him, and embracing of him; a committing all unto him, and a leaning and depending on him, and a living upon him, and a walking on in him. *And love unto all the ſaints*; whether *Jew* or *Gentile*, rich or poor, greater or leſſer believers, of meaner gifts, or larger abilities;

and which love was unfeigned, fervent, active, and laborious; and which is the evidence of regeneration, and without which a profeſſion is in vain. Theſe two graces, faith and love, are inſeparable; they always go together, and are to be found in the ſame perſons; and where they are, they can't be hid, as they were not in theſe *Epheſians*; their faith was profeſſed by them, and was made public, and their love ſhewed itſelf in deeds, as well as in words, to the ſaints: hence the Apoſtle came to hear of them both, upon the certain relation of others; for theſe things were come abroad, and were talked of; ſee the notes on *Col.* i. 3, 4. and *Philem.* ver. 4, 5.

Ver. 16. *Ceaſe not to give thanks for you*, &c.] On account of their faith and love; which were gifts of grace beſtowed upon them, and not the produce of their own free-will and power; and therefore thanks are given to God for them: *making mention of you in my prayers*; which ſhews the Apoſtle to be a praying perſon, and that he was conſtant at the throne of grace, where he prayed for others as well as for himſelf; and it points out the time and way, when, and in which he gave thanks to God for them; and is mentioned, not only to teſtify his great affection for them, but alſo to excite them, by his example, to the practice of thoſe duties themſelves.

Ver. 17. *That the God of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, &c.] In what ſenſe God the Father is the God of Chriſt, ſee the note on ver. 3. *The Father of glory*; or the glorious Father; who is glorious in himſelf, in the perfections of his nature, and in the works of his hands; and as a Father, he is a glorious Father to Chriſt, and is a Father to him, as he is to none elſe; and has been honoured and glorified by Chriſt, and from whom Chriſt as man has received much honour and glory: and he is a glorious Father to the ſaints, to whom he has ſhewn inexpreſſible love, by adopting them into his family; and pities them, as a father does his children; takes care of them, and protects them, and makes a glorious proviſion for them; not only of good things now, but of an eternal inheritance hereafter: and he may be ſo called, becauſe he is the author and giver of eternal glory and happineſs; and becauſe all glory is due unto him: the *Arabic* verſion reads, *God, our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the Father of glory*, making all theſe epithets to belong to Chriſt: *may give unto you the ſpirit of wiſdom and revelation, in the knowledge of him*; this was one part of the Apoſtle's prayers for the ſaints at *Epheſus*, that they might increaſe in divine knowledge; either in the knowledge of God, as the God of Chriſt, and the Father of glory, and as their God and Father in Chriſt, or of God, as conſidered in Chriſt the mediator; or elſe of Chriſt himſelf: and deſigns not a notional and ſpeculative knowledge of Chriſt, but what is practical and experimental; and which is joined with love of him, faith in him, and obedience to him; and which is not only approbative, but fiducial and appropriating; and though it is but imperfect, yet is progreſſive; and for the progreſſion of it, the Apoſtle prays; for it is certain, that theſe ſaints had a knowledge of Chriſt, but this was not perfect; and a larger meaſure of it was deſireable: and in order to this, he prays for the Spirit, as a *Spirit of wiſdom*; who implants ſpiritual wiſdom in the hearts of men, and inſtructs them in the Goſpel, the hidden wiſdom of God, leads them into all truths, and opens to them the treaſures of wiſdom and knowledge, which are hid in Chriſt, the wiſdom of God; and as a Spirit of *revelation*; who reveals Chriſt, and the things of Chriſt, at firſt converſion; and afterwards reveals him and his righteouſneſs, and other benefits of his more largely, even from faith to faith; and gives a clearer view of intereſt in them: hence it appears, that the Spirit is the gift of God; and that all ſpiritual light and knowledge, and the increaſe of it, are owing to him.

Ver. 18. *The eyes of your underſtanding being enlightened*, &c.] By the Spirit of God already, to ſee the exceeding ſinfulneſs of ſin; the inſufficiency of their own righteouſneſs; the beauty, glory, fulneſs, and ſuitableneſs of Chriſt, as a ſaviour; the excellency, truth, and uſefulneſs of the doctrines of the Goſpel; in which their underſtandings were before dark, but now had light into them: wherefore theſe words are not to be conſidered as part of the Apoſtle's petitions, but rather as what was taken for granted by him; and are to be put into a parentheſis, and the following words to be joined in connexion with the preceding verſe; unleſs it ſhould be thought, that the Apoſtle prays for greater illuminations, and for more ſpiritual light, and that the eyes of their underſtandings might be more and more enlightened: the phraſe, עין השכל, ομμα της διανοιας, *the eye of the underſtanding*, is *Rabbinical*, and often to be met with in *Jewiſh* writings [f]; the *Alexandrian* copy, and ſeveral others, the *Complutenſian* edition, the *Vulgate Latin*, and all the *Oriental* verſions read, *the eyes of your heart*; and ſo, עיני הלבבות, *the eyes of the hearts*, or *minds*, is a phraſe uſed by the *Jewiſh* writers [g]: *that ye may know what is the hope of his calling*; by which is meant, the effectual vocation of the ſaints; which is not a call to an office, or a call merely by the external miniſtry of the word; but which is internal, ſpecial, powerful, high, and heavenly: and this is the calling of God, of which he is the author; who calls with an holy calling, unto eternal glory by Chriſt Jeſus; and which is without repentance: and the hope of this calling, is either eternal happineſs, which is the thing hoped for; or Chriſt, who is the ground and foundation of it; or the grace of hope, which is exerciſed on both; or all three: for hope of eternal glory, as it is founded on Chriſt, may be ſaid to be the hope of the calling of God, becauſe it is wrought in the ſoul at the time of effectual vocation, and what ſaints are then called to the exerciſe of; and calling grace, is an encouragement to hope for eternal life; ſince whom God calls, he juſtifies and glorifies: and now the Apoſtle prays, that theſe ſaints who were called by the grace of God, might know more of Chriſt, the foundation of their hope; and what that is they are hoping for; and more and more what it is to hope for the ſame, upon the view of Chriſt's perſon, blood, and righteouſneſs: *and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the ſaints*; the ſaints themſelves are the Lord's portion, and the lot of his inheritance, in whom he is, and will be abundantly glorified; but here it rather ſeems to deſign the heavenly inheritance before ſpoken of, of which the Spirit is the earneſt; and this is the Lord's, it is of his preparing, and it is his gift, and a very rich and glorious inheritance it is: hence it is not only ſignified by manſions, and everlaſting habitations, by an houſe, and by a city, but by a kingdom; the riches of grace are preparatory to it, and the riches of glory are comprized in it; and this is in, or among the ſaints, who only have a right unto it, and a meetneſs for it; and what this inheritance is, with the riches and glory of it, will not be fully known in this life; and indeed but little of it is known; ſo that ſuch a petition as this is always proper and pertinent.

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[f] Zohar in Deut. fol. 119. 3. Jetzirah, p. 22. 78. Ed. Rittangel. R. Levi ben Gerſom in Gen. fol. 14. 3. & Philo de opificio Dei, p. 15.

[g] Bechinat Olam, p. 260.

Ver. 19. *And what is the exceeding greatneſs of his power to us-ward who believe*, &c.] The objects of the divine power here intended, are believers in Chriſt; which diſtinguiſhes this power from that which was put forth in creation, and from that which will be diſplayed in the reſurrection of the dead, and from the power of divine wrath, which will appear in the damnation of ſinners; and ſhews, that this power is that which is exerted in the implantation of faith, and in the continuance of it, and in the finiſhing of that work; and that this is a great power, an exceeding great one, a ſupereminent one; which is attended with energy and efficacy, and is irreſiſtible and inſuperable: the greatneſs of this power as diſplayed in the work of converſion and faith appears, if it be conſidered what the work itſelf is called, a creation, a reſurrection from the dead, a regeneration, and a tranſformation of the man into another man, which muſt needs require almighty power; as well as what is then done, ſome things are removed, ſatan is diſpoſſeſſed, the ſtony heart is taken away, the enmity is ſlain, the old man is put down from his throne, and put off with his deeds; and there are ſome things wrought, Chriſt is formed in the ſoul, his grace is implanted, his image is inſtamped, a new heart is given, and principles of light and life, of grace and holineſs are put; the underſtanding is enlightened, the will is ſubdued, the affections are ſet on other objects, and the mind and conſcience are cleanſed and purified; and the means of this are the miniſters, and miniſtry of the word, which are weak, fooliſh, and contemptible, in the eyes of men; to which may be added, the oppoſition made both from within and from without, from a ſinful heart, a tempting devil, and an enſnaring, reproaching, and perſecuting world: ſo that this work of faith cannot be aſcribed to any thing ſhort of the exceeding greatneſs of divine power; and which is ſeen in ſupporting faith when it is wrought, under great diſcouragements; in delivering believers out of divers temptations; in aſſiſting them to diſcharge their duty, and in their final perſeverance: and to increaſe the idea of this power it is added, *according to the working of his mighty power*, or *according to the energy of the might of his power*; the ſtrength of his power, in all the mighty energy of it, is exerted towards and upon believers; and which they ſhould know, own, and acknowledge, to the glory of the grace of God: and this is in proportion, and agreeable to that power,

Ver. 20. *Which he wrought in Chriſt, when he raiſed him from the dead*, &c.] There are many articles of faith contained in this paſſage; as that Chriſt died, that he is raiſed from the dead, that he was raiſed from the dead by God the Father, and that his reſurrection was by the power of God: the reſurrection of any perſon is an inſtance of great power, but Chriſt's reſurrection from the dead was an inſtance of peculiar and ſpecial power; for he was raiſed from the dead as a publick perſon, repreſenting all his people, for whom he became a ſurety; and he was raiſed again for their juſtification, and to great glory in himſelf, after he had been brought into a very low eſtate indeed: moreover, this paſſage in connexion with the preceding verſe ſuggeſts, that there is ſome proportion between the power put forth on Chriſt in raiſing him from the dead, and that which is exerted in the work of converſion and faith: there is ſome likeneſs between the things themſelves, as well as in the diſplay of power in them; Chriſt's reſurrection is called a begetting, and he is ſtiled the firſt-begotten from the dead, and the regeneration of men is ſignified by a reſurrection from the dead; as Chriſt's body was really dead, lifeleſs, and without motion, antecedent to his reſurrection, ſo men previous to converſion, are dead in treſpaſſes and ſins, and are deſtitute of ſpiritual life and motion; and as Chriſt's human nature could not help itſelf, could not raiſe itſelf, ſo neither can dead ſinners convert themſelves, or bring themſelves out of that ſtate and condition, in which they are by nature; and as the reſurrection of Chriſt was the pure work of God, and a diſplay of his almighty power, ſo the work of faith, of grace and converſion, is the entire work of God, which is begun, carried on, and finiſhed wholly by his power; and as Chriſt's reſurrection was in order to his glorification, ſo is the regeneration and converſion of men, in order to their enjoyment of the heavenly inheritance, as it follows: *and ſet him at his own right hand in the heavenly* places; which is expreſſive of the great honour conferred upon the human nature of Chriſt, ſuch as never was given to any of the angels, and of the glory it is exalted to; and ſhews that he has done his work on earth with acceptance, which he came about; and therefore is ſet down at his Father's right-hand, where he enjoys reſt and eaſe from his labours, and is out of the reach of every enemy; will never die more, but live for ever, to intercede for his people, to aſſiſt and protect them, and bring them where he is; and in whom as their head and repreſentative, they are already ſet down in the ſame heavenly places.

Ver. 21. *Far above all principality and power*, &c.] Good angels and bad angels, and civil magiſtrates, who alſo may be intended by the following words: *and might and dominion*; good angels may be ſo called, becauſe of their employment under God in the affairs of providence, and the government of this world; and Chriſt is not only above them, as he is God, being their creator, who has made them, and on whom they depend, and is the Lord whom they ſerve, and is the object of their worſhip and adoration, and as he is mediator, to whom they miniſter, and ſo is above them in nature, name, and office; but alſo as he is man, in union with the ſon of God; and chiefly he here is ſaid to be above them on account of place, being at the right-hand of God, where they are not, *Heb.* i. 13. And evil angels may be ſo called, becauſe of the government which ſubſiſts among themſelves, and the power and influence they have over mankind; Chriſt was above them when here on earth, as appears by his reſiſting the temptations of ſatan, and defeating him in them; by his diſpoſſeſſing devils from the bodies of men; by his ſpoiling and deſtroying them and their works at his death; and by his leading them captive, and triumphing over them at his aſcenſion; and by delivering ſouls out of his hands at converſion, through his power attending the miniſtration of his Goſpel; and his being above them will ſtill be more manifeſt, in the binding of ſatan a thouſand years, and in the final condemnation of him, and of all his angels under him: civil magiſtrates are ſometimes called by theſe names, and Chriſt is above them; they receive their governments from him, they rule by him, and are accountable to him, and are ſet up and put down at his pleaſure; all theſe ſenſes may be taken in; but the firſt ſeems chiefly deſigned: 'tis added, *and every name that is named, not only in this world, but alſo in that which is to come*; perſons of authority and dignity, of fame and renown, whether in earth or heaven; as emperors, kings, princes, nobles, generals of armies, &c. in this world, and cherubim, ſeraphim, &c. in the other world: this phraſe denotes both the extenſiveneſs of Chriſt's kingdom, and the eternity of it; as reaching to both worlds, and being over every thing in them, and as laſting to the end of this, and unto that which is to come.

Ver. 22. *And hath put all things under his feet*, &c.] Theſe words are taken out of *Pſal.* viii. 6. ſee the note on 1 *Cor.* xv. 27. *And gave him* to be *the head over all things to the church*; the *Vulgate Latin* verſion reads, *and gave him* to be *the head over every church*, or *all the church*; the *Ethiopic* verſion, *the whole church*; which intends not barely profeſſors of religion, or a family of faithful perſons, or a particular congregation, in which ſenſe the word is ſometimes uſed; but the whole body of God's elect, the church, which is built on Chriſt the rock, for which he gave himſelf, and which is the general aſſembly and church of the firſt-born, whoſe names are written in heaven: Chriſt is an head to this church; in what ſenſe he is ſo, ſee the note on 1 *Cor.* xi. 3. And this headſhip of Chriſt, is the gift of God; and it is an honourable gift to him, as mediator; it is a glorifying of him, and a giving him in all things the pre-eminence; and it is a free grace gift to the church, and a very ſpecial, valuable, and excellent one, and of infinite benefit and advantage to it; and which is expreſſed in his being head *over all things* to it; to over-rule all things for its good; to communicate all good things to it; and to perform all the good offices of an head for it: the *Syriac* verſion reads, *and him who is above all things, he gave* to be *the head to the church*; even him who is God over all, bleſſed for evermore.

Ver. 23. *Which is his body*, &c.] That is, which church is the body of Chriſt; as an human body is but one, conſiſting of various members, united to each other, and ſet in an exact proportion and ſymmetry, and in a proper ſubſervience to one another, and which muſt be neither more nor fewer, than they are; ſo the church of Chriſt is but one general aſſembly, which conſiſts of many perſons, of different gifts and uſefulneſs, and are all united together under one head Chriſt, whoſe name they bear, and are made to drink of the ſame Spirit; and theſe are placed in ſuch order, as to throw a glory and comelineſs on each other, and to be uſeful to one another, ſo that it cannot be ſaid of the meaneſt member, that there is no need of it; and the number of them can neither be increaſed nor diminiſhed; and this is Chriſt's body, his myſtical body, which becomes his by the Father's gift to him, and by his own purchaſe; to which he is united, and of which he is the only head; and which he loves as his own body, and ſupplies, directs, and defends: *the fulneſs of him that filleth all in all*; beſides the perſonal fulneſs which Chriſt has as God, and his fulneſs of ability and fitneſs for his work as mediator, and his diſpenſatory fulneſs, which dwells in him for the uſe of his people, the church is his relative fulneſs, which fills him, and makes up Chriſt myſtical; and which is filled by him, and is compleat in him: and then will the church appear to be Chriſt's fulneſs, when all the elect, both *Jews* and *Gentiles*, ſhall be gathered in; and when theſe are all filled with the grace deſigned for them; and when they are all grown up to their full proportion, or are arrived to the meaſure of the ſtature of the fulneſs of Chriſt; which will be a glorious ſight to ſee, and very deſireable: and this ſhews the certainty of the ſaints perſeverance and ſalvation; for if any one member, even the meaneſt, could be loſt, the church would not be the fulneſs of Chriſt: and this may be further concluded, from its being his fulneſs, who *filleth all in all*; which may be underſtood either more extenſively; for he fills both worlds with inhabitants; he fills all places with his omnipreſence, and all creatures with proper food and ſuſtenance: or with a limitation to the church and people of God; he fills all his churches and ordinances with his gracious preſence; and he fills the ſeveral ſocieties of his ſaints, with members and with officers; and theſe with the gifts and graces of his Spirit, ſuitable to their place and ſtation; he fills all and every of the ſaints, all the veſſels of mercy, whether greater or leſſer, all ſorts of them, of larger or meaner capacities; he fills all the powers and faculties of their ſouls, their hearts with joy, their minds with knowledge, their conſciences with peace, their wills with ſpiritual deſires, ſubmiſſion and reſignation, and their affections with love to himſelf and people: in ſhort, he fills them with all grace and goodneſs, and the fruits of righteouſneſs; and ſo makes them meet for uſefulneſs here, and for happineſs hereafter: the fulneſs of the earth in *Pſal.* xxiv. 1. is by the *Jews* interpreted of the ſouls of the righteous, and of the congregation of *Iſrael*[h].

CHAP. II.

THE deſign of the Apoſtle in this chapter, is to magnify the riches of divine grace, in the effectual vocation and ſalvation of ſinners, by Chriſt Jeſus; in order to which, he deſcribes the ſad eſtate they are in by nature, and before converſion, even God's elect among the *Jews*, and eſpecially among the *Gentiles*; and then obſerves how peace is made for and between them both, by Chriſt the peace-maker; and the various privileges and bleſſings which both enjoy, in conſequence of it: he begins with the *Epheſians*, and expreſſes the former ſtate they were in by a death, which is aſcribed to treſpaſſes and ſins, ver. 1. and repreſents their walk and converſation to have been according to the world, and after ſatan; who is deſcribed by his dominion over other devils that dwell in the air, and by his influence upon diſobedient men, ver. 2. and that it might not be thought that the caſe of theſe *Gentile Epheſians* was worſe than others, the Apoſtle obſerves of himſelf, and other ſaints among the *Jews*, that their converſation before converſion was among the men of the world, and ſo according to the courſe of it, as the *Gentiles*; and that it was a very carnal converſation they had ſpent, in fulfilling the deſires and luſts of the fleſh; and that they were as deſerving of, and as liable to the wrath of God in themſelves, as other perſons, ver. 3. to which former ſtate he oppoſes their preſent one;

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[h] Zohar in Gen. fol. 50. 2. & in Exod. fol. 21. 2.

they were not now dead in ſin, but were quickned; which is aſcribed to God as the efficient cauſe, and to his rich mercy and great love as the moving cauſe; and to Chriſt as the meritorious and procuring cauſe, by whoſe grace they were ſaved, and in whom they were not only quickened, but raiſed, and made to ſit together in heavenly places; and the final cauſe and end of all this was, to ſhew forth the abundant grace and kindneſs of God, through Chriſt, ver. 4, 5, 6, 7. The doctrine of ſalvation by grace, the Apoſtle takes up again from ver. 5. and to the moving cauſe of ſalvation, the grace of God, he adds the mean, or inſtrument by which it is received and enjoyed, which is faith; and that is denied to be owing to the power of men, but is ſaid to be a gift of God, ver. 8. and the end in view, in putting ſalvation upon the foot of grace and not works, is to prevent boaſting in the creature, ver. 9. and that works cannot be the cauſes of ſalvation, either efficient, moving, or procuring, is evident; ſince though they are to be performed as being agreeable to the purpoſing, as well as commanding will of God, yet they are effects, both of the work of grace upon the ſoul in time, called a creation, and of the decrees of God from eternity, ver. 10. when the Apoſtle goes on to put the *Epheſians* in mind of their former ſtate in unregeneracy, with the ſame view as before, to magnify the grace of God, but in a different manner; not as common to them with the *Jews*, but as peculiar to them as *Gentiles*; as that they were had in contempt by the *Jews*, and were in a ſtate of alienation, not only from them, but from God and Chriſt, and the enjoyment of various privileges, ver. 11, 12. wherefore the grace of God was the more conſpicuous in their preſent ſtate of nearneſs both to God and to his people, brought about by the blood of Chriſt, ver. 13. who as the peace-maker, not only made peace by the blood of his croſs between God and them, but between them and the true *Iſrael* of God among the *Jews*; which was done, partly by aboliſhing the ceremonial law, which occaſioned enmity, and kept up a diviſion among them, ver. 14, 15, 16. and partly by ſending, and preaching the Goſpel of peace to them both, ver. 17. and by opening a way of acceſs for them both unto the Father thro' himſelf, under the direction and influence of the Spirit, ver. 18. from all which it appeared, that they were not in a ſtate of diſtance and alienation as before, but all belonged to the ſame city and family, and were built on the ſame foundation, and were united together in the ſame corner-ſtone, Jeſus Chriſt, ver. 19, 20. and as the Apoſtle compares Chriſt to a foundation, and a corner-ſtone, ſo the church of Chriſt, conſiſting of *Jews* and *Gentiles*, to a temple; which being fitly put together, becomes an holy one in the Lord, and a ſuitable habitation for God through the Spirit, ver. 21, 22.

Ver. 1. *And you* hath he quickned, &c.] The deſign of the Apoſtle in this and ſome following verſes, is to ſhew the exceeding ſinfulneſs of ſin, and to ſet forth the ſad eſtate and condition of man by nature, and to magnify the riches of the grace of God, and repreſent the exceeding greatneſs of his power in converſion: the phraſe *hath he quickned*, is not in the original text, but is ſupplied from ver. 5. where it will be met with and explained: here thoſe who are quickned with Chriſt, and by the power and grace of God, are deſcribed in their natural and unregenerate eſtate, *who were dead in treſpaſſes and ſins*; not only dead in *Adam*, in whom they ſinned, being their federal head and repreſentative; and in a law ſenſe, the ſentence of condemnation and death having paſſed upon them; but in a moral ſenſe, through original ſin, and their own actual tranſgreſſions: which death lies in a ſeparation from God, Father, Son, and Spirit, ſuch are without God, and are alienated from the life of God, and they are without Chriſt, who is the author and giver of life, and they are ſenſual, not having the Spirit, who is the Spirit of life; and in a deformation of the image of God, ſuch are dead as to their underſtandings, wills, and affections, with reſpect to ſpiritual things, and as to their capacity to do any thing that is ſpiritually good; and in a loſs of original righteouſneſs; and in a privation of the ſenſe of ſin and miſery; and in a ſervitude to ſin, ſatan, and the world: hence it appears, that man muſt be in himſelf unacceptable to God, infectious and hurtful to his fellow-creatures, and uncapable of helping himſelf: ſo it was uſual with the *Jews*, to call a wicked and ignorant man, a dead man; they ſay [i], "there is no death like "that of thoſe that tranſgreſs the words of the "law, who are called, מתים, *dead men*, and "therefore the ſcripture ſays, *turn and live.*" And again [k], "no man is called a living man, but he "who is in the way of truth in this world.—— "And a wicked man who does not go in the way "of truth, is called, מת, *a dead man.*" And once more [l], whoever is without wiſdom, lo, he "is, כמת, *as a dead man*; ſee the note on 1 *Tim.* v. 6. The *Alexandrian* and *Claromontane* copies, and one of *Stephens*'s, and the *Vulgate Latin* verſion read, *dead in your treſpaſſes and ſins*; and the *Syriac* verſion, *dead in your ſins and in your treſpaſſes*; and the *Ethiopic* verſion only, *dead in your ſins*.

Ver. 2. *Wherein in time paſt ye walked*, &c.] Sins and tranſgreſſions are a road or path, in which all unconverted ſinners walk; and this path is a dark, crooked, and broad one, which leads to deſtruction and death, and yet is their own way, which they chuſe, approve of, and delight to walk in; and walking in it, denotes a continued ſeries of ſinning, an obſtinate perſiſting in it, a progreſs in iniquity, and pleaſure therein: and the time of walking in this path, being ſaid to be in time paſt, ſhows that the elect of God before converſion, walk in the ſame road that others do; and that converſion is a turning out of this way; and that when perſons are converted, the courſe of their walking is altered, which before was *according to the courſe of this world*; meaning this world, in diſtinction from the world to come, or the preſent age, in which the Apoſtle lived, and deſigns the men of it; and the courſe of it is their cuſtom, manner, and way of life; to which God's elect, during their ſtate of unregeneracy, conform, both with reſpect to converſation and religious worſhip: great is the force that prevailing cuſtoms have over men; it is one branch of redemption by Chriſt, to deliver men from this preſent evil world, and to free them from a vain converſation in it; and it is only the grace of God that effectually teaches to deny the luſts of it; and it is only owing to the prevalent interceſſion and power of Chriſt, that even converted perſons are kept from the evil of it: *according to the prince of the power of the air*; which is not to be underſtood of any ſuppoſed power the devil has over the air, by divine permiſſion, to raiſe winds, *&c.* but of a poſſe, or body of devils, who have their reſidence in the air; for it was not only the notion of the *Jews* [m], that there are noxious and accuſing ſpirits, who *fly about* באויר, *in the air*, and that there is no ſpace between the earth and the firmament free; and that the whole is full of a multitude of them; but alſo it was the opinion of the *Chaldeans* [n], and of *Pythagoras* [o], and *Plato* [p], that the air is full of *Dæmons:* now there is a prince who is at the head of theſe, called *Beelzebub*, the prince of devils, or the lord of a fly, for the devils under him, are as ſo many flies in the air, *Matt.* xii. 24. and by the *Jews* called [q], רבהון דרוחיא, the *prince of ſpirits*; and is here ſtiled, *the ſpirit that now worketh in the children of diſobedience*; by which ſpirit is meant, not the leſſer devils that are under the prince, nor the ſpirit of the world which comes from him, and is not of God; but ſatan himſelf, who is a ſpirit, and an evil and an unclean one; and who operates powerfully in unbelievers, for they are meant by children of diſobedience, or unbelief; juſt as, בני מהימנותא, *children of faith* [r], in the *Jewiſh* dialect, deſign believers; and over theſe ſatan has great influence, eſpecially the reprobate part of them; whoſe minds he blinds, and whoſe hearts he fills, and puts it into them to do the worſt of crimes; and indeed, he has great power over the elect themſelves, whilſt in unbelief, and leads them captive at his will; and theſe may be ſaid in their unregeneracy to walk after him, when they imitate him, and do his luſts, and comply with what he ſuggeſts, dictates to them, or tempts them to.

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[i] Zohar in Gen. fol. 41. 3.

[k] Ib. in Num. fol. 76. 1. Vid. ib. in Exod. fol. 44. 2.

[l] Caphtor, fol. 30. 2.

Ver. 3. *Among whom alſo we all had our converſation in times paſt*, &c.] What the Apoſtle ſays of the *Gentile Epheſians* before converſion, he ſays of himſelf and other *Jews*; and this he does, partly to ſhow that it was not from ill-will, or with a deſign to upbraid the *Gentiles*, that he ſaid what he did; and partly to beat down the pride of the *Jews*, who thought themſelves better than the ſinners of the *Gentiles*; as well as to magnify the grace of God in the converſion of them both: the ſenſe is, that the Apoſtle and other *Jews* in the time of their unregeneracy, had their converſation according to the cuſtoms of the world, and to the prince of the air, and among unbelievers, as well as the *Gentiles*; and that they were equally ſinners, and lived a like ſinful courſe of life: *in the luſts of our fleſh*; by *fleſh* is meant, the corruption of nature; ſo called, becauſe it is propagated by natural generation; and is oppoſed to the Spirit, or principle of grace; and has for its object fleſhly things; and diſcovers itſelf moſtly in the body, the fleſh; and it makes perſons carnal or fleſhly: and this is called *our*, becauſe it belongs to human nature, and is inherent in it, and inſeparable from it in this life: and the *luſts* of it, are the inward motions of it, in a contrariety to the law and will of God; and are various, and are ſometimes called fleſhly and worldly luſts, and the luſt of the fleſh, and the luſt of the eyes, and the pride of life: and perſons may be ſaid to have their converſations in theſe, when theſe are the ground of their converſation, when they are ſolicitous about them, and make proviſion for the fulfilling of them, and conſtantly employ themſelves in obedience to them, as follows: *fulfilling the deſires of the fleſh, and of the mind*; or the *wills* of them; what they incline to, will, and crave after: various are the degrees of ſin, and its ſeveral motions; and univerſal is the corruption of human nature; not only the body, and the ſeveral members of it, are defiled with ſin, and diſpoſed to it, but all the powers and faculties of the ſoul; even the more noble and governing ones, the mind, underſtanding, and will, as well as the affections; and great is the power and influence which luſt has over them: *and were by nature children of wrath, even as others*; by which is meant, not only that they were wrathful perſons, living in malice, hateful, and hating one another; but that they were deſerving of the wrath of God, which comes upon the children of diſobedience, among whom they had their converſation; and which is revealed from heaven againſt ſuch ſins they were guilty of, though they were not appointed to it: and they were ſuch *by nature*; really, and not in opinion, and by and from their firſt birth: ſo a *Jewiſh* commentator [s] on theſe words, *thy firſt father hath ſinned*, *Iſa.* xliii. 27. has this note; "how can'ſt thou ſay thou haſt not "ſinned? and behold thy firſt father hath ſinned, "and he is the firſt man, for man, מוטבע בחטא, "*is naturally in ſin*;" or by nature a ſinner, or ſin is naturally impreſſed in him; and hence being by nature a ſinner, he is by nature deſerving of the wrath of God, as were the perſons ſpoken of: *even as others*; as the reſt of the world, *Jews* as well as *Gentiles*; and *Gentiles* are eſpecially deſigned, in diſtinction from the *Jews*, the Apoſtle is ſpeaking of; and who are particularly called in the *Jewiſh* dialect, אחרים, *others*; ſee the note on *Luke* xviii. 11.

Ver. 4. *But God, who is rich in mercy*, &c.] Mercy is a perfection of the divine nature, and is eſſential to God; and may be conſidered with reſpect to the objects of it, either as general, extending to all men in a providential way; or as ſpecial, reaching only to ſome in a way of grace; for though mercy is his nature, yet the diſplay and exertion of it towards any object, is the act of his will; and ſpecial mercy, with all the bleſſings and benefits of it, is only exhibited in Chriſt Jeſus: and God is ſaid to be *rich* in it, becauſe he is free and liberal in diſpenſing it, and the effects of it; and that to a large number of perſons, in great abundance and variety, by various ways, and in divers inſtances; as in the covenant of grace, in the miſſion of Chriſt, in redemption by him, in regeneration, in pardon of ſin, and in eternal ſalvation; and yet it is inexhauſtible and perpetual; and this ſets forth the excellency and glory of it: *for his great love wherewith he loved us*; the love of God to his choſen people is very great, if it be conſidered who it is that has loved them, God and not man; who is an infinite, unchangeable, and ſovereign being; and his love is like himſelf, for God is love; it has heights and depths, and lengths and breadths immeaſurable; it admits of no variation nor alteration; and is altogether free, ariſing from himſelf, and not from any motives and conditions in men: and if the perſons themſelves are conſidered, who are the objects of it, men, ſinful men, unworthy of the divine notice and regard; and that theſe are loved perſonally, particularly, and diſtinctly, and not others; nakedly, and not theirs, or for any thing in them, or done by them, and that notwithſtanding their manifold ſins and tranſgreſſions: to which may be added, that this love is repreſented as a paſt act; and indeed it is from everlaſting, and is antecedent to their being quickned, and was when they were dead in treſpaſſes and ſins; and is the ſource and ſpring of the bleſſing next mentioned: ſo the divine love is often called in the *Cabaliſtic* writings of the *Jews* [t], אהבה רבה, *great love*.

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[m] Shaare Ora, fol. 4. 1.

[n] Laert. Procem. in vit. Philoſ. p. 5.

[o] Ib. in vit. Pythagor. p. 587.

[p] Apuleius de Deo Socratis, p. 331.

[q] T. Hieroſ. Peah, fol. 21. 2.

[r] Zohar in Gen. fol. 21. 2. & 22. 4. & 27. 4. & 28. 2. & 35. 2. & 44. 1.

[s] Kimchi in loc.

[t] Zohar in Gen. fol. 8. 4. & in Exod. fol. 102 3. Lex. Cabal. p. 44, 45.

Ver. 5. *Even when we were dead in ſins*, &c.] See the note on ver. 1. *Hath quickned us together with Chriſt*; which may be underſtood either of regeneration, when a ſoul that is dead in a moral or ſpiritual ſenſe, is quickned and made alive; a principle of life is infuſed, and acts of life are put forth; ſuch have their ſpiritual ſenſes, and theſe in exerciſe; they can feel the load and weight of ſin; ſee their loſt ſtate and condition, the odiouſneſs of ſin, and the beauty of a Saviour, the inſufficiency of their own righteouſneſs, and the fulneſs and ſuitableneſs of Chriſt's; breathe after divine and ſpiritual things; ſpeak in prayer to God, and the language of *Canaan* to fellow-chriſtians; move towards Chriſt, exerciſe grace on him, act for him, and walk on in him: and this life they have not from themſelves, for previous to it they are dead, and in this quickning work are entirely paſſive; nor can regenerate perſons quicken themſelves, when in dead and lifeleſs frames, and much leſs unregenerate ſinners; but this is God's act, the act of God the Father; though not excluſive of the Son, who quickens whom he will; nor of the Spirit, who is the Spirit of life from Chriſt; and it is an inſtance of the exceeding greatneſs, both of his power and love; and this may be ſaid to be done with Chriſt, becauſe he is the procuring and meritorious cauſe of it, by his death and reſurrection from the dead; and is the author and efficient cauſe of it; and he is the matter of it, it is not ſo much the quickned perſons that live, as Chriſt that lives in them, and it is the ſame life he himſelf lives; and becauſe he lives, they ſhall live alſo; it is in him as in the fountain, and in them as in the ſtream: or elſe this may be underſtood of juſtification; men are dead in a law ſenſe, and on account of ſin, are under the ſentence of death; though they naturally think themſelves alive, and in a good ſtate; but when the Spirit of God comes, he ſtrikes dead all their hopes of life by a covenant of works; not merely by letting in the terrors of the law upon the conſcience, but by ſhewing the ſpirituality of it, and the exceeding ſinfulneſs of ſin; and how uncapable they are of ſatisfying the law, for the tranſgreſſions of it; and then he works faith in them, whereby they revive and live; they ſee pardon and righteouſneſs in Chriſt, and pray for the one, and plead the other; and alſo lay hold and live upon the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, when the Spirit ſeals up the pardon of their ſins to them, and paſſes the ſentence of juſtification on them, and ſo they reckon themſelves alive unto God; and this is the juſtification of life, the ſcripture ſpeaks of; and this is in conſequence of their being quickned with Chriſt, at the time of his reſurrection; for when he roſe from the dead, they roſe with him; when he was juſtified, they were juſtified in him; and in this ſenſe when he was quickened, they were quickned with him: *by grace ye are ſaved*; the *Claromontane* copy, and the *Vulgate Latin* verſion read, *by whoſe grace*; and the *Arabic* and *Ethiopic* verſions, *by his grace*; either by the grace of him that quickens, or by the grace of Chriſt with whom they were quickned; the *Syriac* verſion renders it, *by his grace he hath redeemed us*; which ſeems to refer to the redeeming grace of Chriſt; and ſo the *Ethiopic* verſion, *and hath delivered us by his grace*; and there is a change of the perſon into *us*, which ſeems more agreeable to what goes before, and follows after; ſee the note on ver. 8.

Ver. 6. *And hath raiſed* us *up together*, &c.] Which refers either to a ſpiritual reſurrection, to a reſurrection from a death in ſin, to a ſpiritual life; and which is the effect of almighty power, and of rich grace and mercy; and in which Chriſt is concerned: he is the efficient cauſe of it, he raiſes the dead in this ſenſe, and quickens whom he will; and his reſurrection is the virtual cauſe of it; and alſo the exemplar, between which there is a great likeneſs; both bear the ſame name; both are a declaration of ſonſhip; and both the firſt ſtep to glory in Chriſt and in his people; and both are inſtances of the exceeding greatneſs of God's power: or it may refer to a corporal reſurrection, ſaid to be already, becauſe it is in faith and hope, and becauſe of the certainty of it; and to be together with Chriſt, becauſe of the conformity of it to his reſurrection, and to the influence of which it is owing; and chiefly becauſe that when Chriſt roſe from the dead, all his people roſe in him, and with him, as their head and repreſentative, he being the firſt-fruits of them that ſlept; ſo called, in alluſion to the firſt-fruits of the harveſt under the law, which repreſented and ſanctified the whole: *and made* us *ſit together in heavenly* places *in Chriſt Jeſus*; Chriſt is entered into heaven as the forerunner, to take poſſeſſion of it for his people, in their name; and to prepare manſions of glory for them, and in theſe they ſit; which imports honour, pleaſure, reſt from labour and wearineſs, and ſafety and ſecurity: and what adds to the happineſs of this is, that it is together with all the ſaints, and with Chriſt himſelf; and in theſe they are made to ſit already; which is ſo ſaid, becauſe of the certainty of it, for the ſame glory Chriſt has, they ſhall have; and becauſe of their right to ſuch a bleſſing; and chiefly becauſe Chriſt their head is ſet down therein, who ſuſtains their perſons, bears their names on his heart, and repreſents them.

Ver. 7. *That in the ages to come*, &c.] This is the end of God's permitting ſin, in which men are morally dead; and of his ſuffering them to go on in ſin, in a ſtate of unregeneracy; and of his quickning them with Chriſt, and raiſing them up, and cauſing them to ſit together with him: namely, that *he might ſhew the exceeding riches of his grace*; riches being added to grace, denote the valuableneſs of it, as well as its plenty and abundance; and alſo the freeneſs and liberality of God in giving it; and likewiſe the enriching nature of it: and theſe riches are exceeding; they exceed the riches of this world, in the immenſeneſs of them, being unſearchable; and in the inexhauſtibleneſs of them, for though ſuch large treaſures have been expended upon ſuch numbers of perſons, yet there is ſtill the ſame quantity; and in the duration of them, they laſt for ever; and in the profit and ſatisfaction they yield, when other riches fade away, are not profitable nor ſatisfying; and they exceed the conception, knowledge, and comprehenſion of men; and intend the utmoſt ſtretch of the grace of God: and which are evidently and remarkably diſplayed, *in his kindneſs towards us through Chriſt Jeſus*; in providing him as a Saviour for his people; in the miſſion of him into this world; in not ſparing, but giving him up as a ſacrifice to juſtice for their ſins; and in bleſſing them with all ſpiritual bleſſings in him: all which God deſigned to ſhew forth, *in the ages to come*; meaning either the ages following to the end of time, in diſtinction from the ages that were paſt: hence it appears, that the world was not expected to be immediately at an end; and that the writings of the New Teſtament were to be continued, and the Goſpel preached unto the end of time, in which the riches of divine grace are held forth to view; and that theſe ages to come, are ſeaſons and days of grace; for a day of grace will never be over, as long as the Goſpel of grace is preached; and that the inſtances of grace through Chriſt, and in the times of the Apoſtles, are encouraging to men in ages ſucceeding; and that the ſame grace that was diſplayed then, is ſhewn forth in theſe: or elſe the world to come is meant, which will take place at the end of this; and may lead us to obſerve, that there will be ages in the other world; and that God has not only prepared a great deal of grace and glory for his people, but he has appointed ages enow for them to enjoy it in; and that their riches lie in another world, and are in ſome meaſure hid; and that theſe are the produce of the grace of God; and that the exceeding riches of that will be then manifeſted, when it will alſo appear that God's giving grace to men, is not only with a view to his own glory, but is an act of kindneſs to them; and that eternal happineſs will be heartily and freely beſtowed upon them, and that through Jeſus Chriſt their Lord: the *Syriac* verſion renders it, *that unto ages to come he might ſhew, &c.* that is, to men in ages to come; the ſenſe is much the ſame.

Ver. 8. *For by grace are ye ſaved*, &c.] This is to be underſtood, not of temporal ſalvation, nor of preſervation in Chriſt, nor of providential ſalvation in order to vocation, and much leſs of being put in a way of ſalvation, or only in a ſalvable ſtate; but of ſpiritual ſalvation, and that actual; for ſalvation was not only reſolved upon, contrived and ſecured in the covenant of grace, for the perſons here ſpoken to, but it was actually obtained and wrought out for them by Chriſt, and was actually applied unto them by the Spirit; and even as to the full enjoyment of it, they had it in faith and hope; and becauſe of the certainty of it, they are ſaid to be already ſaved; and beſides, were repreſentatively poſſeſſed of it in Chriſt their head: thoſe intereſted in this ſalvation, are not all mankind, but particular perſons; and ſuch who were by nature children of wrath, and ſinners of the *Gentiles*; and it is a ſalvation from ſin, ſatan, the law, its curſe and condemnation, and from eternal death, and wrath to come; and includes all the bleſſings of grace and glory; and is entirely owing to free grace: for by grace is not meant the Goſpel, nor gifts of grace, nor grace infuſed; but the free favour of God, to which ſalvation in all its branches is aſcribed; as election, redemption, juſtification, pardon, adoption, regeneration, and eternal glory: the *Syriac*, *Arabic*, and *Ethiopic* verſions read, *by his grace*, and ſo ſome copies; and it may refer to the grace of all the three perſons; for men are ſaved by the grace of the Father, who drew the plan of ſalvation, appointed men to it, made a covenant with his Son, in which it is provided and ſecured, and ſent him into the world to obtain it; and by the grace of the Son, who engaged as a ſurety to effect it, aſſumed human nature, obeyed and ſuffered in it for that purpoſe, and has procured it; and by the grace of the Spirit, who makes men ſenſible of their need of it, brings it near, ſets it before them, and applies it to them, and gives them faith and hope in it: hence it follows, *through faith, and that not of yourſelves, it is the gift of God*; ſalvation is through faith, not as a cauſe or condition of ſalvation, or as what adds any thing to the bleſſing itſelf; but it is the way, or means, or inſtrument, which God has appointed, for the receiving and enjoying it, that ſo it might appear to be all of grace; and this faith is not the produce of man's free-will and power, but it is the free gift of God; and therefore ſalvation through it, is conſiſtent with ſalvation by grace; ſince that itſelf is of grace, lies entirely in receiving grace, and gives all the glory to the grace of God: the ſenſe of this laſt clauſe may be, that ſalvation is not of ourſelves; it is not of our deſiring, nor of our deſerving, nor of our performing, but is of the free grace of God: though faith is elſewhere repreſented as the gift of God, *John* vi. 65. *Phil.* i. 29. and it is called the ſpecial gift of faith, in *Wiſdom* iii. 14.

Ver. 9. *Not of works*, &c.] Of any kind, moral or ceremonial, before or after converſion, done without faith or in it, nor of theſe in any ſenſe; works are neither the moving cauſes, nor the procuring cauſes, nor the helping cauſes, nor *cauſa ſine qua non*, or conditions of ſalvation; the beſt works that are done by men, are not done of themſelves, but by the grace of God, and therefore can never merit at his hand: and ſalvation is put upon ſuch a foot, *leſt any man ſhould boaſt*; of his works before God, and unto men; wherefore he has denied works any place in juſtification and ſalvation, in order to exclude all boaſting in man; and has fixed it in a way of grace, and has choſen and called poor ſinful worthleſs creatures to enjoy it, that whoever glories, may glory in the Lord.

Ver. 10. *For we are his workmanſhip*, &c.] Not as men only, but as chriſtians; not as creatures merely, but as new creatures; the work of grace upon the ſoul ſeems chiefly deſigned, which like a *poem*, as the word may be rendered, is a very curious work; the king's daughter is all glorious within, for this is an internal work, and is a good and excellent one; it is not indeed perfected at once, but is gradually carried on, till the finiſhing ſtroke is given to it by that hand which begun it; the author of it is God, it is not man's work; nor is it the work of miniſters, no, nor of angels, but it is God's work: ſometimes it is aſcribed to the Spirit, who regenerates and ſanctifies; and ſometimes to the Son of God, who quickens whom he will; and ſometimes to the Father, who reveals his Son, and draws men to him, and who ſeems to be meant here: the ſubjects of this divine operation, are the perſons deſcribed in ver. 1, 2, 3. and include both *Jews* and *Gentiles*; and expreſs the diſtinguiſhing grace of God, that they and not others, and who were by nature children of wrath as others, ſhould be his workmanſhip: and this is mentioned to ſhew, that ſalvation cannot be by any works of men, ſince all their works are either wrought for them, or in them, by God; ſalvation is a work wrought for them, without them; and ſanctification is a work wrought in them by God, of his good pleaſure; and all their good works are fruits of his grace, as follows: *created in Chriſt Jeſus unto good works*; the work of grace is a creation, or a creature, a new creature; not a new vamp of old *Adam*'s principles, but an infuſion of new ones, and is a work of almighty power; and ſuch who have it wrought in them, are ſaid to be created in Chriſt; becauſe as ſoon as a man becomes a new creature, he is openly and viſibly in Chriſt; and by theſe new principles of grace which are created in him, he is fit and ready, and in a capacity to perform good works; the new man formed in him, is formed for righteouſueſs and true holineſs; the internal principle of grace both excites unto, and qualifies for, the performance of righteous and holy actions: *which God hath before ordained that we ſhould walk in them*, or has *before prepared*; for the

the preparation of good works to be performed by ſaints, and the preparation of them for the performance of them are both from the Lord; God has appointed good works to be done by his people, and in his word he has declared what they are he would have done; and it is his will not only that they ſhould do them, but continue to do them; not only that they ſhould do a ſingle act or more, but walk in them; their converſation and courſe of life ſhould be one continued ſeries of good works; but the intention is not that they ſhould be ſaved by them, but that they ſhould walk in them; and this being the pre-ordination of God, as it ſhews that predeſtination is not according to good works, ſince good works are the fruits and effects of it, ſo likewiſe that it is no licentious doctrine; ſeeing it provides for the performance of good works, as well as ſecures grace and glory.

Ver. 11. *Wherefore remember that ye being in time paſt, Gentiles in the fleſh*, &c.] This with what follows in the next verſe, the Apoſtle puts the converted *Epheſians* in mind of, in order to magnify the grace of God in their converſion; and to humble them in a view of their former ſtate and condition; and to teach them that they could never be ſaved by any works of theirs: particularly he would have them call to mind, that they were *in time paſt Gentiles*; which does not ſo much regard the nation and country they were of, for in that ſenſe they were *Gentiles* ſtill; but their ſtate and condition; they had been very blind and ignorant, were *Gentiles* that knew not God; they had been very wicked and profligate ſinners of the *Gentiles*; and they had been *Gentiles in the fleſh*; not according to the fleſh, or by birth, for ſo they were then; but in the time of their unregeneracy they were carnal, and minded the things of the fleſh, walked after it, and fulfilled the luſts, and did the works of it; particular reſpect ſeems to be had to their uncircumciſion in the fleſh, to which circumciſion in the fleſh is oppoſed in the next clauſe: *who are called uncircumciſion by that which is called circumciſion in the fleſh made by hands*; that is, they were by way of reproach and contempt called uncircumciſed perſons; than whom none were more abominable to the *Jews*, and hated by them, who were called circumciſed perſons from that circumciſion which is outward, in the fleſh, in a particular part of the body; and which is done by the hands of a man, who was called מוהל, *the circumciſer*; which any one might be, except a *Gentile*[u]; an *Iſraelite* adult and ſkilful was preferred; yet theſe were not circumciſed perſons with that circumciſion that is inward, and is of the heart, in the Spirit, and is made without the hands of men, and by the Spirit and power of God.

Ver. 12. *That at that time ye were without Chriſt*, &c.] Or ſeparate from him: they were choſen in him and were preſerved in him, and were redeemed by him before; but they were without any knowledge of him, faith in him, love to him, communion with him, or ſubjection to him, his Goſpel, government, laws, and ordinances; and particularly they were without any promiſes of him, or prophecies concerning him, which were peculiar to the *Jews*; hence the Meſſiah is called, משיחא דישראל, *the Chriſt of Iſrael*[w], and who as he was promiſed, ſo he was ſent only to the loſt ſheep of the houſe of *Iſrael*: hence it follows, *being aliens from the commonwealth of Iſrael*; both from their civil and church-ſtate; the *Gentiles* might not dwell among them, nor have any dealings with them in things civil, unleſs they conformed to certain laws; nor might the *Jews* go into any, nor eat or converſe with any, that were uncircumciſed; ſo great an alienation and diſtance were there between theſe two people; and much leſs might they eat the paſſover and join with them in religious worſhip: the word for *commonwealth* here uſed, *Harpocratian* ſays[x], is commonly uſed by *Greek* writers for a *democracy*; tho' the original conſtitution of the *Iſraelites* was properly a *theocracy*: *ſtrangers to the covenants of promiſe*; to the covenant of circumciſion given to *Abraham*; and to the covenant at mount *Sinai*, made with *Iſrael*; and to the diſpenſation of the covenant of grace to that people, ſometimes called the firſt covenant and the old covenant, and which peculiarly belonged to them, *Rom*. ix. 4. one copy reads, *ſtrangers to the promiſes of the covenant*; which is natural enough; the *Vulgate Latin* verſion joins the word *promiſe* to the next clauſe, and reads, *having no hope of the promiſe*; of the promiſed Meſſiah: *having no hope*; of the Meſſiah and ſalvation by him, of the reſurrection of the dead, of a future ſtate, and of eternal life; none that is ſure and ſteadfaſt, that is purifying, and makes not aſhamed; or which is a good hope thro' grace, is the gift of God, the fruit of his love, and the effect of his power; and this is to be in a miſerable condition: *Philo* the *Jew*[y] obſerves, that "the *Chaldeans* call "a man *Enos*, as if he only was truly a man that "expects good things, and ſupports himſelf with "good hopes; and adds, hence it is manifeſt that "one without hope is not reckoned a man, but a "beaſt in an human form; ſince he is deſtitute of "hope, which is the property of the human ſoul;" *and without God in the world*; without the knowledge of God in Chriſt; without the image of God, which was defaced by ſin; without the grace and fear of God; and without communion with him, and the worſhip of him; and whilſt they were ſo they were in the world, among the men of it, and were a part of it, not being yet called out of it: the word ſignifies *atheiſts*; ſo ſome of the *Gentiles* were in *theory*, as they all were in practice; and they were by the *Jews* reckoned no other than *atheiſts*; it is a common ſaying with them[z], that "he that dwells without the land (of *Iſrael*) is like "one שאין לו אלוה, *who has no God*."

Ver. 13. *But now in Chriſt Jeſus*, &c.] Being openly and viſibly in Chriſt, created in him, and become believers in him; as they were before ſecretly in him, as choſen and bleſſed in him before the foundation of the world: *ye who ſometimes were far off*; who in their ſtate of unregeneracy were afar off from God, and from his law, and from any ſpiritual knowledge of him and fellowſhip with him; and from Jeſus Chriſt, and from the knowledge of his righteouſneſs, and the way of ſalvation by him; and from the Spirit, and any acquaintance with the things of the Spirit, and from minding them, and from walking after him; and from the ſaints and people of God, and from any love to them, and communion with them; and from any ſolid hopes of happineſs, or real peace and comfort; which diſtance was owing both to *Adam's* ſin and to their own tranſgreſſions: it is an obſervation of a *Jewiſh* writer[a] on *Gen*. iii. 9. *where art* thou? he (God) knew where he was, but he ſaid ſo to ſhew him that he was מרוחק, *afar off from God by his ſin*:

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[u] Maimon. Hilchot Milah, c. 2. §. 1.
[w] Targum in Iſ. xvi. 1. 5.
[x] Lex. Decem Orator. p. 246.
[y] De Abrahamo, p. 350, 351.
[z] T. Bab. Cetubot, fol. 110. 2. Zohar in Exod. fol. 33. 1. Coſri par. 2. §. 22. fol. 85. 2. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 129. 4. & 135. 2. & 153. 3. & 168. 3.
[a] R. Abraham Seba, Tzeror Hammor, fol. 7. 2.

ſee *Iſ.* lix. 2. and yet are *made nigh by the blood of Chriſt*; ſo as to have nearneſs of acceſs to and communion with God, Father, Son, and Spirit, and the ſaints, in virtue of the blood of Chriſt; which gives boldneſs and ſpeaks peace; by which their perſons are juſtified, the pardon of their ſins is procured, reconciliation is made, and their garments are waſhed, and made white; and ſo they draw nigh with confidence by the faith of him.

Ver. 14. *For he is our peace*, &c.] The author of peace between *Jew* and *Gentile*: there was a great enmity of the *Jew* againſt the *Gentile*, and of the *Gentile* againſt the *Jew*; and chiefly on account of circumciſion, the one being without it, and the other inſiſting on it, and branding one another with nick names on account of it; but Chriſt has made peace between them by abrogating the ceremonial law, which was the occaſion of the difference, and by ſending the Goſpel of peace to them both, by converting ſome of each, and by granting the like priviledges to them all, as may be obſerved in the following verſes: and Chriſt is the author of peace between God and his people; there is naturally in man an enmity to God; ſin has ſeparated chief friends; nor can man make his peace with God; what he does, or can do, will not do it, and what will he cannot do; Chriſt is the only fit and proper perſon for this work, being a middle perſon between both, and is only able to effect it, being God as well as man; and ſo could draw nigh to God, and treat with him about terms of peace, and agree to them, and perform them; and which he has brought about by his blood, his ſufferings and death; and which is made on honourable terms, by a full ſatiſfaction to the law and juſtice of God; and ſo is a laſting one, and attended with a train of bleſſings: moreover, Chriſt is the donor of peace, of external peace in his churches, and of internal peace of conſcience, and of eternal peace in heaven: this is one of the names of the Meſſiah with the *Jews*[b]; "ſays *R. Joſe* the *Galilean*, even the name of the "Meſſiah is called שלום, *peace*; as it is ſaid, "*Iſ.* ix. 6. *the everlaſting father, the prince of* "*peace*;" ſee *Mic.* v. 5. where it is ſaid, *and this man ſhall be the peace*; which the *Jewiſh*[c] writers underſtand of the Meſſiah: *who hath made both one*; *Jews* and *Gentiles*, one people, one body, one church; he united them together, and cauſed them to agree in one, and made them to be of one mind and judgment by the above methods; as well as he gathered them together in one, in one head, himſelf, who repreſented them all: *and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us*; the ceremonial law, which was made up of many hard and intolerable commands, and diſtinguiſhed, and divided, and kept up a diviſion between *Jews* and *Gentiles*: ſo the *Jews* call the law a wall, *if ſhe be a wall*, cant. 8, 9. זו תורה, *this is the law*, ſay they[d]; and hence we read of חומת התורה, *the wall of the law*[e]; and ſometimes the phraſe, a *partition wall*, is uſed for a diviſion or diſagreement; ſo *R. Benjamin* ſays[f], that between the *Karaites* and *Rabbanites*, who were the diſciples of the wiſe men, there was מחיצה, *a middle wall of partion*; a great difference and diſtance; and ſuch there was between the *Jew* and *Gentile*, by reaſon of the ceremonial law; but Chriſt removed it, and made up the difference: the alluſion ſeems to be to the wall which divided the court of *Iſrael* from the court of the *Gentiles*, in the temple, and which kept them at a diſtance in worſhip.

Ver. 15. *Having aboliſhed in his fleſh the enmity*, &c.] The ceremonial law, as appears by what follows, even *the law of commandments* contained *in ordinances*; which conſiſted of many precepts, and carnal ordinances; and is ſo called becauſe it was an indication of God's hatred of ſin, by requiring ſacrifice for it; and becauſe it was an occaſion of ſtirring up the enmity of the natural man, it being a burden and a wearineſs to the fleſh, by reaſon of its many and troubleſome rites; and becauſe it was the cauſe of enmity between *Jew* and *Gentile*: the *Jews* ſay[g], that *Sinai* the mount on which the law was given, ſignifies *hatred*; and that it is ſo called becauſe from it deſcended שנאה, *hatred* or *enmity* to the nations of the world: now this Chriſt aboliſhed, *in his fleſh*, or by it; not by his incarnation, but by the ſacrifice of his fleſh, or human nature, and that as in union with his divine nature; but not until he had fulfilled it in himſelf, which was one end of his coming into the world; and then he aboliſhed it, ſo as that it ought not be, and ſo as that it is not, and of no uſe and ſervice; and that becauſe it was faulty and deficient, weak and unprofitable, as well as intolerable; and becauſe there was a change in the prieſthood; and becauſe it was contrary to a ſpirit of liberty, the great bleſſing of the Goſpel; and that there might be a reconciliation and a coalition between *Jew* and *Gentile*, as follows: *for to make in himſelf of twain one new man*, ſo *making peace*; which explains what is meant before by making both one; and expreſſes the ſtrictneſs of the union between *Jew* and *Gentile*, they became as one man; and points at the manner in which they became ſo ſtrictly united; and that is by being made new men, or new creatures, by having a work of grace upon their ſouls, and ſo baptized into one body, and made to drink of one and the ſame Spirit; the foundation of which union is in himſelf; for *Jew* and *Gentile*, male and female, bond and free, are all one in Chriſt Jeſus; he is the corner ſtone in which they all meet, and the head to which the whole body is joined.

Ver. 16. *And that he might reconcile both unto God*, &c.] This is another end of the abrogation of the ceremonial law: the *Jews* had run up a long ſcore againſt the ceremonial law, as well as againſt the moral law; and Chriſt by fulfilling it for them, and thereby abrogating it, reconciled them; and the *Gentiles* could not be reconciled together with them, without the abrogation of it: and this reconciliation of them is made to God, who was the perſon offended; and who yet firſt ſet on foot a reconciliation, in which his glory is greatly concerned; and reconciliation with others depends upon reconciliation with him: and this is made *in one body by the croſs*; by which *body* is meant, the human body of Chriſt, which the Father prepared for him, and he aſſumed, and that in order to make reconciliation for his people; and is ſaid to be *one* body, becauſe it was in one and the ſame body, in which he reconciled both *Jews* and *Gentiles* unto God, and in or by one ſacrifice of that body; reconciliation being ſo effectually made by it that there is no need of a reiteration: or the ſenſe is, he reconciled them, *into one body*; into one myſtical body, the church, of which he is head; and this he did *by the croſs*, that is, by his blood ſhed on the croſs, or by his ſuffering the death of the croſs; which ſhews that reconciliation is made in a way of ſatisfaction to the law and juſtice of God, by Chriſt's bearing the penalty of the law, and ſuffering the ſtrokes of juſtice on the croſs; and expreſſes the efficacy of his blood and ſacrifice, and the greatneſs of his condeſcenſion and love: *having ſlain the enmity thereby*; the ceremonial law, as before; and the ſlaying it is the ſame with aboliſhing it; unleſs the enmity between God and man is meant, which was ſlain by removing the cauſe of it ſin; and which laid a foundation for the ſlaying of it in the hearts of his people in regeneration, when ſin is made odious to them, and they are reconciled to God's way of ſalvation; hence being ſlain in both ſenſes, peace with God can never be broken.

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[b] Perek Shalom, fol. 20. 1. Baal Hatturim in Numb. xxv. 12.
[c] Vid. Kimchi in loc.
[d] T. Bab. Peſachim, fol. 87. 1.
[e] Caphtor, fol. 95. 1. & 101. 1.
[f] Itinerar. p. 28.
[g] T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 89. 1. Shemot Rabba, §. 2. fol. 92. 4.

Ver. 17. *And came and preached peace to you which were afar off*, &c.] Which is to be underſtood not of Chriſt's coming in the fleſh; for when he came in the fleſh, he came only to the *Jews* that were nigh, and preached the Goſpel in his own perſonal miniſtry to them, and not to the *Gentiles*, who are the perſons afar off; ſee ver. 12, 13. but of his coming by his Spirit in the miniſtry of his Apoſtles, to whom he gave a commiſſion after he had made peace and reconciliation by the blood of his croſs, to go into all the world and preach the Goſpel to the *Gentiles* in the furtheſt parts of the earth; and on whom he beſtowed gifts, qualifying them for ſuch ſervice, and ſucceeded them in it by his power and grace: and the ſubject of their miniſtry was peace, Chriſt who is our peace, and peace made by his blood, and the Goſpel of peace which declares both theſe; and it is the means of making perſons of peaceable diſpoſitions; its doctrines and promiſes when powerfully applied, give peace to diſtreſſed minds, and quiet to doubting ſaints; and it ſhews the way to eternal peace: *and to them that were nigh*; to the *Jews*, to whom the Goſpel of peace was preached in the firſt place, not only by Chriſt and his Apoſtles, before his death; but by his Apoſtles after his reſurrection, and after the commiſſion was given to preach it to the *Gentiles*; tho' they are mentioned laſt, becauſe the Apoſtle was ſpeaking to *Gentiles*; and this alſo verifies what Chriſt ſays, the firſt ſhall be laſt, and the laſt firſt: the *Alexandrian* copy, ſome others, and the *Vulgate Latin* and *Ethiopic* verſions read, *peace*, in this clauſe, as in the former; the Apoſtle ſeems to have reſpect to *Iſ.* lvii. 19. a like deſcription and diſtinction of *Jews* and *Gentiles* may be obſerved in the writings of the *Jews*[h]; ſo they ſay, "the *Iſraelites* are *near* unto the holy king, and "the reſt of the nations are *far* from him."

Ver. 18. *For thro' him we both have an acceſs*, &c.] That is, both *Jews* and *Gentiles*; the *Arabic* verſion reads, *we both factions*: being made one, and reconciled unto God, and having the Goſpel of peace preached to both, they have thro' Chriſt freedom of acceſs and boldneſs in it: *by one ſpirit unto the father*; they may come to God as the Father of ſpirits, and of mercies, who has made their ſouls or ſpirits, and beſtowed his mercies on them in great abundance; and as the Father of Chriſt, and as their God and Father in Chriſt: and the rather they ſhould conſider him in this relation to them, in order to command in them a reverence and fear of him; to ſecure a freedom and liberty in their approach to him; and to encourage an holy boldneſs, and a fiducial confidence in him; and to teach them ſubmiſſion to his will: and their acceſs to him is *thro'* Chriſt; who has made peace for them, and atonement for their ſins; who has ſatisfied law and juſtice, and brought in an everlaſting righteouſneſs for them; ſo that there is nothing lies in their way to hinder them; and beſides, he takes them as it were by the hand, and leads them into the preſence of his Father, and preſents their petitions for them, on whoſe account they have both audience and acceptance with God: and this acceſs is alſo *by one Spirit*; the holy Spirit, as the *Ethiopic* verſion reads; and who is neceſſary in acceſs to God, as a ſpirit of adoption, to enable and encourage ſouls to go to God as a Father; and as a ſpirit of ſupplication, to teach both how to pray, and for what, as they ſhould; and as a free ſpirit to give them liberty to ſpeak their minds freely, and pour out their ſouls to God; and as a ſpirit of faith to engage them to pray in faith, and with holy boldneſs, confidence, and importunity: and he is ſaid to be *one*, both with reſpect to the perſons to and by whom acceſs is had, the Father and Chriſt, for he is the one and the ſame ſpirit of the Father and of the Son; and with reſpect to the perſons who have this acceſs, *Jews* and *Gentiles*, who as they make up one body, are actuated and directed by, and drink into one and the ſame Spirit: hence this acceſs to God is of a ſpiritual kind; it is a drawing nigh to God with the heart, and a worſhipping him in Spirit; and is by faith, and may be with freedom, and ſhould be with reverence, and ought to be frequent; and is a peculiar priviledge that belongs to the children of God; and who have great honour beſtowed upon them, to have acceſs to God at any time, as their Father, thro' Chriſt the mediator, and under the influence, and by the direction and aſſiſtance of the holy Spirit: this is a conſiderable proof of a Trinity of perſons in the Godhead, of their deity and diſtinct perſonality.

Ver. 19. *Now therefore ye are no more ſtrangers*, &c.] Alluding to the name נכרי, *a ſtranger*, by which the *Jews* called the *Gentiles*; meaning that they were not now ſtrangers to God, to the grace of God, the love of God, and communion with him, nor to the throne of his grace; nor to Chriſt, to his perſon, his work and office, to his righteouſneſs, to his voice, and to believing in him; nor to the holy Spirit, as an enlightner, a comforter, the Spirit of adoption, and as a ſeal and earneſt of future glory; nor to their own hearts, the corruption and deceitfulneſs of them; nor to the devices of ſatan; nor to the covenant of grace, its bleſſings and promiſes: *and foreigners*; in the commonwealth of *Iſrael*, in the church of God; *but fellow-citizens with the ſaints*: the city they belong to is either the church below, which is the city of God, of his building, and where he dwells, of which Chriſt is the foundation, which is ſtrongly fortified with the walls and bulwarks of ſalvation, is delightfully ſituated by the river of divine love, and is endowed with various priviledges; or heaven above, which is a city of God's preparing and building alſo, and where he has his reſidence, and which is the habitation of angels and ſaints; of this city in either ſenſe ſaints are citizens; ſuch who are ſaints by ſeparation, who are ſet apart by the Father's grace, and by imputation, or thro' Chriſt's being made ſanctification to them, and by the regenerating grace of the bleſſed Spirit; and theſe, as they have a right to a name and a place in the church on earth, have alſo their citizenſhip in heaven; and which they have not by birth, nor by purchaſe, but by the free grace of God, which gives them both a right and a meetneſs; and believing *Gentiles* are upon equal foot of grace and privilege with believing *Jews: and of the houſhold of God*; and which is ſometimes called the houſhold of faith, the church of God conſiſting of believers, the family in heaven and in earth named of Chriſt; in which family or houſhold God is the Father, Chriſt is the firſt-born, miniſters are ſtewards; and here are ſaints of various growth and ſize, ſome fathers, ſome young men, ſome children: and to this family all believers belong, whether *Gentiles* or *Jews*; and which they come into, not by birth, nor by merit, but by adopting grace; and happy are they that belong to this city and houſe! they are freed from all ſervitude and bondage; they can never be arreſted, or come into condemnation; they have liberty of acceſs to God, and ſhare in the fulneſs of grace in Chriſt; they are well taken care of; they are richly clothed, and have plenty of proviſions; and will never be turned out, and are heirs of a never-fading inheritance.

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[h] Zohar in Numb. fol. 89. 3.

Ver. 20. *And are built upon the foundation of the Apoſtles and prophets*, &c.] The prophets of the Old Teſtament, and the Apoſtles of the New, who agree in laying miniſterially the one and only foundation, Jeſus Chriſt; for not the perſons of the Apoſtles and prophets, nor their doctrines merely, are here meant; but Chriſt who is contained in them, and who is the foundation on which the church, and all true believers are built: he is the foundation of the covenant of grace, of all the bleſſings and promiſes of it, of faith and hope, of peace, joy, and comfort, of ſalvation and eternal happineſs; on this foundation the ſaints are built by Father, Son, and Spirit, as the efficient cauſes, and by the miniſters of the Goſpel as inſtruments: theſe lie in the ſame common quarry with the reſt of mankind, and are ſingled out from thence by efficacious grace; they are broken and hewn by the word and miniſters of it, as means; and are miniſterially laid on Chriſt the foundation, and are built up thereon in faith and holineſs; yea, private chriſtians are uſeful this way to build up one another: *Jeſus Chriſt himſelf being the chief corner* ſtone; which cements and knits together angels and men, *Jews* and *Gentiles*, Old and New Teſtament ſaints, ſaints above, and ſaints below, ſaints on earth, in all ages and places, and of every denomination; and which is the beauty and glory, as well as the ſtrength of the building, which keeps all together; and Chriſt is the chief, the head ſtone of the corner, and who is ſuperior to angels and men. This phraſe is uſed by the *Jews* to denote excellency in a perſon; ſo a wiſe ſcholar is called, אבן פינה, *a corner ſtone* [l]; ſee *Pſal.* cxviii. 22. *Iſ.* xxviii. 16. *Zech.* x. 4. It may be rendered, *the chief cornering ſtone*; it being ſuch an one that is a foundation-ſtone, as well as a corner ſtone; and reached unto, and lay at the bottom of, and ſupported the four corners of the building; for the foundation and corner ſtone in this ſpiritual building, is one and the ſame ſtone, Chriſt: it is ſaid of the temple of *Latona* at *Buto* in *Egypt*, that it was made, εξ ενος λιϑȣ, *of one ſtone*, as *Herodotus* [k], an eye-witneſs of it, atteſts.

Ver. 21. *In whom all the building fitly framed together*, &c.] This building is to be underſtood of all the ſaints, and people of God; of the whole univerſal church, which is God's building; and is a building of a ſpiritual nature, and will abide for ever: and this is fitly framed together; it conſiſts of various parts, as a building does; ſome ſaints are comparable to beams, ſome to rafters, others to pillars, &c. and theſe are joined and united to one another, and are ſet in an exact ſymmetry and proportion, and in a proper ſubſerviency to each other; and ſo as to make for the good, the ſtrength, and beauty of the whole. And it all centers in Chriſt; he has a great concern in this building; he is the maſter-builder, and the foundation and corner ſtone; and it being knit together in him, *groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord*: it grows by an acceſſion of new ſtones, or of ſouls called by grace, and added to it; for this building is not yet openly and viſibly compleated, as it will be; in order to which the miniſtry of the word, and adminiſtration of ordinances are continued; and this will be in the latter day, when the number of God's elect, among *Jews* and *Gentiles*, ſhall be gathered in: and this growth may be underſtood alſo of an increaſe of thoſe, who are openly laid in the building; of their ſpiritual growth into their head; Chriſt, and of an increaſe of grace in them; which the word and ordinances are means of, under a divine bleſſing: and this building grows unto an *holy temple*, the Goſpel church-ſtate, called a *temple*, in alluſion to the temple at *Jeruſalem*; whoſe materials were ſtones made ready and hewn, before they were brought thither; and whoſe magnificence, beauty, and glory, were very great; and it was the place of publick worſhip, and of the divine abode, and was a very ſignificant emblem of the church of God; ſee 2 *Cor.* vi. 16. which is an *holy* one, ſet apart for holy uſes, and internally ſanctified by the Spirit of God; and which is diſcovered by external holineſs of life, and converſation in the members of it: and this is ſaid to be *in the Lord*; which phraſe may refer to the word *groweth*, and denotes that growth and increaſe, both of perſons and grace, the church has in, and from the Lord Jeſus Chriſt; or to the word *holy*, and intimates, that the holineſs of the church, and every member of it, is alſo in and from the Lord; or to the word *temple*, which is built for him to dwell in.

Ver. 22. *In whom you alſo are builded together*, &c.] As the church univerſal, ſo every particular church is a building that is compact together, in and upon Chriſt, as the church at *Epheſus* was: God is the builder of it; Chriſt is the foundation; true believers are the proper materials; the door, or entrance into it, is Chriſt, and faith in him; the miniſters of the Goſpel are pillars in it; the ordinances are its windows; its furniture is of various ſorts, there are veſſels of ſmall, and of great quantity; and its proviſions are large and entertaining. A church is a building compact together; it conſiſts of many parts; and theſe are joined together, by agreement, and are knit and cemented in love; and being thus joined together, they are deſigned for ſocial worſhip, and their great concern ſhould be to edify one another. The phraſe, *in whom*, may either refer to the holy temple before ſpoken of, the church univerſal, of which a particular church is a part; or to Chriſt, who is the maſter-builder, by whom they are built together, and the foundation on whom they are built, and the corner ſtone in whom they meet and are united. And the end of their being thus built together is, *for an habitation of God thro' the Spirit*; which may be underſtood of God the Father, since he is diſtinguiſhed from Chriſt, in whom, and from the holy Spirit, thro' whom, they are built for this purpoſe, tho'

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[l] Abot R. Nathan, c. 28.

[k] Euterpe, c. 155.

tho' not to the excluſion of either of them; for a particular church is an habitation of Father, Son, and Spirit: and it being the habitation of God, ſhews his great grace and condeſcenſion, and the great value and regard he has for it; and this makes it a deſirable, delightful, and pleaſant habitation to the ſaints; and hence it is a ſafe and a quiet one, and they are happy that dwell in it; and hither ſhould ſouls come for the enjoyment of the divine preſence: and whereas it is ſaid to be ſuch *through the Spirit*; hence it appears, that the Spirit is concerned with the other two perſons in the building of it; and that hereby it becomes a ſpiritual houſe; and is, thro' his grace, a fit habitation for the holy God to dwell in; and that God dwells in his churches by his Spirit.

CHAP. III.

IN this chapter the Apoſtle hints at his ſtate and condition as a priſoner, and at the afflictions he endured for the ſake of the Goſpel; and whereas he knew theſe would be objected to his miniſtry, and be diſcouraging to the ſaints, he chiefly inſiſts on theſe two things; namely, to aſſert his office of Apoſtleſhip, and obſerve the knowledge of divine myſteries, and gifts of grace beſtowed on him, which he does with all modeſty and humility; and alſo to exhort the ſaints to conſtancy and perſeverance, notwithſtanding his tribulations; for which purpoſe he puts up ſeveral petitions for them; and the whole is concluded with a doxology, or an aſcription of glory to God. In ver. 1. he declares himſelf a priſoner of Chriſt, for the ſake of the *Epheſians*; and which was no objection to his being an embaſſador of Chriſt, and an Apoſtle of his, ſeeing he had a commiſſion from him to diſpenſe the word of his grace, ver. 2. of which, his knowledge in the myſtery of Chriſt, he had by revelation, was an evident proof, ver. 3. which might eaſily be underſtood by what he had written in the former part of his Epiſtle, ver. 4. and was ſuch as had not been given to the ſaints in former times, as it was to him, and others, now, ver. 5. particularly the knowledge of the myſtery of the calling of the *Gentiles* by the Goſpel, ver. 6. of which Goſpel to the *Gentiles* he was made a miniſter, through the gift of grace, and the energy of divine power, ver. 7. of which high honour he was unworthy, being, in his own eſteem, the meaneſt of all the people of God; and the grace and favour was the greater, inaſmuch as it was the unſearchable riches of Chriſt he was ſent to publiſh, and that among the *Gentiles*, ver. 8. and to give men light into a myſterious affair, which from eternity had been hid, and kept a ſecret in the heart of God, the creator of all things, ver. 9. but was now committed to him with this view, not only to be made known to the church, but by that to the heavenly principalities and powers, even that wiſe ſcheme of things which diſplays the manifold wiſdom of God, and was formed according to an eternal purpoſe in Chriſt, ver. 10, 11. thro' whom a way of acceſs is opened to God, with boldneſs, faith, and confidence, as the Goſpel declares, ver. 12. Wherefore, tho' he endured much tribulation for the ſake of preaching this Goſpel, this ſhould not at all ſink their ſpirits, or move them away from the hope of it; but they ſhould rather glory that they had ſuch a faithful preacher and defender of it, ver. 13. And as he deſired their perſeverance, ſo he prays for it, and for ſeveral things in order to it: the poſture in which he prayed was by bowing the knee; the perſon to whom he prayed is deſcribed by his relation to Chriſt, as his Father, of whom, or of Chriſt, the whole family of God in heaven and earth are named, ver. 14, 15. The petitions made by him are for internal ſtrength from the Spirit of God, that ſo they might be enabled to perſevere, ver. 16. and alſo, that Chriſt might continue to dwell in their hearts by faith, which would keep them from falling; and likewiſe, that they might have a lively ſenſe, and a full perſuaſion of their intereſt in the love of God; even ſo as to comprehend with others its breadth, length, depth, and heighth, which would engage them to preſs forward, and to hold on, and out, and not faint at tribulations, ver. 17, 18. And particularly he prays, that they might know more of the love of Chriſt, which is not fully to be known, and which would conſtrain them to follow him, and cleave to him with full purpoſe of heart; and that they might have a full ſupply of all grace to ſupport, influence, and aſſiſt them, ver. 19. and for his own, and their encouragement, with reſpect to having the petitions made, the Apoſtle aſcribes glory to God by Chriſt, as it ſhould be done in the church throughout all ages of time, under this conſideration, as being able to do for his people abundantly more than they are able to aſk of him, or can think of aſking of him, or receiving from him, ver. 20, 21.

Ver. 1. *For this cauſe I Paul, the priſoner of Jeſus Chriſt*, &c.] Not actively, whom Chriſt had apprehended by his grace, and made a priſoner of hope; but paſſively, who was made a priſoner for Chriſt, on account of preaching Chriſt, and his Goſpel: he was not a priſoner for any capital crime, as theft, murder, *&c.* and therefore he was not aſhamed of his bonds, but rather gloried in them; and a priſon has often been the portion of the beſt of men in this world: from hence we learn, that this Epiſtle was written when the Apoſtle was a priſoner at *Rome*; and the conſideration of this his condition ſerves much to confirm the truths he had before delivered, ſeeing they were ſuch as he could, and did ſuffer for; and which muſt engage the attention of the *Epheſians* to them, and eſpecially ſince his ſufferings were on their account: *for you Gentiles*; becauſe he preached the Goſpel to the *Gentiles*, which the *Jews* forbid, that they might not be ſaved; and becauſe he taught them, that circumciſion and the reſt of the ceremonies of the law were not binding upon them; which gave great offence to the *Jews*, who were the means of bringing of him into theſe circumſtances, and particularly the *Aſiatic Jews*, the *Jews* of *Epheſus*; who having ſeen and heard him there, knew him again when in the temple at *Jeruſalem*, and raiſed a mob upon him, having bore a grudge againſt him for his miniſtry at *Epheſus*, by which means he became a priſoner; ſo that he might truly ſay, he was a priſoner for the ſake of them; ſee *Acts* xxi. 27—33. One of *Stephens*'s copies adds, *am an ambaſſador*, as in ch. vi. 20. and another of them, *glory*, or *rejoice*; ſee *Phil.* ii. 16, 17.

Ver. 2. *If ye have heard of the diſpenſation of the grace of God*, &c.] Not the free love and favour of God in his heart towards his people; nor internal grace wrought in the heart of the Apoſtle; but either the gift of grace, as in ver. 7. qualifying him for the work of the miniſtry; and ſo the *Ethiopic* verſion renders it, *if ye have heard the gift of the grace of God*; or rather the doctrine of grace, the Goſpel, the ſubject-matter of which is the grace of God; it is a declaration of the free grace of God in the ſalvation of men; and it is the means of conveying the grace of God into their hearts. Now the Apoſtle had a diſpenſation to preach this Goſpel committed to him; he acted by authority, and as a ſteward of the myſteries of God; and which he faithfully diſpenſed to the family of Chriſt, who appointed him this ſervice: this the *Epheſians* had heard of, from the relations of the Apoſtle, and others, and knew it themſelves, having often heard him preach, for he was with them for the ſpace of three years; wherefore this is not ſaid as if he queſtioned, whether they had heard or no, but as taking it for granted that they had: *if*, or *ſeeing ye have heard*, &c. *which is given me to youward*; it was not for his own private uſe, that the Goſpel was committed to him, or gifts were given him to qualify him for the diſpenſation of it, but for the ſake of others, eſpecially the *Gentiles*, and particularly the *Epheſians*.

Ver. 3. *How that by revelation he made known unto me the myſtery*, &c.] Or *is made known unto me*; ſo the *Alexandrian* copy, and ſome others, and the *Vulgate Latin* verſion. The Goſpel, which is ſometimes called a myſtery, the myſtery of the Goſpel, the myſtery of godlineſs, and the myſtery of faith: the ſeveral doctrines of the Goſpel are the myſteries of the kingdom of heaven; ſuch as a Trinity of perſons in the Godhead, the union of the two natures in Chriſt, the ſaints union to Chriſt, and communion with him, the reſurrection of the dead, and the change of living ſaints, and the whole doctrine of ſalvation by Chriſt, of juſtification by his righteouſneſs, pardon by his blood, and atonement by his ſacrifice; and this was made known to the Apoſtle, not in a mere notional and ſpeculative way, but in a ſpiritual and ſaving manner; not by men, for he was not taught by men, nor did he receive it from them, but had it by the revelation of Jeſus Chriſt, and by the Spirit of wiſdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: *as I wrote afore in few words*; in the two firſt chapters of this Epiſtle, which are a compendium of the myſtery of the Goſpel, in its ſeveral parts; as predeſtination, election, redemption, regeneration, and ſalvation by free grace.

Ver. 4. *Whereby when ye read*, &c.] The above chapters, and ſeriouſly conſider what is contained in them: *ye may underſtand my knowledge in the myſtery of Chriſt*; of his perſon, office, and grace; and which knowledge was very large indeed.

Ver. 5. *Which in other ages was not made known unto the ſons of men*, &c.] That is, which myſtery of Chriſt, and of the Goſpel, was not made known to men in general, nor ſo clearly as under the Goſpel-diſpenſation. Some hints were given of it to *Adam*, immediately after his fall; and the Goſpel was before preached to *Abraham*, *Moſes*, and *David*, and others knew ſomething of it; and it was ſtill more fully diſpenſed in the times of the prophet *Iſaiah*, and other following prophets: but then the knowledge of it was not ſo extenſive, nor ſo clear as now; it lay hid in types and ſhadows, in obſcure prophecies, and ſhort hints. Moreover, this may have reſpect particularly to the calling of the *Gentiles*, as appears from the following words; this was, in ſome meaſure, made known, as that in Chriſt all the nations of the earth ſhould be bleſſed; that when *Shiloh* came, to him ſhould the gathering of the people be; that the Meſſiah ſhould be an enſign of the people, and to him ſhould the *Gentiles* ſeek; that he ſhould be the covenant of the people, and a leader and a commander of them; and that there ſhould be great flockings to him; but then this was not known to many, and the time, mode, and circumſtances of it were but little underſtood, and comparatively ſpeaking, it was not known: however, it was not ſo known, *as it is now revealed unto his holy Apoſtles and prophets by the Spirit*; the Apoſtles and prophets were the ſuperior officers in the Goſpel-diſpenſation; the former deſign the twelve Apoſtles of Chriſt, and the latter ſuch who had the gift of interpreting the prophecies of the Old Teſtament, and of foretelling things to come, having received gifts from Chriſt to fit them for ſuch offices, ſome Apoſtles, ſome prophets; and to theſe a revelation was made of the myſtery of the Goſpel in general, and of the calling of the *Gentiles* in particular, by the Spirit, who ſearches the deep things of God, and reveals them, and leads into all truth; and who, by falling upon the *Gentiles*, as upon *Cornelius* and his family, and by the ſucceſs which he gave to the Goſpel in the *Gentile* world, made their calling clear and manifeſt. The *Complutenſian* edition reads, *by the holy Spirit*; and ſo the *Arabic* and *Ethiopic* verſions.

Ver. 6. *That the Gentiles ſhould be fellow heirs*, &c.] With the *Jews*, of all the bleſſings of grace, of everlaſting ſalvation, and of the eternal, incorruptible, and never-fading inheritance in heaven; that they ſhould be heirs of God, and joint heirs with Chriſt Jeſus, and inherit all things: and heirs they are by being Chriſt's, and on account of their ſpecial adoption thro' him, and their juſtification by his righteouſneſs; and which appears by their regeneration to a lively hope of the inheritance reſerved for them in heaven: *and of the ſame body*; coaleſce in one and the ſame church-ſtate, with the believing *Jews*, under one and the ſame head, Chriſt Jeſus, and participate of the ſame grace from him, being all baptized into one body, and made to drink of the ſame Spirit, and enjoy the ſame privileges and immunities. *And partakers of his promiſe in Chriſt by the Goſpel*; as of God, being their Covenant-God, which is the great promiſe of the covenant; or of the Spirit, his gifts and graces, called the promiſe of the Spirit; or of eternal life and happineſs, as the gift of grace thro' Chriſt. Now all theſe promiſes, and all others, are in Chriſt, yea and amen, ſafe and ſecure; and it is thro' being in Chriſt that any come to partake of them; and that by the means of the Goſpel, as theſe *Gentiles* were to do, and did: the Goſpel is a declaration of what God has promiſed in covenant to his people; this was carried among the *Gentiles*, and was made effectual to their participation of the things contained in it.

Ver. 7. *Whereof I was made a miniſter*, &c.] That is, of the Goſpel, not by men, but by God: and he is a true miniſter of the Goſpel who is called of God to the work of the miniſtry, and is qualified by him with grace and gifts for it; and who faithfully diſcharges it according to the ability God has given; and ſuch an one was the Apoſtle: *according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me*; not according to his natural capacity, his liberal education, or acquired learning; but according to a gift, a miniſterial gift beſtowed upon him, for ſuch ſervice: for this gift of grace does not deſign the grace of God wrought in his ſoul; nor the doctrines of grace, the ſubject of the Goſpel miniſtry; nor the efficacious grace of God, which makes that ſucceſsful and uſeful to the ſouls of men; but a gift of interpreting the ſcriptures, and of explaining the truths of the Goſpel to the edification of men; and which is a diſtinct thing from natural abilities, human learning, or internal grace; for there may be all theſe, and yet a man not fit to be a miniſter of the Goſpel; what qualifies men for that is the above gift, which God, of his ſovereign good-will and pleaſure, gives to ſome of the ſons of men: *by the effectual working of his power*; the power of God is ſeen in working grace in the hearts of men, thereby making them believers in Chriſt; and it is alſo diſplayed in the gifts of the Spirit beſtowed on men, which is called a being endued with a power from on high; thereby making men, and not angels, and theſe oftentimes the meaneſt and weakeſt, miniſters of Chriſt; and likewiſe in aſſiſting them in their work, and in carrying them thro' it, and in making them ſucceſsful in it, to the converſion of ſinners, and the edification of ſaints.

Ver. 8. *Unto me who am leſs than the leaſt of all ſaints*, &c.] This is an inſtance of the great humility of the Apoſtle; and indeed the greateſt ſaints are, generally ſpeaking, the moſt humble ſouls, as *Abraham*, *Jacob*, *Moſes*, *David*, and others; theſe have the meaneſt thoughts of themſelves, and the beſt of others; they rejoice in the grace of God manifeſted to others; they are willing to receive inſtruction, nay admonition, from the meaneſt believer; they have the leaſt opinion of their own works, and are the greateſt admirers of the grace of God; and do moſt contentedly ſubmit to the ſovereign will of God: the reaſons of their great humility are; becauſe they have the largeſt diſcoveries of the love and grace of God and Chriſt, which are of a ſoul-humbling nature; they are the moſt ſenſible of their own ſinfulneſs, vileneſs, and unworthineſs, which keeps them low in their own ſight; they are commonly the moſt afflicted with ſatan's temptations, which are ſuffered to attend them, leſt they ſhould be exalted above meaſure; they are the moſt fruitful ſouls, and boughs laden with fruit hang loweſt; and they are the moſt conformable to Chriſt, who is meek and lowly. The phraſe ſeems to be *Jewiſh*: there was one *R. Joſe the little*, who was ſo called, 'tis ſaid, becauſe he was, קטן חסידים, *the leaſt of ſaints* [l]: but the Apoſtle uſes a ſtill more diminutive word, and calls himſelf leſs than the leaſt of them; and adds, *is this grace given*; that is, the gift of grace, as before, the miniſterial gift: *that I ſhould preach among the Gentiles the unſearchable riches of Chriſt*; the riches of Chriſt, as God, lie in the perfections of his nature, in the works of his hands, in his empire and dominion over all, and in the revenues of glory, which reſult from thence; and theſe riches are underived and incommunicable, and are ineffable, yea inconceivable: his riches, as mediator, lie in the perſons of the elect, in the grace that is laid up in him for them, called the riches of grace, and in the inheritance he is poſſeſſed of for them, called the riches of glory; and theſe rich things are communicable, as well as ſolid, ſatisfying, and laſting; and they are unſearchable to the natural man, and can't be fully inveſtigated by believers themſelves; they will be telling over to all eternity: and they will appear unſearchable, when it is conſidered, what they have procured, and what bleſſings have been diſpenſed according to them; what a large family Chriſt has maintained by them, and how richly and fully he has provided for them, and to what honour and grandeur he raiſes them all. Now it was great grace to entruſt the Apoſtle with ſuch a miniſtry, to put ſuch treaſure into an earthen veſſel; it was great grace that qualified him for it; and it was great grace in particular to the *Gentiles*, that he ſhould be appointed to publiſh theſe among them; and ſo the Apoſtle eſteemed it, and himſelf unworthy of ſuch honour.

Ver. 9. *And to make all men ſee what is the fellowſhip of the myſtery*, &c.] Or *the diſpenſation of the myſtery*, as the *Complutenſian*, and ſeveral copies, and the *Vulgate Latin* and *Syriac* verſions read. The myſtery is the Goſpel; the fellowſhip of it is the communication of grace by it, a participation of the truths and doctrines of it, communion with Father, Son, and Spirit, which the Goſpel calls and leads unto, and that equal concern and intereſt which both *Jews* and *Gentiles* have in the privileges of it. Now men are naturally in the dark about theſe things, and the miniſtry of the word is the means of enlightening them, and is indeed the grand deſign of it; and the miniſters of the Goſpel do inſtrumentally enlighten perſons, tho' it is God only that does it efficiently; and for this, gifts of grace were beſtowed upon the Apoſtle, even for the enlightening of all men, not every individual perſon in the world, but ſome of all ſorts, particularly *Gentiles*, as well as *Jews*. The word πανlας, rendered *all men*, is left out in the *Alexandrian* copy. *Which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God*; in the heart of God, in his counſel and covenant; which ſhows the original and ſource of the Goſpel, and expreſſes the richneſs and valuableneſs of it, as well as its ſafety and ſecrecy: here it was hid in ſome meaſure from the elect angels, and from Old Teſtament ſaints, and altogether from natural men, and eſpecially from the *Gentiles*, whoſe times of ignorance God winked at, or over-looked: and this was kept ſo from ages paſt, from the beginning of time, till now, and was laid up in the breaſt of God from all eternity; for it was ordained before the world for the glory of his people. What the Apoſtle ſays of the Goſpel, the *Jews* ſay of the law, that it was hid and treaſured up two thouſand years before the world was created [m]; yea, they ſay [n], that many ages before the creation of the world it was written and left, בחיקו של הק"בה, *in the boſom of God*: and he is here deſcribed, as he *who created all things by Jeſus Chriſt*; not as an inſtrument, but as a coefficient cauſe: and this is to be underſtood, not of the new creation, but of the old, and of all things in it; for without Chriſt, was not any thing made that is made. The phraſe, *by Jeſus Chriſt*, is left out in the *Alexandrian* and *Claromontane* copies, and in the *Vulgate Latin*, *Syriac*, and *Ethiopic* verſions.

Ver. 10. *To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places*, &c.] By whom are meant, not civil magiſtrates, much leſs evil angels, but the good angels, the angels in heaven; ſee the note on ch. i. 21. *might be known by the church the manifold wiſdom of God*; not the perfection of wiſdom, nor Jeſus Chriſt the wiſdom of God, nor the holy ſcriptures; but the Goſpel, which is the pure produce of the wiſdom of God; which is gloriouſly diſplayed in the ſeveral doctrines of it; as in election, in chuſing men in Chriſt for the ſecu-

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[l] T. Hieroſ. Bava Kama, fol. 3, 4. Miſna Sota, c. 9. §. 15. Juchaſin, fol. 79. 2.

[m] Zohar in Exod. fol. 20. 4. & in Num. fol. 66. 3. Targ. Jon. & Jeruſ. in Gen. iii. 24.

[n] Abot R. Nathan, c. 31. T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 88. 2.

rity of their perſons, in founding it not upon their works, but his own grace, for the ſecurity of his purpoſe, and in pitching on ſuch perſons he has, for the magnifying of his grace: and in redemption, which is ſeen in the perſon of the redeemer, who is both God and man; and in the manner in which it is effected, being both for the glory of God's grace and mercy, and for the honour of his juſtice and holineſs; and wherein ſatan is mortified, ſin is condemned, and the ſinner ſaved: and in juſtification, whereby ſinful men become juſt with God; God is juſt, and yet the juſtifier of him that believes; the ungodly is juſtified, and yet not juſtified in his ungodlineſs, but from it: and in the pardon of ſin, in which iniquity is forgiven, and yet vengeance is taken on mens inventions; it is an act of mercy, and yet of juſtice; it is by price, and yet of free grace; and the like may be obſerved of all other doctrines of the Goſpel. And it may be called *manifold*, becauſe of its various doctrines and promiſes, and becauſe of the various inſtances of wiſdom in them, and the various perſons to whom it is made known, and the various times in which it is diſplayed: and now under the Goſpel this is more clearly known, or made known to the angels by the church of God, thro' the miniſtry of the word in it, on which angels attend, being deſirous to look more diligently into the myſteries of it; and by the diſplays of the wiſdom and grace of God unto his church and people.

Ver. 11. *According to the eternal purpoſe*, &c.] The whole of ſalvation, in which is diſplayed the great wiſdom of God, is according to a purpoſe of his; the ſcheme of it is fixed in the council of peace; the thing itſelf is effected in purſuance of it; Chriſt, the redeemer, was ſet forth in it; his incarnation, the time of his coming into the world, his ſufferings and death, with all their circumſtances, were decreed by God; and the perſons for whom Chriſt became incarnate, ſuffered, and died, were appointed unto ſalvation by him; and the application of it to them is according to his purpoſe; the time when, the place where, and the means whereby ſouls are converted, are all ſettled in the decrees of God; the Goſpel itſelf, the preaching of it by ſuch and ſuch perſons, its uſe to make men ſee the myſteries of grace, and the fellowſhip of them, and to make known theſe things to the angels of heaven, are all according to a divine purpoſe: and this purpoſe is eternal, or was in the mind of God from all eternity; for no new will can ariſe in him; no purpoſe, reſolution, or decree can be made by him in time, which was not in his breaſt from everlaſting; and his purpoſe concerning the ſalvation of men muſt be eternal, ſince a council of peace was held, a covenant of peace was made, a promiſe of life was given, perſons were fixed upon to be ſaved, a ſaviour was appointed for them, and grace, and the bleſſings of it were put into his hands before the world began. *Which he purpoſed in Chriſt Jeſus our Lord*; the conſtitution of it was in him; God was in Chriſt contriving the ſcheme of ſalvation; his eye was upon him, his thoughts centred in him, and in him are all his promiſes, and bleſſings of grace deſigned and provided for his people; and the execution of this purpoſe is by him; tho' ſome refer this clauſe to the church in ver. 10. which he has made in Chriſt, or by Chriſt, has built upon him, and united to him; and others, to the manifold wiſdom of God diſplayed in Chriſt, who is the wiſdom of God, and in whom all the treaſures of wiſdom and knowledge are hid.

Ver. 12. *In whom we have boldneſs and acceſs*, &c.] Into the holy of holies, to the throne of grace there, and to God the Father, as ſeated on it: Chriſt is the way of acceſs; union to him gives right of acceſs; through his mediation his people have audience of God, and acceptance with him, both of perſon and ſervice: and this acceſs is with boldneſs; which denotes liberty of coming, granted by God, and a liberty in their own ſouls to ſpeak out their minds plainly and freely; and an holy courage and intrepidity of ſoul, being free from ſervile fear, or a ſpirit of bondage; which is owing to the heart being ſprinkled from an evil conſcience, to an act of faith, on the perſon, blood, and righteouſneſs of Chriſt, and to a view of God, as a God of peace, grace and mercy: and this acceſs may be had *with confidence by the faith of him*; with confidence of intereſt in the everlaſting love of God; of relation to him, as a Covenant-God and Father; of his power, faithfulneſs, and willingneſs to fulfil his promiſes; of his hearing and anſwering prayer; of the fulneſs of Chriſt, the prevalence of his mediation, and of the acceptance of perſons and performances thro' him; and of the work of grace being carried on till the day of Chriſt; and of entrance at laſt into the heavenly glory: and this acceſs is not local, but ſpiritual; it is by faith, and ſo is peculiar to believers; and the confidence with which it may be had, ariſes from its being by the faith of Chriſt; not that faith which Chriſt himſelf had, and exerciſed as man, but that of which he is both the object and author; or that by which ſouls believe in him for acceptance, for righteouſneſs, for pardon, for every ſupply of grace, and for eternal life and happineſs.

Ver. 13. *Wherefore I deſire that ye faint not at my tribulations for you*, &c.] The Apoſtle was a man attended with many tribulations, and great afflictions, which he did not ſuffer as an evil doer, either from God or men; wherefore he was not aſhamed of them, but gloried in them; yea, he took pleaſure in them, having much of the preſence of God in them; they did not come to him unawares, he always expected them, and was helped to look to the glory which ſhould follow them, the view of which greatly ſupported him under them; and theſe tribulations were endured for the ſake of the elect, for Chriſt's body's ſake the church, and among others, for the *Epheſians*, for the ſake of preaching the Goſpel among them, and for the confirmation of their faith in it; and yet they were a ſtumbling to them, they were ready to faint at them; but he deſires they would not, ſince they were on account of the Goſpel, which he had ſuch a diſtinct knowledge of, and ſo clear a call to; and ſince they were for their ſakes, and ſince he and they had ſuch nearneſs of acceſs to God by the faith of Chriſt, with ſo much boldneſs and confidence; and ſeeing alſo they turned to their account: *which is your glory*; meaning either that it was matter of glorying to them, and what they might boaſt of, that the Apoſtle's afflictions were not for any crime that was found in him, but for preaching the Goſpel to them, and that it was an honour to ſuffer in ſuch a cauſe; or that their perſeverance and conſtancy in the doctrines of the Goſpel, notwithſtanding the ſcandal of the croſs, would be an honour to them.

Ver. 14. *For this cauſe I bow my knees unto the Father*, &c.] That is, pray unto him for the perſeverance of the ſaints; for nothing is more deſirable to the miniſters of Chriſt than that; which is the pure gift of God, and is what he has promiſed, and therefore ſhould be prayed to for it; for what God has deſigned and promiſed to his people, he will be ſought to; and the Apoſtle's view might be alſo to ſtir up theſe ſaints to pray for themſelves: the geſture he uſed in prayer was bowing the knees; a man is not tied to any particular geſture or poſture in prayer, the main thing is the heart; mere poſtures and geſtures are inſignificant things with God; tho' where the mind is affected, the body will be moved; and this geſture may be expreſſive of reverence, humility, and ſubmiſſion in prayer: the object he prayed unto is the Father; that is, as follows, *of our Lord Jeſus*; tho' theſe words are wanting in the *Alexandrian* copy, and *Ethiopic* verſion, yet are rightly retained in others; for God is the Father of Chriſt, not by creation, nor adoption, but by generation, being the only-begotten of the Father; and as ſuch he is rightly prayed to, ſince not only Chriſt prayed to him as ſuch; but he is the Father of his people in and thro' Chriſt; and there is no other way of coming to him but by Chriſt; and all ſpiritual bleſſings come thro' Chriſt, and from God, as the Father of Chriſt.

Ver. 15. *Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named.*] This may refer either to God, the Father of Chriſt; who is the Father of the whole family in heaven and in earth; not only the Father of Chriſt, but the Father of ſpirits, of angelic ſpirits, as well as of the ſouls of men; and the Father of all the ſaints by adopting grace, whether above or below; they are all the houſhold of God: or elſe to Jeſus Chriſt, who is the everlaſting Father, the Son over his own houſe, and the firſt-born among many brethren: and this family conſiſts either of elect angels and elect men, who are both under one head, Chriſt, and are in one family, only with this difference, the one are ſervants, the other ſons; or elſe only of elect men, of ſaints in heaven and in earth, who all make up but one family; and that part of it, which is on earth, conſiſts of perſons of various ſizes and growth, as fathers, young men and children, tho' they are all the children of God, and partake of the ſame privileges: and this family is named of Chriſt; they are called Chriſtians from him, and he is the maſter and governour of them; they have their laws, directions, and inſtructions from him; and he is the great provider for them, and the ſupport of them; they have their food and clothing from him, as well as are called by his name. Frequent mention is made in the *Jewiſh* writings [a] of the family of the holy angels, and of the family above, and the family below, to which here may be ſome reference.

Ver. 16. *That he would grant you according to the riches of his glory*, &c.] Or according to, and out of that rich, plenteous, and glorious fulneſs of grace and ſtrength in Chriſt Jeſus. *To be ſtrengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man*; this is the petition which the Apoſtle put up on his bended knees to the Father of Chriſt, that he would ſtrengthen theſe ſaints, that ſo they might not faint at the tribulations which either he or they endured. Believers in Chriſt need freſh ſupplies of ſtrength to enable them to exerciſe grace, to perform duties, to reſiſt ſatan and his temptations, to oppoſe their corruptions, and to bear the croſs, and undergo afflictions chearfully, and to hold on and out to the end: this is a bleſſing that comes from God, and is a gift of his free grace; a *grant* from him who is the ſtrength of the lives of his people, of their ſalvation, of their hearts, and of the work of grace in their hearts: the means whereby the ſaints are ſtrengthened by God, is *his Spirit*; who ſtrengthens them by leading them to the fulneſs of grace and ſtrength in Chriſt, by ſhedding abroad the love of God in their hearts, by applying the promiſes of the Goſpel to them, and by making the Goſpel itſelf, and the ordinances of it, uſeful to them, cauſing them to go from ſtrength to ſtrength in them: the ſubject of this bleſſing is the *inner man*, or the ſpirit, or ſoul of man, which is the ſeat of grace; and this ſhows that this was ſpiritual ſtrength which is here deſired, which may be where there is much bodily weakneſs, and for which there ſhould be the greateſt concern; and that this ſtrength is not naturally there, it muſt be given, or put into it. This laſt phraſe, *in the inner man*, is joined to the beginning of the next verſe in the *Arabic*, *Syriac*, and *Ethiopic* verſions, *in the inner man Chriſt may dwell*, &c.

Ver. 17. *That Chriſt may dwell in your hearts by faith*, &c.] This is another petition put up by the Apoſtle for the *Epheſians*, which is for the inhabitation of Chriſt in them: the inhabitant Chriſt is he who dwells in the higheſt heavens, who dwells in the Father, and the Father in him, in whom all fulneſs dwells, the fulneſs of the Godhead, and the fulneſs of grace; ſo that thoſe in whoſe hearts he dwells cannot want any good thing, muſt be in the greateſt ſafety, and enjoy the greateſt comfort and pleaſure: and this inhabitation of Chriſt prayed for is not to be underſtood in ſuch ſenſe, as he dwells every where, being the omnipreſent God; or as he dwells in the human nature; nor of his dwelling merely by his Spirit, but of a perſonal indwelling of his; and which is an inſtance of his ſpecial grace: he dwells in his people, as a king in his palace, to rule and protect them, and as a maſter in his family to provide for them, and as their life to quicken them; it is in conſequence of their union to him, and is expreſſive of their communion with him, and is perpetual; where he once takes up his reſidence, he never totally and finally departs: the place where he dwells ~~is not~~ their heads, nor their tongues, but their hearts; and this is where no good thing dwells but himſelf and his grace; and where ſin dwells, and where he is often ſlighted, oppoſed, and rebelled againſt: the means by which he dwells is faith; which is not the bond of union to Chriſt, nor the cauſe of his being and dwelling in the hearts of his people; but is the inſtrument or means by which they receive him, and retain him, and by which they have communion with him: *that ye being rooted and grounded in love*; either in love to God, and one another; for faith and love go together; and love is ſometimes weak, and needs eſtabliſhing; and what ſerves to root and ground perſons in it, are the diſcoveries of God's love, views of Chriſt's lovelineſs, the conſideration of bleſſings received, and the communion they have with God, and Chriſt, and one another, and a larger inſight into the doctrines of the Goſpel: or rather in the love of God to them; which is the root and foundation of ſalvation; this is, in itſelf, immoveable and immutable; but ſaints have not always the manifeſtations of it, and ſometimes call it in queſtion, and have need to be rooted and grounded in it; which is to have a lively ſenſe of it, and to be perſuaded of intereſt in it, and that nothing ſhall be able to ſeparate from it.

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[a] Targ. in Cant. i. 15. T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 17. 1. Zohar in Exod. fol. 105. 4. Raziel, fol. 42. 1. & 45. 2. Caphtor, fol. 58. 2. Shaare Ora, fol. 14. 3.

Ver. 18. *May be able to comprehend with all ſaints*, &c.] This is the end of their being rooted and grounded in love, that they, together with the reſt of the ſaints intereſted in it, might have a larger and more comprehenſive view of *what* is *the breadth, and length, and depth, and height*; not of God himſelf, who is incomprehenſible by finite minds, and is not to be found out to perfection; ſee *Job* xi. 7, 8, 9. but either of the great myſtery of ſalvation, particularly the myſtery of the calling of the *Gentiles* mentioned in the beginning of the chapter; or of the ſpiritual building the church, the dimenſions of which are given, *Rev.* xxi. 15, 16. or rather of the love of God, which in its length reaches from one eternity to another; in its breadth to all the elect, in all ages, places, and nations; and in its depth to ſaints in the loweſt ſtate of life; and in its height to bring them to an exalted ſtate in glory.

Ver. 19. *And to know the love of Chriſt, which paſſeth knowledge*, &c.] The love of Chriſt to his own, to his church and people, is ſpecial and peculiar; free and ſovereign; as early as his Father's love, and is durable and unchangeable; the greateſt love that ever was heard of; it is matchleſs and unparalleled; it is exceeding ſtrong and affectionate, and is wonderful and ſurprizing: the inſtances of it are, his engaging as a ſurety for them; his eſpouſing both their perſons, and their cauſe; his aſſumption of their nature; his dying in their room and ſtead; his payment of their debts, atoning for their ſins, and bringing in for them an everlaſting righteouſneſs; his going to prepare a place for them in heaven; his interceſſion for them there; his conſtant ſupply of all their wants, and the freedom and familiarity he uſes them with. The ſaints have ſome knowledge of this love, ſome taſtes of it; their knowledge is a feeling and experimental one, fiducial and appropriating, and what influences their faith, and love, and chearful obedience, but it is but imperfect; tho' the knowledge they have of it is ſuper-eminent, it exceeds all other knowledge, yet this love paſſes knowledge; not only the knowledge of natural men, who know nothing of it, but the perfect knowledge of ſaints themſelves, in the preſent life, and of angels alſo, who deſire to look into it, and the myſteries of it; and eſpecially it is ſo as to ſome inſtances of it, ſuch as the incarnation of Chriſt, his becoming poor who was Lord of all, being made ſin, and a curſe, and ſuffering, the juſt for the unjuſt. Now the Apoſtle prays, that theſe ſaints might know more of this love; that their knowledge, which was imperfect, might be progreſſive. *That ye might be filled with all the fulneſs of God*; this is the laſt petition, and is to be underſtood, not of a full comprehenſion of the divine being, nor of a communication of his divine perfections, nor of having in them the fulneſs of grace, which it has pleaſed God ſhould dwell in Chriſt; but either of that fulneſs of good things, which they may receive from God in this life; as to be filled with a ſenſe of the love and grace of God; with ſatisfying views of intereſt in the righteouſneſs of Chriſt; with the Spirit, and the gifts and graces thereof; with full proviſions of food for their ſouls; with ſpiritual peace, joy, and comfort; with knowledge of divine things, of God in Chriſt, of Chriſt, of the Goſpel, and of the will of God; and with all the fruits of righteouſneſs, or good works ſpringing from grace; or elſe of that fulneſs which they ſhall receive hereafter, even compleat holineſs, perfection of knowledge, fulneſs of joy and peace, entire conformity to God and Chriſt, and everlaſting communion with them.

Ver. 20. *Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly*, &c.] This is the concluſion of the Apoſtle's prayer, in which the power of God is celebrated, a perfection which is eſſential unto God, and is very large and extenſive; it reaches to all things, to every thing that he wills, which is his actual or ordinative power; and to more things than he has willed, which is his abſolute power; and to all things that have been, are, or ſhall be, and to things impoſſible with men; tho' there are ſome things which God cannot do, ſuch as are contrary to his nature, inconſiſtent with his will, his decrees and purpoſes, which imply a contradiction, and are foreign to truth, which to do would be to deny himſelf: but then he can do *above all that we aſk or think*; he can do more than men aſk for, as he did for *Solomon:* God knows what we want before we aſk, and he has made proviſions for his people before they aſk for them; ſome of which things we never could, and others we never ſhould have aſked for, if he had not provided them; and without the Spirit of God we know not what to aſk for, nor how to aſk aright: this affords great encouragement to go to God and aſk ſuch things of him, as we want, and he has provided; and who alſo can do more than we can think, imagine, or conceive in our minds. *According to the power that worketh in us*; either in believers in common, meaning the Spirit of God, who is the finger and power of God, who begins, and carries on, and will finiſh the work of grace in them, and which is an evidence of the exceeding greatneſs of the power of God; or in the Apoſtles in particular, in fitting and furniſhing them for their work, and ſucceeding them in it; which is another proof and demonſtration of the abundant power of God, and ſhows what he can do if he pleaſes.

Ver. 21. *Unto him be glory in the church by Chriſt Jeſus*, &c.] This is a doxology, or an aſcription of glory to God, with which the Apoſtle concludes his prayer: glory is to be given to God on account of his perfections, which are to be celebrated; and on account of the works of creation and providence, which are to be commended and acquieſced in; and on account of temporal mercies, for which thanks ſhould be given; and eſpecially for ſpiritual mercies, and above all for Jeſus Chriſt: the glory of ſalvation, from firſt to laſt, is to be aſcribed to his free grace; and his worſhip is to be regarded, and conſtantly attended on; faith is to be exerciſed on him, as a promiſing and covenant-keeping God; and our lives and converſations are to be ordered aright according to his word; and we are chearfully and patiently to ſuffer for his cauſe and intereſt, in all which inſtances he is glorified: and the place where this glory is to be given, is the *church*; for the church, and true believers, only know the bleſſings and myſteries of divine grace; and they only know how to glorify God aright; and beſides, glory muſt be given to God by believers, not only ſeparately and apart, but conjunctly and together, in a church-ſtate; becauſe there the Lord appears glorious, grants his preſence, and diſplays his mighty grace: and this is to be done by *Chriſt Jeſus*, or *in* him; and may refer either to the church, which is in Chriſt; or to him as the medium by whom praiſe and glory are to be given to God; for all bleſſings are in Chriſt, and come to us thro' him, and he is the only way of acceſs to God; nor can our praiſes and thankſgivings be acceptable unto God, but thro' him: and this glory is to be given *throughout all ages, world without end, Amen*; for the church will abide for ever, in which it is to be given; the bleſſings of grace will be for ever diſpenſing, for which it is to be given; and Jeſus Chriſt, the mediator, will continue for evermore, by whom it is given: to all which is added the word *Amen*, ſignifying his wiſh, that ſo it might be, and his faith, that ſo it would be.

CHAP. IV.

THE Apoſtle having in the three former chapters treated of the doctrines of grace, and explained and eſtabliſhed them, proceeds in the three following to exhort to the duties of religion; and in this adviſes to a becoming converſation in general, and to brotherly concord and unity in particular; and dehorts from ſeveral vices, and encourages to the contrary virtues. And inaſmuch as theſe *Epheſians* were called with an holy calling, he intreats them if they had any regard for him as a priſoner of Chriſt, that they would walk worthy of it, ver. 1. and directs to the manner in which they ſhould act becoming it, with all humility, patience, forbearance, and love; ſeeking to preſerve a ſpiritual harmony, unity, and peace, one among another, ver. 2, 3. for the encouragement of which, he makes uſe of various arguments, taken from the unity of the body, of which they were members; from their being quickned and influenced by one and the ſame Spirit; from having the ſame hope of eternal happineſs, to which they were called; from their having one Lord over them, who is Chriſt; from their having the ſame like precious faith in him; from their being baptized with the ſame baptiſm in him; and from their having one and the ſame God and Father, ver. 4, 5, 6. and from all of them having gifts, though different, for mutual uſefulneſs; which gifts are deſcribed by the author and donor of them, Chriſt, ver. 7. which is proved, ver. 8. out of a paſſage in *Pſal.* lxviii. 18. which is explained of the humiliation and exaltation of Chriſt, of his deſcent from heaven, and aſcenſion thither; the end of which latter, was to fill all things, or perſons, with gifts, ver. 9, 10. of which a particular enumeration is given, ver. 11. the deſign of which is, to fit men for the work of the miniſtry, and by them to convert ſinners, and edify ſaints, ver. 12. which miniſtry is to be continued, until all the ſaints arrive to a perfection of ſpiritual knowledge, and make up one perfect man, or body of men in Chriſt, ver. 13. for the uſe and end of the Goſpel miniſtry is not, that ſuch who are converted by it, ſhould continue children, be in ſuſpenſe about truth, and under the deceptions of men, ver. 14. but that through ſpeaking the truth in love, they ſhould grow up into Chriſt their head; from whom ſupplies of grace are communicated, for the increaſe and edification of every member of the body, ver. 15, 16. and ſeeing theſe *Epheſians* to whom the Apoſtle writes, were ſeparated in effectual vocation from the reſt of the *Gentiles*, they ought not to walk as the others did; whoſe minds were vain, their underſtandings darkened, and their hearts blinded, hardened, and ignorant; and had no ſenſe of things, but were given up to all manner of wickedneſs, ver. 17, 18, 19. whereas they had learned Chriſt, and through hearing had been taught the truth of the Goſpel, as it was in him, ver. 20, 21. wherefore it became them in their converſation, not to follow the dictates of corrupt nature, called the old man, that being full of luſts, corrupt and deceitful, but to act becoming the renewing work of the Spirit upon their ſouls, and agreeable to the new principles of the grace of God created in them, in order to righteouſneſs and holineſs, ver. 22, 23, 24. and in particular it became them to avoid lying, and on the contrary to ſpeak truth to one another; and that for this reaſon, becauſe they were members of the ſame body, and of one another, ver. 25. and likewiſe to abſtain from ſinful anger, and not continue a wrathful diſpoſition, ver. 26. nor was it adviſeable to yield to the ſuggeſtions, ſolicitations, and temptations of ſatan, ver. 27. nor to commit theft, but on the other hand give themſelves to manual labour at ſome commendable calling, that they might have for their own uſe, and others too, ver. 28. and it was alſo right to be careful, not to ſuffer corrupt and unchaſte words to come out of their mouths, but ſuch as would be grateful and uſeful to others, ver. 29. and the rather this, and all the reſt of the things mentioned, and likewiſe what follows, ſhould be attended to; ſince by ſuch evil luſts, words, and actions, the holy Spirit of God is grieved, who ſhould not, ſince he is the ſealer of the ſaints unto the day of redemption, ver. 30. And the chapter is concluded with a dehortation from ſeveral vices of the mind and tongue, reſpecting wrath and revenge; and an exhortation to the contrary virtues, kindneſs, tenderneſs, and forgiveneſs; to which encouragement is given, by the example of God, who forgives for Chriſt's ſake, ver. 31, 32.

Ver. 1. *I therefore the priſoner of the Lord, beſeech you,* &c.] Or *in the Lord*; that is, for the Lord's ſake; ſee the note on ch. iii. 1. Some connect this phraſe, *in the Lord*, with the following word, *beſeech*, as if the ſenſe was, that the Apoſtle intreated the believing *Epheſians*, in the name of the Lord, and for his ſake, to take heed to their walk and converſation, that it be as became the calling by grace, and to glory, with which they were called: and this exhortation he enforces from the conſideration of the ſtate and condition in which he was, a priſoner, not for any wickedneſs he had been guilty of, but for the Lord's ſake, which ſeems to be the true ſenſe of the word; and that, if they would not add afflictions to his bonds, as ſome profeſſors by their walk did, he beſeeches them, as an embaſſador in bonds, that they would attend to what he was about to ſay; and the rather, ſince ſuch doctrines of grace had been made known to them, which have a tendency to promote powerful godlineſs; and ſince they were made partakers of ſuch privileges as laid them under the greateſt obligation to duty, which were made mention of in the preceding chapters. *That ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called*; by which is meant, not that private and peculiar ſtate and condition of life, that the ſaints are called to, and in; but that vocation, by the grace of God, which is common to them all; and is not a mere outward call by the miniſtry of the word, with which men may be called, and not be choſen, ſanctified, and ſaved; but that which is internal, and is of ſpecial grace, and by the Spirit of God; by whom they are called out of darkneſs into light, out of bondage into liberty, out of the world, and from the company and converſation of the men of it, into the fellowſhip of Chriſt, and his people, to the participation of the grace of Chriſt here, and to his kingdom and glory hereafter; and which call is powerful, efficacious, yea irreſiſtible; and being once made is unchangeable, and without repentance, and is holy, high, and heavenly. Now to walk worthy of it, or ſuitable to it, is to walk as children of the light; to walk in the liberty wherewith Chriſt, and his Spirit make them free; to walk by faith on Chriſt; and to walk in the ways of God, with Chriſt, the mark, in their view, and with the ſtaff of promiſes in their hands; and to walk on conſtantly, to go forward, and hold out unto the end: for this walking, tho' it refers to a holy life and converſation, a ſeries of good works, yet it does not ſuppoſe that theſe merit vocation; rather the contrary, ſince theſe follow upon it; and that is uſed as an argument to excite unto them: but the phraſe is expreſſive of a fitneſs, ſuitableneſs, and agreeableneſs of a walk and converſation to ſuch rich grace, and ſo high an honour conferr'd on ſaints.

Ver. 2. *With all lowlineſs and meekneſs*, &c.] In the exerciſe of humility, which ſhows itſelf in believers, in entertaining and expreſſing the meaneſt thoughts of themſelves, and the beſt of others; in not envying the gifts and graces of others, but rejoicing at them, and at every increaſe of them; in a willingneſs to receive inſtruction from the meaneſt ſaints; in ſubmiſſion to the will of God in all adverſe diſpenſations of providence; and in aſcribing all they have, and are, to the grace of God: and ſo to behave, is to walk agreeable to their vocation of God; and what the conſideration of that may engage them to, when they obſerve the low eſtate and condition out of which they are called, in which they were before vocation; and that in effectual calling they have nothing but what they have received; and that others are called with the ſame calling that they are: and to walk humbly before God and man, is to walk according to the will of God that calls; and 'tis walking as Chriſt walked, who is meek, and lowly; and is agreeable to the bleſſed Spirit, one of whoſe fruits is meekneſs; and is what is very ornamental to the ſaints, and is well-pleaſing in the ſight of God. *With long-ſuffering*; bearing much and long with the infirmities of each other; without being eaſily provoked to anger by any ill uſage; and not immediately meditating and ſeeking revenge for every affront given, or injury done; and ſo to walk, is to walk worthy of the grace of calling, or agreeable to it, to God that calls by his grace, who is long-ſuffering both with wicked men, and with his own people. *Forbearing one another in love*; overlooking the infirmities of one another, forgiving injuries done, ſympathizing with, and aſſiſting each other in diſtreſſed circumſtances, the ſpring of all which ſhould be love; by that ſaints ſhould be moved, influenced, and engaged to ſuch a conduct, and which ſhould be ſo far attended to, as is conſiſtent with love; for ſo to forbear one another, as to ſuffer ſin to be on each other, without proper, gentle, and faithful rebukes for it, is not to act in love.

Ver. 3. *Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit*, &c.] That is, a ſpiritual union: there is an union between God and his people, and between Chriſt and his members, and between ſaints and ſaints, and the bond of each union is love; and that it is which knits and cements them together; and it is the laſt of theſe which is here intended: the ſaints are united under one head, and are members of one and the ſame body, and ſhould be of the ſame mind and judgment, and of one accord, heart, and affection: and this may be called *the unity of the Spirit*; becauſe it's an union of ſpirits, of the ſpirits or ſouls of men, and that in ſpiritual affairs, in the ſpiritual exerciſes of religion; and it is effected by the Spirit of God, by whom they are baptized into one body. Now to endeavour or ſtudy to keep and preſerve this, ſuppoſes that this union does already exiſt; that it is very valuable, as making much for the glory of God, the mutual comfort and delight of ſaints, and is worth taking ſome pains about; and that it is very difficult to ſecure, there being ſo many things which frequently ariſe, and break in upon it, thro' the devices of ſatan, and the corruptions of mens hearts: but tho' it is difficult, and may ſometimes ſeem to be impoſſible, yet it becomes the ſaints to be diligent in the uſe of means to keep it up, and continue it; and which they may be ſaid to endeavour after, when they abide with one another, and don't forſake each other upon every occaſion; when they perform all offices of love to one another, and ſtir up each other to the like: and the way and manner in which this is to be kept, is *in the bond of peace*; the *Arabic* verſion reads, *by the bond of love and peace*; by maintaining peace among themſelves, and ſeeking thoſe things which tend to, and make for peace, and ſpiritual edification; and which is called a *bond*, in alluſion to the *Greek* word uſed, which comes from one that ſignifies to knit, join, and bind together, and becauſe it is of a knitting and uniting nature. Now ſo to act is to walk worthy of calling grace, or agreeable to it: peace is what the ſaints are called unto in effectual vocation; and is what is ſuitable to God, who is the God of peace; and to Chriſt, who is the prince of peace; and to the holy Spirit, whoſe fruit is peace; and to the Goſpel, which is the Goſpel of peace; and to the character which the ſaints bear, which is that of ſons of peace.

Ver. 4. There is *one body*, &c.] The church; in what ſenſe that is a body, and compared to one, ſee the note on ch. i. 23. It is called *one* with relation to *Jews* and *Gentiles*, who are of the ſame body, and are reconciled in one body by Chriſt, and are baptized into it by the Spirit; and with reſpect to ſaints above and ſaints below, who make up one general aſſembly; and with regard to ſeparate ſocieties; for tho' there are ſeveral particular congregations, yet there is but one church of the firſt-born, whoſe names are written in heaven; and ſaints of different ages, places, ſtates, and conditions, are all one in Chriſt Jeſus, who is the one, and only head of this body: and this is an argument to excite the ſaints to unity of ſpirit; ſince they are, as one natural body is, members one of another, and therefore ſhould not bite and devour one another; they are one political body, one kingdom, over which Chriſt is ſole king and lawgiver, and a kingdom divided againſt itſelf cannot ſtand; they are one œconomical body, one family, they are all brethren, and ſhould not fall out by the way. *And one Spirit*; the holy Spirit of God, who animates, quickens, and actuates the body: there is but one Spirit, who convinces of ſin, enlightens, regenerates, and makes alive; who incorporates into the body, the church; who comforts the ſaints; helps them in their acceſs to God through Chriſt; makes known the things of Chriſt to them, is a Spirit of adoption, and the ſeal and earneſt of the heavenly glory; and the conſideration of this ſhould engage to unity, becauſe a contrary conduct muſt be grieving to the Spirit of God, unſuitable to his genuine fruits, and very unlike the true ſpirit of a chriſtian: and by one ſpirit may be meant the ſpirit of themſelves, who, as the firſt chriſtians were, ſhould be of one heart, and of one ſoul, of the ſame mind, and having the ſame affections for one another; which ſenſe is favoured by the *Syriac* and *Arabic* verſions; the former rendering the words, *that ye may be one body and one ſpirit*, making this to be the iſſue and effect of their endeavours after union and peace; and the latter reads them as an exhortation, *be ye one body and one ſpirit*; that is, be ye cordially and heartily united in your affections to one another: *even as ye are called in one hope of your calling*; that is, the glory hoped for, and which is laid up in heaven, and will be enjoyed there, to which the ſaints are called in effectual vocation, is one and the ſame: there are no degrees in it; it will be equally poſſeſſed by them all; for they are all loved with the ſame love, choſen in the ſame head, and ſecured in the ſame covenant; they are bought with the ſame price of Chriſt's blood, and are juſtified by the ſame righteouſneſs; they are all equally the ſons of God, and ſo heirs of the ſame heavenly inheritance; and are all made kings and prieſts unto God, and there is but one kingdom, one crown, one inheritance for them all; and the holineſs and beatific viſion of the ſaints in heaven will be alike; and therefore they ſhould be heartily affected to one another here on earth, who are to be partners together in glory to all eternity. So the *Jews* ſay [p], that in the world of ſouls, all, ſmall and great, ſtand before the Lord; and they have a ſtanding alike; for in the affairs of the ſoul, it is fit that they ſhould be all, שוים, *equal*, as it is ſaid *Exod.* xxx. 15. *the rich ſhall not give more.*

Ver. 5. *One Lord*, &c.] The Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who, by right of creation, is Lord of all; and by right of marriage, and redemption, is the one and only Lord of his church and people; he has betrothed them to himſelf, and is their huſband, and ſo their Lord, whom they are to worſhip and obey; he has redeemed them, he has bought them with the price of his blood, and therefore they are not their own, but his, and ſhould glorify him both with their bodies and ſouls, which are his; he is the head of his body the church, the king of ſaints, and father and maſter of the family named of him, and therefore they ought to agree among themſelves, and not be many maſters, and uſurp a domination over one another. The *Ethiopic* verſion reads, *one God*, but that is expreſſed in the following verſe. *One faith*; there is but one grace of faith; there are indeed different ſorts of faith; there is the faith of miracles, and an hiſtorical, temporary faith, but there is but one true grace of faith; and which, tho' it is in different ſubjects, and its degrees and acts are various, yet as to its nature, it is like precious faith in all; and has the ſame author and object Jeſus Chriſt, and ſprings from the ſame cauſe, the free grace of God, and has equally in all everlaſting ſalvation connected with it, and conſequent upon it: and there is but one doctrine of faith; the Goſpel is ſo called, becauſe it conſiſts of things to be believed, is the means of implanting faith, it propoſes the object to be believed in, and requires the exerciſe of it upon it, and ſhould be mixed with faith whenever heard. Now this is but one, and is all of a-piece, and conſiſtent with itſelf, and ſo ſhould the profeſſors of it be, and love one another in the faith. *One baptiſm*; there were divers baptiſms under the law, but there is but one baptiſm under the Goſpel; for *John*'s and Chriſt's are the ſame: there are beſides, figurative or metaphorical ones, which are ſo in an improper ſenſe, as the baptiſm of the Spirit, and the baptiſm of blood, or of ſufferings; but there is but one baptiſm, literally and properly ſo called, which is water-baptiſm; and which is to be adminiſtred in one and the ſame way, by immerſion in water; and on one and the ſame ſubjects, believers in Chriſt; and in one and the ſame name, the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghoſt; and to be performed but once, when rightly adminiſtred.

Ver. 6. *One God and Father of all*, &c.] That there is but one God is the voice of nature and of revelation; and may be concluded from the perfections of deity, for there can be but one eternal, infinite, immenſe, omnipotent, all-ſufficient, perfect, and independent being; and from one firſt cauſe of all things, and the relations he ſtands in to his creatures: there is but one God, who is truly, and really, and properly God, in oppoſition to all nominal and figurative deities, and which are not Gods by nature, and to the fictitious deities and idols of the nations; and there is but one God of *Jews* and *Gentiles*; nor is the unity of the Godhead inconſiſtent with a Trinity of perſons in it: and this one God is the Father of all; the Father of all mercies, and of all ſpirits, both angels and ſouls of men; and he is the Father of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and of all the elect in him: and ſeeing that they have all one Covenant-God and Father, who has predeſtinated them to the adoption of children, and who has put them among the children, and adopted them into his family, and ſtand in the ſame relation to him, and enjoy the ſame privileges, they ought to love as brethren: *who is above all*; which may denote the ſuper-excellency of his nature not above his Son and Spirit, who are of the ſame nature with him, but above angels and men; and the extenſiveneſs of his government, over all creatures in general, and over his church and people in particular: *and through all*; the *Arabic* verſion renders it, *taking care of all*; which may have reſpect to his providence, which is either univerſal, and reaches to all creatures, his hands have made; or ſpecial, and concerns his own choſen people, who belong to his family, and to whom he ſtands in the relation of a Covenant-God and Father: or this clauſe may refer to the perfections of his nature, which appear thro' the whole of the ſalvation of all the choſen ones; as his wiſdom, love, grace, mercy, juſtice, holineſs, truth, and faithfulneſs: *and in you all*; which is to be underſtood, not of his being in his creatures, by his powerful preſence, which is every where ſupporting them; but of the gracious union there is between him and his people, and of his gracious inhabitation in them by his Spirit. The *Vulgate Latin*, *Syriac*, and *Arabic* verſions, the *Complutenſian* edition, and ſome copies, read, *in us all*; and the *Alexandrian* copy, and the *Ethiopic* verſion, read only, *in all*.

Ver. 7. *But unto every one of us is given grace*, &c.] Which may refer to the ſaints in common, and may be interpreted of juſtifying, pardoning, adopting, ſanctifying, and perſevering grace, beſtowed upon them all, freely and liberally, not grudgingly, nor niggardly, and without motive and condition in them; or to the miniſters of the Goſpel, and ſo deſign gifts fitting for the miniſtry, which every one has, tho' differing one from another, and all of free grace: *according to the meaſure of the gift of Chriſt*; either according to the gift of grace to Chriſt before the world began, and the meaſure of it, which he communicates to them in time, even grace for grace; or according to that meaſure of gifts which Chriſt received from men at his aſcenſion: it may be obſerved that every member of Chriſt and miniſter of his, receive more or leſs grace and gifts from him; and that what they receive is all of free grace, and in meaſure; and tho' they may have gifts differing one from another, yet all are uſeful; ſo that there is no room for pride, envy, and contempt, which would break in upon the unity of the Spirit; for what is ſaid from ver. 3. contains ſo many arguments to ſtir up the ſaints to endeavour to preſerve that.

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[p] Tzeror Hammor, fol. 154. 2.

Ver. 8. *Wherefore he ſaith*, &c.] God in the ſcripture, *Pſal.* lxviii. 18. *when he aſcended up on high*; which is not to be underſtood of *Moſes*'s aſcending up to the firmament at the giving of the law, as ſome *Jewiſh* writers[q] interpret it; for tho' *Moſes* aſcended to the top of mount *Sinai*, yet it is never ſaid that he went up to the firmament of heaven; nor of *David's* going up to the high fortreſſes of his enemies, as another of thoſe writers[r] would have it; nor of God's aſcent from mount *Sinai*, when he gave the law, of which there is no mention in ſcripture; but of the Meſſiah's aſcenſion to heaven, which may very well be ſignified by this phraſe, *on high*; ſee *Pſal.* cii. 19. and *Jer.* xxv. 30. and which aſcenſion is to be taken not in a figurative, but literal ſenſe, and as real, local, and viſible as Chriſt's aſcenſion to heaven was; being from mount *Olivet*, attended by angels, in the ſight of his Apoſtles, after he had converſed with them from the time of his reſurrection forty days; and which aſcenſion of his was in order to fulfil the type of the high-prieſt entering into the moſt holy place; and to make interceſſion for his people, and to ſend down the Spirit with his gifts and graces to them, and to make way and prepare manſions of glory for them, and receive the glory promiſed and due to him: in the *Hebrew* text it is, *thou haſt aſcended*; there the pſalmiſt ſpeaks to the Meſſiah, here the Apoſtle ſpeaks of him; tho' the *Arabic* and *Ethiopic* read there, *he aſcended*, as here: *he led captivity captive*; which is expreſſive of Chriſt's conqueſts and triumph over ſin, ſatan, the world, death and the grave; and indeed, every ſpiritual enemy of his and his people, eſpecially the devil, who leads men captive at his will, and is therefore called captivity, and his principalities and powers, whom Chriſt has ſpoiled and triumphed over; the alluſion is to the public triumphs of the *Romans*, in which captives were led in chains and expoſed to open view[s]: *and gave gifts unto men*; meaning the gifts of the Holy Ghoſt, and particularly ſuch as qualify men for the work of the miniſtry; theſe he received באדם, *in man*; in human nature, in that nature in which he aſcended to heaven; באדם הידוע למעלה, *in the man that is known above*[t], as ſay the *Jews*; and theſe he beſtows on men, even rebellious ones, that the Lord God might dwell among them, and make them uſeful to others: wherefore the *Jews* have no reaſon to quarrel with the verſion of the Apoſtle as they do[u]; who inſtead of *received gifts for* men, renders it, *gave gifts to men*; ſince the Meſſiah received in order to give, and gives in conſequence of his having received them; and ſo *Jarchi* interprets the words, לתתם, *to give them* to the children of men; and beſides, as a learned man has obſerved[w], one and the ſame *Hebrew* word ſignifies to give and to receive; to which may be added that their own *Targum* renders it יהבתא, *and haſt given gifts to the children of men*; and in like manner the *Syriac* and *Arabic* verſions of *Pſal.* lxviii. 18. render the words; very likely the Apoſtle might uſe the *Syriac* verſion, which is a very ancient one: it was cuſtomary at triumphs to give gifts to the ſoldiers[x], to which there is an alluſion here.

Ver. 9. *Now that he aſcended*, &c.] Theſe words are a concluſion of Chriſt's deſcent from heaven, from his aſcenſion thither; for had he not firſt deſcended from thence, it could not have been ſaid of him that he aſcended; for no man hath aſcended to heaven but he that came down from heaven, *John* iii. 13. and they are alſo an explanation of the ſenſe of the *Pſalmiſt* in the above citation, which takes in his humiliation as well as his exaltation; which humiliation is ſignified by his deſcent into the earth: *what is it but that he alſo deſcended firſt into the lower parts of the earth?* this the papiſts underſtand of his deſcent into a place they call *Limbus Patrum*, which they make to be contiguous to hell; and where they ſay the patriarchs were detained till Chriſt's coming; and that he went thither to deliver them out of it; and that theſe are the captivity he led captive; all which is fictitious and fabulous: for certain it is, that the place where *Abraham* was with *Lazarus* in his boſom was not near to hell, but afar off, and that there was a great gulf between them, *Luke* xvi. 23, 26. and the ſpirits or ſouls of the patriarchs returned to God that gave them, when ſeparated from their bodies, as the ſouls of men do no now, *Eccleſ.* xii. 7. nor did Chriſt enter any ſuch feigned place at his death, but went to paradiſe, where the penitent thief was that day with him; nor were the patriarchs, but the principalities and powers Chriſt ſpoiled, the captivity he led captive and triumphed over: ſome interpret this of Chriſt's deſcent into hell, which muſt be underſtood not locally, but of his enduring the wrath of God for ſin, which was equivalent to the torments of hell, and of his being in the ſtate of the dead; but it may rather deſign the whole of his humiliation, as his deſcent from heaven and incarnation in the virgin's womb, where his human nature was curiouſly wrought in the loweſt parts of the earth; and his humbling himſelf and becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the croſs, when he was made ſin and a curſe for his people, and bore all the puniſhment due to their tranſgreſſions; and his being in *Hades*, in the ſtate of the dead, in the grave, in the heart of the earth, as *Jonas* in the whale's belly: reference ſeems to be had to *Pſal.* cxxxix. 15. where *the lower parts of the earth*, is interpreted by the *Targum* on the place of כריסא דאמא, his *mother's womb*; and ſo it is by *Jarchi*, *Aben Ezra*, *Kimchi*, and *Ben Melec*. The *Alexandrian* copy and the *Ethiopic* verſion, leave out the word *firſt* in this clauſe.

Ver. 10. *He that deſcended is the ſame alſo that aſcended*, &c.] It was the ſame divine perſon the Son of God, who aſſumed human nature, and ſuffered in it, which is meant by his deſcent, who in that nature aſcended up to heaven: this proves that Chriſt exiſted before he took fleſh of the virgin; and that tho' he has two natures, yet he is but one perſon; and diſproves the popiſh notion of the deſcent of Chriſt's ſoul into *Limbus* or hell, locally taken;

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[q] Targum & Jarchi in Pſal. lxviii. 18.

[r] Aben Ezra in loc.

[s] Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 6. c. 6.

[t] Zohar in Numb. fol. 61. 4.

[u] R. Iſaac, Chizzuk Emuna, par. 2. c. 91.

[w] Pocock. not. Miſc. p. 24.

[x] Alex. ab Alex. ib. ut ſupra.

taken: and this aſcenſion of his was, *up far above all heavens*; the viſible heavens, the airy and ſtarry heavens; Chriſt aſcended far above theſe, and went into the third heaven, the holieſt of all; and this is expreſſive of the exaltation of Chriſt, who is made higher than the heavens: and the end of his aſcenſion was, *that he might fill all things*, or *fulfil all things*; that were types of him, or predicted concerning him; that as he had fulfilled many things already by his incarnation, doctrine, miracles, obedience, ſufferings, death and reſurrection from the dead; ſo he aſcended on high that he might accompliſh what was foretold concerning his aſcenſion to heaven, and ſeſſion at the right hand of God, and anſwer to the type of the high-prieſt's entering once a year into the holieſt of all: or that he might compleat, perfect and fill up all his offices; as the remainder of his prieſtly office, his interceſſion for his people; and more fully his prophetic office by the effuſion of his Spirit; and more viſibly his kingly office, by ſending forth the rod of his ſtrength out of *Zion*, and ſubduing the people under him: or that he might fill all places; as God he fills all places at once, being infinite, immenſe, and omnipreſent; as man one after another; at his incarnation he dwelt with men on earth; at his crucifixion he was lifted up between heaven and earth; at his death he deſcended into the lower parts of the earth, into hell, *Hades*, or the grave; and at his reſurrection ſtood upon the earth again, and had all power in heaven and in earth given him; and at his aſcenſion he went thro' the airy and ſtarry heavens, into the higheſt heaven; and ſo ſucceſſively was in all places: or rather that he might fill all perſons, all his elect, both *Jews* and *Gentiles*; and ſo the *Arabic* verſion renders it, *that he might fill all creatures*; as the *Gentiles* were called; particularly that he might fill each and every one of his people with his grace and righteouſneſs, with his Spirit, and the fruits of it, with ſpiritual knowledge and underſtanding, with food and gladneſs, with peace, joy and comfort; and all his churches with his gracious preſence, and with officers and members, and all with gifts and graces ſuitable to their ſeveral ſtations and work.

Ver. 11. *And he gave ſome Apoſtles*, &c.] That is, he gave them gifts by which they were qualified to be Apoſtles; who were ſuch as were immediately called by Chriſt, and had their doctrine from him, and their commiſſion to preach it; and were peculiarly and infallibly guided by the Spirit of God, and had a power to work miracles for the confirmation of their doctrine; and had authority to go every where and preach the Goſpel, and plant churches, and were not confined to any one particular place or church; this was the firſt and chief office in the church, and of an extraordinary kind, and is now ceaſed; and tho' the Apoſtles were before Chriſt's aſcenſion, yet they had not received till then the fulneſs of the Spirit, and his extraordinary gifts to fit them for their office; nor did they enter upon the diſcharge of it in its large extent till that time; for they were not only to bear witneſs of Chriſt in *Jeruſalem*, in *Judea* and *Samaria*, but in the uttermoſt part of the earth: *and ſome prophets*; by whom are meant, not private members of churches, who may all propheſy or teach in a private way; nor ordinary miniſters of the word; but extraordinary ones, who had a peculiar gift of interpreting the ſcriptures, the prophecies of the Old Teſtament, and of foretelling things to come; ſuch were *Agabus* and others in the church of *Antioch*, *Acts* xi. 27. and xiii. 1. *and ſome evangeliſts*; by whom are deſigned, not ſo much the writers of the Goſpels, as *Matthew*, *Mark*, *Luke* and *John*, ſome of which were alſo Apoſtles; as preachers of the Goſpel, and who yet were diſtinct from the ordinary miniſters of it; they were below the Apoſtles, and yet above paſtors and teachers; they were the companions of the Apoſtles, and aſſiſtants to them, and ſubſerved them in their work; ſuch were *Philip*, *Luke*, *Titus*, *Timothy*, and others; theſe were not fixed and ſtated miniſters in any one place, as the following officers be, but were ſent here and there, as the Apoſtles thought fit: *and ſome paſtors and teachers*, or doctors; theſe may be thought to differ, but not ſo much on account of the place where they perform their work, the one in the church, the other in the ſchool; nor on account of the different ſubject of their miniſtry, the one attending to practical, the other to doctrinal points; but whereas the paſtors are the ſhepherds of the flock, the overſeers of it, and the ſame with the biſhops and elders, and the teachers may be the gifted brethren in the church, aſſiſtants to the paſtors, bare miniſters of the word; ſo the difference lies here, that the one has the overſight, and care, and charge of the church, and the other not; the one can adminiſter all ordinances, the other not; the one is fixed and tied to ſome certain church, the other not: tho' I rather think they intend one and the ſame office, and that the word *teachers* is only explanative of the figurative word *paſtors* or ſhepherds; and the rather becauſe if the Apoſtle had deſigned diſtinct officers, he would have uſed the ſame form of ſpeaking as before; and have expreſſed himſelf thus, *and ſome paſtors, and ſome teachers*; whereas he does not make ſuch a diſtribution here as there; tho' the *Syriac* verſion reads this clauſe diſtributively as the others; and among the *Jews* there were the ſingular men or wiſe men, and the diſciples of the wiſe men, who were their companions and aſſiſtants; and it is aſked [y], "who is a ſingular man? and who is a "diſciple? a ſingular man is every one that is fit to "be appointed a paſtor or governor of a congrega"tion, and a diſciple is one, that when he is queſtioned "about any point in his doctrine, gives an anſwer:" wherefore if theſe two, paſtors and teachers, are different, it might be thought there is ſome reference to this diſtinction, and that paſtors anſwer to the wiſe men, and teachers to their diſciples or aſſiſtants; and ſo *Kimchi* in *Jer.* iii. 15. interprets the *paſtors* there of פרנסים ישראל, *the paſtors of Iſrael*, which ſhall be with the King Meſſiah, as is ſaid in *Micah* v. 5. and undoubtedly Goſpel-miniſters are meant: from the whole it may be obſerved, that as there have been various officers, and offices in the Goſpel-diſpenſation, various gifts have been beſtowed; and theſe are the gifts of Chriſt, which he has received for men, and gives unto them; and hence it appears that the work of the miniſtry is not an human invention, but the appointment of Chriſt, for which he fits and qualifies, and therefore to be regarded; and that they only are the miniſters of Chriſt, whom he makes miniſters of the New Teſtament, and not whom men or themſelves make and appoint.

Ver. 12. *For the perfecting of the ſaints*, &c.] The choſen ones, whom God has ſanctified or ſet apart for himſelf in eternal election: the miniſtry of the word is deſigned for the compleating the number of theſe in effectual vocation; and for the perfecting of the whole body of the church, by gathering in all that belong to it, and of every particular ſaint, who is regenerated and ſanctified by the Spirit of God: for the beſt of ſaints are imperfect; for tho' there is a perfection in them as that deſigns ſincerity, in oppoſition to hypocriſy, and as it may be taken comparatively with reſpect to what others are, or they themſelves were; and tho' there is a perfection of parts of the new man in them, yet not of degrees; and tho' there is a compleat perfection in Chriſt, yet not in themſelves, their ſanctification is imperfect, as their faith, knowledge, love, &c. ſin is in them, and committed by them, and they continually want ſupplies of grace; and the beſt of them are ſenſible of their imperfection, and own it: now the miniſtration of the word is a means of carrying on the work of grace in them unto perfection, or *for the reſtoring* or *jointing in of the ſaints*; the elect of God, were diſjointed in *Adam*'s fall and ſcattered abroad, who were repreſentatively gathered together in one head, even in Chriſt, in redemption; and the word is the means of the viſible and open jointing of them into Chriſt, and into his churches, and alſo of reſtoring them after backſlidings: *for the work of the miniſtry*; gifts are given unto men by Chriſt to qualify them for it: the preaching of the Goſpel is a work, and a laborious one, and what no man is ſufficient for of himſelf; it requires faithfulneſs, and is a good work, and when well performed thoſe concerned in it, are worthy of reſpect, eſteem, and honour; and it is a miniſtring work, a ſervice and not dominion: *for the edifying the body of Chriſt*; not his natural body the Father prepared for him; nor his ſacramental body in the ſupper; but his myſtical body the church; and gifts are beſtowed to fit them for the preaching of the Goſpel, that hereby the church, which is compared to an edifice, might be built up; and that the ſeveral ſocieties of chriſtians and particular believers might have ſpiritual edification, and walk in the fear of the Lord, and in the comforts of the Holy Ghoſt, and their numbers be increaſed, and their graces be in lively exerciſe.

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[y] T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 10. 2.

Ver. 13. *Till we all come in the unity of the faith*, &c.] Theſe words regard the continuance of the Goſpel-miniſtry in the church, until all the elect of God come in: or *to the unity of the faith*; by which is meant, not the union between the ſaints, the cement of which is love; nor that which is between Chriſt and his people, of which his love; and not their faith, is the bond; but the ſame with the *one faith*, ver. 5. and deſigns either the doctrine of faith, which is uniform, and all of a-piece; and the ſenſe is, that the miniſtration of the Goſpel will continue until the ſaints entirely unite in their ſentiments about it, and both watchmen and churches ſee eye to eye: or elſe the grace of faith, which as to its nature, object, author, ſpring and cauſe is the ſame; and it uſually comes by hearing; and all God's elect ſhall have it; and the work and office of the miniſtry will remain until they are all brought to believe in Chriſt; *and of the knowledge of the Son of God*; which is but another phraſe for faith in Chriſt, for faith is a ſpiritual knowledge of Chriſt; it is that grace by which a ſoul beholds his glory and fulneſs, approves of him, truſts in him, and appropriates him to itſelf; and ſuch an approbatory, fiducial, appropriating, practical, and experimental knowledge of Chriſt is here intended; and which is imperfect in thoſe that have it, and is not yet in many who will have it; and inaſmuch as the Goſpel-miniſtry is the means of it, this will be continued until every elect ſoul partakes of it, and arrives to a greater perfection in it: for it follows, *unto a perfect man*; meaning either Chriſt, who is in every ſenſe a perfect man; his human nature is the greater and more perfect tabernacle, and he is perfectly free from ſin, and has been made perfect thro' ſufferings in it; and coming to him may be underſtood either of coming to him now by faith, which the Goſpel-miniſtry is the means of, and encourages to; or of coming to him hereafter, for the ſaints will meet him, and be ever with him, and till that time the Goſpel will be preached: or elſe the church being a compleat body with all its members is deſigned; for when all the elect of God are gathered in and joined together, they will be as one man; or it may reſpect every individual believer, who tho' he is comparatively perfect, and with regard to parts, but not degrees, and as in Chriſt Jeſus, yet is in himſelf imperfect in holineſs and knowledge, tho' hereafter he will be perfect in both; when he comes *unto the meaſure of the ſtature of the fulneſs of Chriſt*; not of Chriſt's natural body, but of his myſtical body the church, which will be his fulneſs when all the elect are gathered in; and when they are filled with his gifts and graces, and are grown up to their proportion in it, they will be come to the meaſure and ſtature of it: or it may be underſtood of every particular believer, who has Chriſt formed in him; who when the work of grace is finiſhed in him, will be a perfect man in Chriſt, and all this will be true of him; till which time, and during this imperfect ſtate, the Goſpel-miniſtry will be maintained: the phraſe is taken from the *Jews*, who among the forms and degrees of propheſy which the prophets arrived to, and had in them the viſion of God and angels, make שעור קומה, *the meaſure of the ſtature*[z], a principal one; and is here uſed for the perfection of the heavenly ſtate in the viſion, and enjoyment of God and Chriſt.

Ver. 14. *That we henceforth be no more children*, &c.] Meaning not children of men, for grace does not deſtroy natural relations; nor children of God, which is a priviledge, and always continues; nor indeed children of diſobedience, tho' the ſaints ceaſe to be ſuch upon converſion; but in ſuch ſenſe children, as they were when firſt converted, new born babes, little children: there are ſome things in which they ſhould be children ſtill, namely with reſpect to an ardent and flaming love to God and Chriſt, and to the ſaints; and with regard to their eager deſire after the ſincere milk of the word; and as to pride, malice, envy, evil ſpeakings, guile and hypocriſy; in theſe things it becomes them to be children: but not in underſtanding; they ſhould not always remain ignorant, imprudent, or be always fed with milk, and not able to digeſt meat; nor be unable to go unleſs led, and be tender and uncapable of bearing hardſhips for Chriſt and his Goſpel, and of defending it, and his cauſe and intereſt; but ſhould play the man, and quit themſelves as ſuch and be ſtrong, which the Goſpel-miniſtry is a means of, and encourages to: *toſſed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine*; falſe doctrine, which may be compared to wind for its lightneſs and emptineſs, and for its ſwelling and puffing nature, and for the noiſe and bluſter it makes, and for its rapidity and force, with which it ſometimes comes and bears all before it, and for its infectiouſneſs, which is the nature of ſome winds; and to be toſſed to and fro, and carried about with it, is expreſſive of much ignorance and want of a diſcerning ſpirit, and implies heſitation, and doubts and ſcruples, and ſhews credulity, fickleneſs and inconſtancy: and which is brought on *by the ſleight of men*; either thro' the uncertain and changeable ſtate of things in life; the mind of man is fickle, the life of man is uncertain, and all the affairs of human nature are ſubject to change, by reaſon of which men are eaſily impoſed upon; or rather thro' the tricking arts of falſe teachers: the word here uſed is adopted by the *Jews* into their language, and with them קוביא, ſignifies the game at dice [a]; and קוביוסטום, is a gameſter at that play, and is interpreted by them, one that ſteals ſouls [b], and deceives and corrupts them; and may be fitly applied to falſe teachers, who make uſe of ſuch like artifices and juggling tricks, to deceive the hearts of the ſimple, as the others do to cheat men of their money: hence it follows, and *cunning craftineſs, whereby they lie in wait to deceive*; or *unto the deceitful methods* or *wiles of the devil*, as the *Alexandrian* copy reads; which not only ſuggeſts that their principal end in view is to deceive, but their inſidious, private and ſecret way of deceiving, and their expertneſs in it, which they have from the devil; and now the miniſtration of the Goſpel is the beſt and ſureſt guard and antidote, againſt ſuch fluctuations and deceptions.

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[z] Maimon. in Miſn. Sanhedrin, c. 11. §. 1. Coſri, par. 4. §. 3. p. 213. 2.

Ver. 15. *But ſpeaking the truth in love*, &c.] Either Chriſt himſelf, who is the truth, and is to be preached, and always ſpoken of with ſtrong affection and love; or the Goſpel, the word of truth, ſo called in oppoſition to that which is falſe and fictitious; and alſo to the law, which is ſhadowiſh; and on account of its author, the God of truth, and its ſubject matter, Chriſt, and the ſeveral doctrines of grace; and becauſe the Spirit of truth has dictated it, and does direct to it, and owns and bleſſes it: this with reſpect to the miniſters of the Goſpel, ſhould be ſpoken openly, honeſtly, and ſincerely, and in love to the ſouls of men, and in a way conſiſtent with love, in oppoſition to the ſecret, enſnaring and pernicious ways of falſe teachers; and with reſpect to private chriſtians, as they are to receive it in love, ſo to ſpeak of it to one another from a principle of love, and an affectionate concern for each others welfare, to the end that they *may grow up into him in all things which is the head*, even *Chriſt*: the work of grace upon the ſoul is a gradual work, and an increaſe of this in the exerciſe of faith, hope, love, and ſpiritual knowledge is a growth; and this is a growth in all things, in all grace, as in thoſe mentioned, ſo in others, as humility, patience, ſelf-denial, reſignation of the will to the will of God, and eſpecially the knowledge of Chriſt; for it is a growing into him, from whom ſouls receive all their grace and increaſe of it; for he is the head of influence to ſupply them, as well as the head of eminence to protect them; ſee chap. i. 22. and now the preaching of the Goſpel, or the ſincere ſpeaking of the truth, is the inſtrumental means of ſuch growth.

Ver. 16. *From whom the whole body fitly joined together*, &c.] By which is meant, the church; ſee chap. i. 23. ſometimes it deſigns all the elect of God in heaven and in earth, but here the church-militant, which only can admit of an increaſe; this body is from Chriſt, as an head, and the phraſe denotes the riſe and original of the church from Chriſt, her dependance upon him, and union to him, and of its members one to another; ſhe has her being and form from him, and all her bleſſings, as her life and light, righteouſneſs and holineſs, her grace and ſtrength, her joy, peace, and comfort, her fruitfulneſs and final perſeverance; and her dependance is upon him for ſubſiſtence, ſuſtenance, protection and ſafety, and for grace and glory; and her union to him is very near, ſtrict and cloſe, and indiſſoluble; and the union between the ſeveral members is alſo very cloſe, and both are very beautiful: *and compacted by that which every joint ſupplieth, according to the effectual working in the meaſure of every part*. The *Alexandrian* copy reads, *of every member*; and ſo the *Vulgate Latin*, *Syriac* and *Arabic* verſions; the author of the union of the members of Chriſt's body to one another is the Spirit of God, by him they are baptized into one body; the cement or bond of this union is the grace of love wrought in their ſouls by him; and the means are the word and ordinances, and theſe convey a ſupply from Chriſt the head to every member, ſuitable to the part it bears in the body, according to the energy of the Spirit, who makes all effectual: and ſo *maketh increaſe of the body unto the edifying of itſelf in love*; the increaſe of the body the church, is either in numbers, when perſons are converted and added to it; or in the exerciſe of grace, under the influence of the Spirit, thro' the miniſtration of the word and ordinances; and both theſe tend to the edifying or building of it up; and nothing is of a more edifying nature to the church than love, which bears the infirmities of the weak, and ſeeks for, and follows after thoſe things which make for peace and godly edification, 1 *Cor.* viii. 1.

Ver. 17. *This I ſay therefore and teſtify in the Lord*, &c.] Theſe words may be conſidered either as an aſſertion, and ſo a teſtimonial of the different walk and converſation of the ſaints at *Epheſus*, from the reſt of the *Gentiles*; or as an exhortation in the name of the Lord to ſuch a walk, the Apoſtle here returning to what he ſtirs them up to in ver. 1. *that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind*; every natural man walks in a vain ſhew; the mind of man is vain, and whoever walk according to the dictates of it, muſt walk vainly: the phraſe is expreſſive of the emptineſs of the mind; it being naturally deſtitute of God, of the knowledge, fear and grace of God; and of Jeſus Chriſt, of the knowledge of him, faith in him, and love to him; and of the Spirit and his graces; and it alſo points at the inſtability and changeableneſs of the human mind, in which ſenſe man at his beſt eſtate was altogether vanity; as alſo the folly, falſhood, and wickedneſs of it in his fallen ſtate: and the mind diſcovers its vanity in its thoughts and imaginations, which are vain and fooliſh; in the happineſs it propoſes to itſelf, which lies in vain things, as worldly riches, honours, *&c.* and in the ways and means it takes to obtain it, and in words and actions; and the *Gentiles* ſhewed the vanity of their minds in their vain philoſophy, and curious enquiries into things, and in their polytheiſm and idolatry: to walk herein, is to act according to the dictates of a vain and carnal mind; and it denotes a continued ſeries of ſinning, or a vain converſation maintained, a progreſs and obſtinate perſiſting therein with pleaſure: now God's elect before converſion walk as others do, but when they are converted their walk and converſation is not, at leaſt, it ought not to be like that of others: the *Alexandrian* copy and ſome others, the *Vulgate Latin* and *Ethiopic* verſions, leave out the word *other*, and only read, *as the Gentiles*, &c.

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[a] T. Bab. Erubin, fol. 82. 1. Miſna Roſhhaſhana, c. 1. §. 8. & Sanhedrin, c. 3. §. 3. & Jarchi & Toſephot in ib. & Juchaſin, fol. 88. 1.

[b] T. Bab. Cholin, fol. 91. 2.

Ver. 18. *Having the underſtanding darkened*, &c.] Not that the natural faculty of the underſtanding is loſt in men, nor the underſtanding in things natural and civil, and which is quick enough, eſpecially in things that are evil; but in things ſpiritual it is very dark and ignorant, as about the nature and perfections of God, his holineſs and righteouſneſs; about ſin and the conſequences of it; about Chriſt, his perſon, office, and work, and ſalvation by him; about the Spirit, and his work of grace upon the ſoul; and about the ſcriptures and the doctrines contained in it; and ſo it came to be by ſin: the underſtanding of man was at firſt filled both with natural and divine knowledge; but man was not content with this, and being ambitious of more, even of being as God, loſt what he had; for on account of his ſin he was baniſhed the divine preſence, which brought not only a darkneſs upon him, but upon all his poſterity; and which is increaſed by perſonal iniquity, and oftentimes by ſatan the god of this world, who blinds the minds of men; and ſometimes men are given up in juſt judgment by God, to a judicial blindneſs and hardneſs of heart; and which iſſues in utter darkneſs, in blackneſs of darkneſs for evermore: *being alienated from the life of God*; not that which God lives in himſelf, but that which he lives in his people; nor that natural life which men receive from him, but a ſpiritual life, a life of grace, faith and holineſs; and which may be called the life of God, becauſe it is infuſed by the Spirit of God, and the word of God is the means of it, and it is ſupported and ſecured by the power of God, and is according to the will of God, and is directed to his glory: now wicked and unconverted men are alienated from this life; they are eſtranged from God the fountain of it; and go aſtray from the law, the rule of an holy life; and are entirely deſtitute of a principle of life, from whence men can only act right; and are utterly unacquainted with the pleaſures and ſweetneſs of the life of faith and holineſs; nor do they approve of ſuch a life, but have the utmoſt averſion to it: *thro' the ignorance that is in them*; every unregenerate man is an ignorant man, and eſpecially the *Gentiles* were very ignorant of God, and of divine things; ignorance is natural to men, it comes by ſin, and is itſelf ſinful, and is ſometimes the puniſhment of ſin, and alſo the cauſe of it, as here of alienation from the life of God; for where is ignorance of God, there can be no deſire after him, no communion with him, no faith in him, and dependance on him; no true worſhip of him, or living according to his will, and to his glory: and this ignorance is, *becauſe of the blindneſs of their hearts*, or *the hardneſs* of it; there is a natural hardneſs of the heart, the heart is naturally ſtony, and ſo it remains till grace takes away the ſtony heart, and gives an heart of fleſh; it is inſenſible and inflexible, and not ſuſceptive of any impreſſion; and there is a voluntary hardneſs of it, men willingly harden themſelves againſt the Lord, and make their hearts like an adamant ſtone, all ſin is of an hardening nature; and there is a judicial hardneſs, which God gives up men unto; and when and where this is the caſe, in either ſenſe, it is no wonder men ſhould be ſo ignorant of God, and ſo alienated from the life of him: סמיות הלב, *blindneſs of heart* [c], is a *Rabbinical* phraſe.

Ver. 19. *Who being paſt feeling*, &c.] Their conſciences being cauterized or ſeared as with a red hot iron, which is the conſequence of judicial hardneſs; ſo that they have loſt all ſenſe of ſin, and don't feel the load of its guilt upon them, and are without any concern about it; but on the contrary commit it with pleaſure, boaſt of it and glory in it, plead for it and defend it publickly, and openly declare it, and ſtand in no fear of a future judgment, which they ridicule and deſpiſe: the *Vulgate Latin*, *Syriac*, and *Arabic* verſions, and the *Claromontane* exemplar read, *who deſpairing*; of mercy and ſalvation, ſaying there is no hope, and therefore grow hardened and deſperate in ſin: *have given themſelves over unto laſciviouſneſs, to work all uncleanneſs with greedineſs*; by *laſciviouſneſs* is meant all manner of luſts, and a wanton and unbridled courſe of ſinning; and their *giving themſelves over* unto it denotes their voluntarineſs in ſinning, the power of ſin over them, they being willing ſlaves unto it, and their continuance in it; and this they do in order *to work all uncleanneſs*; to commit every unclean luſt, to live in a continued commiſſion of uncleanneſs of every ſort; and that *with greedineſs*; being like a covetous man, never ſatisfied with ſinning, but always craving more ſinful luſts and pleaſures.

Ver. 20. *But ye have not ſo learned Chriſt*, &c.] Some diſtinguiſh theſe words and make two propoſitions of them, *but ye not ſo*, or *ye are not ſo*, *ye have learned Chriſt*; the firſt of theſe propoſitions has reſpect to what goes before, and ſuggeſts that regenerate perſons are not as other men: they don't walk in the vanity of their minds as others, their minds are not empty and vain; but are filled with God, with a ſaving knowledge of God in Chriſt, with the fear and love of God, and with Chriſt, with a ſpiritual knowledge of him, with faith in him and love to him, and with the Spirit, with his graces and fruits of righteouſneſs; and tho' there is a great deal of vanity, inſtability, treachery, and ſinfulneſs in them, yet their walk and the courſe of their converſation is not according to this: nor are their underſtandings darkened as others; they are enlightened to ſee their loſt ſtate and condition by nature, the plague of their own hearts, the inſufficiency of their own righteouſneſs, the way of life and ſalvation by Chriſt, and that ſalvation from firſt to laſt is all of grace; they have ſome light into the doctrines of the Goſpel, and have ſome glimpſe of glory; and their light is of an increaſing nature: they are not alienated from the life of God as others, but live a life of communion with him, a life of faith upon him, and a life of holineſs according to his mind; they are not paſt feeling as others, they are ſenſible of ſin, and are often preſſed down with the weight of it, and groan, being burdened by it; they cannot ſin with that delight and pleaſure as others do, nor will they plead for it, but confeſs it with ſhame and ſorrow; nor do they give up themſelves to it, and continue in it, and in an inſatiable purſuit of it: the reaſon of all which is, they *have learned Chriſt*; ſo as to know him as God over all bleſſed for ever; as the Lord and heir of all things; as the alpha and omega of the covenant of grace; as entruſted with all that is near and dear to his Father; as the Father's free gift to men, and as the ſinner's ſaviour; as the way of acceſs to God and acceptance with him; as the church's head and huſband; as the ſaints prophet, prieſt, and king, and as the only mediator between God and men; and ſo as

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[c] T. Bab. Cetubot, fol. 105. 1.

to receive him, believe in him, and commit their ſouls unto him; and ſo as to embrace his truths, and ſubmit to his ordinances: and this leſſon they learn, not in the book and ſchool of nature, nor of carnal reaſon, nor of the law; but in the book of the covenant, and of the ſcripture; and in the ſchool of the church, and under the miniſtry of the Goſpel; for the miniſters of the Goſpel are the inſtructors, the inſtruments of teaching; though the Spirit of God is the efficient cauſe, the anointing which teacheth all things, and leads into all truth, as it is in Jeſus: and this leſſon being truly learnt, will teach men to walk differently from others; to deny ungodlineſs and worldly luſts, and to live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly.

Ver. 21. *If ſo be that ye have heard him*, &c.] Not heard him preach, but heard him preached; and that not merely externally, with the outward hearing of the ear; though oftentimes ſpiritual conviction and illumination, true faith in Chriſt, real comfort from him, and eſtabliſhment and aſſurance of intereſt in him, come this way, as to theſe *Epheſians*, ch. i. 13. but internally, ſo as to know him, underſtand his word, and diſtinguiſh his voice; ſo as to approve of him and love him, and believe in him; feel the power of his Goſpel, reliſh his truths, and obey his ordinances, and ſo bring forth fruit to his glory; as ſuch do, who are quickened by him, whoſe ears are unſtopped, and their hearts opened, and their underſtandings enlightened; and who have hearing ears, and underſtanding hearts given them: *and have been taught by him*; not perſonally, but by his Spirit and miniſters; for Chriſt is not only the ſubject of the miniſtry of the word, and whom the Spirit of God teaches and directs ſouls to for righteouſneſs, pardon, cleanſing, and for every ſupply of grace; but he is the efficient cauſe of teaching; and there is none teaches like him: and thoſe who are taught by him, are taught *as the truth is in Jeſus*; as the Goſpel is in him, as in its original and ſubject; for he is truth itſelf, and grace and truth came by him; and as it was preached by him, and ſo is pure and unmixed.

Ver. 22. *That ye put off concerning the former converſation, the old man*, &c.] Which is the corruption of nature; why this is called a man, and an old man, ſee the note on *Rom.* vi. 6. the putting him off, is not a removing him from the ſaints, nor a deſtroying him in them, nor a changing his nature; for he remains, and remains alive, and is the ſame old man he ever was, in regenerate perſons; but it is a putting him off from his ſeat, and a putting him down from his government; a ſhewing no regard to his rule and dominion, to his laws and luſts, making no proviſion for his ſupport; and particularly, not ſquaring the life and converſation according to his dictates and directions; and therefore it is called a putting him off, concerning the former converſation: the change lies not in the old man, who can never be altered, but in the converſation; he is not in the ſame power, but he retains the ſame ſinful nature; he is put off, but he is not put out; and though he does not reign, he rages, and often threatens to get the aſcendant: theſe words ſtand either in connexion with ver. 17. and ſo are a continuation and an explanation of that exhortation; or elſe they point out what regenerate ſouls are taught by Chriſt to do, to quit the former converſation, to hate the garment ſpotted with the fleſh, and to put it off; for the alluſion is to the putting off of filthy garments, as the works of the fleſh may be truly called, which flow from the vitioſity of nature, the old man: *which is corrupt according to the deceitful luſts*; the old man, or the vitioſity of nature, has its luſts; and theſe are deceitful, they promiſe pleaſure and profit, but yield neither in the iſſue; they promiſe liberty, and bring into bondage; they promiſe ſecrecy and impunity, but expoſe to ſhame, and render liable to puniſhment; they ſometimes put on a religious face, and ſo deceive, and fill men with pride and conceit, who think themſelves to be ſomething, when they are nothing: and through theſe the old man is corrupt; by theſe the corruption of nature is diſcovered; and the corruption that is in the world is produced hereby; and theſe make a man deſerving of, and liable to the pit of corruption; and this is a good reaſon, why this corrupt old man, with reſpect to the life and converſation, ſhould be put off.

Ver. 23. *And be renewed in the ſpirit of your mind.*] Or by the Spirit that is in your mind; that is, by the Holy Spirit; who is in the ſaints, and is the author of renovation in them; and who is the reviver and carrier on, and finiſher of that work, and therefore that is called the renewing of the Holy Spirit, *Titus* iii. 5. or rather the mind of man, which is a ſpirit, of a ſpiritual nature, immaterial and immortal, and is the ſeat of that renewing work of the Spirit of God; which ſhows, that the more noble part of man ſtands in need of renovation, being corrupted by ſin: and this renewing in it, deſigns not the firſt work of renovation; for theſe *Epheſians* had been renewed, and were made new creatures in Chriſt; but the gradual progreſs of it; and takes in, if not principally intends, a renewal, or an increaſe of ſpiritual light and knowledge, of life and ſtrength, of joy and comfort, and freſh ſupplies of grace, and a revival of the exerciſe of grace; and in ſhort, a renewal of ſpiritual youth, and a reſtoration of the ſaints to that ſtate and condition they were in, in times paſt: and the exhortation to this can only mean, that it becomes ſaints to be concerned for ſuch revivings and renewings, and to pray for them, as *David* did, *Pſal.* li. 10, for otherwiſe, this is as much the work of the Spirit of God, as renovation is at firſt; and he only who is ſent forth, and renews the face of the earth, year by year, can renew us daily in the ſpirit of our minds.

Ver. 24. *And that ye put on the new man*, &c.] Which ſome underſtand of Jeſus Chriſt, who is truly and really man, and a new or extraordinary one, *Jer.* xxxi. 22. and as ſuch is God's creature, and is made after his image, and which appears in his perfect holineſs and righteouſneſs; and the phraſe of putting on well agrees with him, *Rom.* xiii. 14. *Gal.* iii. 27. whoſe righteouſneſs is a garment, pure and ſpotleſs, and which is put on by the hand of faith: though rather by the *new man* is meant, the new nature, the new principle, or work of grace in the ſoul, elſewhere called a new creature; and it bears this name in oppoſition to, and diſtinction from the old man, or corruption of nature, before ſpoken of; and becauſe it is *de novo*, or anew, put into the hearts of men; it is not what was in them naturally; nor is it any old principle renewed, or wrought up in another and better form; but it is ſomething that is infuſed, that was never there before: and becauſe it is new in all its parts; ſuch who have it, have new hearts and new ſpirits given unto them; they have new eyes to ſee with, and new ears to hear with, and new hands to handle and work with, and new feet to walk with; and they live a new life and converſation; ſo the

Jews ſay of a man that truly repents of ſin, and does not return to it, that he is, איש חדש, *a new man*[d]*:* now to put on this new man, is not to make ourſelves new creatures; for this is not by the power of man, but by the Spirit of God; this is God's work, and not man's; 'tis he who made us at firſt, re-makes us, and not we ourſelves; beſides, theſe *Epheſians* the Apoſtle writes to, were already made new men, or new creatures; but to put on the new man, is to walk in our lives and converſations, agreeable to the new man, or work of grace upon the ſoul; as to put off the old man, reſpects the former converſation, or a not walking as formerly, and agreeable to the dictates of corrupt nature, ſo to put on the new man, is to walk according to the principles of grace and holineſs formed in the ſoul: and of this new man it is further ſaid, *which after God is created in righteouſneſs and true holineſs*; the principle of the ſoul is *created*, and therefore is not the effect of man's power, which cannot create; it is peculiar to God only to create; it is a creature, and therefore not to be truſted in, and depended on; for not grace, but the author of grace is the object of truſt: it is created *after God*; by his power, according to his mind and will, and after his image, and in his likeneſs; which greatly conſiſts *in righteouſneſs and true holineſs*; called *true*, in oppoſition to the typical and ceremonial holineſs of the *Jews*, and to the pretended holineſs of hypocrites; and denotes the truth and genuineneſs of the Spirit's work of ſanctification upon the heart; unleſs this ſhould rather be conſidered, as the effect of his grace upon the ſoul; for ſo the words may be rendered, *unto righteouſneſs and true holineſs*; for the new man is of ſuch a nature, and ſo formed, as to tend to acts of righteouſneſs and holineſs, and to engage men to the performance of them: ſome copies read, *in righteouſneſs, and holineſs, and truth*; and ſo the *Ethiopic* verſion ſeems to have read.

Ver. 25. *Wherefore putting away lying,* &c.] Which is one of the deeds of the old man, and a branch of the former converſation agreeable to him: a lye is a voluntary diſagreement of the mind and ſpeech, with a deſign to deceive; it is to ſpeak that which is falſe, contrary to truth ſhining in the mind; and it is ſpoken knowingly and willingly, and with a deſign to impoſe upon others: hence a man may ſpeak what is falſe, and not be a liar, if he does not know it to be ſo; and hence parables, fables, tropes, figures, hyperboles, *&c.* are not lyes, becauſe they are not uſed to deceive, but to illuſtrate and enforce truth: there are ſeveral ſorts of lyes; there is an officious lye, which is told for the ſervice of others, but this is not lawful; for evil is not to be done, that good may come of it; and a man may as well tell a lye to ſerve himſelf, as another; and any other ſin by the ſame rule may be allowed of, and tolerated; beſides, it is not lawful to lye for God, and therefore not for a creature: and there is a jocoſe lye; this ought not to be encouraged; all appearance of evil ſhould be abſtained from; every idle word muſt be accounted for; and hereby alſo an evil habit of lying may be acquired: and there is a lye which is in itſelf directly hurtful, and injurious; as is every falſe thing, ſaid with a deſign to deceive: and there are religious lyes, and liars; ſome practical ones, as thoſe who do not ſincerely worſhip God, and who are diſſolute in their lives, and their practice is not according to their profeſſion; and there are others who are guilty of doctrinal lyes, as antichriſt and his followers, who are given up to believe a lye; and ſuch who deny the deity, incarnation, Meſſiahſhip, work, office, grace, righteouſneſs, and ſacrifice of Chriſt; and who profeſs themſelves to be chriſtians, and are not: the ſprings and cauſes of lying, are a corrupt heart and the luſts of it, which prompt unto it; ſuch as covetouſneſs, malice, and the fear of men; and alſo a tempting devil, the father of lyes; and who is a lying ſpirit, in the hearts and mouths of men: this is a vice which ought to be put away, eſpecially by profeſſors of religion; the effects of it are ſad; it brings infamy, diſgrace, and diſcredit, upon particular perſons; and has brought judgments upon nations, where it has in general obtained; and has been the cauſe of corporal diſeaſes and death; and even makes men liable to the lake of fire and brimſtone, which is the ſecond death: it is a ſin exceeding ſinful; it is a breach of God's law; an aping of the devil; it is againſt the light of nature, and is deſtructive of civil ſociety, and very abominable in the ſight of God: wherefore *ſpeak every man truth with his neighbour*; both with reſpect to civil and religious affairs, in common converſation, in trade and buſineſs, and in all things relating to God and men: *for we are members one of another*; as men, are all of one blood, deſcended from one man, and ſo are related one to another; and as in civil ſociety, belong to one body politick; and in a religious ſenſe, members of the ſame myſtical body, the church; of which Chriſt, who is the truth itſelf, is the head; and therefore ſhould not attempt to deceive one another by lying, ſince there is ſuch a near relation, and cloſe union of one to another.

Ver. 26. *Be ye angry and ſin not,* &c.] There is anger which is not ſinful; for anger is found in God himſelf, in Jeſus Chriſt, in the holy angels, and in God's people: and a man may be ſaid to be angry and not ſin, when his anger ariſes from a true zeal for God and religion; when it is kindled not againſt perſons, but ſins; when a man is diſpleaſed with his own ſins, and with the ſins of others; with vice and immorality of every kind; with idolatry and idolatrous worſhip, and with all falſe doctrine; and alſo when it is carried on to anſwer good ends, as the good of thoſe with whom we are angry, the glory of God, and the promoting of the intereſt of Chriſt: and there is an anger which is ſinful; as when it is without a cauſe; when it exceeds due bounds; when it is not directed to a good end; when it is productive of bad effects, either in words or actions; and when it is ſoon raiſed, or long continues: the *Jews* have a like diſtinction of anger; they ſay[e], "there is an "anger and an anger; there is an anger which is "bleſſed above and below, and it is called bleſſed, "as it is ſaid *Gen.* xiv. 19. and there is an anger "which is curſed above and below, as it is ſaid "*Gen.* iii. 14. and xlix. 7." And theſe two ſorts are compared to *Ebal* and *Gerizzim*, from the one of which proceeded bleſſing, and from the other curſing: anger for the moſt part is not only ſinful, but it tends to ſin, and iſſues in it; hence that ſaying of the *Jews*, לא תרתח ולא תחטי, *be not angry, and thou wilt not ſin*[f]*:* the ſpring of it is a corrupt heart, it is ſtirred up by ſatan, encouraged by pride, and increaſed by grievous words and reproachful language: *let not the ſun go down upon your wrath*; there is an alluſion to *Deut.* xxiv. 12, 13, 14, 15. it ſeems to be a proverbial expreſſion; and the deſign of it is to ſhew, that anger ſhould not be continued; that it ſhould not laſt at fartheſt, more than a day; that when the heat of the day is over, the heat of anger ſhould be over likewiſe; and that we ſhould not ſleep with it, leſt it ſhould be cheriſhed and increaſed upon our pillows; and beſides, the time of the going down of the ſun, is the time of evening prayer, which may be greatly interrupted and hindered by anger. *R. Jonah*[g] has an expreſſion or two like to this; "let not the indignation of any one abide upon thee; and let not a night ſleep with thee, and anger be againſt any one:" it ſhould be conſidered, that as God is ſlow to anger, ſo he does not retain it for ever; and that to retain anger, is to gratify the devil; wherefore it follows,

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[d] Tzeror Hammor, fol. 156. 4.

[e] Zohar in Gen. fol. 104. 1.

[f] T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 29. 2.

Ver. 27. *Neither give place to the devil.*] Or *to the accuſer*, or *ſlanderer*; that is, to any adverſary, that takes delight in ſlandering and reproaching the ſaints; give ſuch no room, nor reaſon, to calumniate the doctrine and ways of Chriſt, through an unbecoming converſation, by lying and ſinful anger, or by other means; or rather the devil, the great accuſer of the brethren is meant; and the *Ethiopic* verſion renders it, *do not give way to ſatan*; which is done, when men indulge any luſt or corruption; and when they eaſily fall in with his ſuggeſtions and temptations; when they are off of their watch and guard; and when they do not reſiſt, but quietly yield unto him.

Ver. 28. *Let him that ſtole ſteal no more*, &c.] Stealing, or theft, is a fraudulent taking away of another man's goods, without the knowledge and will of the owner, for the ſake of gain; to which evil may be reduced, not making good, or not performing payments, all unjuſt contracts, detention of wages, unlawful uſury, unfaithfulneſs in any thing committed to truſt, adviſing, encouraging, and receiving from thieves: theft is a very great evil; it is a breach of the common law of nature, to do to others, as we would be done by; it is contrary to particular laws of God, and is againſt common juſtice, and ought not to be continued in, and is puniſhable by God and man; it ſprings from a corrupt heart, and often ariſes from poverty, idleneſs, ſloth, covetouſneſs, and prodigality: the remedy againſt it follows, *but rather let him labour, working with* his *hands the thing which is good*; labouring with diligence and induſtry, at any manufacture, trade, or buſineſs, which is honeſt, lawful, and of good report, is a proper antidote againſt theft; and ought to be preferred to ſuch a ſcandalous way of living, and to be conſtantly attended to: and that for this end among others, *that he may have to give to him that needeth*; and not take away another man's property; needy perſons are the objects of charity; and what is given to them, ſhould be a man's own; and what a man gets by his hand labour, he ſhould not prodigally ſpend, or covetouſly lay up, but ſhould chearfully diſtribute it to indigent perſons.

Ver. 29. *Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth*, &c.] As unſavoury ſpeech, fooliſh talking, light and frothy language, that which is filthy, unprofitable, noxious, and nauſeous, and all that is ſinful; ſuch as prophane oaths, curſes, and imprecations, unchaſte words, angry ones, proud, haughty, and arrogant expreſſions, lyes, perjury, *&c.* which may be called *corrupt*, becauſe ſuch communication ſprings from a corrupt heart; is an evidence of the corruption of it; the ſubject matter of it is corrupt; and it conveys corruption to others, it corrupts good manners; and is the cauſe of mens going down to the pit of corruption: wherefore a reſtraint ſhould be laid upon the lips of men; men have not a right to ſay what they pleaſe; good men will be cautious what they ſay, otherwiſe their religion is in vain; and conſcious of their own weakneſs, they will pray to God to ſet a watch before their mouth, and to keep the door of their lips, and not ſuffer any thing to come out, *but that which is good for the uſe of edifying*; or *for edification*, as the *Syriac* verſion renders it; the *Arabic* verſion reads, *for the edification of all*; that is, that hear; and the *Vulgate Latin* verſion and *Claromontane* exemplar, *for the edification of faith*; for the building up of ſaints on their moſt holy faith, and for the encouragement and increaſe of the grace of faith: in the *Greek* text it is literally, *for the edification of uſe*; for uſeful edification, or what is uſeful for edification; and is ſuited to the preſent want or opportunity, as the word is by ſome rendered: and that muſt be *good*, which anſwers ſuch an end; meaning not that the language ſhould be formally and grammatically good, though to ſpeak with propriety is uſeful and ſerviceable, and tends the more to inſtruction and edification; but that which is materially good, or the ſubject of it is good; that which is true, pure, pleaſant, and profitable: *that it may miniſter grace unto the hearers*; may be grateful and acceptable to them, or may miniſter the grace of God to them; that is, the doctrine of grace, the Goſpel of the grace of God; and be a means of conveying the principle of grace into the hearts of the hearers, and of drawing it forth into exerciſe where it is; and ſuch ſpeech or communication which ſprings from a gracious heart, and from a principle of grace in the heart, and is upon the ſubject of the grace of God, is moſt likely to be thus uſeful and edifying: agreeable to all this, are ſome ſayings of the *Jews*[h]; "ſays *R. Joſhua ben Levi*, for ever let not a man ſuffer any thing, מגונה, *that is filthy*, or unſeemly, to proceed out of his mouth; ſays *R. Iſhmael*, for ever let a man diſcourſe, בלשון נקייה, *in a pure language*;" not corrupt.

Ver. 30. *And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God*, &c.] Not a believer's own ſpirit, ſanctified by the Holy Ghoſt, which is grieved by ſin; nor the ſpirit of a good man, that hears our words and ſees our actions, and is diſpleaſed and troubled at them; but the third perſon in the Trinity: and this is ſaid of him by an anthropopathy, and ſuppoſes ſomething done that is offenſive to him; and he may be grieved, not only by unconverted perſons, by their ſtubborn reſiſtance and oppoſition to the Goſpel, and means of grace, and by their contempt of his perſon, office, and grace, but by believers themſelves, and who are here ſpoken to; and which may be done both by their words, lying, angry, and corrupt ones, before cautioned againſt, ver. 25, 26, 29. and by their actions, their behaviour towards God, their converſation in the world, and by their carriage to one another, which is ſuggeſted in the following verſe: alſo he may be grieved by their thoughts, their vain and ſinful thoughts, and that they are no better employed; and eſpecially when they entertain any undervaluing ones of Jeſus Chriſt, whoſe glorifier he is; and by the unbelief of their hearts, and by their unmindfulneſs of the things of the Spirit; and when they diſregard the rules, dictates, and advice of the Spirit, and make no uſe of him: and his being grieved appears, by his departure from them; which is to be perceived, by the darkneſs of their ſouls, the prevailings of corruption, the weakneſs of grace, and their backwardneſs to duty: and now there are many reaſons why he ſhould not be grieved; as becauſe he is God, and the author of the new birth, the implanter and applier of all grace, and the finiſher of it; becauſe he is the ſaints comforter, their advocate, helper, and ſtrengthner; and their conſtant companion, who dwells in them, and will remain in them, until death: and it follows, *whereby ye are ſealed unto the day of redemption*; of the ſealing work of the Spirit, ſee the note on ch. i. 13. By *the day of redemption* may be meant, either the day of death, when the ſaints have a deliverance from the incumbrance of the body; from their preſent ſtate of exile and baniſhment; from the body of ſin and death; from all ſorrows and afflictions; from the reproaches and perſecutions of men; from the temptations of ſatan; from doubts, fears, and unbelief; and from all fear of death, corporal, ſpiritual, and eternal: or the day of the reſurrection, when the body will be redeemed from mortality, corruption, weakneſs and diſhonour; when it will be refined and ſpiritualized, ſo that it will not ſtand in need of natural ſuſtenance; will be endowed with great agility, like that of ſpirits; and will be ſubject to the ſoul, or ſpirit, and will be ſuited to ſpiritual objects; to which may be added, the day of judgment, *Luke* xxi. 28. when Chriſt ſhall appear in glory, and his ſaints with him, and he will put them ſoul and body, into the poſſeſſion of everlaſting happineſs; which will conſiſt in the viſion of Chriſt, in conformity to him, and in that happy company and converſation that will then be enjoyed, and that delightful employment they will be taken up in: and now the ſaints being ſealed up by the Spirit unto this time, ſhews the perpetual indwelling of the Spirit in them; and that it will continue even after death, who will give them confidence at the day of judgment; and that it is the Spirit which works up the ſaints, and makes them meet for glory; and gives them the aſſurance of it, and therefore ſhould not be grieved.

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[g] Apud Capell. in Matt. v. 23.

[h] T. Bab. Peſachim, fol. 3. 1.

Ver. 31. *Let all bitterneſs,* &c.] Theſe words are a dehortation from ſeveral vices, good men are liable to, by which the Spirit of God is grieved: *bitterneſs* ſometimes deſigns the corruption of nature, which is the gall of bitterneſs, and bond of iniquity; and ſometimes actual ſins and tranſgreſſions, even thoſe of God's own people, which are evil and bitter things; and ſometimes heretical doctrines, which are roots of bitterneſs; and ſometimes ſinful words ſpoken by the ſaints, one againſt another; and here perhaps it ſignifies, the firſt offence taken in the mind, againſt any perſon, upon any account, which ſhould at once be put away, and not encouraged: *and wrath*; heat of ſpirit, which follows upon bitterneſs, or upon the ſpirit being embittered and offended; ſee *Ezek.* iii. 14. *And anger*; a ſinful one cautioned againſt before, ver. 26. *And clamour and evil ſpeaking*; ſuch as brawlings, contentions, contumelies, reproaches, ſlanders, &c. ariſing from an imbittered, wrathful, and angry diſpoſition: theſe ſhould all *be put away from you, with all malice*; being the deeds of the old man, unbecoming ſuch as are born again, and grieving to the Spirit of God.

Ver. 32. *And be ye kind one to another,* &c.] Good, affable, courteous; which appears in looks, words, and actions; by looking pleaſantly on each other, ſpeaking kindly to one another, and mutually doing every good office that lies in their way, and in their power: *tender hearted*; which is oppoſed to a being hard hearted to them that are in diſtreſs, and cloſe handed to the needy; to cruelty and ſeverity to ſuch who are ſubject to them, or have injured them; and to a rigid and cenſorious ſpirit to them that are fallen: *forgiving one another, even as God for Chriſt's ſake hath forgiven you*; whatever offences are given, or injuries done by the ſaints one to another, and ſo far as they are committed againſt them, they ſhould forgive, and ſhould pray to God for one another, that he would manifeſt his forgiveneſs of them, as committed againſt him; and this ſhould be done in like manner, as God forgives in Chriſt, and for his ſake; that is, fully and freely, and from their hearts; and ſo as to forget the offences, and not to upbraid them with them hereafter; yea, they ſhould forgive them before they repent, and without aſking for it, and that for Chriſt's ſake, and becauſe they are members of his: the *Complutenſian* edition reads, *even as Chriſt hath forgiven us*; the *Arabic* verſion alſo reads *us*, and ſo ſome copies: the words may be rendered, *giving freely to one another, even as God in Chriſt has given freely to you*; ſaints ſhould give freely to one another, for outward ſupport, where it is needful; and ſhould impart ſpiritual gifts and experience for inward comfort, where it is wanted, and as they have ability; and that from this conſideration, that all they have, whether in temporals or ſpirituals, is freely given by God in Chriſt, and for his ſake; with whom he freely gives them all things; in whom he has given them grace, and bleſſed them with all ſpiritual bleſſings; as peace, pardon, righteouſneſs, and eternal life.

CHAP. V.

THE Apoſtle in this chapter, goes on with his exhortations to the duties of religion; and ſuch in general, as relate to purity of life, and againſt uncleanneſs; and particularly treats of the duties of married perſons. And whereas in the latter part of the preceding chapter, he had exhorted to kindneſs and tenderneſs, and which he enforced by the example of God himſelf, he here repeats and urges it; and to it adds the example of Chriſt in loving his people, and giving himſelf for them a propitiatory ſacrifice, acceptable to God, ver. 1, 2. then follows a dehortation from ſeveral vices of the impure kind, ſome as being filthy actions, and unbecoming ſaints, and not to be named by them, and much leſs done, ver. 3. others, and ſuch as are vices of the tongue, as being inconvenient, and to which thankſgiving is preferred, ver. 4. and the former eſpecially, as excluding from having any part or portion in the kingdom of God and Chriſt, ver. 5. and all of them, as bringing the wrath of God upon men, ver. 6. wherefore profeſſors of religion ſhould avoid ſuch ſins, and not join with the children of diſobedience in the commiſſion of them, ver. 7. to which exhortation they ſhould the rather give heed, from the conſideration of their preſent ſtate, illuſtrated by their former one; who were once darkneſs, but now light, and therefore ſhould walk as enlightened perſons, ver. 8. and as having the Spirit of God, which is known by its fruits, ver. 9. ſtudying to know, approve of, and do that which is acceptable to God, ver. 10. and on the contrary, ſhould have no ſociety and communion with men in the commiſſion of ſins, the works of darkneſs, but ſhould reprove them for them, ver. 11. ſince the things done by them were ſuch, that it was a ſhame to relate them, and much more to commit them, ver. 12. and the rather this was incumbent upon them, ſince it was agreeable to their character, as being made light in the Lord; ſeeing it is the property of light, to make manifeſt and detect what is done in the dark, ver. 13. which is confirmed by a paſſage of ſcripture pertinently produced, to ſtir up drouſy and lifeleſs profeſſors, to the diſcharge of their duty, ver. 14. and from hence the Apoſtle enforces a wiſe and circumſpect walk and converſation, one part of which lies in redeeming time; and which ſhould be done for this reaſon, becauſe the preſent days were evil ones, ver. 15, 16. and that they might avoid a fooliſh walk, and order their converſation wiſely and aright, he ſuggeſts it would be proper to learn what was the will of the Lord, which is the rule of a chriſtian's walk and converſation, ver. 17. and whereas drunkenneſs is oftentimes the cauſe of all the above-mentioned vices, the Apoſtle cautions againſt that, and on the contrary adviſes them to be concerned for a larger meaſure of the Spirit of God; that under his influence they might ſing pſalms, hymns, and ſpiritual ſongs, in a melodious manner, and heartily to the Lord; and ſo expreſs their thankfulneſs to him, for all mercies from him; and not abuſe their mercies and themſelves, and ſpend their time in ſinging lewd and prophane ſongs, as drunkards often do, ver. 18, 19, 20. and hence he paſſes to the ſpecial duties of wives and huſbands, to which he premiſes a general exhortation to ſubmiſſion to one another, ver. 21. and begins with the ſubjection of wives to their huſbands, this being the will of the Lord, ver. 22. and beſides, the relation which the wife ſtands in to her huſband, being her head, requires it; and which is illuſtrated, by Chriſt being the head and ſaviour of his body, the church, ver. 23. and which is further urged and enforced, by the inſtance and example of the church's ſubjection to Chriſt, ver. 24. and next the Apoſtle exhorts huſbands to love their wives, in imitation of Chriſt, who has loved his church; and as an inſtance of it, has given himſelf to death for her; than which, there cannot be a greater inſtance of love, ver. 25. the ends of which were, the ſanctification and cleanſing of the church with his blood, by means of water and the word; and the preſentation of her to himſelf, all glorious and beautiful, ver. 26, 27. and then another argument is uſed, to engage the affections of huſbands to their wives, they being their own bodies; ſo that loving them, is loving themſelves, ver. 28. nor was it ever known, and it would be unnatural, for a man to hate his own fleſh, but on the contrary, he nouriſhes and cheriſhes it; and therefore ſeeing the wife is a man's own fleſh, he ought not to hate her, but to nouriſh and cheriſh her; and this is alſo enforced, by the example of Chriſt, who does not hate his church, but nouriſhes and cheriſhes her, ver. 29. the reaſon of which is, becauſe the ſaints which make up the church, are members of him, one fleſh and blood with him, ver. 30. which is the caſe of a man and his wife; and hence it is, that according to the original law of marriage, a man was to leave father and mother, and cleave to his wife, ver. 31. the whole of which is a myſtery, and typical of the marriage relation and union between Chriſt and his church, ver. 32. and the chapter is cloſed with a recapitulation of the mutual duties of huſband and wife, love in the one, and reverence in the other, ver. 33.

Ver. 1. *Be ye therefore followers of God*, &c.] Not in his works of infinite wiſdom and almighty power, which is impoſſible; but in acts of righteouſneſs and holineſs, and particularly in acts of mercy, goodneſs, and beneficence; as in forgiving injuries and offences, and in freely diſtributing to the neceſſities of the ſaints; as the connexion of the words with the preceding chapter, and the inſtance and example in the following verſe ſhow: and this ſhould be done by the ſaints, *as dear children*; and becauſe they are ſuch, by adopting grace; being predeſtinated unto the adoption of children, in the eternal purpoſe of God, and taken into that relation in the covenant of grace; and which is declared and made manifeſt in regeneration, and by faith in Chriſt Jeſus: and they are *dear*, or beloved children, being loved with an everlaſting and unchangeable love, and which is the ſpring and ſource of their adoption; and their being dear to him is ſeen, by what he is unto them, their covenant God and Father; and by what he has done for them, in giving his Son to them, and for them; as well as in chuſing, calling, and quickning them by his grace; and by the account he makes of them, as his jewels, his peculiar treaſure, and the apple of his eye; and by the pity and compaſſion he has for them, and the care he takes of them; and therefore it becomes them to imitate him; for who ſhould they imitate and follow after, but their Father, and eſpecially when they are ſo dear unto him?

Ver. 2. *And walk in love*, &c.] To God; to which the ſaints are obliged, not only by the law of God, which requires it, but by the goodneſs of God, and the diſcoveries of his love to them; and which ſhows itſelf, in fearing to offend him, in a conformity to his will, in making his glory the chief end of all actions, and in loving all that belong to him: and alſo the ſaints ſhould walk in love to Chriſt; who is to be loved fervently, conſtantly, in ſincerity, with all the heart, and above all creatures and things; becauſe of the lovelineſs of his perſon, the love he bears to them, and the things he has done for them, and the relations he ſtands in to them; and which is manifeſted, in keeping his commands, in delighting in his preſence, and in a concern at his abſence: and alſo they ſhould walk in love to one another, which is chiefly deſigned; which is Chriſt's new commandment, and is an evidence of regeneration; and without which, a profeſſion of religion is in vain: and to *walk* in love, is not merely to talk of it, but to exerciſe it; and to do all that is done for God, and Chriſt, and the ſaints, from a principle of love; and to advance, increaſe, and abound in it, and to go on and continue therein: the example to be copied after, and which carries in it an argument engaging to it is, *as Chriſt alſo hath loved us*; with a love exceeding great and ſtrong, which is wonderful, unconceivable, and unparalleled; and even as the Father has loved him; with a love that is free and ſovereign, unchangeable and everlaſting, of which he has given many inſtances; and a principal one is hereafter mentioned: the *as* here is a note of ſimilitude, not of equality; for it cannot be thought that the ſaints ſhould love God, or Chriſt, or one another, with a love equal to Chriſt's love to them, but only that theirs ſhould bear ſome likeneſs to his: the *Alexandrian* copy and *Ethiopic* verſion, inſtead of *us*, read *you: and hath given himſelf for us*; not the world, and the things of it, which are his; not men, nor angels, nor animals, but himſelf; he gave away his time, ſervice, and ſtrength; his name, fame, and reputation; all the comforts of life, and life itſelf; his whole human nature, ſoul and body, and that as in union with his divine perſon; and that not only for the good of his people, but in their room and ſtead; not for angels, nor for all men, but for his choſen ones, the church, his ſheep, his people, and when they were ſinners; in the following manner, and for the ſaid purpoſe: *an offering and a ſacrifice to God, for a ſweet ſmelling ſavour*; Chriſt was both prieſt and ſacrifice; he offered up himſelf a propitiatory ſacrifice for the ſins of his people, to expiate them, and make reconciliation and ſatiſfaction for them; and this he offered up to God, againſt whom they had ſinned, and whoſe juſtice muſt be ſatiſfied, who called him to this work, and engaged him in it; and which was well pleaſing to him, he ſmelled a ſweet ſavour of reſt in it, it being an unblemiſhed ſacrifice, and voluntarily offered up; and was compleat, full, and adequate to the demands of his juſtice; by it ſin was put away, finiſhed, and made an end of, and his people perfected for ever; ſee *Gen.* viii. 20, 21.

Ver. 3. *But fornication, and all uncleanneſs, or covetouſneſs*, &c.] The Apoſtle proceeds to dehort from ſeveral vices, which are unbecoming the dear children and followers of God; and which the love of Chriſt ſhould conſtrain them to avoid: the firſt of theſe, which is ſimple *fornication*, is the ſin which is committed between ſingle or unmarried perſons; and is contrary to the law of God, is a work of the fleſh, and is againſt a man's own body; it renders perſons unfit for church communion, brings many temporal calamities upon them, and expoſes them to divine wrath, and excludes from the kingdom of heaven, without repentance; and the reaſon why it is ſo often taken notice of is, becauſe it was very frequent among the *Gentiles*, and not thought criminal: *all uncleanneſs* takes in adultery, inceſt, ſodomy, and every unnatural luſt; and *covetouſneſs* ſeems not ſo much to deſign that ſin which is commonly ſo called, namely, an immoderate deſire after worldly things, as a greedy and inſatiable appetite after the above luſts: *let it not be once named among you, as becometh ſaints*; that is, neither one nor other of them; the ſenſe is, that they ſhould not be committed; ſo that there might be no occaſion to ſpeak of them, even tho' with abhorrence, as if there were no ſuch vices in being; and much leſs ſhould they be named with pleaſure, and pleaded for: for thus it becomes ſuch who are ſet apart by God the Father, whoſe ſins are expiated by the blood of Chriſt, and whoſe hearts are ſanctified by the Spirit of God; who profeſs the Goſpel of Chriſt, and have a place and a name in God's houſe, better than that of ſons and daughters.

Ver. 4. *Neither filthineſs, nor fooliſh talking, nor jeſting*, &c.] The former of theſe may include all filthy geſtures and behaviour, every indecent habit and attire, and all actions which have a tendency to excite luſt; and alſo all impure words, theſe diſcover an impure heart, and are the means of corrupting mens minds and manners; filthy ſpeaking, is a verbal commiſſion of the things that are ſpoken of; and it may include all impure ſongs and books, and the reading or hearing of them; this is what the *Jews* call, נבול פה, *filthineſs of the mouth*, obſcene words; which they ſay they don't uſe on feaſt-days, as the *Gentiles* do [1]: *fooliſh talking* does not ſo much deſign every imprudent thing that is ſaid, as that which is wicked, corrupt, unſavoury, light, vain, idle, and unprofitable; and takes in all fabulous ſtories, and mimicking of fools in words and geſtures: and *jeſting*, when it is with wantonneſs, and excites unto it, and is inconſiſtent with truth, and when the ſcriptures are abuſed by it, and not our neighbour's edification, but hurt is promoted by it, ought not to be uſed: *which are not convenient*; are diſagreeable to the will of God, and unſuitable to the characters of the ſaints, and are very unbecoming them to practiſe: *but rather giving of thanks*; inſtead of theſe, as the *Syriac* verſion renders it; it is much more ſuitable and becoming, to give thanks to God, for temporal and ſpiritual mercies, and to ſpeak thoſe things which are grateful to good men; this is to uſe the tongue to much better purpoſe, than in an obſcene, fooliſh, or jocoſe way: one of *Stephens*'s copies read, *but only giving of thanks*.

Ver. 5. *For this ye know*, &c.] Or *know ye this*, as the *Alexandrian* copy, and ſome others, and the *Vulgate Latin*, *Syriac*, and *Ethiopic* verſions read: *that no whoremonger, nor unclean perſon*; any one that is guilty of fornication, adultery, inceſt, *&c.* *Nor covetous man, who is an idolater*; as every man is, that indulges his luſts, the idols of his own heart; and who ſerves divers luſts and pleaſures, and gives up himſelf to work all uncleanneſs with greedineſs; never having his fill of ſin, but is ever craving and coveting it; as well as he who is immoderately deſirous of worldly things: the covetous man may be called an idolater, becauſe the idolater and he worſhip the ſame in ſubſtance, gold and ſilver, and braſs, or what is made of them; the covetous man admires his gold, lays it up, and will not make uſe of it, as if it was ſomething ſacred; and through his over love to mammon, whom he ſerves, he neglects the worſhip of God, and the good of his own ſoul, and puts his truſt and confidence in his riches: now no ſuch perſon *hath inheritance in the kingdom of Chriſt, and of God*; meaning either a Goſpel church-ſtate, in which perſons of ſuch characters, and living in ſuch ſins, ought not to be; or elſe the kingdom of heaven and of glory, which may be called the kingdom of Chriſt, becauſe it is in his hands, for his people; and it is his righteouſneſs that gives a title to it, and his Spirit and grace which make meet for it; and it is by his power ſaints are preſerved unto it; and he will put them into the poſſeſſion of it; and which will greatly conſiſt in the enjoyment of him: and this is alſo the kingdom of God, either of Chriſt who is God, or of God the Father; it being of his preparing and giving, and which he calls unto, and makes meet for; and this may be ſaid to be an inheritance, becauſe it is peculiar to children, the bequeſt of their heavenly Father, and is not purchaſed or acquired by them, but comes to them from the free donation of God, through the death of Chriſt; and to have an inheritance in it, is to have a right unto it, a meetneſs for it, and to be poſſeſſed of it: now the meaning of theſe words is, not that all who have been guilty of theſe ſins, ſhall be excluded the kingdom of God, but all ſuch who live and die in them, without the grace of God, and righteouſneſs of Chriſt.

Ver. 6. *Let no man deceive you with vain words*, &c.] With vain philoſophy, vain babblings, with fooliſh and filthy talking; ſuggeſting that theſe were not ſinful the Apoſtle had condemned; or that they were ſmall ſins, the frailties of human life; and that God would take no notice of them, and they might continue in them with impunity: ſuch deceivers there were, doctrinal and practical ones; who lay in wait to deceive men with ſuch vain pretences; and there was danger of being carried away with their error; for the heart is deceitful and deſperately wicked, and is eaſily taken in ſuch ſnares: wherefore the Apoſtle cautions againſt ſuch deceptions, adding *for becauſe of theſe things*; fornication, uncleanneſs, covetouſneſs, filthineſs, fooliſh talking, and jeſting: *the wrath of God cometh upon the children of diſobedience*; in temporal judgments, and in eternal ruin; there have been inſtances of it; it is uſually the caſe, and always if grace prevents not; this wrath comes down from above, and ſometimes ſuddenly, with great force and power, like a mighty flood; and there's no ſtanding up under it, and againſt it; and though it falls upon the children of diſobedience, ſuch as are diſobedient both to law and Goſpel, are unbelievers in Chriſt, and unperſuadable by his miniſters, are ſtubborn, obſtinate, and rebellious; yet it ſhows how much theſe things are diſpleaſing to God, and reſented by him, and therefore ſhould be avoided by his people; and the conſideration of their not being appointed to this wrath, though deſerving of it as others, and of their deliverance from it by Chriſt, ſhould engage them the more to abſtain from theſe ſins.

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[1] Jarchi in Pſal. lxxv. 3. Vid. Vajikra Rabba, §. 24. fol. 165. 3.

Ver. 7. *Be not ye therefore partakers with them.*] In their ſins, and acts of diſobedience; by keeping needleſs company with them; by abetting and encouraging ſinful practices; by conniving at them, and not reproving for them; or by committing the ſame things.

Ver. 8. *For ye were ſometimes darkneſs*, &c.] Not only dark, but darkneſs itſelf; exceeding blind, dark, and ignorant, reſpecting ſpiritual things; ſo the *Gentiles* were wont to be called by the *Jews*, חושך, *darkneſs*[k] itſelf; of this darkneſs, ſee the note on ch. iv. 18. *But now* are ye *light in the Lord*; either in, or by the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the light of men, from whom all ſpiritual light comes; or by the Lord the Spirit, by whom the eyes of their underſtandings were enlightened, to ſee the exceeding ſinfulneſs of ſin, in heart and life; the inſufficiency of their own righteouſneſs and moral virtues, to juſtify them before God; and the true and right way of righteouſneſs, life, and ſalvation by Chriſt; and to have ſome light into the ſeveral doctrines of the Goſpel, and even a glimpſe of the inviſible glories and realities of another world: and this light is ſo great, that they are not only ſaid to be enlightened, but to be light itſelf; and this they have not of, and from themſelves, but the Lord; and therefore ſhould *walk as children of light*; not in ſins, which are works of darkneſs, but in faith, truth, and holineſs.

Ver. 9. *For the fruit of the Spirit*, &c.] Either of the ſpirit of man, as renewed, or rather of the Spirit of God; the alluſion is to fruits of trees: the believer is a tree of righteouſneſs; Chriſt is his root; the Spirit is the ſap, which ſupports and nouriſhes; and good works under the influence of his grace, are the fruit: the *Alexandrian* copy, and ſome others, and the *Vulgate Latin*, *Syriac*, and *Ethiopic* verſions read, *the fruit of light*; which agrees with the preceding words: and the genuine fruit of internal grace, or light, is *in all goodneſs, and righteouſneſs, and truth*; the fruit of *goodneſs*, lies in ſympathizing with perſons in diſtreſs; in aſſiſting ſuch according to the abilities men have; in a readineſs to forgive offences and injuries; and in uſing meekneſs and candour in admoniſhing others: *righteouſneſs* lies in living in obedience to the law of God; in attending the worſhip and ſervice of him; and in diſcharging our duty to our fellow creatures; and this as goodneſs, is very imperfect, and not to be boaſted of, or truſted to; nor is ſalvation to be expected from it: *truth* is oppoſed to lying, to hypocriſy, to error and falſhood; and where the Spirit of God, and the work of grace are, there will be more or leſs an appearance of theſe fruits.

Ver. 10. *Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord.*] There are many things that are acceptable to God, as the perſon of Chriſt, his righteouſneſs, ſacrifice, ſufferings, death, and mediation; the perſons of his people, their ſervices, ſufferings, ſacrifices of prayer, and praiſe to him, and of bounty and liberality to the poor; their graces, and the exerciſe of them; and the actions of their lives and converſations, when they are becoming the Goſpel, are according to the will of God, and are done in faith, and are directed to his glory: and theſe things which are acceptable to God, as all the truths of the Goſpel, and duties of religion are, ſhould be proved, or tried by men; and in order to the trial of ſpiritual things, it is neceſſary that the mind be renewed, the underſtanding be enlightened, the ſpiritual ſenſes be in exerciſe, and all be under the influence and directions of the Spirit of God: and the trial is to be made, not according to human reaſon, which is corrupt and fallible, and beſides, there are ſome things in revelation above it; but according to the ſcriptures, which are the word of God, and the rule of faith and practice; and whither the Prophets, Chriſt, and his Apoſtles, always ſent men for the trial of divine things; and things being here tried, and found to be right, ſhould be approved of, valued, and eſteemed, cleaved to and held faſt.

Ver. 11. *And have no fellowſhip with the unfruitful works of darkneſs*, &c.] It is not ſaid with the workers of darkneſs, or with the men of the world, who are in darkneſs, and are darkneſs itſelf; to have fellowſhip with them in a civil way, or to dwell among them, is not prohibited; it is allowed of, and countenanced by the greateſt examples; and eſpecially it is lawful and right, when there is any proſpect of doing good to the ſouls of men; and even when natural right, relation, and neceſſity require it; and indeed, the contrary is impracticable: converſation with them in things ſinful and ſuperſtitious, ſhould be abſtained from; and when it tends to draw off the ſoul from Chriſt and his intereſt, and is infectious; and when weak ones are offended, and ſinners are hereby hardened and confirmed in ſin; and the name of God is blaſphemed, and the Goſpel is evil ſpoken of: but fellowſhip is not to be maintained *with the works of darkneſs*; which are ſins, ſo called, becauſe they are oppoſite to light; to the light of nature, to the light of the divine word, both law and Goſpel, to the light of grace, to God the fountain of light, and to Chriſt the light of the world; and becauſe the ſource and ſpring of them, are the original darkneſs of the mind, and ſatan the prince of darkneſs; and becauſe they are generally committed in the dark; and becauſe the effect and conſequence of them is utter darkneſs, and blackneſs of darkneſs: and theſe are *unfruitful*; they are of no profit and advantage, they bring forth no fruit, unleſs it be guilt, fear, ſhame, corruption, and death; wherefore no fellowſhip ſhould be had with them, by committing the ſame, by aſſiſting in them, by conſenting to them, by approving of them, by receiving any worldly advantage from them, and by winking and conniving at them: it is contrary to the character of ſaints, to have fellowſhip with ſuch, as the Apoſtle ſays, 2 *Cor.* vi. 14. where he gives the myſtical explanation of the law, in *Deut.* xxii. 10. agreeable to which, and to the paſſage here, is the ſenſe of a *Jewiſh* commentator [l]; who upon it obſerves, that that law "intimates, that a righteous man, "שלא ישתתף *ſhould have no fellowſhip* with a "wicked man;" this is to be unequally yoked, ſignified by the ox and the aſs plowing together: *but rather reprove them*; both by words and by deeds, by an agreeable life and converſation, which laſt ſeems to be the deſign of the Apoſtle here; becauſe it is not a brother, but ſuch who are in darkneſs, and live in works of darkneſs; yea, not ſinners, but ſins are to be reproved, which can be done no other way; nor are all ſaints proper to reprove verbally, nor are they qualified for it; but all ſhould, and may by facts; and the light diſcovers darkneſs, by its own ſplendor; and this appears, from the Apoſtle's reaſoning in the next words.

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[k] Tzeror Hammor, fol. 1, 2.

Ver. 12. *For it is a ſhame even to ſpeak of thoſe things*, &c.] This is a reaſon, why perſons ſhould walk as children of light; why they ſhould prove what is acceptable to God; why they ſhould have no fellowſhip with the unfruitful works of darkneſs; why the Apoſtle exhorts to reprove them, and yet does not expreſs what they are; and why they ſhould be reproved rather by deeds, than by words: and he tacitly intimates, that if it is a ſhame to ſpeak of thoſe ſins *which are done of them in ſecret*, it is much more ſhameful to commit them; the perſons the Apoſtle refers to, are the unconverted *Gentiles* in general; ſuch who have no inheritance in the kingdom of God, who deceive men with vain words, who are children of diſobedience, who are in darkneſs, and deſtitute of the Spirit; and it may be that reſpect may be had to the followers of *Simon Magus*, the *Gnoſticks*, and ſuch like impure profeſſors, by whom the vileſt things were done in ſecret; for ſins, works of darkneſs, will not bear the light; there is a conſciouſneſs in men of the evil of ſin, unleſs paſt feeling, and therefore they don't care that others ſhould know their crimes; and beſides, there is an imaginary pleaſure in committing ſin ſecretly; but then though theſe things are ſecret to men, they are not to God; nor will they always remain ſecrets, they will be brought to light, and therefore no fellowſhip ſhould be had with them; and eſpecially when they are of ſuch a ſcandalous nature, that it is a ſhame to mention the very names of them.

Ver. 13. *But all things that are reproved*, &c.] As all ſins ſhould be, by the miniſters of the Goſpel, and by other ſaints, and will be by God; either by his Spirit convincing of them, or by his judgments, and the letting out of his wrath and fury, either here or hereafter, for the puniſhment of them: *are made manifeſt by the light*; either by the ſaints, who are made light in the Lord, and detect and reprove the ſins of others; or by the word of the Lord, which diſcovers the heinouſneſs of ſins; or by Chriſt the light of the world, who as judge will bring to light the hidden things of darkneſs; or by the omniſcience of God, to whom darkneſs and light are both alike: *for whatſoever doth make manifeſt, is light*; this is true in things natural and ſpiritual, whether of the ſun in the firmament, or of Chriſt the ſun of righteouſneſs; or of the divine word, or of good men.

Ver. 14. *Wherefore he ſaith*, &c.] Either the man that is light in the Lord, who reproves the unfruitful works of darkneſs; or elſe the Holy Ghoſt by *Paul*, who here ſpeaks after the manner of the Prophets; or God, or the Spirit, or the ſcripture; ſee *James* iv. 6. but where is it ſaid? ſome think the Apoſtle refers to *Iſa.* ix. 2. others to *Iſa.* xxvi. 19. others to *Iſa.* lx. 1. ſome are of opinion the words are cited out of an *Apocryphal* book of *Jeremy*, or from ſome writing now loſt; and ſome have thought them to be a ſaying of Chriſt, that was freſh in memory: it may not be improper to obſerve what *Maimonides* ſays [m], that "the blowing of the trumpet in the beginning of the year, "had an intimation in it, as if it was ſaid, "עורי ישינים, *awake ye that ſleep*, from your "ſleep, and ye that ſlumber rouſe up from your "ſlumber, and ſearch into your actions, and return by repentance, and remember your creator;" whether any reference may be had to this, may be conſidered: the words are ſpoken not to unregenerate men, for though they are aſleep, and dead in ſin, and need awaking out of ſleep, and raiſing from the dead, yet they are never called upon to awake and ariſe of themſelves; ſuch a ſenſe would countenance the doctrine of man's free-will and power, againſt the preventing and efficacious grace of God; but to regenerate perſons, profeſſors of religion, to whom the epiſtle in general was written; and who are ſpoken to, and exhorted in the context: *awake thou that ſleepeſt*; the children of God are ſometimes aſleep, and need awaking; of the nature, cauſes, and ill conſequences of ſuch ſleeping, and of the methods by which they are ſometimes awaked out of it; ſee the note on *Rom.* xiii. 11. *And ariſe from the dead*; living ſaints are ſometimes among dead ſinners, and it becomes them to ariſe from among them, and quit their company, which is oftentimes the occaſion of their ſleepineſs: beſides, the company of dead ſinners is infectious and dangerous; it is a means of hardening in ſin, and of grieving of the people of God, who obſerve it; and by abſtaining from their company, a teſtimony is bore againſt ſin, and conviction is ſtruck into the minds of ſinners themſelves; to which add, that ſo to do, is well pleaſing to God, who promiſes to receive ſuch who come out from among them, and ſeparate themſelves from them: and it follows here as an encouragement, *and Chriſt ſhall give thee light*; for ſuch who are made light in the Lord, ſtand in need of more light; and by keeping cloſe to the word, ways, ordinances, and people of Chriſt, they may expect more light from Chriſt: they need freſh light into pardoning grace and mercy, through the blood of Chriſt; they want more to direct them in the way they ſhould go; and they are often without the light of God's countenance; and they may hope for light from Chriſt, ſince it is ſown in him, and promiſed through him; and he is given to be a light unto them, and he is the giver of it himſelf.

Ver. 15. *See then that ye walk circumſpectly*, &c.] The *Alexandrian* copy, and the *Vulgate Latin* verſion read, *ſee then, brethren*; it being an exhortation to the ſaints at *Epheſus*, upon the foregoing diſcourſe and citation, to take heed to their walk: the believer's walk is both inward and outward; his inward walk is by faith on Chriſt; his outward walk is his converſation among men: this ſuppoſes life; requires ſtrength and prudence; denotes continu-

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[l] Baal Hatturim in Deut. xxii. 10.

[m] Hilchot Teſhuba, c. 3 §. 4.

ance and progreſſion; with patience and courage: this walk ſhould be ſeen to, and watched over; a man ſhould ſee to it that he does walk, and to the way in which he walks, and how he walks; that he walks circumſpectly, with his eyes about him; that he walks with diligence, caution, accuracy, and exactneſs, to the uttermoſt of his ſtrength and power; and with wiſdom and prudence, looking well to his going: *not as fools, but as wiſe*; ſuch walk like fools, whoſe eyes are not upon their ways; who walk in their own ways, which are crooked, and ways of darkneſs, and lead to deſtruction; who walk after the fleſh, and naked, without the garments of a holy life and converſation; and with lamps, but no oil in them: and ſuch walk as wiſe men, who walk according to the rule of God's word, make Chriſt their pattern, have the Spirit for their guide, and walk as becomes the Goſpel of Chriſt; inoffenſively to all men, in wiſdom towards them that are without, and in love to them that are within; and as pilgrims and ſtrangers in this world, looking for a better country; and ſo as to promote the glory of God, and the good of ſouls.

Ver. 16. *Redeeming the time*, &c.] Or *buying time*; a like expreſſion is uſed in *Dan.* ii. 8. which we render, *gain time*; but in the *Chaldee* text it is, *buy time*; and ſo *Jacchiades* a *Jewiſh* commentator on the place renders it, העת הזאת אתם נמכרים, *ye buy this opportunity*; and the *Septuagint* verſion uſes the ſame phraſe the Apoſtle does here; but there it ſeems to ſignify a ſtudy to prolong time, to put off the buſineſs to another ſeaſon; but here taking time for a ſpace of time, it denotes a careful and diligent uſe of it, an improvement of it, to the beſt advantage; and ſhows that it is valuable and precious, and is not to be trifled with, and ſquandered away, and be loſt, as it may be; for it can neither be re-called nor prolonged: and taking it for an opportunity of doing good to ourſelves or others, it ſignifies that no opportunity of diſcharging our duty to God and man, of attending on the word and ordinances of the Goſpel, and to the private and publick exerciſes of religion, of gaining advantage to our own ſouls, or of gaining the ſouls of others, and of doing good either to the bodies or ſouls of men, ſhould be neglected; but even all riſques ſhould be run, and means uſed to enjoy it: in the *Syriac* and *Chaldee* languages, זבנא, *time*, comes from זְבַן, *to redeem*: the reaſon the Apoſtle gives for the redemption of time is, *becauſe the days are evil*; as ſuch are, in which iniquity abounds, and many wicked men live, and errors and hereſies prevail, and are days of affliction or perſecution; ſee *Gen.* xlvii. 9.

Ver. 17. *Wherefore be ye not unwiſe*, &c.] No one would be thought to be unwiſe, but ſuch are, who do not redeem time, and are ignorant of the will of the Lord; believers ſhould not act the unwiſe part, neither in their talk, nor in their walk and converſation, nor in their uſe of time: *but underſtanding what the will of the Lord is*; or *of God*, as read the *Alexandrian* copy, the *Vulgate Latin*, *Syriac*, and *Ethiopic* verſions: there is the ſecret will of God, which is the rule of all his proceedings; and is unknown to men, till facts make it appear; this is always fulfilled, and ſometimes by perſons who have no regard to his revealed will; to this the wills of the people of God ſhould be always reſigned: and there is his revealed will, which lies partly in the Goſpel; which declares it to be his will, that Chriſt ſhould work out the ſalvation of his people, which is what he came to do; that whoever believes in him, ſhall be ſaved; that all that are redeemed, ſhall be ſanctified; and that they ſhall perſevere to the end, and be glorified; and partly in the law, in the precepts and commands of it, which contain the good, perfect, and acceptable will of God: and the underſtanding of it is not a mere ſpeculative knowledge of it, but a practical one; when a man not only knows, but does the will of God, and his heart and actions agree with it; and this is to be done in faith, in virtue of grace and ſtrength received, with a view to the glory of God, having no dependance on what is done; and to the right underſtanding of it, ſo as to act according to it, as ſhould be, the word of God, and the illuminations, inſtructions, and grace of the Spirit, are neceſſary: the *Alexandrian* copy, *Syriac*, *Arabic*, and *Ethiopic* verſions, read the words as an exhortation, *underſtand ye the will of God*.

Ver. 18. *And be not drunk with wine, wherein is exceſs*, &c.] The ſin of drunkenneſs here dehorted from, is a cuſtom, or habit, of voluntary exceſſive drinking of any ſtrong liquor, whereby the mind is diſturbed, and deprived of the uſe of reaſon: though wine is only here mentioned, that being the uſual liquor drank in the eaſtern countries, yet the ſame holds good of any other ſtrong liquor, as of that; nor is drinking wine for neceſſary uſe prohibited, nor for honeſt delight and lawful pleaſure; but exceſſive drinking of it, and this voluntary, and with deſign, and on purpoſe; otherwiſe perſons may be overtaken and intoxicated, through ignorance of the ſtrength of the liquor, and their own weakneſs; and it is a cuſtom, or habit of exceſſive drinking, for not a ſingle act, but a ſeries of actions, a courſe of living in this ſin, denominates a man a drunkard; and generally ſpeaking, exceſſive drinking deprives perſons of the uſe of reaſon, though not always; and ſuch are criminal, who are mighty to drink wine, and ſtrong to mingle ſtrong drink; as are alſo ſuch, who though not guilty of this ſin themſelves, are the means of it in others: the ſin is very ſinful; it is one of the works of the fleſh; it is an abuſe of the creature; it is oppoſed to walking honeſtly; for it perſons are to be excluded from the communion of the church; and without the grace of true repentance, ſhall not inherit the kingdom of heaven: many things might be ſaid to diſſuade from it; it hurts the mind, memory, and judgment; deprives of reaſon, and ſets a man below a beaſt; it brings diſeaſes on the body, and waſtes the eſtate; it unfits for buſineſs and duty; it opens a door for every ſin, and expoſes to ſhame and danger; and therefore ſhould be carefully avoided, and eſpecially by profeſſors of religion: *but be filled with the Spirit*; that is, *with the Holy Spirit*, as read the *Vulgate Latin* and *Ethiopic* verſions; with the gifts and graces of the Spirit: ſome have been filled with them in an extraordinary way, as the Apoſtles on the day of *Pentecoſt*; and others in an ordinary manner, as common believers; and who may be ſaid to be filled with the Spirit, as with wine, or inſtead of it, or in oppoſition to it, when the love of God is ſhed abroad in their hearts by the Spirit, which is compared to wine, for its antiquity, purity, and refreſhing nature; and they are filled with it, who have a comfortable ſenſe of it, and a firm perſuaſion of intereſt in it, and are delighted with the views of it, and are as it were inebriated with it; and they are filled with the Spirit, in whom his grace is a well of living water, and out of whoſe belly flow rivers of it; and who have a large meaſure of ſpiritual peace and joy, expreſſed in the following manner.

Ver. 19. *Speaking to yourſelves in pſalms, and hymns, and ſpiritual ſongs,* &c.] By *pſalms* are meant, the pſalms of *David*, and others which compoſe the book that goes by that name, for other pſalms there are none; and by *hymns* we are to underſtand, not ſuch as are made by good men, without the inſpiration of the Spirit of God; ſince they are placed between pſalms and ſpiritual ſongs, made by men inſpired by the Holy Ghoſt; and are put upon a level with them, and to be ſung along with them, to the edification of churches; but theſe are only another name for the book of pſalms, the running title of which may as well be the book of hymns, as it is rendered by *Ainſworth*; and the pſalm which our Lord ſung with his diſciples after the ſupper, is called an hymn; and ſo are the pſalms in general called hymns, by *Philo* the *Jew*[n]; and ſongs and hymns by *Joſephus*[o]; and, שירות ותושבחות, *ſongs and praiſes*, or *hymns*, in the *Talmud*[p]: and by *ſpiritual ſongs* are meant, the ſame pſalms of *David*, *Aſaph*, *&c.* and the titles of many of them are ſongs, and ſometimes a pſalm and ſong, and ſong and pſalm, a ſong of degrees; together with all other ſcriptural ſongs, written by inſpired men; and which are called *ſpiritual*, becauſe they are endited by the Spirit of God, conſiſt of ſpiritual matter, and are deſigned for ſpiritual edification; and are oppoſed to all profane, looſe, and wanton ſongs: theſe three words anſwer to, שירים תהלים מזמורים, the ſeveral titles of *David*'s pſalms; from whence it ſeems to be the intention of the Apoſtle, that theſe ſhould be ſung in Goſpel churches; for ſo he explains ſpeaking to themſelves in them, in the next clauſe: *ſinging and making melody in your hearts to the Lord*; ſinging, as it is a diſtinct thing from prayer, ſo from giving of thanks, which is mentioned in the next verſe as another duty; it is not a mental praiſing of God, for it is called ſpeaking, and teaching, and admoniſhing, but it is a praiſing of God with the modulation of the voice; and is rightly performed, when the heart and voice agree; when there is a melody in the heart, as well as in the tongue; for ſinging and making melody in the heart, is ſinging with, or from the heart, or heartily; or as elſewhere, *with grace*, and which the *Alexandrian* copy reads here; that is, either with gratitude and thankfulneſs, or with grace in exerciſe; and the end in view, ſhould be the glory of God.

Ver. 20. *Giving thanks always for all things,* &c.] For things temporal, for our beings, and the preſervation of them, and for all the mercies of life; for things ſpiritual, for Chriſt, and for all ſpiritual bleſſings in him; for electing, redeeming, ſanctifying, adopting, pardoning, and juſtifying grace; for a meetneſs for heaven, and for eternal life itſelf; for the Goſpel, promiſes, truths, ordinances, and miniſtry; and this is to be done always, at all times, in times of adverſity, deſertion, temptation, affliction, and perſecution, as well as in proſperity: *unto God, and the Father*; to God who is, and as he is the Father of mercies, and of all creatures; and as he is the Father of Chriſt, and of all the elect in him: *in the name of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*; for all the mercies of God's people, both temporal and ſpiritual, come through him, and for his ſake; and thankſgivings for them, are only acceptable to God as they are offered up by him; nor is there any other way of bringing them to God, but through him: this duty, as it ſtands connected with the former, ſhows that praiſe and thankſgiving are the principal ſubject matter of pſalms, hymns, and ſpiritual ſongs, to be ſung; and that the manner of ſinging, is with thankſgiving; and that the end of it, is to give thanks to God.

Ver. 21. *Submitting yourſelves one to another,* &c.] Which may be underſtood either in a political ſenſe, of giving honour, obedience, and tribute, to civil magiſtrates, ſince they are ſet up by God for the good of men, and 'tis for the credit of religion, for the ſaints to ſubmit to them; or in an œconomical ſenſe, thus the wife ſhould be ſubject to the huſband, children to their parents, and ſervants to their maſters, which ſeveral things are afterwards inſiſted on, as explanative of this rule; or in an eccleſiaſtic ſenſe, ſo the *Ethiopic* verſion renders it, *ſubject yourſelves to your brethren:* thus members of churches ſhould be ſubject to their paſtors, not in the ſame ſenſe as they are to Chriſt, the head, nor are they obliged to believe or do every thing they ſay, right or wrong; yet honour and eſteem are due to them, and ſubmiſſion and obedience ſhould be yielded to their doctrines, precepts, and exhortations, when they are agreeable to the word of God; ſince God has ſet them in the higheſt place in the church, called them to the higheſt ſervice, and moſt honourable work, and beſtowed on them the greateſt gifts; the younger members ſhould alſo ſubmit to the elder, and the minority to the majority; one member ſhould ſubmit to another, to the ſuperior judgment of another, and to the weakneſs of another, and to the admonitions of others, and ſo as to perform all offices of love: and the manner in which this duty is to be performed, is *in the fear of God*; which may be conſidered as the moving cauſe of ſubmiſſion, or as the rule of it; ſubmiſſion ſhould be on account of the fear of God, and ſo far as is conſiſtent with it; and indeed, the fear of God is that which ſhould influence and engage to every duty; and which ſhould be before our eyes, and in exerciſe in our hearts, in all concerns, civil and religious: the *Alexandrian* copy and ſome others, the *Complutenſian* edition, and the *Vulgate Latin* and *Ethiopic* verſions read, *in the fear of Chriſt*; who is the head of the church, and king of ſaints, and as ſuch to be feared and reverenced; and for his ſake, there ſhould be a ſubmiſſion to one another; the *Syriac* verſion reads, *in the love of Chriſt*, which ſhould conſtrain the ſaints to this duty.

Ver. 22. *Wives, ſubmit yourſelves unto your own huſbands,* &c.] This is an inſtance, explaining the above general rule; which ſubjection lies in honour and reverence, ver. 33. and in obedience; they ſhould think well of their huſbands, ſpeak becomingly to them, and reſpectfully of them; the wife ſhould take care of the family, and family affairs, according to the huſband's will; ſhould imitate him in what is good, and bear with that which is not ſo agreeable; ſhe ſhould not curiouſly enquire into his buſineſs, but leave the management of it to him; ſhe ſhould help and aſſiſt in caring and providing for the family; and ſhould abide with him in proſperity and adverſity, and do nothing without his will and conſent: and this ſubjection is only to her own huſband; not to any other man, nor to her children, nor to her ſervants, or any brought into her houſe; and this conſideration ſhould render the ſubjection more eaſy, voluntary, and chearful: and which is but reaſonable that it ſhould be; as may be gathered from the time, matter, and end of the woman's creation, ſhe was made after him, out of him, and for him; and from her fall, and being firſt in the tranſgreſſion; and from her being the weaker and inferior ſex; and from the profitableneſs and comelineſs of it; and the credit of religion requires it, that ſo the word of God be not blaſphemed: wherefore it follows, *as unto the Lord*; that is, either as the Lord has commanded, that ſo it ſhould be, ſhewing a regard to his precepts; or as in the ſight of the Lord, and ſo yielding it ſincerely and heartily; or in things pertaining to the Lord, which are conſiſtent with the law of the Lord, and the Goſpel of Chriſt; and in like manner as the church is ſubject to Chriſt, her Lord and huſband, as follows.

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[n] De mutat. nomin. p. 1062. & alibi.

[o] Antiqu. l. 7. c. 12, §. 3.

[p] T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 94. 1.

Ver. 23. *For the huſband is the head of the wife*, &c.] See the note on 1 *Cor.* xi. 3. *even as Chriſt is the head of the church*; all the elect; ſee the note on ch. i. 22. *And he is the Saviour of the body*; not *of our body*, as the *Ethiopic* verſion reads, of that part of man, which is called the body; though that indeed is redeemed and ſaved by Chriſt, as well as the ſoul; but *of his body*, as the *Vulgate Latin* verſion reads; that is, of the church, which is his body; ſee ch. i. 23. of which he is the Saviour; he provides every thing for it, preſerves and protects it, and has wrought out ſalvation for it, which every member of it partakes of.

Ver. 24. *Therefore as the church is ſubject unto Chriſt*, &c.] Her head, being wholly dependant upon him, and entirely reſigned to him, and receiving all from him; from whom alone is all her expectation of proviſion, protection, comfort, and happineſs; wherefore ſhe has reſpect to all his commands, and eſteems all his precepts concerning all things to be right; and yields a chearful, voluntary, ſincere, and hearty obedience to them; ariſing from a principle of love to him, and joined with honour, fear, and reverence of him: *ſo let the wives* be *to their own huſbands in every thing*; political, domeſtic, and eccleſiaſtic; that is conſiſtent with the laws of God, and the Goſpel of Chriſt.

Ver. 25. *Huſbands, love your wives*, &c.] Which conſiſts in a ſtrong and cordial affection for them; in a real delight and pleaſure in them; in ſhowing reſpect, and doing honour to them; in ſeeking their contentment, ſatisfaction, and pleaſure; in a quiet, conſtant, and comfortable dwelling with them; in providing all things neceſſary for them; in protecting them from all injuries and abuſes; in concealing their faults, and covering their infirmities; in entertaining the beſt opinion of their perſons and actions; and in endeavouring to promote their ſpiritual good and welfare: this love ought to be hearty and ſincere, and not feigned and ſelfiſh; it ſhould be ſhown in private, as well as in public; it ſhould be chaſte and ſingle, conſtant and perpetual; it ſhould exceed that which is bore to neighbours, or even to parents, and ſhould be equal to that a man bears to himſelf; though not ſo as to hinder, and break in upon love to God and Chriſt: many are the reaſons why huſbands ſhould love their wives; they are given to be helps unto them; they are companions of them; they are wives of covenant; they are their own wives, yea, their own bodies, their own fleſh, nay, as themſelves; they are their image and their glory; and eſpecially the example of Chriſt in his love to his church and people, ſhould engage to it: *even as Chriſt alſo loved the church, and gave himſelf for it*; ſee the note on ver. 2. the *Syriac* and *Ethiopic* verſions read, *his own church*; his bride and ſpouſe, whom he betrothed to himſelf from all eternity, the Father having given her to him; and is no other than the church of the firſt-born, whoſe names are written in heaven, even all the elect of God.

Ver. 26. *That he might ſanctify and cleanſe it*, &c.] Being defiled, both with original ſin and actual tranſgreſſions; for God's elect, whom Chriſt loved and eſpouſed from everlaſting, fell in *Adam* with the reſt of mankind; and in their nature ſtate, live in ſin as others do; and ſo are under the guilt, and in the pollution of it as others be: Chriſt gave himſelf for them, that he might deliver them out of this ſtate; he gave himſelf a ſacrifice for them, that he might expiate their ſins, and make atonement and ſatisfaction for them; he ſhed his blood that he might cleanſe them from them; and he wrought out a righteouſneſs that he might juſtify them from all their iniquities; and which being put upon them, makes them to appear pure and ſpotleſs in the ſight of divine juſtice; for this ſanctifying and cleanſing, does not ſo much refer to the inward work of ſanctification of the Spirit, though that is a fruit and effect of the death of Chriſt, and is brought about by the following means, as to the juſtification of them by the blood and righteouſneſs of Chriſt: which is ſaid to be, *with the waſhing of water*; not baptiſm, which is never expreſſed by waſhing; nor does it purify or cleanſe from ſin; nor is it the means of ſanctification and regeneration, which ought to be before it; nor the grace of the Spirit, though that is often compared to water, and regeneration and ſanctification are owing to it; yet the ſaints are not ſo cleanſed from ſin by it, as to be without ſpot or wrinkle; but the blood of Chriſt, which is the fountain to waſh in, and which cleanſes from all ſin: *by the word*; not the form of words in baptiſm; but either the Goſpel, which brings the good news and glad tidings of peace, pardon, atonement, and juſtification by Chriſt; or the ſentence of juſtification pronounced upon the conſcience by him; ſee *John* xv. 2.

Ver. 27. *That he might preſent it to himſelf a glorious church*, &c.] There is a preſentation of the church by Chriſt to his Father, at his death, when he gathered the elect together in one, brought them nigh, and reconciled them to God, and preſented them to him holy, unblameable, and unreproveable in his ſight; and now in heaven, where he repreſents their perſons, appears and makes interceſſion for them; and at the laſt day, when he will deliver the whole number of them compleat and perfect, in conſequence of his ſuretyſhip engagements: but this is a preſentation of them to himſelf; and is either in this life, when they are brought to him in raiment of needle work, cloathed with his righteouſneſs, and waſhed in his blood, and he beholds them all fair, and without ſpot; or at the firſt reſurrection, and during the thouſand years reign; as well as in the ultimate glory, when the open marriage of the Lamb will be come, when his bride will be arrayed with fine linnen, clean and white; and have the glory of God upon her, and appear in glory with Chriſt, and will be a glorious church indeed: *not having ſpot, or wrinkle, or any ſuch thing*; the bodies of the ſaints will be like to Chriſt's glorious body, and will ſhine as the ſun in the kingdom of their Father; and in their ſouls, they will be compleatly conformed to the image of Chriſt, and enjoy uninterrupted communion with him, and have perfect knowledge of him; they will be always in his preſence, and he will take unſpeakable delight and complacency in them, which his preſentation of them to himſelf is expreſſive of: the church will then be free from all ſpots and blemiſhes; from all hypocrites and formal profeſſors; from all hereſies and hereticks; from all declenſions and infirmities, and from all ſin and iniquity: the alluſion ſeems to be to the cuſtoms and practices of the *Jews*, in their eſpouſals: if a man eſpouſed a woman on condition that ſhe had no ſpots in her, and afterwards ſpots were found in her, ſhe was not eſpouſed; for ſpots or blemiſhes, as in prieſts, ſo in women, render them unfit; as the one for ſervice, ſo the other for marriage; and they reckon up eight ſeveral ſpots or blemiſhes, for which they may be rejected[q]: but Chriſt's church has no ſpots nor blemiſhes, nor any thing like them; and will never be rejected by him, but will be always pleaſing in his ſight: *but that it ſhould be holy and without blemiſh*; as it is, being juſtified by his righteouſneſs, waſhed in his blood, and ſanctified by his Spirit.

Ver. 28. *So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies*, &c.] It is a common ſaying with the *Jews*, that a man's wife is, כגופו, *as his own body*[r]; and it is one of the precepts of their wiſe men, that a man ſhould honour his wife more than his body, ואהבה כגופו, *and love her as his body*[s]; for as they alſo ſay, they are but one body[t]: the Apoſtle ſeems to ſpeak in the language of his countrymen; however his doctrine and theirs agree in this point: wherefore *he that loveth his wife, loveth himſelf*; becauſe ſhe is one body and fleſh with him.

Ver. 29. *For no man ever yet hated his own fleſh*, &c.] This is unnatural, contrary to the firſt principles of nature; ſee *Iſa.* lviii. 7. which the[u] *Jews* underſtand of one that is near akin, and there is none nearer than a wife: *but nouriſheth and cheriſheth it*; feeds and clothes it: *even as the Lord the church*; who never hated her, but nouriſhes and cheriſhes her: Chriſt *never hated* his church and people; for his love is not only a love of benevolence, but of complacency and delight: there is a difference between anger and hatred, Chriſt may be angry with them, but not hate them; and there is a difference between perſons and actions, Chriſt may hate their actions, but not their perſons; and there is a difference between deſert and fact, they may be deſerving of his wrath and hatred, but are not the objects of it in fact; and there is a difference between what is real, and what is imaginary, they may imagine themſelves to be hated by him, when they are not; and there is a difference between hatred, and a non-diſcovery of love, Chriſt may not manifeſt his love, and yet not hate; as he never does his own people, for his love is everlaſting and unchangeable: and he *nouriſhes* them, as a Father his child, as a ſhepherd his flock, and as an huſband his wife; he feeds them with that which is nouriſhing, with himſelf the bread of life, with his covenant and promiſes, with the Goſpel and the doctrines of it, and with his love and grace; and by his Spirit, miniſters, word, and ordinances: and he *cheriſhes* them, he grants them near and intimate communion with himſelf, than which nothing is more deſireable by them, or joyful to them; nor is there any thing that more revives and encourages faith, hope, and love; he cloaths them ſuitable to their dignity and character, as his ſpouſe and bride; and with which they are well contented, and in which they look exceeding comely in his ſight: theſe phraſes are expreſſive of the whole care Chriſt takes of his church, in furniſhing her with every thing pertaining to life and godlineſs; for her comfort and happineſs in this world, and that to come: inſtead of the *Lord*, the *Alexandrian* copy, and ſome others, the *Vulgate Latin*, *Syriac*, and *Ethiopic* verſions read, *Chriſt*; and the *Arabic* verſion reads, *as the Lord loves the church*.

Ver. 30. *For we are members of his body*, &c.] Not of his natural body, for this would make Chriſt's human nature monſtrous; Chriſt as man, is of our fleſh and of our bones, or a partaker of the ſame fleſh and blood with us; or otherwiſe, his incarnation would have been of no ſervice to us; and had our human nature been from Chriſt, it would not have been corrupted; but our bodies, fleſh, and bones, are from the firſt, and not the ſecond *Adam*, and ſo corrupt and ſinful; Chriſt indeed as God, is the former of all human nature, and as man was ſet up in God's thoughts as the pattern of it; but the Apoſtle is here ſpeaking of the ſaints, not as men, but as chriſtians, as new creatures in Chriſt, and of what is peculiar to them; and therefore this muſt be underſtood of Chriſt's myſtical body the church; which is his by the Father's gift, and his own purchaſe; and of which he is the head, and which is united to him; now of this ſaints are members; ſee *Rom.* xii. 5. 1 *Cor.* xii. 12, 18, 27. *Of his fleſh and of his bones*; for ſo the church may be called, his own fleſh, his fleſh and bones, on account of the marriage relation ſhe ſtands in to him, and that ſpiritual union there is between them, which theſe phraſes are expreſſive of; and which the near relation of man and wife, is an emblem of: theſe words are wanting in the *Alexandrian* copy, and in the *Ethiopic* verſion.

Ver. 31. *For this cauſe ſhall a man leave his father and mother*, &c.] Theſe words contain the law of marriage, and are cited from *Gen.* ii. 24. and declare what ought to be, and are a prophecy of what ſhould be; and are obſerved againſt polygamy, and to ſtir up mutual affection; ſee the note on *Matt.* xix. 5.

Ver. 32. *This is a great myſtery*, &c.] It has ſomething myſterious in it; it is a figure and emblem of the myſterious union between Chriſt and his people: for ſo it follows, *but I ſpeak concerning Chriſt and the church*; or mention this law and inſtitution of marriage, with reſpect to them; for the leaving of father and mother, prefigured Chriſt's coming forth from the Father, and coming into this world in human nature, and his diſregard to his earthly parents, in compariſon of his people, and his ſervice for them; the man cleaving to the wife, very aptly expreſſes the ſtrong affection of Chriſt to his church, and the near communion there is between them; and their being one fleſh denotes the union of them; and indeed, the marriage of *Adam* and *Eve*, was a type of Chriſt and his church; for in this the firſt *Adam* was a figure of him that was to come, as well as in being a federal head to his poſterity: *Adam* was before *Eve*, ſo Chriſt was before his church; God thought it not proper that man ſhould be alone, ſo neither Chriſt, but that he ſhould have ſome fellows and companions with him: the formation of *Eve* from *Adam*, was typical of the church's production from Chriſt; ſhe was made of him while he was aſleep, which ſleep was from the Lord, and it was not an ordinary one; which may reſemble the ſufferings and death of Chriſt, which were from the Lord, and were not common; and which are the redemption of his church and people; and which ſecure their comfort and happineſs, and well-being: ſhe was taken out of his ſide, and built up a woman of one of his ribs; both the juſtification and ſanctification of the church are from Chriſt, from the water and the blood which iſſued out of his ſide, when on the croſs: the bringing and preſentation of *Eve* to *Adam*, has its myſtery; it was God that brought her to him; and ſhe was the ſame that was made out of him; and to the ſame *Adam* was ſhe brought of whoſe rib ſhe was made, and that not againſt her will: ſo it is God that draws ſouls to Chriſt, and eſpouſes them to him, even the ſame that he has choſen in him, and Chriſt has redeemed by his blood; and to the ſame are they brought, who was wounded for their tranſgreſſions, and bruiſed for their ſins; and they are made willing in the day of his power upon them, to come and give themſelves to him. *Adam*'s conſent and acknowledgment of *Eve* to be his wife, ſhadow forth Chriſt's hearty reception and acknowledgment of the ſaints, as being of him, and his, when they are brought unto him under the influences of his grace and Spirit.

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[q] Miſn. Cetubot, c. 7. §. 7, 8. Maimon. & Bartenora in ib.

[r] T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 24. 1. & Becorot, fol. 35. 2. Maimon. Hilchot Becorot, c. 2. §. 17. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 18. 2.

[s] T. Bab. Yebamot, fol 62. 2. & Sanhedrin, fol. 76. 2. Derech Eretz, fol. 17. 4. Maimon. Hilchot Iſhot, c. 15. §. 19.

[t] Tzeror Hammor, fol. 6. 3.

[u] Jarchi in loc. & R. Sol. Urbin. in Ohel Moed, fol. 85. 1.

Ver. 33. *Nevertheleſs, let every one of you in particular*, &c.] The Apoſtle returns to his former ſubject, and recapitulates the mutual duties of huſband and wife, after he had enforced them from the inſtance and example of Chriſt, and his church; and would have every married perſon in particular take the directions and inſtructions given, to themſelves: as that the huſband *ſo love his wife even as himſelf*; ſince they two are one fleſh: *and the wife* ſee *that ſhe reverence* her *huſband*; ſince he leaves father and mother for her, and is the head of her; ſee the note on ver. 22.

CHAP. VI.

IN this chapter the Apoſtle goes on with his exhortations to relative and domeſtic duties, and conſiders thoſe of children and parents, and of ſervants and maſters; and next he exhorts the ſaints in general to conſtancy and perſeverance in the exerciſe of grace, and the performance of duty in the ſtrength of Chriſt, and with the uſe of the armour of God deſcribed by him; intreats them to pray for him; gives the reaſons of ſending *Tychicus*, who brought them this Epiſtle, and cloſes it with his apoſtolical ſalutation. He begins with the duties of children to their parents, which are ſubmiſſion and obedience to them, honour, fear, and reverence of them; the arguments engaging thereunto are taken from the light of nature and reaſon, from the command of God, and the promiſe annexed to it, ver. 1, 2, 3. Then follow the duties of fathers to their children, who are exhorted not to uſe them with too much rigor, and ſo provoke them to wrath, but to bring them up in a religious manner, that they may ſerve the Lord, ver. 4. Next he obſerves the duties of ſervants to their maſters, which are ſubjection and obedience, which ſhould be done with reverence of them, with ſimplicity of heart, as unto Chriſt, not with eye-ſervice, as men-pleaſers, but with the heart, and with good-will, as doing the will of God, and as if it was to the Lord, and not men; to which they are encouraged by a promiſe of reward which is given without reſpect to bond or free, ver. 5, 6, 7, 8. And maſters, they are exhorted to do what is right and juſt to their ſervants, and not terrify them with menaces; to which they are moved by the conſideration of their having a maſter in heaven, who is no reſpecter of perſons, ver. 9. From hence the Apoſtle paſſes to a general exhortation to the ſaints to behave with firmneſs and conſtancy of mind, tho' they had many enemies, and theſe mighty and powerful, and an over-match for them; relying on the power and ſtrength of Chriſt, and making uſe of the whole armour of God, which he adviſes them to take, that they might ſtand and withſtand in the worſt of times, ver. 10, 11, 12, 13. the ſeveral parts of which he enumerates, as the girdle of truth, the breaſt-plate of righteouſneſs, the ſhoes of the Goſpel of peace, the ſhield of faith, whereby the fiery darts of ſatan are quenched, the helmet of ſalvation, the ſword of the Spirit the word of God, and ſpiritual prayer of every ſort for all ſaints, attended with watching and perſeverance, ver. 14, 15, 16, 17, 18. which laſt part of the ſpiritual armour being mentioned, leads on the Apoſtle to intreat the *Epheſians* to pray for him, that he might freely and boldly preach the Goſpel; which he commends from the myſterious nature and ſubject of it, from his character as an embaſſador for it, or for Chriſt, the ſum and ſubſtance of it, and from his being in bonds for it; which ſhowed how great an eſteem he had of it, and how heartily concerned he was to preach it without fear, ver. 19, 20. And then adds, that the reaſons of his ſending *Tychicus*, whom he deſcribes by his relation to him as a brother, and his affection for him, and by his office as a miniſter, and his faithfulneſs in it, were; that they might be acquainted with his circumſtances, in what ſtate and condition he was, both with reſpect to things temporal and ſpiritual, and that their hearts might be comforted by him, ver. 21, 22. And the Epiſtle is concluded with the Apoſtle's ſalutation; and the perſons ſaluted are the brethren of this church, and all that love Chriſt Jeſus ſincerely; and the bleſſings wiſhed for are peace, love, with faith and grace; the perſons from whom they are deſired are God the Father, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, ver. 23, 24.

Ver. 1. *Children obey your parents in the Lord*, &c.] The perſons whoſe duty this is, *children*, are ſuch of every ſex, male and female, and of every age, and of every ſtate and condition; and though the true, legitimate, and immediate offspring of men may be chiefly reſpected, yet not excluſive of ſpurious children, and adopted ones, and of children in-law; and the perſons to whom obedience from them is due, are not only real and immediate parents, both father and mother, but ſuch who are in the room of parents, as ſtep-fathers, ſtep-mothers, guardians, nurſes, *&c.* and all who are in the aſcending line, as grand-fathers, grand-mothers, *&c.* to theſe, children ſhould be ſubject and obedient in all things lawful, juſt and good; in every thing that is not ſinful and unlawful, by the word of God; and in things indifferent, as much as in them lies, and even in things which are difficult to perform: and this obedience ſhould be hearty and ſincere, and not merely verbal, and in ſhow and appearance, nor mercenary; and ſhould be joined with gratitude and thankfulneſs for paſt favours: and it ſhould be *in the Lord*; which may be conſidered either as a limitation of the obedience, that it ſhould be in things that are agreeable to the mind and will of the Lord; or as an argument to it, becauſe it is the command of the Lord, and is well-pleaſing in his ſight, and makes for his glory, and therefore ſhould be done for his ſake: *for this is right*; it appears to be right by the light of nature, by which the very heathens have taught it; and it is equitable from reaſon that ſo it ſhould be; and it is juſt by the law of God, which commands nothing but what is holy, juſt, and good.

Ver. 2. *Honour thy father and mother*, &c.] This explains who parents are, and points at ſome branches of obedience due unto them; for they are not only to be loved, and to be feared, and reverenced, their corrections to be ſubmitted to, offences againſt them to be acknowledged, their tempers to be bore with, and their infirmities covered; but they are to be honoured in thought, word, and geſture; they are to be highly thought of and eſteemed; they are to be ſpoken to, and of, very honourably, and with great veneration; and to be behaved to in a very reſpectful manner; and they are to be relieved, aſſiſted, and maintained in a comfortable way when aged, and in neceſſitous circumſtances; and which may be chiefly deſigned. So the *Jews* explain, כבוד, *the honour* due to parents, by, *&c.* מאכיל, *giving them food*, *drink*, and *clothing*, unlooſing their ſhoes, and leading them out and in [x]. Compare with this 1 *Tim.* v. 4, 17. ſee the note on *Matt.* xv. 4. *which is the firſt commandment with promiſe*: it is the fifth commandment in the decalogue, but the firſt that has a promiſe annexed to it: it is reckoned by the *Jews* [y] the weightieſt of the weightieſt commands of the law; and the reward beſtowed on it is length of days, as follows.

Ver. 3. *That it may be well with thee*, &c.] In this world, and that which is to come; ſee *Deut.* v. 16. The *Jews* [z] ſay, "there are four things, "which if a man does, he eats the fruit of them "in this world, and the capital part remains for "him in the world to come; and they are theſe, "כיבוד אב ואם, *honouring father and mother*, do"ing acts of beneficence, making peace between "a man and his neighbour, and learning of the law, "which anſwers to them all." *And thou mayſt live long on the earth*: length of days is in itſelf a bleſſing; and tho' mens days can't be lengthened beyond God's purpoſe and decree; and tho' obedient children don't always live long; yet diſobedience to parents often brings the judgments of God on children, ſo that they die not a common death, 2 *Sam.* xviii. 14. *Prov.* xxx. 17. On thoſe words in *Deut.* xxxii. 47. the *Jews* [a] have this paraphraſe; "*becauſe* "*it is your life*, זה כיבוד אב ואם, *this is honour*"*ing father and mother*; *and thro' this thing ye ſhall* "*prolong your days*, this is beneficence." It may be obſerved, that the words in this promiſſory part are not the ſame as in the decalogue, where they ſtand thus, *that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee*; referring to the land of *Canaan*; for the law in the form of it, in which it was delivered by *Moſes*, only concerned the people of the *Jews*; wherefore to ſuit this law, and the promiſe of it, to others, the Apoſtle alters the language of it.

Ver. 4. *And ye fathers*, *provoke not your children to wrath*, &c.] Neither by words; by unjuſt and unreaſonable commands; by contumelious and reproachful language; by frequent and public chidings, and by indiſcreet and paſſionate expreſſions: nor by deeds; preferring one to another; by denying them the neceſſaries of life; by not allowing them proper recreation; by ſevere and cruel blows, and inhuman uſage; by not giving them ſuitable education; by an improper diſpoſal of them in marriage; and by profuſely ſpending their eſtates, and leaving nothing to them: not but that parents may, and ought to correct and rebuke their children; nor are they accountable to them for their conduct; yet they ſhould take care not to provoke them to wrath, becauſe this alienates their minds from them, and renders their inſtructions and corrections uſeleſs, and puts them upon ſinful practices; wrath lets in ſatan, and leads to ſin againſt God; and indeed it is difficult in the beſt of men to be angry and not ſin; ſee *Col.* iii. 21. *Fathers* are particularly mentioned, they being the heads of families, and are apt to be too ſevere, as mothers too indulgent. *But bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord*; inſtructing them in the knowledge of divine things, ſetting them good examples, taking care to prevent their falling into bad company, praying with them, and for them, bringing them into the houſe of God, under the means of grace, to attend public worſhip; all which, under a divine bleſſing, may be very uſeful to them: the example of *Abraham* is worthy of imitation, *Gen.* xviii. 19. and the advice of the wiſe man deſerves attention, *Prov.* xxii. 6.

Ver. 5. *Servants*, *be obedient to them that are your maſters*, &c.] The Apoſtle enlarges on the duty of ſervants, as well as frequently inculcates it in his Epiſtles; becauſe, generally ſpeaking, they were more rude and ignorant, and leſs pains were taken with them to inſtruct them; they were apt to be impatient and weary of the yoke; and ſcandal was like to ariſe from ſervants in the firſt ages of Chriſtianity thro' ſome libertines, and the licentiouſneſs of the falſe teachers, who inſinuated, that ſervitude was inconſiſtent with chriſtian freedom: the perſons exhorted are *ſervants*, bond ſervants, and hired ſervants; who are to be ſubject to, and obey their *maſters*, of each ſex, whether male or female, of every condition, whether poor or rich, believers or unbelievers, good or bad humoured, gentle or froward: ſuch as are their maſters *according to the fleſh*; or *carnal maſters*, as the *Vulgate Latin* verſion renders it; even though they are unregenerate men, and are in a ſtate of nature, and only mind the things of the fleſh, yet they are to be obeyed in their lawful commands: or *in things pertaining to the fleſh*, as the *Arabic* verſion renders it; in things temporal, which concern the body, and this temporal life; not in things ſpiritual and religious, or that belong to conſcience, and which are contrary to them: or *according to your fleſh*, as the *Ethiopic* verſion renders it; ſignifying that they are only maſters over their bodies, not their conſciences; and that their power only extends to corporal things, and can laſt no longer than while they are in the fleſh; ſee *Job* iii. 19. and obedience is to be yielded to them *with fear and trembling*; with great humility and reſpect, with reverence of them, and giving honour to them, with carefulneſs not to offend them, with ſubmiſſion to their reproofs and corrections, and with fear of puniſhment; but more eſpecially with the fear of God, being by that influenced and conſtrained to obedience: *in ſingleneſs of heart*; with readineſs and chearfulneſs, without hypocriſy and diſſimulation, and with all integrity and faithfulneſs: *as unto Chriſt*; it being agreeable to his will, and what makes for his glory, and ſerves to adorn the doctrine of God our ſaviour in all things.

Ver. 6. *Not with eye-ſervice*, *as men-pleaſers*, &c.] Doing nothing but when under the maſter's eye, and then pretending a great deal of diligence and induſtry, in order to ingratiate themſelves into his affections, and neglecting his buſineſs when he is abſent; whereas they ought to attend his ſervice in his abſence, as well as in his preſence, and ſo ſeek to pleaſe him, which is commendable. *But as the ſervants of Chriſt*; acting in like manner as the ſervants of Chriſt, who are not men-pleaſers; or as if they themſelves were ſerving Chriſt, as indeed they are, when they are doing that which is the will of Chriſt: *doing the will of God from the heart*; meaning not the will of God in a religious, but in a civil ſenſe, yielding a chearful and hearty obedience to their own maſters.

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[x] T. Hieroſ. Kidduſhin, fol. 61. 2. T. Bab. Kidduſhin, fol. 31. 1, 2. Maimon. & Bartenora in Miſn. Kidduſhin, c. 1. §. 7.

[y] Debarim Rabba, §. 6. fol. 241. 3.

[z] Miſna Peah, c. 1. §. 1. T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 127. 1. & Kidduſhin, fol. 40. 1.

[a] T. Hieroſ. Peah, fol. 15. 4.

Ver. 7. *With good-will doing ſervice*, &c.] To their maſters; not grudgingly, with an ill will; no otherwiſe, nor longer than when they are forced to it; but of a ready mind, and with a chearful ſpirit, taking delight in their work, and reckoning it a pleaſure to ſerve their maſters; as an *Iſraelite* that is not ſold, who does his work, ברצונו, *with his good-will*, and according to his own mind [b]; doing what they do *as to the Lord, and not to men*; not merely becauſe it is the will of men, and they are commanded by them, and in order to pleaſe them, but becauſe it is the will of the Lord, and is well-pleaſing in his ſight.

Ver. 8. *Knowing that whatſoever good thing any man doth*, &c.] According to the will of God, from right principles in his heart, and with a view to God's glory: *the ſame ſhall he receive of the Lord*; that is, he ſhall receive the fruit and advantage of it, in a way of grace, *whether* he be *bond or free*; a bond man or a free man, a maſter or a ſervant.

Ver. 9. *And ye maſters do the ſame things unto them*, &c.] This does not refer to ſervice and obedience, but to ſingleneſs of heart, benevolence, humanity, and a regard to Chriſt, and the will of God, and to the doing of good things, and to the performance of their duty, as they would have their ſervants do theirs; whoſe duty, if religious maſters, is, with reſpect to their ſouls, to inſtruct them in, and uſe them to religious exerciſes, to pray with them, and for them, to ſet them good examples, to prevent them falling into bad company, and to allow them proper time for religious duties; and with reſpect to their bodies, and outward concerns, to provide ſufficient food and proper raiment for them, or to give them their due wages, to take care of them when ſick or lame, and ſhew compaſſion and humanity to them, to encourage thoſe that are prudent, faithful, and laborious, and to correct the diſobedient, and expel the incorrigible: *forbearing threatning*; not that they may not in any ſenſe threaten, but not always, nor too often, nor too much, and with great things on light occaſions; nor ſhould they be too forward to execute their threatnings, eſpecially when their ſervants repent and amend; they ſhould then forbear them and forgive; and ſo the *Syriac* verſion renders it, *forgive their offences*; this is oppoſed to all hard rigour, and ill uſage, either by words or blows. And this is a rule given by the *Jews* [c], that a maſter ſhould not multiply clamour and anger, but ſhould ſpeak to him (his ſervant) quietly, and in a ſtill manner, and he will hear his objections, or arguments and reaſons: *knowing that your maſter alſo is in heaven*; meaning Chriſt, who employs, provides for, and uſes well all his ſervants, and to whom maſters muſt be accountable for their uſage of ſervants; for he is the common maſter of maſters and ſervants; and ſo the *Alexandrian* copy, and *Vulgate Latin* verſion read, *their and your maſter*: and the place of his habitation is mentioned, to diſtinguiſh him from earthly maſters; and the more to move and excite maſters to their duty, ſince he being in heaven over-looks and takes notice of all their actions, as the omniſcient God; and being omnipotent, has it in his power to plead and avenge the cauſe of the injured: *neither is there reſpect of perſons with him*; as whether they are of this, or the other nation, *Jew* or *Gentile*; whether in this, or that ſtate and condition, or in ſuch and ſuch circumſtances of life; whether maſters or ſervants, bond or free, or whether *Canaanitiſh* or *Hebrew* ſervants; between which the *Jews* [d] made a difference, and allowed of rigour to be uſed to the one, but required mercy and kindneſs to be ſhewed to the other; and ſo were reſpecters of perſons.

Ver. 10. *Finally, my brethren*, &c.] This is the concluſion of the Apoſtle's exhortations, in which he addreſſes the ſaints as his brethren; which appellation he uſes, not merely as a familiar way of ſpeaking among the *Jews*, but in regard to them as regenerate perſons, and of the ſame family and houſhold of God with himſelf; and he calls them ſo, to ſhew his humility, and as a proof of his affection to them, and with a deſign to encourage them to their duty, as follows: *be ſtrong in the Lord, and in the power of his might*; which is directed to, partly on account of the things before exhorted to, which could not be performed in their own ſtrength; and partly with reſpect to their many and potent enemies hereafter mentioned, againſt whom they had no might nor power of their own; and therefore the Apoſtle points out the Lord Jeſus Chriſt unto them, in whom are ſtrength, power, and might, even everlaſting ſtrength, to enable them to perform their duty, and to fight againſt every enemy, ſin, ſatan, and the world; for tho' they are weak, and without ſtrength in themſelves, and can do nothing of themſelves, and without Chriſt; yet ſince there is ſtrength in him, which is communicable to them, they may expect it from him, and depend upon it; and they may come at, or ſtrengthen themſelves in it, and by it, by meditation on it, by prayer for it, by waiting on Chriſt in his own ways, by exerciſing faith upon him, and thro' the Spirit, who ſtrengthens them from him with might in the inward man.

Ver. 11. *Put on the whole armour of God*, &c.] Not that which God himſelf is ſometimes clothed with, and uſes againſt his enemies; but what he has provided for his people, and furniſhes them with; the particulars of which are after mentioned: and it is called *the armour of God*, becauſe it is prepared by him for his people, and is beſtowed on them by him; and becauſe it is in its own nature divine and ſpiritual, and not carnal; and becauſe it is provided for fighting the Lord's battles, and is uſed in them; and becauſe the efficacy of it is from him, and the execution it does is owing to him: and it is *whole*, compleat, and perfect; and all of it is uſeful, and no part to be neglected, but all to be taken and *put on*; which is not to make and provide this armour, but to take it, as in ver. 13. as being ready made and provided, and to expect and prepare for battle, and make uſe of it; and this ſuppoſes ſaints to be in a warfare-ſtate, and that they are in the character of ſoldiers, and have enemies to fight with, and therefore ſhould be accoutred with proper and ſuitable armour, to meet them: *that ye may be able to ſtand againſt the wiles of the devil*; who is the grand enemy of Chriſt and his people, and a very powerful and cunning one he is; ſo that the whole armour of God ſhould be put on, which is proof againſt all his might and craft, in order to ſtand againſt him, oppoſe him, and fight, and get the victory over him, which in the iſſue is always obtained by believers; for they not only ſtand their ground in the ſtrength of Chriſt, and by the uſe of their armour, confound his ſchemes, and baffle all his arts and ſtratagems, but are more than conquerors thro' him that has loved them.

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[b] Maimon. Hilchot Abadim, c. 1. §. 7.

[c] Maimon. ib. c. 9. §. 8.

[d] Maimon. ib.

Ver. 12. *For we wreſtle not againſt fleſh and blood,* &c.] The *Syriac*, *Arabic*, and *Ethiopic* verſions, and ſome copies, read *you*, inſtead of *we*. This is a reaſon why ſaints ſhould be ſtrong in the Lord, and why they ſhould put on the whole armour of God, and prepare for battle, ſince their enemies are ſuch as here deſcribed: not *fleſh and blood*; frail mortal men, ſuch as were wreſtled againſt in the *Olympic* games, to which the Apoſtle alludes. For this wreſtling, as *Philo* the *Jew* ſays [e], concerning *Jacob*'s wreſtling, is not of the body, but of the ſoul; ſee *Matt.* xvi. 17. *Gal.* i. 16. and the meaning is, not with men only, for otherwiſe the ſaints have a conflict with men; with prophane men, and wreſtle againſt them, by bearing a teſtimony againſt their enormities, and by patiently enduring their reproaches, and conquer them by a conſtant adherence to Chriſt, and an exerciſe of faith upon him, which gets the victory over the world; and with heretical men, and maintain a conflict with them, by watching and obſerving the firſt appearance of their errors and hereſies, and declaring againſt them, and by uſing ſcripture arguments to confute them, and by rejecting the ſtubborn and incorrigible from church-communion: yet they wreſtle not againſt theſe only, *but againſt principalities, againſt powers*; by whom are meant not civil magiſtrates, or the *Roman* governours, though theſe are ſometimes ſo called, *Tit.* iii. 1. and may be ſaid to be the rulers of the darkneſs of this world, or of the dark heathen world, and were in high places, and were of wicked and malicious ſpirits, againſt the people of Chriſt; yet theſe can't be oppoſed to fleſh and blood, or to men, ſince they were ſuch themſelves; and tho' they were in high, yet not in heavenly places; and the connexion with the preceding verſe ſhews the contrary, the enemy being the devil, and the armour ſpiritual; wherefore the devils are here deſigned, who are deſcribed from their power, rule, and government, ſee the note on ch. i. 21. both in this clauſe, and in the next: *and againſt the rulers of the darkneſs of this world*; that is, over wicked men in it, who are in a ſtate of darkneſs itſelf; and ſo ſatan is called the prince, and God of the world, *John* xii. 31. 2 *Cor.* iv. 4. The *Jews* uſe this very word, the Apoſtle does here, of the angel of death, who is called darkneſs [f]; and the devil is called by them, שר של חושך, *the prince of darkneſs* [g]; and mention is made by them of, חשוכי עלמא, *the darkneſs of the world* [h]; from whom the Apoſtle ſeems to have taken theſe phraſes, as being in common uſe among the *Jews*; who alſo uſe it of civil governours [i], and render it, as here, *the rulers of the world*, and ſay it ſignifies monarchs, ſuch as rule from one end of the world to the other [k]: ſome copies, and the *Ethiopic* verſion, leave out the phraſe, *of this world*. It follows, *againſt ſpiritual wickedneſs in high places*; or wicked ſpirits, as the devils are, unclean, proud, lying, deceitful, and malicious; who may be ſaid to be in *high* or *heavenly* places; not in places ſuper-celeſtial, or in the higheſt heavens, in the third heaven, where God, angels, and ſaints are; but in the aerial heavens, where the power or poſſe of devils reſide, and where they are above us, over our heads, overlooking us, and watching every advantage againſt us; and therefore we ſhould have on our armour, and be in a readineſs to engage them; and ſo the *Syriac* and *Ethiopic* verſions render it, *under*, or *beneath heaven*; and the *Arabic* verſion, *in the air*.

Ver. 13. *Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God,* &c.] This is a repetition of the exhortation in ver. 11. which repetition ſeems neceſſary by reaſon of the many powerful enemies mentioned in the preceding verſe, and ſerves to explain what is meant by putting it on; and leads on the Apoſtle to give an account of the ſeveral parts of this armour: the end of taking it is much the ſame as before, *that ye may be able to withſtand in the evil day*; that is, that ye may be able to ſtand againſt the wiles and ſtratagems of ſatan, againſt his power and might, to oppoſe his ſchemes, and reſiſt his temptations; and ſo the *Syriac* verſion renders it, *that ye may be able to meet the evil one*; to face him, and give him battle, being accoutred with the whole armour of God; tho' the *Greek* copies, and other verſions, read, *in the evil day*; in which ſin and iniquity abound, error and hereſy prevail, ſatan is very buſy, trials and afflictions come on, perſecution ariſes becauſe of the word, and God's judgments are in the earth: *and having done all to ſtand*; or having overcome, having routed the enemy, ſtand as conquerors; or rather, having took and put on the whole armour of God, in order to ſtand, and withſtand the enemy,

Ver. 14. *Stand therefore,* &c.] Keep your ground, don't deſert the army, the church of Chriſt, nor his cauſe; continue in the ſtation in which you are placed, keep your poſt, be upon your watch, ſtand upon your guard: *having your loins girt about with truth*; by which is meant the Goſpel, and the ſeveral doctrines of it; ſee chap. i. 13. and iv. 15. and to have the loins girt with it, ſhews, that it ſhould be near and cloſe to the ſaints, and never departed from; and that it is a means of keeping them cloſe to God and Chriſt, and of ſtrengthening them againſt the aſſaults and attacks of ſatan; and is of great uſe in the chriſtians ſpiritual conflict with their enemies; the girdle is a part of armour, and ſo conſiderable as ſometimes to be put for the whole, *Iſ.* v. 27. and here it is mentioned in the firſt place: *and having on the breaſt-plate of righteouſneſs*; in alluſion to *Iſ.* lix. 17. meaning not works of righteouſneſs done by men, tho' theſe are a fence when rightly uſed againſt the reproaches and charges of the enemy, as they were by *Samuel*, 1 *Sam.* xii. 3. but rather the graces of faith and love, 1 *Theſſ.* v. 8. tho' faith has another place in the chriſtian armour, afterwards mentioned; wherefore it ſeems beſt to underſtand this of the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, which being imputed by God, and received by faith, is a guard againſt, and repels the accuſations and charges of ſatan, and is a ſecurity from all wrath and condemnation.

Ver. 15. *And your feet ſhod with the preparation of the Goſpel of peace.*] The Goſpel is ſo called, becauſe it makes men to be of peaceable tempers and behaviour, and gives peace to diſtreſſed minds:

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[e] Leg. Allegor. l. 2. p. 96.

[f] Vajikra Rabba. §. 18. fol. 160. 1. & Shirhaſhirim Rabba, fol. 25. 4.

[g] Peſikta in Kettoreth Haſſammim in Targum in Gen. fol. 9. 4. Raziel, fol. 13. 1.

[h] Zohar in Lev. fol. 19. 3.

[i] Bereſhit Rabba, §. 58. fol. 51. 2.

[k] Tanchuma & Aruch in Guidon. Dict. Syr. Chal. p. 169.

it directs the way to eternal peace, and publiſhes peace made by the blood of Chriſt; and has a much better claim to this name, and epithet, than the law has, which is often called *peace* by the *Jews* [l]: the *preparation* of it does not deſign a promptitude or readineſs to preach the Goſpel, or to receive it, or profeſs it, or to give a reaſon of faith in it, or to endure reproach and perſecution for it; nor that readineſs which the Goſpel is a means of, as for every good work, for the ſpiritual warfare, for the chriſtian's journey heaven-ward, or for heaven itſelf: but the word ἑτοιμασια ſignifies a *baſe*, or foundation; and ſo it is uſed by the *Septuagint* interpreters on *Zech.* v. 11. and here it deſigns a firm and ſolid knowledge of the Goſpel, as it publiſhes peace by Jeſus Chriſt, which yields a ſure foundation for the chriſtian ſoldier to ſet his foot upon, and ſtand faſt on; it being that to him, as the ſhoe is to the foot, its baſe or foundation: and for *the feet* to be *ſhod with* it, does not mean the outward converſation being agreeable to the Goſpel, tho' ſuch a walk and converſation is very beautiful and ſafe, and ſuch may walk and war with intrepidity; but it deſigns the conſtant and firm ſtanding of believers in the faith of the Goſpel, and ſo ſtriving and contending for it, without being moved from it, that it may continue with them. Shoes or boots, which were ſometimes of iron, and ſometimes of braſs, are reckoned among the armour of ſoldiers [m].

Ver. 16. *Above all, taking the ſhield of faith,* &c.] Which may be underſtood either of the grace of faith, which is like a golden ſhield, precious, ſolid, and ſubſtantial; and like a ſhield of mighty men, by which mighty things are done, and by which the believer not only repels, but conquers the enemy. The *Jews* ſay [n], that repentance and good works are as a ſhield againſt divine vengeance: or rather of the object of faith, that which faith makes uſe of as a ſhield; ſo God himſelf is a ſhield, *Gen.* xv. 1. his divine perfections, as his power, faithfulneſs, truth, and immutability, which encompaſs the ſaints as a ſhield, and are oppoſed by faith to the temptations of ſatan; alſo the love and favour of God, *Pſ.* v. 12. and particularly God in his word, *Prov.* xxx. 5. which is a ſhield againſt falſe doctrines, and the wiles of ſatan. Moreover, Chriſt is a ſhield, *Pſ.* lxxxiv. 11. and faith makes uſe of him as a ſhield, his perſon, blood, righteouſneſs, and ſacrifice; which it holds up and oppoſes to all the charges and objections of ſatan; and who is the ſaints protection, and ſecurity from the wrath of God, divine juſtice, and eternal death. The diſciples of the wiſe men are ſaid to be [o], התריסון, *ſhielded men*, who, as the *Gloſs* ſays, fight in the war of the law; but they are not like Chriſt's diſciples, who have on the ſhield, and fight the fight of faith: and this is *above all* to be taken, as being the moſt uſeful part of the chriſtian armour; or *with all*, with the reſt, this is to be taken, and by no means to be neglected; and it is to be uſed *in all*; in every temptation of ſatan, in every conflict with that enemy, or any other. *Wherewith ye ſhall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked*; of the wicked one, ſatan; who was the firſt wicked one, and the tempter of others to wickedneſs; and is emphatically the wicked one, being wickedneſs itſelf; and his temptations are *fiery darts*: they may be compared to *darts*, becauſe they ſometimes come ſuddenly and ſwiftly, and thick and faſt, are very numerous, and where they ſtick are very troubleſome and grieving; ſee *Gen.* xlix. 23, 24. And they may be ſaid to be *fiery*, becauſe they ſerve to enflame the mind, and excite to ſin, as luſt, anger, revenge, and the like; and were they not repelled, would be the occaſion of bringing into everlaſting burnings. The alluſion is to βελεσι πεπυρωμενοις, *the fiery darts*, caſt by enemies into towns, and upon houſes, in order to burn them [p]. Mention is alſo made of, גירי דאשא, *fiery darts*, with the *Jews* [q], and of ſatan's caſting a dart at *David* [r]: from theſe cuſtoms, and ways of ſpeaking, the Apoſtle borrows his phraſes; and ſuggeſts, that the ſhield of faith is of uſe to quench the fiery darts of ſatan's temptations; ſo that they may not have the malignant influence they are deſigned for; which is chiefly done by faith's dealing with the blood of Chriſt. And there were ways of quenching the fiery darts alluded to; which was done by ſkins and hides of beaſts made wet, or anointed with allum [s].

Ver. 17. *And take the helmet of ſalvation,* &c.] Meaning either Chriſt himſelf, the ſaviour; and ſo the *Arabic* verſion renders it, *the helmet of the ſaviour*; or the ſalvation itſelf, which he is the author of, and a well-grounded hope of it; ſee 1 *Theſſ.* v. 8. the alluſion is to *Iſ.* lix. 17. and ſuch an hope of ſalvation by Chriſt, is a defence of the head againſt falſe doctrines; for the helmet is a piece of armour for the head; and it is an erecter of the head in times of difficulty, affliction, and diſtreſs; and it covers the head in the day of battle, when engaged with ſatan, the enemy of ſouls: *and the ſword of the Spirit, which is the word of God*; the word of God is compared to a *ſword*, for its two edges, the law and Goſpel; the one convicts of ſin, and cuts to the heart for it, and the other cuts down all the goodlineſs of man; and the ſcriptures in general are a ſharp ſword, in convincing of ſin, reproving for it, and threatning with wrath and ruin, in refuting error and hereſy, and repelling ſatan's temptations, and will be uſed in the deſtruction of antichriſt: and this word may be called *the ſword of the Spirit*, becauſe it is not carnal, but of a ſpiritual nature; and is uſed by the ſpiritual man; and becauſe the holy Spirit, as the *Ethiopic* verſion here expreſſes it, is the author of it; and which he furniſhes the ſaints with, and teaches them how to make uſe of, and makes it powerful and effectual. So the *Jews* ſays [t], the words of the law are like to a ſword, and ſpeak of, חרב הורה, *the ſword of the law* [u].

Ver. 18. *Praying always with all prayer and ſupplication in the Spirit,* &c.] The laſt weapon is prayer, and takes in all ſorts of prayer, mental and vocal, public and private; and every branch of it, as deprecation of evils, petitions for good things, and thankſgiving for mercies: and which ſhould be uſed *always*; this ſtands oppoſed to ſuch who pray not at all, or who have prayed, but have left it off, or who pray only in diſtreſs; and it ſuggeſts, that a man ſhould pray as often as he has an opportunity; and particularly, that he ſhould make uſe of it in times of darkneſs, deſertion, and temptation: and this, when performed aright, is performed *in the Spirit*; with the heart, ſoul, and ſpirit engaged in it; it is put up with a true heart, and a right ſpirit, and without hypocriſy; in a ſpiritual way, and with fervency, and under the influence, and by the aſſiſtance of the Spirit of God. *And watching thereunto*; either to the word, as a direction for prayer, or to prayer itſelf; for opportunities to pray, for the aſſiſtance of the Spirit in prayer, for an anſwer of it, and to return thanks for bleſſings when beſtowed; and againſt all dependance on it, and againſt ſatan's temptations, and our own corruptions with reſpect to it: *with all perſeverance*; in it, notwithſtanding what ſatan, and an unbelieving heart may ſuggeſt to the contrary: *and ſupplication for all ſaints*; of every nation, age, ſex, and condition, in all places, and of every denomination. So Chriſt taught his diſciples to pray, ſaying, *our Father*, ſuggeſting, that they were not only to pray for themſelves, but for all the children of God.

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[l] Zohar in Num. fol. 73. 3. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 9. 3.

[m] Pauſan. l. 6. p. 362, 378. Julian. Orat. 2. p. 105. Alex. ab Alexandro, l. 6. c. 22.

[n] Pirke Abot, c. 4. §. 11.

[o] T. Bab. Becorot, fol. 36. 1. & Gloſſ. in ib.

[p] Apollodorus de Orig. Deorum, l. 2. p. 89.

[q] Targum Jon. & Jeruſ. in Exod. xix. 13.

[r] T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 95. 1. & 107. 1.

[s] Ammian. Marcellin. l. 20. c. 11.

[t] Targum in Cant. 3. 8.

[u] Bereſhit Rabba, §. 21. fol. 19. 1.

Ver. 19. *And for me*, &c.] This ſhows the great humility of the Apoſtle, and the ſenſe he had of the greatneſs of the work of the miniſtry; and that it is the duty of people to pray for their miniſters; and that no man is perfect in this life; and that the more ſuperior members need the aſſiſtance of the inferior ones: for this requeſt is made by the Apoſtle not in diſſimulation, or as feigning humility and modeſty; but in the ſincerity of his heart, and from a real ſenſe of his need of freſh ſupplies of gifts and grace, to fit him for the work and ſervice of Chriſt: *that utterance may be given unto me*; or *that the word*; meaning not the ſubject-matter of the miniſtry, the word of the Goſpel, the word of faith, truth, and reconciliation, for that was committed to him; unleſs he ſhould mean an increaſe of light and knowledge in it; but rather a faculty of ſpeaking it freely and aptly, and what is commonly called elocution; not ſpeaking with the enticing words of man's wiſdom, but with the words of the Holy Ghoſt: or elſe an opportunity of preaching the word, and liberty to do it, as follows: *that I may open my mouth boldly*; or *in the opening of my mouth*; the phraſe is *Rabbinical.* The *Jews* [w] ſay, that when *Moſes* came to write that paſſage, *let us make man in our image*, &c. he ſaid before the Lord of the world, why doſt thou give, פתחון פה, *opening of the mouth* to hereticks? *i. e.* an occaſion to them of ſpeaking, objecting to us, and of reproving and convincing us with reſpect to a plurality of perſons in the deity: and a little after they ſay, "where-ever you find, פתחון פה, *an* "*opening of the mouth* to hereticks, you will find "an anſwer by its ſide, or along with it." Now the Apoſtle deſired he might have ſomething to ſay, to object to, and to reprove and convince the unbelieving *Jews*; that he might do this with boldneſs, with all faithfulneſs, with courage, and intrepidity, and with freedom of ſpeech; or *openly* and *publickly*, as the *Syriac* verſion renders it: *to make known the myſtery of the Goſpel*; or the myſterious doctrines of it, ſuch as the doctrines of a Trinity of perſons, of the union of the two natures in Chriſt, juſtification by his righteouſneſs, regeneration by his Spirit and grace, the ſaints union to Chriſt, and communion with him, the reſurrection of the dead, *&c.* which are called myſteries, becauſe they were hid until revealed; and tho' revealed, the *modus* and *ratio* of them are not to be accounted for. Now the Apoſtle's work was to make known theſe myſteries, to prove the truth of them from the word of God, and to defend them againſt the oppoſers of them; and that he might be able to do this, he intreats the prayers of the ſaints.

Ver. 20. *For which I am an ambaſſador in bonds*, &c.] The character the Apoſtle bore, was that of an ambaſſador; and he was an ambaſſador from and for Chriſt, in his room and ſtead; he repreſented him, he was ſent by him, and entruſted by him with the Goſpel; he gave him it, and a commiſſion to preach it, and furniſhed him with qualifications for it; ſuch as knowledge and faithfulneſs, wiſdom and prudence, courage and greatneſs of mind; and made his embaſſy ſucceſsful: and he was chiefly an ambaſſador to the *Gentiles*, which ſhowed great condeſcenſion in Chriſt to ſend him to them, and baſe ingratitude in the deſpiſers and rejecters of the Goſpel, for which he was an ambaſſador; for the embaſſy Chriſt's miniſters are ſent on, is the embaſſy of the Goſpel of peace: their buſineſs is to declare that men by nature are enemies to God; that peace is made by the blood of Chriſt for ſuch; by which means they are made uſeful to conciliate the minds of men to God's way of ſalvation, and to bring them to ſubmit to his government and laws: and when he adds, *in bonds*, or *in a chain*, he means, that he was in ſuch circumſtances, not for any crime, but for the Goſpel, for which he was an ambaſſador; and therefore was not aſhamed of his bonds, or chain, but rather gloried in them; and he makes mention of them to engage perſons to a regard to him as an ambaſſador, and to his embaſſy; for an ambaſſador, eſpecially an ambaſſador of Chriſt, that comes with his Goſpel, and more eſpecially that is ſuffering for it, ought to be received, heard, and honoured. *That therein I may ſpeak boldly as I ought to ſpeak*; that is, the Apoſtle beſeeches the ſaints to pray for him, that ſince he was an ambaſſador for the Goſpel, and in bonds, that he might ſpeak in it, or rather of it boldly and freely; that he might have both liberty from his bonds, and liberty in his ſoul, and freedom of ſpeech; and that he might uſe boldneſs in delivering his meſſage, as became an ambaſſador of Jeſus Chriſt.

Ver. 21. *But that ye alſo may know my affairs*, and *how I do*, &c.] Both his temporal and ſpiritual affairs; as that he was in bonds, and how he was ſupported under them, and of what uſe they were to others; how that he preached in his own hired houſe, and with what ſucceſs; and what miniſtring brethren he had with him to aſſiſt him; and in what condition was the church at *Rome* where he now was: the Apoſtle's life and actions would bear the light, and what he did was worthy of imitation, and muſt be both delightful and uſeful to know; and the account he ſends, by a meſſenger hereafter named, of whom he gives the following character, that credit might be the more readily given to his relation: *Tychicus, a beloved brother, and faithful miniſter in the Lord, ſhall make known to you all things.* This *Tychicus* was of *Aſia*, who accompanied the Apoſtle in his travels, and went with him to *Rome*, from whence he ſent him to ſeveral places to relate his caſe, and to know the ſtate of the churches, *Col.* iv. 7, 8. 2 *Tim.* iv. 12. *Tit.* iii. 12. He calls him *a beloved brother*; he was a *brother*, becauſe he was a partaker of the ſame grace, was of the ſame family and houſhold of God, and was of the ſame function, being a miniſter of the Goſpel, and was a *beloved* one: he was beloved of God and Chriſt, and of all the ſaints that knew him, and eſpecially a brother beloved of the Apoſtle *Paul*; and where there is brotherhood, there ſhould be love: he alſo ſtiles him a *faithful miniſter in the Lord*; he was a *miniſter* in the work and ſer-

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[w] Bereſhit Rabba, §. 8. fol. 7. 1. & Vajikra Rabba, §. 21. fol. 163. 1. Megillat Eſther, fol. 94. 1, 3.

vice of the Lord, in things pertaining to him; he was one of his appointing, qualifying, and ſending; and he preached Chriſt and him crucified; and was a *faithful one*, to his Lord or maſter, in whoſe name he miniſtred, to the Goſpel which he miniſtred, and to the ſouls of men to whom he miniſtred; and a greater character he could not well have; and therefore it need not be doubted but that he would faithfully relate all things concerning the Apoſtle, and what he ſaid might be depended on as truth.

Ver. 22. *Whom I have ſent unto you for the ſame purpoſe*, &c.] Which ſhows the great concern the Apoſtle had for the churches, being willing to inform them of every thing that might be for their uſe and ſervice: *that ye might know our affairs*; temporal and ſpiritual, and not only the Apoſtle's affairs, but the affairs of thoſe that were with him, who were concerned in the ſame common cauſe: *and that he might comfort your hearts*; both by ſuch a relation, and by the miniſtry of the Goſpel to them: believers in Chriſt are ſometimes diſconſolate, by reaſon of indwelling ſin, ſatan's temptations, the hidings of God's face, afflictions and perſecutions, their own ſufferings, and thoſe of others; and it is the buſineſs of the miniſters of Chriſt to comfort them; their commiſſion is to ſpeak comfortably to them; and they are qualified for it, by inward comforts in their own ſouls; the Goſpel they preach, and the meſſage they bring, is of a comfortable nature; the Spirit of God acts by them, and with them as a comforter; and ſad indeed is the ſtate of *Zion*, or the church of Chriſt, when it has no comforters.

Ver. 23. *Peace be to the brethren*, &c.] The members of the church at *Epheſus*, who ſtood in a ſpiritual relation to each other; meaning all proſperity outward and inward, temporal, ſpiritual, and eternal; eſpecially peace of conſcience under the ſprinklings of the blood of Chriſt, and a view of peace made with God by that blood: *and love with faith from God the Father, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt*; that is, an increaſe of theſe graces, and of the exerciſe of them, is wiſhed for; for otherwiſe theſe brethren had both theſe graces, faith and love; ſee ch. i. 15. which go together; faith works by love, and love diſcovers faith, and both are imperfect; faith has ſomething lacking in it, and love is apt to grow cold, and need reviving and increaſing; and theſe, and the increaſe of them, are from God the Father, who is the God of all grace, and from Jeſus Chriſt, in whom all fulneſs of grace is; and theſe things are equally deſired from the one as from the other, and ſhews a plurality of perſons in the Godhead, and the equality of Chriſt with the Father; and ſuch a wiſh expreſſes the Apoſtle's great love and affection for the brethren, and points out the things they ſtand in need of; and which, being aſked for ſuch, might be expected to be enjoyed.

Ver. 24. *Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, &c.] Chriſt is the object of love, and a lovely object he is: he is to be loved becauſe of the lovelineſs of his perſon, and the tranſcendent excellencies that are in him; becauſe of his ſuitableneſs and fulneſs as a ſaviour; and becauſe of his great love ſhown to his church and people; and becauſe of the relations he ſtands in to them, and the communion they have with him: love to Chriſt is a grace of the Spirit, and is in all believers; and tho' it is imperfect, and ſometimes cold, it will abide for ever; it ought to be univerſal and ſuperlative; all of Chriſt is to be loved, and he is to be loved above all: and it ſhows itſelf in a value for his Goſpel, and the truths of it; in an eſteem of his ordinances, and a regard to his commands; in parting with all for Chriſt, when called for; and in bearing all for his ſake; in a well-pleaſedneſs in his company and preſence, and in a concern for his abſence, and in an uneaſineſs until he is enjoyed again: it ſhould be fervent, and conſtant, and cordial, and, as here ſaid, *in ſincerity*; from the heart, and with all the heart, and without hypocriſy; not in word only, but in deed and in truth; which appears when he is loved, as before obſerved: and the Apoſtle wiſhes *grace* to all ſuch ſincere and hearty lovers of him; by which may be meant a freſh diſcovery of the free grace, love, and favour of God in Chriſt to them; and a freſh ſupply of grace from the fulneſs of it in Chriſt; and a larger meaſure of the grace of the Spirit to carry on the good work begun in them; as well as a continuation of the Goſpel of the grace of God with them, and an increaſe of ſpiritual gifts. *Grace* may be connected with the word tranſlated *ſincerity*, and be rendered *grace with incorruption*; or incorruptible grace, as true grace is an incorruptible ſeed; or *grace with immortality*; and ſo the Apoſtle wiſhes not only for grace here, but for eternal happineſs and glory hereafter; and then cloſes the Epiſtle with an *Amen*, as a confirmation and aſſeveration of the truth of the doctrines contained in it, and as expreſſive of his earneſt deſire that the ſeveral petitions in it might be granted, and of his faith and confidence that they would be fulfilled.

The ſubſcription, *written from Rome to the Epheſians by Tychicus*, ſeems to be right; for that this Epiſtle was written to the *Epheſians*, the inſcription ſhows; and that it was written when the Apoſtle was a priſoner at *Rome*, appears from ch. iii. 1. and iv. 1. and vi. 20. and that it was ſent by *Tychicus*, ſeems very likely from ch. vi. 21, 22.

AN EXPOSITION, &c.

The Epiſtle of PAUL the Apoſtle to the *PHILIPPIANS.*

PHILIPPI was a *Roman* colony, and the chief city of one part of *Macedonia*, *Acts* xvi. 12. it is by *Appianus* called *Datos*, which was its original name; and by *Diodorus Siculus* it is called *Crenidæ* [a], from the fountains about it; and it took its name *Philippi*, from *Philip* king of *Macedon*, father of *Alexander* the great, who rebuilt and fortified it; near this place a famous battle was fought, and a victory obtained by *Auguſtus Cæſar* and *Mark Antony*, over *Brutus* and *Caſſius*; it is now called *Chrixopolis*, properly *Chryſopolis*, from the plenty of golden mines near it: here the Apoſtle was directed by a viſion, to go and preach the Goſpel; and which was ſucceeded, to the converſion of *Lydia*, and the jailor, and their families; which laid the foundation of a Goſpel church in this place, to whom this Epiſtle is written; and which was written by the Apoſtle when he was a priſoner at *Rome*, as many things in it ſhew; for he more than once makes mention of his bonds, and of theſe being made manifeſt in *Cæſar*'s palace, and of ſome of *Cæſar*'s houſhold ſending their chriſtian ſalutations to this church: Dr. *Hammond* makes the date of this Epiſtle to be the year 59, and Dr. *Lightfoot* places it in the year 60, and the ſixth of *Nero*: the occaſion of it was this, the *Philippians* to whom the Apoſtle was very dear, he being the firſt preacher of the Goſpel to them, and the inſtrument of their converſion, hearing that he was a priſoner at *Rome*, ſend their miniſter and paſtor *Epaphroditus* to him, to viſit him, and by him a preſent to ſupport him under his afflicted circumſtances, and who related to him the caſe of this church; and at his departure he ſent by him this letter; the deſign of which is, to expreſs his love and affection to them; to give them an account of his bonds, and the uſefulneſs of them, and how he was ſupported under them; to encourage them under all their afflictions and perſecutions, they endured for the ſake of Chriſt; to excite them to love, unity, and peace, among themſelves; to caution them againſt falſe teachers, *Judaizing* chriſtians, that were for joining *Moſes* and Chriſt, law and Goſpel, works and grace together, in the buſineſs of ſalvation; to exhort them to a holy life and converſation, and to return them thanks for their kind preſent.

CHAP. I.

THIS chapter contains the inſcription of the Epiſtle; the Apoſtle's ſalutation of the *Philippians*; an account of his thankſgivings, prayers, and affection for them, and confidence of them; a narrative of his ſufferings, and the uſe of them; and an exhortation to a converſation becoming the Goſpel, to abide by it, and ſuffer chearfully for it. The inſcription is in ver. 1. in which are mentioned by name, the perſons that ſubſcribed the Epiſtle, *Paul* and *Timothy*; and who are deſcribed by their character, ſervants of Jeſus Chriſt; and alſo the perſons to whom the Epiſtle was ſent, by the place of their abode, *Philippi*; the members of the church by their general character, ſaints in Chriſt Jeſus; and the officers of it, by thoſe that are peculiar to them as ſuch, biſhops and deacons: the ſalutation is in ver. 2. and then follows a thankſgiving for them to God, which was made in prayer, and upon every remembrance of them at the throne of grace, and that for their conſtant fellowſhip in the Goſpel, ver. 3, 4, 5. and the Apoſtle expreſſes his ſtrong confidence of the good work of grace being begun in them, and of the performance of it, until the day of Chriſt; grounded upon a judgment of charity, and a belief of their being partakers of the ſame grace with himſelf, ver. 6, 7. and declares the moſt tender and affectionate love to them, for the truth of which he calls God to witneſs, ver. 8. and as a proof of it, puts up ſeveral petitions for them; that they might have an increaſe of love, and ſpiritual knowledge, judgment, and ſenſe, that ſo they might be capable of trying and approving things that differ, and which are the moſt excellent of them; that they might be ſincere and harmleſs in their lives, and always doing good works in the ſtrength of Chriſt, and to the glory of God, ver. 9, 10, 11. next follows an account of his bonds and impriſonment, and the uſefulneſs of them; as that they were for the further ſpread of the Goſpel in many places, and even in *Cæſar*'s palace, ver. 12, 13. yea, by means of them ſeveral of the miniſtring brethren were the more emboldened to preach the Goſpel without fear of men; tho' there was a difference among them, ſome preached Chriſt of envy, ſtrife, and contention, thinking to add to the Apoſtle's troubles, and others, of good-will, and of love to the Apoſtle, who they knew was ſet for the defence of the Goſpel, ver. 14, 15, 16, 17. upon all which the Apoſtle gives his ſentiments, and makes his reflexions, that whatever were the views of ſome men in preaching, it was, and ever would be, conſtant matter of joy to him that Chriſt was preached, ver. 18. yea, he was ſatisfied, that the ill deſigned by ſome to him would be over-ruled for his good, by means of the prayers of the ſaints, and the ſupply of the Spirit; for he had a ſure and well-grounded hope and expectation, that he ſhould never be brought to ſhame and confuſion, but that Chriſt would be magnified in him living and dying; for he knew that both his life, and his death, would be gain to Chriſt, or that it would be for the glory of Chriſt, for him to live, and his own gain ſhould he die, ver. 19, 20, 21. which put him in a ſtrait what was moſt eligible in this caſe, whether to live in the fleſh, or depart out of the world; ſeeing to live in the fleſh, and labour in the miniſtry, were fruitful and profitable, and more neceſſary and uſeful for the churches of Chriſt, and to die, and be with Chriſt were better for himſelf, ver. 22, 23, 24. but upon maturely weighing things on both ſides, like one of a truly noble public ſpirit, he inclines to the former; nay, is perſuaded, that he ſhould continue longer to be an inſtrument of increaſing the faith and joy of the Lord's people, which he knew would abound in Chriſt on his account, ſhould he be reſtored again, ver. 25, 26. And then he concludes the chapter with an exhortation to the *Philippians*, to order their converſation agreeable to the Goſpel of Chriſt, and to continue firm and unanimous in it, and uſe their utmoſt endeavours to keep it themſelves, and ſpread it among others, ver. 27. being not daunted and intimidated by the perſecutions of men, which to the perſecutors was a ſign of perdition, looked darkly, and with an ill aſpect upon them, but to the perſecuted was a token that they had an intereſt in that ſalvation which is of God, ver. 28. for as it is a gift of grace to believe in Chriſt, ſo likewiſe to ſuffer for him, ver. 29. to which the Apoſtle animates them by his own example, that which they were called unto being no other than what they had ſeen endured by him, and had heard concerning him, ver. 30.

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[a] Vid. Ptolom. Geograph. l. 3. c. 13.

Ver. 1. *Paul and Timotheus the ſervants of Jeſus Chriſt*, &c.] The Apoſtle ſets his own name firſt, as being not only ſuperior to *Timothy* in age, in office, and in character, but the ſole writer of this Epiſtle. The reaſons of his joining *Timothy* with him are, becauſe he was with him when he firſt preached at *Philippi*, and ſo was known unto the *Philippians*, and reſpected by them; and becauſe he was about to ſend him to them again, whoſe commendations he enlarges on in the Epiſtle itſelf; and to let them ſee, that there was a continued agreement between them in affection and doctrine. It ſhews indeed great humility in the Apoſtle to join with him one ſo young, and ſo much inferior to him on all accounts; tho' it muſt be obſerved, that *Timothy* was not a partner with him in compoſing the Epiſtle; he only joined in the ſalutation to this church, and approved of the letter to it, and might be the *amanuenſis* of the Apoſtle; but had no hand in the Epiſtle itſelf, which was dictated by *Paul* under divine inſpiration. He chuſes a character which agreed to them both; he does not ſay Apoſtles, for *Timothy* was no Apoſtle, tho' he himſelf was, but *ſervants of Jeſus Chriſt*; not of men; nor did they ſeek to pleaſe men by preaching the doctrines and commandments of men, and which are ſuited to the carnal reaſonings, luſts, and pleaſures of men; for then the character here aſſumed would not belong to them: but ſervants of Chriſt; and that not in ſuch ſenſe only, as all mankind are, or in right ought to be, ſince all are his creatures, and therefore ought to ſerve him; nor merely as all the ſaints in common are, being bought with the price of Chriſt's blood, and being effectually called by his grace, and ſo made willing to ſerve him from a principle of love, without ſervile fear, and with a view to his glory; but as miniſters of the word, and preachers of the Goſpel; they were his ſervants in the Goſpel, they ſerved him under the miniſterial character, and as ſuch were the ſervants of the moſt high God, the king of kings, and lord of lords; ſo that this title is far from being mean and deſpicable, it is high, honourable, and glorious. *To all the ſaints in Chriſt Jeſus which are at Philippi, with the biſhops and deacons.* The perſons to whom this Epiſtle is inſcribed are here deſcribed by the place of their abode, *Philippi*, and by the various characters they bore in the church; which was at this time very numerous, conſiſting of many members, and of proper officers, and are both taken notice of here. The members are meant by *all the ſaints in Chriſt Jeſus*; they were ſaints or holy perſons, not by *Moſes* and his law; not by ceremonial ablutions and ſacrifices, which only ſanctified to the purifying of the fleſh, but could not take away ſin, or cleanſe from it; nor by themſelves and their moral righteouſneſs; for though thereby men may outwardly appear holy and righteous, yet they remain inwardly unholy and impure; nor by baptiſm, which has no regenerating nor ſanctifying virtue in it; if perſons are not ſaints before that, they are never by it; it leaves them as it finds them, and neither takes away original or actual ſin: but theſe were ſaints in and by Chriſt; they were become holy in conſequence of being in Chriſt; men are firſt in Chriſt, and then ſaints in him; they are choſen *in him* before the world began to be holy, and in time are made new men, new creatures, are created in him unto good works by virtue of their being in him; hence he ſanctifies his church and people by his blood, they being ſo nearly related to him, and intereſted in him, and he in them; hence they being firſt of God in Chriſt, he is made ſanctification to them; and hence internal holineſs is wrought in them from Chriſt, by his Spirit; which being begun is carried on, and will be performed until the day of Chriſt; and which was the happy caſe of theſe *Philippians*, as the Apoſtle was confident of. The officers of this church were *the biſhops and deacons*. The *biſhops* were the paſtors, elders, and overſeers of the church, for a biſhop and an elder is one and the ſame; ſee *Acts* xx. 17, 28. where the elders of the church at *Epheſus* are called *overſeers* or *biſhops*; for the ſame word is uſed there as here; and the *Syriac* verſion here renders the word by קשישא, *elders*: and they deſign no other than common and ordinary paſtors; who have the name of elders from their age, gravity, and ſeniority; and that of biſhops and overſeers from the nature of their office, which is to feed, watch, inſpect, and take the overſight of the flock, miniſter ſound doctrine to them, and preſerve them from error and hereſies. It ſeems by this, and the inſtance of the church at *Epheſus*, that there were, and ſo may be, where there is neceſſity for it, more paſtors or biſhops than one in a church; unleſs it can be thought that there were more churches than one in each of theſe cities; or that the paſtors of adjacent churches are here included; neither of which ſeem to be a clear caſe, but the contrary: but then theſe paſtors or biſhops were all upon an equal foot; one had not any authority or power over another, or more authority than another; they were not metropolitan or dioceſan biſhops, but paſtors of a particular church; and were neither lords over one another, nor of God's heritage. The *deacons* were ſuch as ſerved tables, the Lord's table, the miniſters table, and the poors table; took care of the ſecular affairs of the church, received and diſburſed monies, kept the churches accounts, and provided every thing neceſſary for its temporal good. The one ſort of theſe officers were concerned with the ſouls and ſpiritual eſtate of the members of the church; the others with their bodies and temporal eſtate, by viſiting the ſick, relieving the poor, *&c.* and both theſe exhibit the true primitive plan of church-offices and diſcipline; there being no other order of offices or officers, in a chriſtian church of divine inſtitution, but paſtors and deacons; whatever elſe is introduced is without warrant, and comes from the man of ſin. Theſe officers are mentioned by the Apoſtle, not only to ſhew his reſpect to them, but to obſerve to the members of this church, that they ought to eſteem them highly for their works ſake; theſe being offices of great importance and uſefulneſs to the church, which, by having ſuch, was a truly organized church of Chriſt.

Ver. 2. *Grace be unto you*, &c.] This form of ſalutation is uſed by the Apoſtle in all his Epiſtles; ſee the note on *Rom.* i. 7.

Ver. 3. *I thank my God*, &c.] After the inſcription and ſalutation follows a thankſgiving, the object of which is God; to whom thanks is to be given at the remembrance of his name, and the perfections of his nature, and for all his mercies, temporal and ſpiritual. The Apoſtle expreſſes his propriety and intereſt in him, calling him *my God*; thereby diſtinguiſhing him from all others, the nominal and fictitious gods of the *Gentiles*, and the idols and luſts of mens hearts; he was the God whom he ſerved in the Goſpel, by whom he was ſent, and from whom he received all his furniture, and to whom he was accountable. He had a ſpecial, particular, covenant intereſt in him, had knowledge of it, and faith in it; and therefore could draw nigh to God with freedom, uſe confidence, plead promiſes, expect favours, and do all he did, whether in a way of prayer, or praiſe in faith, and therefore was acceptable unto God. This work of thankſgiving he was often employed in on account of theſe *Philippians*, even, ſays he, *upon every remembrance of you*; that is, as often as I remember you, or make mention of you to God at the throne of grace; it being a cuſtomary thing with the Apoſtle to mention by name the ſeveral churches, the care of which was upon him, in his prayers to God; ſee *Rom.* i. 9. *Eph.* i. 16. 1 *Theſſ.* i. 2. and ſo he uſed to mention this church; and whenever he did, it was with thankfulneſs. The *Arabic* verſion reads it, *for*, or *concerning all your remembrance*; meaning of himſelf, and as if the ſenſe was, that he gave thanks to God for their remembrance of him at all times, and particularly at that time, by ſending him relief in his preſent circumſtances. But the former ſenſe is preferable.

Ver. 4. *Always in every prayer of mine for you all*, &c.] The Apoſtle was a praying believer, and a praying miniſter: notwithſtanding all his gifts, and graces, and high attainments, he was not above the work and duty of prayer, and in which he was ſenſible he ſtood in need of the aſſiſtance and direction of the Spirit of God. As ſoon as he was converted he prayed, and continued to do ſo without ceaſing, as he himſelf directs; he was conſtant and aſſiduous at the throne of grace, and was concerned for others, as well as himſelf, for all the churches, and for this church, and all the ſaints in it. *Making requeſt with joy*; for what God had done for them, and continued with them. Requeſts are to be made known to God with thankſgiving. When we requeſt a favour of him, it becomes us to return thanks for what we have received from him. Thankſgiving is a branch of prayer; as we have always mercies to aſk for, we have always mercies to be thankful for.

Ver. 5. *For your fellowſhip in the Goſpel*, &c.] Or *for your communication unto the Goſpel*; that is, to the ſupport of it. Theſe *Philippians* were one of the churches of *Macedonia* the Apoſtle ſo highly commends for their liberality in 2 *Cor.* viii. 1, 2, 3. they had been very communicative to him, and thoſe that were with him, from the beginning of the Goſpel being preached to them; as the inſtances of *Lydia* and the jaylor ſhew, and which are taken notice of in this Epiſtle, ch. iv. 15, 16. And this ſame generous ſpirit ſtill continued, of which their preſent by *Epaphroditus* was an evidence; and for this the Apoſtle gives thanks, not only that they had an ability to ſupport the Goſpel, and aſſiſt Goſpel miniſters, but that they were willing to communicate, and did communicate, readily and chearfully, largely and liberally; or this may intend their *participation in the Goſpel*, as the *Arabic* verſion renders it. The Goſpel was in a very wonderful and providential manner brought unto them, and it was attended with mighty power to the converſion of them; they received it with joy and gladneſs, and chearfully ſubmitted to the ordinances of it; they had much light into it, and ſpiritual knowledge of it; and were made partakers of the bleſſings of grace, which are revealed and exhibited in it, and of the exceeding great and precious promiſes of it, for which the Apoſtle gives thanks to God; for all this was from him, and a wonderful inſtance of his grace it was. Moreover, through the Goſpel being thus brought unto them, and ſucceeded among them, they became a Goſpel-church, and had, through the Goſpel, and the ordinances of it, fellowſhip one with another; yea, they had fellowſhip with the Father, and his Son Jeſus Chriſt, unto which they were called by the Goſpel: and in this they remained *from the firſt day until now*; they continued in the Goſpel which they were made partakers of, and in fellowſhip with one another, in breaking of bread, and in prayer, and in hearing the word which they conſtantly attended to, and were bleſſed with communion with Father, Son, and Spirit to that time; and therefore the Apoſtle continued from the firſt of their receiving the Goſpel, to that moment, to give thanks to God for them on that account: for this laſt clauſe may be connected with the words in ver. 3. *I thank my God*, as well as with thoſe immediately preceding, *your fellowſhip in the Goſpel*; and ſhews not only their *perſeverance in the Goſpel*, from the firſt to the preſent time, as the *Ethiopic* verſion renders it, for which he was abundantly thankful; but the continuance of his thankfulneſs on that account, from his firſt acquaintance with them to that time.

Ver. 6. *Being confident of this very thing*, &c.] The reaſon of his thankſgiving, and of his making requeſt with joy continually on the behalf of this church, was the confidence and full perſuaſion he had of this ſame thing; of which he could be as much aſſured as of any thing in the world: *that he which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jeſus Chriſt*; by this *good work* is not meant the preaching of the Goſpel among them, nor a Goſpel church-ſtate ſet up in the midſt of them; for though the preaching of the Goſpel was a good work, and iſſued well in the converſion of many, in their edification and comfort, and which was ſtill continued; and though a Goſpel church-ſtate was erected among them, and was now flouriſhing, yet the Apoſtle could not aſſure himſelf of the continuance of either of them, eſpecially until the day of Chriſt; and both have been removed from thence many hundreds of years ago: nor is their liberal communication to the ſupport of the Goſpel intended; for tho' this was a good work, yet this was not wrought by God but by themſelves, and was not wrought in them, but done by them; nor their good lives and converſations. The *Syriac* verſion indeed renders it *good works*; but theſe can't be deſigned, for the ſame reaſons as before; for tho' they are good things, and anſwer many valuable ends and purpoſes, yet they are external works done by men, and not internal ones wrought in them by God; wherefore by it is undoubtedly meant the work of grace upon their hearts, ſometimes called the work of faith, becauſe that is a principal part of it: this is God's work, and not man's, as may be concluded from the nature of the work itſelf, which is the transforming of a man by the renewing of him, a regeneration, a reſurrection, and a creation, and therefore requires almighty power; and from the condition man is in by nature, he is dead in ſin, and has no power to act ſpiritually, and much leſs what is equal to ſuch a work as this; he has no will, deſire, and inclination to it, but all the reverſe; and if he had, he could no more effect it, than the dry bones in *Ezekiel*'s viſion could cauſe themſelves to live. This is the work of God. Sometimes it is aſcribed to the Father, who regenerates, calls by his grace, reveals his Son, and draws ſouls unto him; and ſometimes to the Son, who quickens whom he will, whoſe ſpirit is given, whoſe image is inſtamp'd, and out of whoſe fulneſs grace is received; but more commonly it is attributed to the Spirit, who is a Spirit of regeneration, ſanctification, and faith: and this is a *good work*, as it muſt needs be, ſince it is God's work; he is the efficient cauſe of it; his good-will and pleaſure, his grace and mercy are the moving cauſe of it, and not mens works; and his good word is the means of it. The matter of it is good; it is an illumination of the underſtanding, a ſubduing of the will, a taking away of the ſtony heart, and a giving of an heart of fleſh, an infuſion of ſpiritual life, a formation of Chriſt in the ſoul, and an implantation of all grace there: it is good in its effects; it makes a man a good man, and fits and qualifies him to perform good works, which without it he cannot do; it makes a man a proper habitation for God, and gives him meetneſs for the heavenly inheritance. And this is an internal work, a work begun *in* the ſaints; nothing external is this work; not an outward reformation, which, when right, is the fruit of this good work; nor external humiliation for ſin; nor a ceſſation from the groſſer acts of ſin; nor a conformity and ſubmiſſion to Goſpel-ordinances; all which may be where this work is not: but it is ſomething within a man; as appears from the names by which it goes; ſuch as Spirit, ſo called, becauſe it is of a ſpiritual nature, wrought by the Spirit of God, and has its ſeat in the ſpirit of man; it is called the inward man, which is renewed day by day; a ſeed that remains in him, and a root which is out of ſight, and oil in the veſſel, the heart, as diſtinct from the lamp of an outward profeſſion: as alſo from the ſeveral things, which, together, make up the ſubject of it; it is the underſtanding which is enlightened; the will which is ſubdued; the heart and inward parts in which the laws of God are written; the mind and conſcience, which are ſprinkled with the blood of Chriſt, and cleanſed; and the affections, which are ſet on divine objects. This is a *begun* work, and but a begun one. It may be ſaid to be begun as ſoon as light is let into the ſoul by the Spirit of God; when it ſees its loſt ſtate, and need of a ſaviour, for as the firſt thing in the old creation was light, ſo in the new; when the fear of God is put into the heart, which is the beginning of wiſdom; when love appears in the ſoul to God, to Chriſt, to his people, word, and ordinances; and when there are the ſeeing, venturing, and relying acts of faith on Chriſt, tho' there is a great deal of darkneſs, trembling, and unbelief; and when it is got thus far, and even much further, it is but a begun work; 'tis not yet finiſhed and perfect: this appears from the ſeveral parts of this work, which are imperfect, as faith, hope, love, knowledge, *&c.* from the indwelling of ſin, and corruption in the beſt of ſaints; from their various continual wants and neceſſities; from their diſclaiming perfection in this life, and their deſires after it. But the Apoſtle was confident, and ſo may every good man be confident, both for himſelf and others, that God who has, and where-ever he has begun the good work of grace, will *perform*, finiſh it, or bring it to an end, as the word here uſed ſignifies: and this the ſaints may aſſure themſelves of, from many conſiderations; as from the nature of the work itſelf, which is called living water, becauſe it always continues, a well of it, becauſe of its abundance, and is ſaid to ſpring up to eternal life; becauſe it is inſeparably connected with it, where there is grace, there will be glory; grace is the beginning of glory, and glory the perfection of grace; this work of grace is an incorruptible ſeed, and which remains in the ſaints, and can never be loſt; it is a principle of life, the root of which is hid in Chriſt, and that itſelf is maintained by him, and can never be deſtroyed by men or devils: and alſo from the concern God has in it, who is unchangeable in his nature, purpoſes, promiſes, gifts, and calling; who is a rock, and his work is perfect ſooner or later; who is faithful, and will never forſake the work of his hands, and has power to accompliſh it; and who has promiſed his people, that they ſhall grow ſtronger and ſtronger, that they ſhall not depart from him, and he will never leave them. Moreover, this may be concluded from the indwelling of the Spirit, as a ſpirit of ſanctification, as the earneſt and ſeal of the inheritance, and that for ever; and from the interceſſion and fulneſs of grace in Chriſt, and the ſaints union to him, and ſtanding in him; as well as from the impotency of any to hinder the performance of this work, as ſin, ſatan, or the world: to which may be added the glory of all the three perſons herein concerned; for if this work is not finiſhed, the glory of God the Father in election, in the covenant of grace, in the contrivance of ſalvation, in the miſſion of his Son, the glory of Chriſt in redemption, and of the Spirit in ſanctification, would be entirely loſt: wherefore it may be depended on, this work will be performed where-ever 'tis begun, and that *until the day of Jeſus Chriſt*; meaning either the day of death, when Chriſt takes the ſouls of believers to himſelf, and they ſhall be for ever with him, when this work of grace upon the ſoul will be finiſhed; for God, who is the guide of his people, will be their God and guide even unto death: or elſe the laſt day, the day of judgment, the reſurrection day, when Chriſt ſhall appear and raiſe the dead, and free the bodies of the ſaints from all their bondage, corruption, vileneſs, and weakneſs, which will be putting the laſt and finiſhing hand to this good work; nor will even the bodies of the ſaints be quitted by the Spirit of God till this is done.

Ver. 7. *Even as it is meet for me to think this of you all*, &c.] Some connect theſe words with ver. 3, 4, 5. as if the Apoſtle's ſenſe was, that it became him to be thus affected to them, and mindful of them in his prayers, to make requeſt for them with joy, and give thanks for their fellowſhip in the Goſpel, and continuance in it; but they ſeem rather to refer to his confidence of the good work begun in them, being perform'd until the day of Chriſt, and which was but juſt and right in him to entertain and aſſert; and may be underſtood either of a judgment of faith, or a judgment of charity: in a judgment of faith the Apoſtle might be confident, and ſo may every other man, that all that believe in Chriſt truly, and have a good work begun in them, that ſhall be finiſhed; for nothing is more certain, nor is there any thing that a man can be more confident of, than this, that he that believes in Chriſt ſhall be ſaved; and this the Apoſtle was fully perſuaded of with reſpect to every one in this church, that was a believer in Chriſt; and in a judgment of charity, it was meet and proper, juſt and right, to think, judge, hope, and believe ſo of every one of them, ſince there was nothing in their profeſſion, conduct, and converſation, ſhewing the contrary: *becauſe I have you in my heart*; or *you have me in your heart*; and either reading carries in it a reaſon why it was fit and right that he ſhould ſo think and judge concerning them; becauſe they were, as the *Syriac* verſion renders it, *put* or *laid* upon his heart; whenever he was at the throne of grace, his heart was enlarged on their account, his affections were wonderfully drawn out towards them, and they were ever in his mind, *both in his bonds, and in the defence of the Goſpel*; whether in the priſon, or in the pulpit, or whatever he was about in the cauſe or affairs of religion, they were in his heart and thoughts; from whence he concluded they muſt belong to God, the good work muſt be in them, and would be performed; 'tis a token for good when the Lord lays the caſe of any upon the hearts of his miniſters, or any of his people: and alſo, becauſe they had him in their hearts, they were affectionate to him, ever thoughtful and mindful of him; and had lately given a ſpecimen of their love to him, as a ſervant of Chriſt, and priſoner of the Lord; and as they, ſo he might know, that they had paſſed from death to life, becauſe they loved the brethren, and him in particular for his work ſake, who had been an uſeful inſtrument in the hand of God among them: and another reaſon follows, *inaſmuch as both in my bonds, and in the defence and confirmation of the Goſpel, ye all are partakers of my grace*; or *partakers with me of grace*; meaning either that they were partakers of the ſame electing, redeeming, adopting, juſtifying, pardoning, and regenerating grace, as he was; had obtained the ſame like precious faith in Chriſt, and knowledge of him, as he had, tho' not to the ſame degree; and therefore might well be aſſured of the performance of the good work in them, having no more to doubt of their ſalvation than of his own: or rather by *grace*, or as the *Vulgate Latin* verſion reads it, *joy*, he deſigns his ſufferings for Chriſt, and the ſake of his Goſpel; which he ſo calls, becauſe it was given him by God, as a token of his favour, and a mark of honour and reſpect, to ſuffer for Chriſt, as well as believe in him; and therefore rejoiced that he was counted worthy to ſuffer ſhame for his name. Now theſe *Philippians* were partakers with him of this, both in his *bonds*, by ſympathizing with him, praying for him, ſending relief unto him, and by ſuffering ſuch like things themſelves; and *in the defence and confirmation of the Goſpel*, whether by ſuffering, preaching, or writing; they ſtood by him, encouraged and aſſiſted him, when others forſook him, and laid difficulties and diſcouragements in his way; on account of all which it was but meet and proper he ſhould entertain ſuch ſentiments of them as before expreſſed.

Ver. 8. *For God is my record*, &c.] Which is all one as ſwearing by him; 'tis in form of an oath, being a ſolemn appeal to him as the ſearcher of hearts, for the uprightneſs of his mind, the ſincerity of his expreſſions, and the ſtrength of his affections: *how greatly I long after you all*; the common members, as well as the biſhops and deacons, the weak as well as the ſtrong believers, the poor as well as the rich; the Apoſtle's reſpects were univerſal, and without diſtinction: he longed after their ſpiritual welfare, an increaſe of gifts and grace among them; he was their ſpiritual Father, and he hankered after them, as parents after their children; he longed to ſee them, that he might enjoy their company and converſation, have communion with them, and impart ſome ſpiritual gift unto them: and this he did *in the bowels of Jeſus Chriſt*; not with an human and carnal affection, but with a chriſtian and ſpiritual one; with a love which came from Chriſt, and was in imitation of him, and on account of their being in him, loved by him, belonging to him, and being believers in him: it was in the moſt tender manner that he loved them, and was affected to them; the phraſe denotes, that his love towards them was internal, in his heart, and was moſt tender and ſtrong; and like to that tender concern Chriſt had for them, and which he ſtirred up in him.

Ver. 9. *And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more*, &c.] As a proof of his great affection for them, he puts up this petition on their account; which ſuppoſes that they had love, as they muſt certainly have, ſince the good work of grace was begun in them; for where-ever the work of the Spirit of God is, there is love, which is a fruit of the Spirit; and where there is not love, there cannot be that good work; for it ſignifies nothing what a man ſays, nor what he has, nor what he does, if love be wanting; but this grace was in theſe *Philippians*, they had love to God, to Chriſt, to one another, to all the ſaints, and to the miniſters of the Goſpel, and particularly to the Apoſtle, of which they had lately given him a proof: and it alſo ſuppoſes, that this grace, which was implanted in them in regeneration, was in exerciſe, which is meant by its *abounding*; it was not only a principle in the heart, and expreſſed by the mouth, but it was in action; it lay not in word, and in tongue, but ſhewed itſelf towards the objects of it in deed and in truth; and it was in a very large and lively exerciſe; it abounded, it flowed and overflowed; it roſe up out of the heart, as water out of a fountain; it was as grace is ſaid to be, a well of living water, ſpringing up, and ſpreading itſelf various ways; wherefore the Apoſtle did not pray that they might have love, nor merely that their love might abound, but that it might abound *yet*, might continue to abound, that there might be no ſtop put to its flow and exerciſe, and ſo concerns the perſeverance of it, and its actings; and that it might abound *more and more*; which regards the increaſe of it, and enlargement of its exerciſe. The *Syriac* verſion reads it, that it *may be multiplied and abound*; intimating, that ſpiritual love can't be exceeded in; there's no going to an extreme in the exerciſe of it; natural love may, but not ſpiritual; God and Chriſt can never be loved too much, nor ſaints, as ſaints, tho' they may as men: wherefore let love abound ever ſo much to theſe objects, it is capable of abounding more and more, without any danger of exceſs; and it is to be wiſhed for; for where it is ever ſo large and abundant in its actings, it is not perfect, nor will it be in this life; ſo that there is always room for ſuch a petition; beſides, the Apoſtle knew how apt love is to grow cold, and ſaints to ſink in their ſpiritual affections thro' the prevalence of ſin, the cares of the world, and temptations of ſatan: he adds, *in knowledge, and in all judgment*; that is, either *with* knowledge and judgment; and the ſenſe be, that as their love abounded, ſo their knowledge might be increaſed, and their judgment in ſpiritual things be better informed and eſtabliſhed. Some chriſtians are more affectionate, and leſs knowing; others are more knowing, and leſs affectionate; it is well when love and knowledge go and keep pace together: or it may be rendered *by knowledge*, ſuggeſting, that love is increaſed thereby, which is true; for the more ſaints know of God and Chriſt, the more they love them; and the more they know of one another's grace and experience, the more they love each other: by *knowledge*, may be meant the knowledge of God; not that which is general, is by the light of nature, and is very obſcure and inſufficient to ſalvation; but that which is ſpecial, is of God in Chriſt, as a God gracious and merciful, as a Covenant-God and Father in him; and which at beſt is imperfect, and needs increaſing: and alſo knowledge of Chriſt; not general, notional, and ſpeculative, as that he is the Son of God, the Meſſiah and Saviour of the world in common; but that which is ſpecial, ſpiritual, and ſaving; and which is a knowledge of approbation, whereby a ſoul approves of Chriſt above all others, as a Saviour; a fiducial one, whereby it truſts in him, and commits itſelf to him; an experimental and practical one, to which is joined a chearful obedience to his commands and ordinances, and becomes an appropriating one; yet is in this life imperfect, and ſo needs increaſing; and all means ſhould be uſed in order thereunto: moreover, the knowledge of one another may be included; an increaſe of which is neceſſary to promote brotherly love, and make communion with one another delightful and profitable. By all *judgment*, or *ſenſe*, as in the *Greek* text, is deſigned a ſpiritual apprehenſion, judgment, and ſenſation of things. The *Syriac* verſion renders it, *all ſpiritual underſtanding*, and may intend a ſpiritual perception, and ſenſe of the love of God ſhed abroad in the heart, an enlarged experience of the grace of God, and particularly faith, which is expreſſed by all the five ſenſes; as by *ſeeing* the Son, the glory, fulneſs, ſuitableneſs, and excellency of him, and the unſeen glories of another world; by *hearing* the joyful ſound, the voice of Chriſt in the Goſpel, ſo as to underſtand and diſtinguiſh it; by *ſmelling* a ſweet ſmell in the perſon, blood, righteouſneſs, and ſacrifice of Chriſt, which are of a ſweet-ſmelling ſavour to faith, as are alſo the things of God, and of the Spirit of God; and by *taſting* how good the Lord is, how ſweet is his word, and delicious his fruit; and by *feeling*, laying hold on Chriſt, embracing and handling him, the word of life: and now a believer having theſe his ſpiritual ſenſes exerciſed, he is capable of diſcerning between good and evil, and ſo of approving things moſt excellent; which is the end of this petition, as appears from the following words.

Ver. 10. *That ye may approve things that are excellent*, &c.] Or *try things that differ*. There are ſome things that differ one from other; as morality and grace, earthly things, and heavenly things, carnal and ſpiritual, temporal and eternal things, law and Goſpel, the doctrines of men, and the doctrines of Chriſt; all which differ as much as chaff and wheat, as gold, ſilver, precious ſtones, and wood, hay, ſtubble. Theſe are to be tried and proved; they are not to be received without diſtinction, but ſhould be examined, which is right and beſt to be choſen and preferr'd; and to ſuch trial and examination 'tis neceſſary that a man ſhould be transformed, by the renewing of his mind, that he ſhould have ſpiritual light, knowledge, and experience, have his ſpiritual ſenſes exerciſed to diſcern the difference of things, and alſo the guidance, direction, and influence of the Spirit of God: and this trial muſt be made, not according to carnal reaſon, and the judgment and dictates of it; for the moſt excellent things are above it, and out of its ſphere, and therefore judged fooliſh, and rejected by it; but according to the word of God, the ſcriptures of truth, in the light of the divine Spirit, and with ſpiritual judgment and ſenſe; when ſome things will be found excellent, as Chriſt, and the knowledge of him in his perſon, offices, grace, righteouſneſs, blood, ſacrifice, and ſatisfaction, and the ſeveral truths of the Goſpel relating to peace, pardon, juſtification, adoption, ſanctification, and eternal life; and of the ſeveral doctrines of the Goſpel, ſome will appear in their nature and uſe more excellent than others, more grand and ſublime; ſuch as concern the ſovereign and diſtinguiſhing grace of God, the glory of Chriſt, and the ſalvation of the elect; ſome being milk for babes, others meat for ſtrong men. And theſe being tried and proved, firſt by the word of God, and then by the experience of the ſaints, are to be approved above thouſands of gold and ſilver, and eſteemed more than our neceſſary food; even the ſincere milk of the word, as it is by new-born babes, as well as the ſtrong meat of it by the adult, and all to be highly valued and abode by, and held faſt. *That ye may be ſincere*; or *pure*, as the *Syriac* verſion renders it; pure as the ſun, diſcerned and judged by the light of it, as the word ſignifies, which diſcovers motes, faults, and flaws; in which, ſome think, is a metaphor taken either from the eagle, which holds up its young againſt the ſun, and ſuch as can bear the light of it ſhe retains as her own, but ſuch that cannot ſhe rejects as a ſpurious brood; or from perſons in traffick, who hold up the goods they are buying to the ſun, to ſee if they can obſerve any fault in them: ſo ſuch may be ſaid to be ſincere, or pure, who are pure in heart, life, and converſation, whoſe principles and practices will bear the teſt of light; ſuch are ſincere, who are like honey without wax, and fine flour without leaven, that have no mixture of corruption in doctrine, life, or manners; whoſe grace is genuine and right; whoſe faith is unfeigned; whoſe love to God, and Chriſt, and one another, is without diſſimulation; whoſe hope is lively, and of a ſoul-purifying nature, and is built on a good foundation; and whoſe repentance is attended with genuine effects, and proper fruits; whoſe principles are unmixed; who don't corrupt or adulterate the word of God, but deſire and retain the ſincere milk of it, and hold the myſtery of the faith in a pure conſcience; whoſe worſhip is alſo pure and ſpiritual, who worſhip God in ſpirit and truth, under the influence, and by the aſſiſtance of the Spirit of God, and with their whole hearts and ſpirits, and according to the truth of the Goſpel; who keep the ordinances as they were delivered, without any human inventions, corruptions, and mixtures; who are ſincere in their hearts, pure and ſound in heart, ſimple, plain hearted, and ſingle eyed; chuſe to be good, rather than ſeem to be ſo; whoſe deſires after God, and divine things, and whoſe affections for them, are true and real, and proceed from the bottom of their hearts; and who have their converſation in the world by the grace of God, in ſimplicity and godly ſincerity: and ſuch the Apoſtle wiſhes theſe ſaints to be, and adds, *and without offence until the day of Chriſt*; to God, as conſidered in the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, in which they are perfectly without offence, and will always continue ſo; or in their walk and converſation before God, in which, tho' they may in many things offend, yet not be guilty of any notorious iniquity, and much leſs of living in it: and to themſelves, to their own conſciences, exerciſing a conſcience void of offence towards God and men; acting according to that light they have received, and thoſe principles they have embraced and profeſſed; deſiring to be kept from all evil, that it might not grieve and wound them; and doing nothing in things of an indifferent nature, with offence, or againſt the dictates of conſcience, and to the violation of it: and alſo to others, to *Jew* or *Gentile*, to the world, or to the church of God, by avoiding every thing that is offenſive to either; not good things, but evil ones, and thoſe that are indifferent; that peace may be preſerved, and their own good may not be evil ſpoken of; that the children of God may not be grieved, ſtaggered, and ſtumbled, nor ſinners hardened, or have any occaſion to blaſpheme. The phraſe denotes an harmleſs life and converſation, and a continuance in it to the end, to the day of death, or coming of our Lord, which is to be loved, longed, wiſhed, and looked for, and to be always had in view; and that to engage to a becoming life and converſation, with ſincerity, and without offence, ſince in that day all hearts and actions will be expoſed and laid open.

Ver. 11. *Being filled with the fruits of righteouſneſs*, &c.] Good works. Some think alms-deeds, or acts of liberality and bounty are here particularly intended; and that reſpect is had to the generoſity of theſe *Philippians* to the Apoſtle, and others: and true it is, that theſe are ſometimes ſo called, as in 2 *Cor.* ix. 10. but rather good works in general are meant, which are called *fruits*, becauſe like fruits, they ſpring from a ſeed, even from the incorruptible ſeed of grace in the heart, implanted there in regeneration; and becauſe they are owing, as the fruits of the earth are, to divine bounty and goodneſs, to the dews of grace, the riſing and bright ſhining of the ſun of righteouſneſs, and to the ſouth gale of the bleſſed Spirit, when brought forth aright; and alſo becauſe they are pleaſant and delightful, they are well-pleaſing to Chriſt, and are acceptable to God thro' Chriſt; and likewiſe, becauſe they are profitable, not to God, but to men: and they are ſtiled fruits of *righteouſneſs*, either of imputed righteouſneſs, the righteouſneſs of Chriſt imputed without works, the effects of which are good works; for nothing more ſtrongly influences and engages men to the performance of good works, than a view of their free juſtification by the righteouſneſs of Chriſt; hence there can be no juſtification by works, ſince theſe are the fruits and effects of juſtification, and not the cauſe: or of righteouſneſs and holineſs implanted in the ſoul by the Spirit of God, the new man, which is created unto good works, and in or unto righteouſneſs and true holineſs; and which naturally tends thereunto, and which ſtimulates and qualifies men for the performance of the ſame: or good works are ſo called, becauſe they are performed by a righteous man; for as none but a good tree can bring forth good fruit, ſo none but a tree of righteouſneſs can bear fruits of righteouſneſs; or none but a righteous man do works of righteouſneſs, which are truly ſuch: or becauſe they are ſuch as are done according to the righteous law of God; for this is a neceſſary requiſite of a good work, that it be according to the command and will of God; for otherwiſe, let it have never ſuch a ſhew of religion and goodneſs, 'tis no good work. The *Alexandrian* copy, the *Vulgate Latin*, and *Ethiopic* verſions, read, *fruit*, in the ſingular number, but other copies and verſions, read, *fruits*; and the Apoſtle wiſhes, that theſe ſaints might be *filled* with them; that is, that they might be like trees laden with fruit, which have fruit on every branch, bough, and twigs; that they might abound in the performance of them, be ready to, and fruitful in every good work; not doing a few of one ſort only, but performing continually all manner of good works; and ſo be like fruitful trees that yield their fruit in their ſeaſon, and do not ceaſe from ſo doing, but ſtill bring forth fruit, and that in large quantities: *which are by Jeſus Chriſt*; who is the green fir-tree, from whom all fruit, as of grace, ſo of good works, is found; for all good works, which are truly and properly ſo, ſpring from union to Chriſt, and are owing to his grace: ſouls are married to Chriſt, that they may bring forth fruit unto God; they are created in him unto good works, and are engrafted in him the true vine; and thro' abiding in him, and deriving life, grace, and ſtrength from him, bear fruit, which otherwiſe they could not do: without Chriſt no good work can be performed; 'tis thro' him, ſtrengthening his people, they do all they do; for they are inſufficient to do any thing of themſelves, but his grace is ſufficient for them, and his ſtrength is made perfect in their weakneſs. He is the exemplar and pattern, according to which they do their good works; and they are motives drawn and taken from him, from his love, from the doctrines of grace relating to him, which are the moſt powerful, and do moſt ſtrongly work upon the ſaints to perform theſe things; and which, under his grace, and the influence of it, are directed *unto the glory and praiſe of God*: they are done by believers in Chriſt, not in order to obtain eternal life and happineſs for themſelves, which they know is the gift of God, and entirely owing to his free grace and abundant mercy; nor to gain honour and applauſe from men, but to glorify God; who is glorified when his people bring forth much fruit, and which alſo is the occaſion of others glorifying him likewiſe: and this end is neceſſary to a good work, that it be done to the glory of God; for if any thing elſe is in view and not that, let it have ever ſuch an appearance of a good work, it is none at all: and indeed, here we have all the requiſites of a good work; as that it ſhould be done according to the righteous law and will of God; that it ſprings from a principle of grace and holineſs; that it be performed in the name, grace, and ſtrength of Chriſt, and with a view to the honour and glory of God. The *Ethiopic* verſion reads, *in* or *to his* (Chriſt's) *glory, and the praiſe of God*; and the *Arabic* verſion thus, *to the glory of God and his praiſe*; and ſo the deſign of the clauſe is to ſhew, either that both the glory of Chriſt and the praiſe of God are concerned in every truly good work; or that the glory of God ſecretly, and his praiſe openly, are to be ſought therein; even all honour and glory, an abundance of it, and that continually; aſcribing nothing to ourſelves, but attributing all to him, acknowledging when we have done all we can, we are but unprofitable ſervants.

Ver. 12. *But I would ye ſhould underſtand brethren*, &c.] The church at *Philippi* having heard of the Apoſtle's troubles, he was very deſirous that they ſhould have a true and right underſtanding of them, and eſpecially of the uſe they had been of, and were like to be of more and more; and that partly that ſuch as were weak among them might not be offended and ſtaggered, and partly that all might be comforted; as alſo that they might be animated and encouraged hereby, to endure with patience and chearfulneſs, whatſoever afflictions might befal them for the ſake of Chriſt: his ſufferings are more obſcurely expreſſed in the next clauſe, and more clearly in the following verſe, *that the things which happened unto me*; by which he intends, not any thing done by him, or his labour in the miniſtry, which had been greatly ſucceded for the ſpread of the Goſpel; as the *Syriac* verſion ſuggeſts, rendering the phraſe, דסוערני דילי, *that my work makes more abundant progreſs in the Goſpel*; but his ſufferings on account of the Goſpel, which tho' ſaid to happen, were not things of chance but of appointment; for as all the ſufferings of Chriſt the head, were by the determinate counſel and foreknowledge of God, ſo are thoſe of all the members of his myſtical body, and of his miniſters who are appointed to theſe things, and they for them; of which Chriſt has given previous notice, ſo that they do not come unexpected, but are looked for by them; nor are they over diſtreſſed with them, being ſupported with the preſence, Spirit, grace, and favour of God; hence they can rejoice in them, in hope of the glory of God; and as the afflictions of Goſpel-miniſters, the quality and quantity of them, are fixed and ſettled by divine appointment, and which accordingly come upon them, ſo the uſe of them is alſo determined, and which have their ſure and certain effect as the Apoſtles had; for the very things by which men deſigned to have hindred the ſpread of the Goſpel, he ſays, *have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the Goſpel*. The Goſpel, tho' it is good news and glad tidings of peace, pardon, righteouſneſs, and ſalvation by Chriſt; yet is very diſagreeable to carnal men, they are enemies to it, and do all they can to ſtop its progreſs, to ſhut the open door of it, and hinder its courſe by ſpeaking reproachfully of it, and writing againſt it, and eſpecially by perſecuting its profeſſors, and particularly its miniſters; which oftentimes proves rather a furtherance than an hindrance of it; for hereby the Goſpel, like gold and ſilver tried in the fire, ſhines out the more brightly, with more luſtre and glory, and has the greater influence on the minds of men; perſecution in one place has often been the means of carrying and ſpreading the Goſpel in many others; ſee *Acts* viii. 1, 5, 6. and xi. 19, 20, 21. and has been God's ordinance for the converſion of multitudes of ſouls, where it has been the fierceſt and hotteſt; inſomuch that it became a common ſaying in primitive times, that the blood of the martyrs was the ſeed of the church; and hereby alſo the Goſpel has been confirmed, and they that have embraced it have been the more eſtabliſhed in it. The Apoſtle's ſufferings and bonds, were for the confirmation and defence of the Goſpel.

Ver. 13. *So that my bonds in Chriſt*, &c.] What he had more darkly hinted before, he more clearly expreſſes here; the things that happened to him were his bonds; he was now a priſoner at *Rome* and in chains; tho' he had the liberty of dwelling alone in his own hired houſe, and of his friends coming to ſee him and hear him, yet he was bound with a chain, and under the care and guard of a ſoldier continually, who held one end of it. Theſe bonds of his were not for debt, which he took care not to run into, but choſe rather to work with his own hands, and ſo miniſtring to his own and the neceſſities of others, that he might not eat any man's bread for nought; nor for any capital crime, as murder, or theſt, or any thing that was worthy of death or of bonds; but his bonds were in Chriſt, or for Chriſt's ſake, for profeſſing Chriſt and preaching his Goſpel; he was a priſoner in the Lord, or for his ſake; ſee *Epheſ.* iv. 1. The uſe of his ſufferings, which is more generally ſignified in the preceding verſe, is here and in the next more particularly related, and the ſeveral inſtances of it given. Theſe his bonds for the ſake of Chriſt, he ſays, *are manifeſt in all the palace, and in all other places*, or *my bonds are manifeſt in Chriſt*, as the words may be read; that is, by the means of Chriſt, he cauſing them to be taken notice of by men, and ſome of the firſt rank: by his bonds being manifeſt may be meant he himſelf who was bound; who by his bonds became known to perſons, to whom in all probability he would otherwiſe have remained unknown; as to *Felix*, and *Feſtus*, and king *Agrippa*, and others in *Cæſar*'s court: or the Goſpel for the ſake of which he was bound; this was made manifeſt and became known, not barely notionally, but ſavingly and experimentally; and even Chriſt himſelf the ſubſtance of it, for whom he was laid in bonds, by this means came to be known, *in all the palace*. The *Arabic* verſion reads it, *in the palace of the Emperor*. The word *prætorium* here uſed, ſignifies ſometimes the judgment hall, or court of judicature belonging to the *Roman* governors, as *Herod* and *Pilate*; ſee *Acts* xxiii. 35. *John* xviii. 28, 33. and xix. 9. and if it deſigns any ſuch court at *Rome*, then the ſenſe is, that thro' the Apoſtle's being ſent a priſoner to *Rome*, and his cauſe heard in the *prætorium*, or judgment-hall, he and the cauſe of his bonds came to be known by the judges in that court; and which might be the means of the converſion of ſome of them: ſometimes it ſignifies the general's pavilion in the camp, and ſometimes the Emperor's palace at

Rome, he being the chief *prætor* or magiſtrate; and ſo here it ſeems to deſign *Nero*'s houſe or court, where the Goſpel thro' the Apoſtle's bonds, had made its way to the converſion of many there; ſee chap. iv. 22. ***and in all other places***; or as the *Arabic* verſion renders it, ***with all other men***; for it may be underſtood either of men or places; and that Chriſt and his Goſpel came to be known thro' the Apoſtle's ſufferings, not only in the court of judicature where his cauſe was tried, or in *Cæſar*'s palace, and to many of his courtiers, but in other places in *Rome*, and parts of the empire, and to many perſons there, both *Jews* and *Gentiles*; ſo that what was intended for the diſadvantage of the Goſpel, proved for the ſervice of it.

Ver. 14. *And many of the brethren in the Lord*, &c.] This is another inſtance of the uſefulneſs of the Apoſtle's ſufferings, and another proof of their being for the furtherance of the Goſpel; they were not only the means of the converſion of many that were without, but were very encouraging and ſtrengthening to them that were within the church, and to many that were in the miniſtry; who are called *brethren*, ſome real, others nominal; being partakers of the grace of God, at leaſt in profeſſion, or otherwiſe they would not have been fit to have been miniſters of the word, nor members of a Goſpel-church, which was neceſſary to their being regularly ſent forth; and whom the Apoſtle calls and owns as brethren in the miniſtry, being ſent forth by Chriſt, at leaſt ſome of them, and having the ſame commiſſion to preach the Goſpel as he had; tho' they had not equal gifts and qualifications with him: he ſtiles them brethren *in the Lord*, to diſtinguiſh them from the *Jews* at *Rome*, who were his brethren according to the fleſh; and to expreſs their ſpiritual character and relation, and point out the work of the Lord, in which they were jointly concerned with him: now tho' not all the brethren, yet many of them were greatly affected with, and influenced by the Apoſtle's patient and chearfully ſuffering for Chriſt; inſomuch that as he ſays, ***waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to ſpeak the word without fear***; or as ſome read it, ***waxing confident in the Lord***; connecting the phraſe, *in the Lord*, with this word, and ſo make the ground and object of their confidence the Lord; whoſe preſence, power, grace, and Spirit emboldened them the more by the Apoſtle's bonds, to preach the Goſpel with courage and intrepidity; the Lord being on their ſide, and their helper, they feared not what men could do unto them; or elſe being animated by the Apoſtle's patience and firmneſs of mind in ſuffering, and by the uſe they ſaw his bonds were of for the ſpread of the Goſpel, they took heart and courage to ***ſpeak the word***; the word ***of God***, as the ***Vulgate Latin***, ***Syriac***, and ***Ethiopic*** verſions read; and ſo the ***Alexandrian***, ***Claromontane***, and two of ***Stephens***'s copies: meaning either the eſſential word, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who was the ſubject of their miniſtry; or the written word, the writings of *Moſes* and the prophets, the books of the Old Teſtament, according to which they ſpoke; or the Goſpel called often the word, and ſometimes with an addition, the word of truth, the word of faith, the word of reconciliation, the word of righteouſneſs, the word of life, and the word of our ſalvation, from the ſeveral ſubjects of it: this they ſpake boldly and freely, as it ought to be ſpoken, and ***without fear***; not without fear and reverence of God whoſe word it is; nor of themſelves and their own weakneſs and inabilities, which cauſe much fear and trembling; but without the fear of man, which brings a ſnare; they had no regard to the threats and menaces, the reproaches and perſecutions of men; none of theſe things moved them; they feared God and not man, and ſo went on boldly, preaching the Goſpel; which is related with pleaſure, as a fruit and effect of the Apoſtle's ſufferings, and which he doubted not would be very delightful to the *Philippians* to hear of.

Ver. 15. *Some indeed preach Chriſt*, &c.] That is, ſome ***of them***, as the *Arabic* verſion reads; ſome of the brethren, that were only ſo in profeſſion; wherefore theſe could not be the unbelieving *Jews*, who preached the Meſſiah in general, but did not believe *Jeſus* of *Nazareth* to be he, and opened the prophecies of the Old Teſtament relating to him, to the *Gentiles*; at which the Apoſtle is by ſome thought to rejoice; inaſmuch as this might be a means of giving light to them that were without any knowledge of the Meſſiah, and of leading them into an enquiry concerning him, whereby they might come to know the true Meſſiah, and believe in him: for theſe men were brethren, were members of the church, and whom the Apoſtle owned as brethren in the miniſtry; neither of which could have been admitted had they been unbelievers to Jeſus being the Meſſiah; nor would the Apoſtle have rejoiced in their miniſtry; and beſides, they preached the ſame Chriſt as other Goſpel-miniſters, only on different principles and with different views; they preached the pure Goſpel of Chriſt, they did not preach themſelves, or any doctrines of their own, but Chriſt, nor the doctrines of other men; nor did they read lectures of mere morality, as the *Gentiles* did; nor were they legaliſts as the *Jews*; they did not inſiſt on the doctrine of works, or preach up juſtification and ſalvation by the works of the law, a doctrine the Apoſtle always militated againſt, nor would he ever expreſs any pleaſure and ſatisfaction in it; nor did they preach a mixed Goſpel, partly of grace and partly of works; they were not ſuch as joined *Moſes* and Chriſt, the law and Goſpel, works and grace, together in mens ſalvation; nor did they corrupt and adulterate the word of God, or blend it with their own, or other mens inventions: but they preached Chriſt clearly and fully; he was the ſum and ſubſtance of their miniſtry; they preached up his perſon as the true God, the Son of God equal with the Father, and poſſeſſed of all divine perfections; as truly man, having aſſumed a true body and a reaſonable ſoul, and as God and man in one perſon; they preached him in all his offices, as prophet, prieſt, and king; juſtification by his righteouſneſs alone, pardon thro' his blood, atonement and ſatisfaction by his ſacrifice and ſalvation alone by him; they directed ſouls to him for all grace, and every ſupply of it; and aſſured them that tho' he died, he roſe again from the dead, is aſcended on high, is ſet down at the right hand of God, is an advocate with the Father, and ever lives to make interceſſion for his people; and when he has gathered them all in, he will come a ſecond time to judge the world in righteouſneſs, and take them to himſelf, that they may be ever with him: and yet all this they did, ***even of envy and ſtrife***; not of *envy* to Chriſt, whom they preached, but of envy to the Apoſtle; they envied his gifts, his uſefulneſs and ſucceſs in the miniſtry; and he being now in bonds, they thought it a proper opportunity to exert themſelves, and ſet up preaching Chriſt as he had done, in the cleareſt manner; hoping they ſhould meet with the ſame ſucceſs, and gain great honour and applauſe in the church, and even be able to transfer to themſelves that glory which belonged to the Apoſtle: as for their *ſtrife* and *contention*, of which they alſo preached Chriſt; it was not with other faithful miniſters of the word, about the doctrines of the Goſpel; for in theſe they were agreed with them, at leaſt, in appearance and profeſſion, and in their miniſtry ever did they raiſe ſtrifes and contentions about words, from which comes envying among the brethren; for this would not have anſwered their ends, which were vain glory and popular applauſe; but they ſtrove and contended one with another, who ſhould preach Chriſt beſt and cleareſt, or with the Apoſtle to get his glory and honour from him; they ſtrove to outvie one another, and particularly him in preaching Chriſt: but there were others of the brethren who were truly ſuch, who preached Chriſt as well as they, and upon better principles, and with better views; *and ſome alſo of good will*; or *willingly* and *freely*, as the *Arabic* verſion renders it; without any ſelfiſh end or ſiniſter view of vain glory; not moved unto it by envy or ambition; not doing it in a contentious manner, and with an ill deſign; but of pure *good will* to the Goſpel, having a real liking of it, an hearty love for it, a ſincere deſire to ſpread it, and promote the intereſt of a redeemer, and the good of ſouls by it; having in a ſpiritual and experimental manner felt the power, and taſted the ſweetneſs of it themſelves; and ſo were inwardly affected and truly diſpoſed to preach it, clear of all external motives and ambitious views; and as having a good will to the Apoſtle himſelf, whoſe heart they knew was in the Goſpel, tho' he was now hindered from the miniſtry of it; and therefore to the beſt of their abilities were deſirous of ſupplying his place, without the leaſt injury to his character.

Ver. 16. *The one preach Chriſt of contention*, &c.] That is, thoſe that preached of envy and ſtrife, and not of good will to Chriſt, to the Goſpel, to the ſouls of men, or to the Apoſtle; and tho' they preached Chriſt, yet *not ſincerely* or *purely*; not but that they delivered the ſincere milk of the word, and preached the pure Goſpel of Chriſt, without any mixture and adulteration; but then they did not preach it with a ſincere heart, and a pure intention; for this reſpects not the doctrine they preached, but their views in it, which were not honeſt and upright; they did not preach Chriſt from a principle of love to his perſon, and from an inward experience of the power of his Goſpel, and a zealous affection for it, and firm attachment to it, and with a view to the glory of God, the honour of Chriſt, and the good of immortal ſouls; but were influenced by avarice, ambition, and envy: they had very evil deſigns upon the Apoſtle, *ſuppoſing to add affliction to my bonds*; imagining that by their free and bold way of preaching Chriſt openly in the city without controul, and with impunity, it might be thought that the Apoſtle did not lie in bonds for preaching Chriſt, but for ſome other crime; or otherwiſe why were not they laid hold on and put under confinement alſo? or thinking that by ſuch numbers of them frequently preaching Chriſt about the city, it would either incenſe and ſtir up the *Jews*, *Paul*'s accuſers, to proſecute him more vigorouſly; or excite *Nero* to take more cognizance of his caſe, and either more cloſely confine him, or haſten the bringing his cauſe to a hearing, and him to puniſhment, as the ringleader of this ſect to the terror of others; but this they could not do without expoſing themſelves to great danger, unleſs they were determined to recant, as ſoon as they ſhould be taken up; wherefore it ſhould rather ſeem that their view was in preaching Chriſt to carry away the glory of it from the Apoſtle, and take it to themſelves; and fancying that he was a man of the ſame caſt with them, deſirous of vain glory, they thought it would afflict and diſtreſs him, he being in bonds, and not at liberty to exert himſelf, and make uſe of his ſuperior gifts and abilities; but in this they were miſtaken, he was ſo far from being made uneaſy hereby, that he rejoiced at the preaching of Chriſt, let their intentions be what they would; and therefore he does not ſay that they did add affliction to his bonds; but they *ſuppoſed*, or thought, that the method they took would do it.

Ver. 17. *But the other of love*, &c.] Thoſe that were truly brethren in the Lord, who had received the grace of God in truth, to whom the Goſpel was come in power, and who had a ſpiritual and experimental knowledge of Chriſt, and of the myſteries of his grace; theſe preached Chriſt of love, *out of the love of him*, as the *Ethiopic* verſe reads; that is, out of love to Chriſt, who to them was exceeding precious, altogether lovely, the chiefeſt among ten thouſands, and their hearts being hot and burning with love to him, they therefore ſpoke of him with their tongues; and out of love to the Goſpel of Chriſt, which with them was the pearl of great price, and every truth of it more valuable than gold, ſilver, and precious ſtones; and out of love to the church of Chriſt and the members of it, that their ſouls might be fed and nouriſhed with the wholeſome words of Chriſt, might be comforted with the doctrines of grace, and be eſtabliſhed and built up in their moſt holy faith; and out of love to the ſouls of others, knowing their miſerable eſtate by nature, and the danger they were in, and therefore preached Chriſt as the only way of ſalvation, whereby they could eſcape the wrath to come; and out of love to the Apoſtle likewiſe, which the following clauſe ſhews: *knowing that I am ſet for the defence of the Goſpel*; meaning either that they knew he was a choſen veſſel, to bear the name of Chriſt, and preach his Goſpel in the world; that he was ordained and appointed a miniſter of it before the world was; ſeparated to it from his mother's womb, and was called unto, and ſent to preach it by Chriſt, and was ſet apart for it by the church; and was in a very eminent manner qualified to defend it, by preaching, diſputing, writing, and ſuffering: or that they knew that he was laid, or lay, as the words may be rendered, in priſon, for defending the Goſpel of Chriſt; yea, they knew that his lying in priſon was in defence of the Goſpel; and therefore out of love to him, they joined iſſue with him to defend the Goſpel; as he by ſuffering for it, ſo they by preaching it, which they knew full well would be matter of great joy to him.

Ver. 18. *What then? notwithſtanding every way*, &c.] What follows from hence? what is to be concluded from all this? what is to be thought or ſaid in this caſe? this, that notwithſtanding theſe brethren acted on thoſe different principles, and with thoſe different views: *whether in pretence*; of love to Chriſt, zeal for the Goſpel, and concern for the good of ſouls; tho' their real views were their own applauſe, and detriment to the Apoſtle's character; or בעלתא, *by occaſion*, as the *Syriac* verſion renders the word, and as many interpreters think is the ſenſe of it; occaſionally preaching Chriſt, and making a handle of this to gain ſome other points, and get advantages to themſelves as ſome: *or in truth*; as the hearty friends of Chriſt and the Apoſtle did; they not only preached Chriſt who is the truth, and the truth as it is in Jeſus, and every truth of the Goſpel; and eſpecially that fundamental one, ſalvation alone by a crucified Chriſt, and that without any adulteration or concealing any part of it; but with great purity of mind, with integrity of heart, and in the uprightneſs of their ſouls; as of ſincerity, and in the ſight of God; without ſelfiſh and ſiniſter ends, and any ambitious views and evil deſigns: whether it was now in the one or the other way, upon the one or the other principles and views, the Apoſtle ſtood thus affected; and theſe were his ſentiments, reflections, and reſolutions, that inaſmuch as *Chriſt is preached*; in the glory of his perſon, in the fulneſs of his grace, in the ſuitableneſs of his offices and great ſalvation, in the excellency of his righteouſneſs, and the virtue of his blood, and the efficacy of his ſacrifice; *and therein I do rejoice, yea and will rejoice*; not that it was an indifferent thing with him, whether Chriſt was ſincerely or hypocritically preached; or that he could take any pleaſure in the manner of preaching, and in the principles and views of one ſort of theſe preachers; for nothing was more diſagreeable to him than envy and ambition, ſtrife and contention, hypocriſy and inſincerity; but he rejoiced in the ſubject matter of their miniſtry, which was Chriſt Jeſus the Lord, whom he dearly loved, and whoſe intereſt, if ſerved by any means, or any ſort of perſons, was a pleaſure to him; and alſo in the effects and conſequences of their miniſtry, the eſtabliſhing of the ſaints, the converſion of ſinners, the ſpread of the Goſpel, and the enlargement of the intereſt of Chriſt: all which may be anſwered through the preaching of Chriſt, by evil deſigning men; for Chriſt and his Goſpel are the ſame by whomſoever preached, and God may make uſe of his own truths to anſwer his ends and purpoſes, whoever are the diſpenſers of them, and tho' they themſelves may be caſt away, as *Judas* and others.

Ver. 19. *For I know that this ſhall turn to my ſalvation*, &c.] Or *to ſalvation*, to the ſalvation of others; that is, the preaching of Chriſt by theſe men, tho' deſigned by them to the hurt of the Apoſtle; yet he knew that by the power and grace of God, it ſhould be made uſeful to the converſion, and for the ſalvation of many ſouls; and this was matter of rejoicing to him: or that affliction which they thought to have added to his bonds, ſhould it befal him, he knew either from a divine revelation, or from the word of God in general, which gives reaſon to believe that all things work together for good to the ſaints, and from his own experience; that this alſo would turn to his advantage, and be for his good, either temporal, ſpiritual or eternal, and would work for him a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory in the world to come; and even in this world, he knew that every reproach, indignity, and ſuffering he endured, did but increaſe his fame and his honour, and make his name the more illuſtrious among the ſaints; which was the very thing theſe men envied in him, and ſtrove to take from him; yea, he knew that the method they took would, quite contrary to their expectation, be the means of his enlargement and liberty, of his ſalvation and deliverance from his bonds; ſee ver. 25, 26. and which he believed would be brought about by the prayers of the ſaints, and particularly theſe *Philippians*; *thro' your prayer*; as *Peter* was delivered out of priſon thro' the inceſſant prayer of the church for him. The Apoſtle knew that the prayer of a righteous man availeth much with God, and is very prevalent with him, and much more the prayers of a whole church; wherefore he frequently deſired them for him on many accounts; and among others, that he might be delivered out of the hands of unreaſonable men; and he firmly believed that he ſhould be delivered by ſuch means: *and the ſupply of the Spirit of Jeſus Chriſt*; which he had reaſon to expect and hope would be given him thro' their prayers for him; for tho' God has made large proviſions for the ſupply of the wants of his people, in his Son and in his covenant, to be diſpenſed unto them by his Spirit, yet for theſe will he be ſought unto by them: the ſupply of the Spirit is a ſupply of gifts from Chriſt, fitting and qualifying men for his ſervice, and which are miniſtred by the Spirit to them ſeverally as he will; and a ſupply of grace out of the fulneſs of Chriſt, which the Spirit of grace is the applier of; and a ſupply of ſtrength from the ſame by him, to enable the ſaints both to do and ſuffer whatever he is pleaſed to call them to; 'tis in ſhort a ſupply of all their need, which the Spirit of God helps them to, according to the riches of grace, in glory by Chriſt: this the Apoſtle knew would be ſufficient for him, to ſupport him under his preſent troubles, to deliver him out of them, and to fit him for whatever future work and ſervice his Lord and maſter had for him to do.

Ver. 20. *According to my earneſt expectation and my hope*, &c.] Theſe words are ſo placed as that they may refer both to what goes before and what follows after; and the ſenſe be either that the Apoſtle had an earneſt expectation and hope, even a ſtrong confidence of his ſalvation, or deliverance from his confinement; and alſo of his having an intereſt in the prayers of the ſaints, and that hereby a ſupply of the Spirit would be given him; for as he knew and was ſure that his God would ſupply the wants of others, he had great reaſon to believe he would ſupply his own; and eſpecially ſince he had been told by Chriſt that his grace was ſufficient for him: or as in connection with what follows; he had a full perſuaſion that he ſhould not be put to ſhame on any account; *that in nothing I ſhall be aſhamed*; not of his hope, neither the grace of hope, which makes not aſhamed; nor the object of hope, Chriſt Jeſus; nor the thing hoped for, eternal life and happineſs, or any of the above things about which this grace was converſant; nor of his reproaches and ſufferings for the ſake of Chriſt and his Goſpel, which he eſteemed as an honour to him, as jewels in his crown, as chains of gold about his neck, and as great riches; nor of the Goſpel which he preached, ſo as to retract and deny it, drop the whole, or conceal any part of it, lay down his profeſſion of it, or ceaſe to preach it: *but* his earneſt deſire and his firm hope and faith were, *that with all boldneſs, as always*; that as he had, ſo he ſhould continue to uſe boldneſs in the exerciſe of faith at the throne of grace, come with freedom thither, and ſtand before God with intrepidity, thro' the blood and righteouſneſs of his Son; and that as he had met with afflictions and ſufferings for Chriſt's ſake, with chearfulneſs and an undaunted ſpirit, none of theſe things had moved him, ſo he believed he never ſhould; and that as he had all along, throughout the whole courſe of his miniſtry, preached the Goſpel with plainneſs, openneſs, and freedom, without any guiſe or reſerve, and that with an holy courage and boldneſs in the face of all oppoſition; *ſo now* *alſo Chriſt ſhall be magnified in my body*; for this being Chriſt's, his great concern was to glorify him in it; and tho' it was a poor weak and crazy body, yet rich treaſure being put into this earthern veſſel, Chriſt had been greatly magnified, extolled, and made very high in it; never was there, as the Apoſtle, ſuch a magnifier of Chriſt, by preaching him in the tranſcendent glories of his perſon as the Son of God, in the riches of his grace as mediator, in all his offices of prophet, prieſt, and king; and particularly in the juſtification and ſalvation of men, where he made him to be all in all. Chriſt was alſo magnified by him, by his life and converſation, which was influenced by his grace, was in obedience to his will, was directed to his glory, was as became his Goſpel, and what adorned his doctrine in all things; and alſo by enduring ſuch hardſhips and ſo great ſufferings on his account; the power of Chriſt was greatly magnified in ſupporting him under them, and carrying him thro' them; and as this had been the caſe ever ſince he was in the miniſtry, it being the main thing he had in view, he had a well grounded hope and confidence, that it would ever be ſo: *whether* it be *by life or by death*; that is, ſhould he live longer, ſhould he be delivered from his preſent confinement, and be ſpared a little longer among men, he was comfortably aſſured Chriſt would be magnified by him in his body, and as long as he was in it; for his determination was to preach him and him only, to ſpend his life in his ſervice, and to ſeek not his own things, but the things of Chriſt; or ſhould he be put to death quickly by the order of *Nero*, he doubted not but Chriſt would have ſome glory thereby; he ſhould die calling upon his name with fervency, profeſſing his conſtant and unſhaken faith in him, and ſealing the Goſpel by his blood, with the greateſt chearfulneſs.

Ver. 21. *For to me to live is Chriſt*, &c.] Chriſt was his life, *efficiently*, the efficient cauſe and author of his ſpiritual life; he ſpoke it into him, produced it in him, and imprincipled him with it: and he was his life, *objectively*, the matter and object of his life, that on which he lived; yea, it was not ſo much he that lived, as Chriſt that lived in him; he lived by faith on Chriſt, and his ſpiritual life, was maintained and ſupported by feeding on him as the bread of life: and he was his life, *finally*, the end of his life; what he aimed at throughout the whole courſe of his life was the glory of Chriſt, the good of his church and people, the ſpread of his Goſpel, the honour of his name, and the increaſe of his intereſt; and this laſt ſeems to be the true ſenſe of the phraſe here: *and to die is gain*; to himſelf, for death is gain to believers: it is not eaſy to ſay what a believer gains by dying; he is releaſed thereby, and delivered from all the troubles and diſtreſſes of this life, ariſing from diſeaſes of body, loſſes and diſappointments in worldly things; from the oppreſſions and perſecutions of wicked men; from indwelling ſin, unbelief, doubts, and fears, and the temptations of ſatan; he as ſoon as dies enters into the preſence of God, where is fulneſs of joy, and is immediately with Chriſt, which is far better than being here, beholding his glory and enjoying communion with him; he is at once in the company of angels and glorified ſaints; is poſſeſſed of perfect holineſs and knowledge; inherits a kingdom prepared from the foundation of the world, and wears a crown of life, righteouſneſs, and glory; enters upon an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled; is received into everlaſting habitations, into manſions of light, life, love, joy, peace, and comfort; is at perfect reſt, and ſurrounded with endleſs pleaſures. This is the common interpretation, and is countenanced by the *Syriac*, *Arabic*, and *Ethiopic* verſions, which read, *to die*, or *if I die*, *it is gain to me*; but inſtead of reading the words as conſiſting of two propoſitions, they may be conſidered as one, and the ſenſe be either this; Chriſt is gain to me living or dying, in life or in death; for Chriſt is the believer's gain in life; he is all in all, his righteouſneſs, his wiſdom, his ſanctification, his redemption, his life, his light, his food, his raiment, his riches, his joy, peace, and comfort; he is every thing to him he wants, can wiſh for or deſire: and he is his gain in death; the hope he then has is founded on him, and the triumphs of his faith over death and the grave ariſe from redemption by him; his expectation is to be immediately with him; and the glory he will then enter into, will lie in communion with him, in conformity to him, and in an everlaſting viſion of him: or thus, for me to live and to die is Chriſt's gain; his life being ſpent in his ſervice, in living according to his will, in preaching his Goſpel, ſerving his churches, and ſuffering for his ſake, was for his glory; and his death being for his ſake, in the faith of him, and the ſteady profeſſion of it, would be what would glorify him, and ſo be his gain likewiſe; and this ſeems to be the genuine ſenſe of the words, which contain a reaſon of the Apoſtle's faith, why he was perſuaded Chriſt would be magnified or glorified in his body, whether by life or by death.

Ver. 22. *But if I live in the fleſh*, &c.] To be in the fleſh ſometimes ſignifies to be in a ſtate of nature and unregeneracy, and to live in and after the fleſh, to live according to the dictates of corrupt nature; but here it ſignifies living in the body, or the life which is in the fleſh, as the *Syriac* verſion renders the phraſe here, and as the Apoſtle expreſſes it in *Gal.* ii. 20. and the ſenſe is, if I ſhould live any longer in the body, and be continued for ſome time in this world: *this is the fruit of my labour*; or *I have fruit in my works*, as the above verſion renders it: *yet what I ſhall chuſe I wot not*, or *know not*; whether life or death; ſince my life will be for the honour and glory of Chriſt, and tho' a toilſome and laborious one, yet uſeful and fruitful: by his *labour*, he means his miniſterial work and ſervice; the miniſtry is a work, a good and honourable work, and a laborious one. Chriſt's faithful miniſters are labourers; they labour in the word and doctrine, both in ſtudying and preaching it; and ſuch a labourer was the Apoſtle, who by the grace of God laboured more abundantly than others; the *fruit* of which was the converſion of many ſinners, the edification, comfort and eſtabliſhment of the ſaints, their fruitfulneſs in grace and works, the ſpread of the Goſpel far and near, the enlargement of the kingdom of Chriſt, and the weakening of ſatan's kingdom, and the glorifying of Chriſt in his perſon, offices, and great ſalvation; all which was a ſtrong and ſwaying argument with him, to deſire to live longer in the body, and made it on the one hand ſo difficult with him what to chuſe: for as a certain *Jew*[b] ſays, "the righteous man "deſires to live to do the will of God whilſt he "lives;" but not with that view, he adds, "to "encreaſe the reward of the ſoul in the world to "come."

Ver. 23. *For I am in a ſtrait betwixt two*, &c.] Life and death; or between theſe *two counſels*, as the *Arabic* verſion reads; two thoughts and deſires of the mind, a deſire to live for the reaſons above, and a deſire to die for a reaſon following. The Apoſtle was preſſed with a difficulty in his mind about this, as *David* was when he was bid to chuſe which he would, either ſeven years famine, or three months flight before his enemies, or three days peſtilence; upon which he ſaid, *I am in a great ſtrait*, 2 Sam. xxiv. 14. to which paſſage 'tis thought the Apoſtle alludes; the ſame word as here is uſed by Chriſt, *Luke* xii. 50. *having a deſire to depart*; to die, a way of ſpeaking much in uſe with the *Jews*, as expreſſive of death; thus *Abraham* is repreſented by them ſpeaking after this manner on account of his two ſons *Iſaac* and *Iſhmael*, the one being righteous and the other wicked [c]; "ſays he, if I bleſs *Iſaac*, lo, *Iſhmael* will ſeek "to be bleſſed, and he is wicked; but a ſervant "am I, fleſh and blood am I, and to-morrow "אפטר מן העולם, *I ſhall depart out of the world*, "or *die*; and what pleaſes the holy bleſſed God "himſelf in his own world, let him do: כשנפטר, "*when Abraham was diſmiſſed* or *departed*, the "holy bleſſed God appeared to *Iſaac* and bleſſed "him:" and again it is ſaid [d], "iniquities are "not atoned for, until דאתפטר מעלמא, *a man* "*is diſmiſſed*, or *departs out of the world*;" and once more [e], "when a man נפטר מזה העולם, *de-*"*parts out of this world*; according to his merit "he aſcends above;" ſee the note on *John* xiii. 1. the ſame word is uſed in the *Syriac* verſion here; death is a departing out of this life, a going out of the body, a removal out of this world; it is like moving from one place to another, from the world below to the world above; with the ſaints 'tis no other than a removing from one houſe to another, from the earthly houſe of their tabernacle, the body, to their Father's houſe, and the manſions of glory in it, preparing for them. Death is not an annihiliation of men, neither of ſoul nor body; it is a ſeparation of them, but not a deſtruction of either; it is a diſſolution of the union between them for a while, when both remain in a ſeparate ſtate till the reſurrection: now this the Apoſtle had a deſire unto, which was not a new and ſudden motion of mind; it was a thought that had long dwelt with him, and ſtill continued; and this deſire after death was not for the ſake of death, for death in itſelf is a king of terrors, very formidable and terrible, and not deſireable; 'tis an enemy, the laſt enemy that ſhall be deſtroyed; it is contrary to nature, and to deſire it, is contrary to a firſt principle in nature, ſelf-preſervation; but death is deſired for ſome other end: wicked men deſire it, and deſire others to put an end to their lives, or do it themſelves to free them from ſome trouble they are in; or becauſe they are not able to ſupport under a diſappointment of what their ambition or luſt have prompted them to: good men deſire death, tho' always when right, with a ſubmiſſion to the will of God, that they may be rid of ſin, which ſo much diſhonours God as well as diſtreſſes themſelves; and that they may be cloathed upon with the ſhining robes of immortality and glory; and as the Apoſtle here, *to be with Chriſt*: for the former clauſe is to be ſtrictly connected with this; he did not deſire merely to depart this life, but chiefly to be with Chriſt, and the former only in order to the latter; the ſaints are in Chriſt now, choſen in him, ſet upon his heart, and put into his hands, are created in him, and brought to believe in him, and are in him as branches in the vine; and he is in them, formed in their hearts, lives and dwells in them by faith, and they have ſometimes communion with him in private duties and publick worſhip; he comes into them and ſups with them, and they with him: but this is only at times, he is as a wayfaring man that continues but for a night; hence the preſent ſtate of the ſaints is a ſtate of abſence from Chriſt; whilſt they are at home in the body, they are abſent from the Lord, eſpecially as to his bodily preſence; but after death they are immediately with him, where he is in his human nature; and their ſouls in their ſeparate ſtate continue with him till the reſurrection morn, when their bodies will be raiſed and re-united to their ſouls, and be both for ever with him, beholding his glory, and enjoying uninterrupted communion with him; which will be the completion and full end of Chriſt's preparations and prayers: hence it appears that there is a future being and ſtate after death; the Apoſtle deſires to depart this life, and *be*, exiſt, be ſome where, *with Chriſt*; for the only happy being after death is with him; if ſouls are not with him, they are with devils and damned ſpirits, in the lake which burns with fire and brimſtone: and it is alſo manifeſt that ſouls don't ſleep with the body in the grave until the reſurrection; the ſouls of the ſaints are immediately with Chriſt, in the enjoyment of his preſence, in happineſs and glory, hoping, believing, and waiting for the reſurrection of their bodies; had the Apoſtle known that he muſt have remained after death in a ſtate of inactivity and uſeleſsneſs, deprived of the communion of Chriſt and of his church, it would have been no difficulty with him to determine which was moſt eligible, to live or die; and it would have been much better for him, and more to the advantage of the churches, if he had continued upon earth to this day, than to be ſleeping in his grave, ſenſeleſs and unactive; whereas he adds, *which is far better*: to depart and be with Chriſt is better than to live in the fleſh in this ſinful world, in the midſt of a variety of ſorrows and troubles, and in which communion with Chriſt is but now and then enjoyed, tho' ſuch a life is better than ſleeping in the grave; but upon a ſoul's departure and being with Chriſt, it is free from ſin and ſorrow, and in the utmoſt pleaſure, enjoying communion with him without interruption; and this is better than labouring in the miniſtry: for tho' no man took more pleaſure in the work of the miniſtry than the Apoſtle did, and no man's miniſtry was more profitable and uſeful; yet it was toilſome, laborious and weariſome to the fleſh; wherefore dying and being with Jeſus could not but be deſirable, ſince he ſhould then reſt from his labours, and his works would follow him; at leaſt, it was better for him, and ſo the *Syriac* verſion adds, ܠܝ, *to me*, far better for me; and ſo the *Arabic*: to live longer might be better and more to the advantage of Chriſt, the glory of his name, the good of his churches, it might be better for others; but leaving the world and being with Chriſt were better for him; and this was an argument ſwaying on the ſide of death, and inclining him to deſire that, and made it ſo difficult with him what to chuſe.

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[b] Kimchi in Pſ. vi. 5

Ver. 24. *Nevertheleſs to abide in the fleſh*, &c.] To continue in the body, not always, but a little longer, is *more needful for you*; for their comfort, edification, and inſtruction, their further profiting and encreaſe in faith, and the joy of it. The *Syriac* verſion renders the words thus, *but buſineſs for you*, or *a good will towards you compels me to abide in the body*;

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[c] Bemidbar Rabba. §. 11. fol. 202. 3.

[d] Zohar in Numb. fol. 51. 3.

[e] Tzeror Hanmor, fol. 2. 1.

body; and the *Arabic* verſion thus, *notwithſtanding I chuſe to remain in the fleſh, and this I think very neceſſary for you*; ſo that upon the whole, the argument for living longer on conſideration of glorifying Chriſt, and of being more uſeful to the good of ſouls, preponderated with him; inclined him to deſire rather to live than die; tho' the latter was better for him, and more to his perſonal advantage; and thus like a brave and good man, he prefers a public good to a private one.

Ver. 25. *And having this confidence, I know that I ſhall abide*, &c.] In the fleſh, in the body, live a little longer in the world. Theſe words muſt be underſtood either of a certain infallible knowledge, ariſing from a divine revelation, and a firm perſuaſion and confidence founded upon that which the Apoſtle had, of his being delivered from his bonds, and ſpared a little longer for further uſefulneſs among the churches; and accordingly ſome have thought that he was after this ſet at liberty, and travelled thro' ſeveral countries preaching the Goſpel, and after that was committed to priſon and ſuffered death; but of this there is no ſufficient proof: or rather therefore of a conjectural knowledge ariſing from the preſent ſtate of things, and his view of it; being willing to hope, and perſuade himſelf that he ſhould be delivered from his confinement, and his life be ſpared for the good of the intereſt of Chriſt, and the glory of his name; it being what his heart was ſet upon, and he was very deſirous of: *and continue with you all*; not only with the *Philippians*, but other ſaints, and other churches, who were dear to him, and he to them; tho' he may mean more eſpecially theſe believers: *for your furtherance*, or *profiting*; in divine and ſpiritual things, in the knowledge of Chriſt, and the truths of the Goſpel: *and joy of faith*; for the furtherance, or increaſe of that joy which faith is attended with, and which ſprings from it; for true ſolid joy ſprings from faith in the perſon, blood, righteouſneſs, and atonement of Chriſt; and is what may be increaſed, and is often done by and thro' the miniſtry of the word, and the miniſters of the Goſpel; who don't pretend to a dominion over the faith of men, only to be helpers of their joy, as they ſometimes are, as alſo of their faith, which as it comes by hearing is increaſed the ſame way. The phraſe is *Jewiſh*; mention is made in the writings of the *Jews* [f] of חדוה דמהימנותא, *the joy of faith*.

Ver. 26. *That your rejoicing may be more abundant*, &c.] They had rejoiced greatly on his account already, bleſſing God that ever they had ſeen his face, or heard his voice; as they had great reaſon to do, he being the happy inſtrument of firſt bringing the Goſpel to them, and of their converſion; and now he hoped he ſhould be delivered out of priſon, and ſee them again, that their joy might be increaſed and abound yet more and more, upon his deliverance, they had ſo earneſtly prayed and ſo much longed for, and at the ſight of him they ſo dearly loved: and yet to ſhew that this their joy was not looked upon by him as a carnal one, or as ariſing from a natural affection, he obſerves that it was *in Jeſus Chriſt*; tho' they rejoiced in him as an inſtrument, and therefore he adds, *for me*; yet it was on account of Jeſus Chriſt, the ſubject of his miniſtry; their joy did not center in the Apoſtle, but had Chriſt for its object, whoſe perſon, righteouſneſs, and ſalvation were held forth by him to their view and comfort; and tho' they would ſtill more and more rejoice ſhould he return to them once more, *by my coming to you again*; yet ſtill it would be in Chriſt, and becauſe of the fulneſs of the bleſſing of the Goſpel of Chriſt, in which he ſhould come to them.

Ver. 27. *Only let your converſation be as it becometh the Goſpel of Chriſt*, &c.] Or *behave as citizens worthy of the Goſpel*; for not ſo much their outward converſation in the world is here intended, which ought to be in wiſdom towards them that are without; ſo as to give no offence to any, and to put to ſilence the ignorance of fooliſh men, and them to confuſion and ſhame who falſly accuſe their good converſation in Chriſt; tho' this is what is highly becoming profeſſors of the Goſpel; and a moral converſation proceeding from principles of grace, under the influence of the Spirit of God, is very ornamental to the Goſpel, being what that requires and powerfully teaches; but the converſation of the ſaints one with another, in their church-ſtate, is here meant. The alluſion is to cities which have their peculiar laws and rules, to which the citizens are to conform; and ſuch as behave according to them act up to the character of good citizens, and becoming, and worthy of the charter by which they hold their priviledges and immunities. A church of Chriſt is as a city, and is often ſo called; the members of it are citizens, fellow-citizens one with another, and of the houſhold of God, and have laws and rules according to which they are to conduct themſelves; as ſuch do who walk worthy of their vocation, and becoming the charter of the Goſpel by which they have and hold their freedom and priviledges, as citizens of the new *Jeruſalem*: and ſuch a Goſpel-walk and converſation lies in ſuch things as theſe; conſtant attendance on the preaching of the Goſpel, and on the adminiſtration of Goſpel-ordinances; a ſtrict obſervation of the rules of behaviour towards perſons that have given offence, either in public or private; a juſt regard to the diſcipline of Chriſt's houſe, in admonitions, reproofs, cenſures and excommunications, as caſes require; cultivating love, unity, and peace; keeping the ordinances as they were delivered; retaining and ſtriving for the doctrines of the Goſpel; holding the myſteries of it in a pure conſcience, and adorning it by a becoming life and converſation. This the Apoſtle recommends as the *only*, the main and principal thing theſe ſaints ſhould attend to; and as what would give him the greateſt joy and pleaſure to hear of, whether he ſhould ever come and ſee them again or no: *that whether I come and ſee you, or elſe be abſent, I may hear of your affairs*. The *Vulgate Latin* verſion reads, *hear of you*; and ſo do the *Syriac* and *Ethiopic* verſions: *that ye ſtand faſt in one Spirit*; meaning either the Goſpel, which is the Spirit that giveth life; ſo called becauſe it is from the Spirit of God, and that by which he is conveyed into the ſouls of men, and contains ſpiritual things: this is one, uniform, conſiſtent ſcheme of truths; and in this believers ought to ſtand faſt, and ſhould abide by it, and never give up, or part with any one branch of it; and ſo to do is one part of their Goſpel converſation; for the Apoſtle in this and the following things points out the ſeveral parts of that converſation he exhorts to: or elſe the holy Spirit of God is intended, who as he is the beginner of the good work of grace on the ſoul, is he alſo who carries it on and will perfect it; and therefore to him ſhould the people of God look for grace and ſtrength, to enable them to ſtand faſt in the profeſſion of their faith, to hold it faſt without wavering, and to perſevere to the end; who is that one Spirit by which they are baptized into one body, and become fellow-citizens with the ſaints; or the Spirit of love, unity, and peace is here meant: true chriſtian love makes the ſaints to be of one heart and ſoul; and in this ſingle affection to one another ſhould they ſtand faſt; brotherly love ſhould continue, and all endeavours be uſed to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace; which isa nother branch of becoming Goſpel-converſation: the Apoſtle adds, *with one mind*, or *ſoul*; either ſignifying the ſame as before, or elſe that they ſhould be of one judgment in the doctrines and ordinances of the Goſpel, and abide therein; which is neceſſary to their harmonious walk and converſation together, as citizens of *Zion*: *ſtriving together for the faith of the Goſpel*; by the *faith of the Goſpel*, may be deſigned the grace of faith, which comes by the Goſpel, as the means of it, and by which the Goſpel becomes uſeful and beneficial to the ſouls of men, and which has the Goſpel for its object; for faith comes by hearing the word, and that is only profitable when it is mixed with it, and is that grace which gives credit to every truth of it, upon the teſtimony of divine revelation: now as the doctrine of faith is that which the ſaints are to ſtrive for, the grace of faith is that by which they ſtrive for it; by which they reſiſt ſatan, oppoſe falſe teachers, and overcome the world; and agreeable to this ſenſe the *Arabic* verſion reads, *by the faith of the Goſpel:* tho' rather the doctrine of faith is intended, that word of faith, or faith, which is the Goſpel itſelf, and which is often ſo called; and for this in all its parts and branches, believers ſhould ſtrive; as for all thoſe doctrines of faith, which concern the unity of God, the trinity of perſons in the Godhead, the divine Sonſhip of Chriſt, the proper deity and diſtinct perſonality of him and the bleſſed Spirit; and for all ſuch doctrines as regard the ſtate and condition of men by the fall of *Adam*, as that the guilt of his ſin is imputed to all his poſterity, the pollution of nature by it derived and communicated to them, that the biaſs of man's mind is naturally to that which is evil, and is averſe to that which is good, and that he is impotent to every thing that is ſpiritually good; and for all thoſe doctrines which regard the free and diſtinguiſhing grace of God; of election, as eternal, perſonal, and irreſpective of faith, holineſs, and good works, as motives and conditions of it; of the covenant of grace, as from everlaſting, abſolute and unconditional, ſure and firm; of redemption, as particular, and as proceeding upon a full ſatisfaction for ſin to law and juſtice; of juſtification by the righteouſneſs of Chriſt; of peace and pardon by his blood; of regeneration, converſion, and ſanctification, as entirely owing to powerful and efficacious grace, and not to man's free-will; of the ſaints final perſeverance, the reſurrection of the dead, a future judgment, and eternal life, as the free gift of God: *ſtriving* for theſe, as wreſtlers do with one another, to which the alluſion is, ſuppoſes perſons to ſtrive and wreſtle againſt; and they are ſuch as oppoſe truth and themſelves unto it; as all ſuch that deny divine revelation, or the authority of the ſcriptures; that ſay that Jeſus is not the Meſſiah; or that Chriſt is not the natural and eternal Son of God; or that deny his proper deity, his ſatisfaction and righteouſneſs; that reject the efficacious grace of God, and the operations of the Spirit as unneceſſary to regeneration and converſion; that advance and plead for the purity of human nature, the power of man's free-will, and aſcribe juſtification and ſalvation to the works of men: all ſuch are to be contended with and ſtrove againſt, and that not with carnal weapons, but with ſpiritual ones, with the ſcriptures of truth; by which a good warfare with them may be warred, and the good fight of faith fought with much ſucceſs; and the whole requires great care and ſolicitude, earneſtneſs, zeal, conſtancy, and courage: ſtriving *together* for theſe intends either ſtriving with the Apoſtle, and as they had him both as a fellow-ſoldier, and for an example; or rather ſtriving one with another, their miniſters with their members, and their members with their miniſters; the one by preaching, writing, and diſputing more eſpecially, the other, by bearing a conſtant teſtimony to truth, and praying for the ſucceſs of it; and both by dying for it when required; and ſo to do is to have the converſation as becomes the Goſpel of Chriſt.

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[f] Zohar in Gen. fol. 113. 4. & in Exod. fol. 36. 4.

Ver. 28. *And in nothing terrified by your adverſaries*, &c.] Not by ſatan, tho' a roaring lion, for Chriſt is greater than he; nor by the world which Chriſt has overcome; nor by falſe teachers, tho' men of art and cunning; nor by violent perſecutors, who can do no more than kill the body; let not the power, the rage, the cunning, or the violence of one or the other, move, diſcourage or affright from a cloſe attachment to the Goſpel and the truths of it: *which is to them an evident token of perdition*; when men wilfully oppoſe themſelves to the truth, and ſhew a malicious hatred to it, and hold it in unrighteouſneſs, and either turn the grace of God into laſciviouſneſs, or perſecute it with rage and fury, it looks as if they were given up to reprobate minds, to ſay and do things not convenient; as if they were fore-ordained to condemnation, and were conſigned over to deſtruction and perdition; and very rare it is that ſuch perſons are ever called by grace: *but to you of ſalvation*; when men are reproached and ridiculed, are threatned and perſecuted for the ſake of the Goſpel, and are enabled to take all patiently, and perſevere in the truth with conſtancy, it is a manifeſt token that ſuch are counted worthy of the kingdom of God; that God has a deſign of ſalvation for them, and that they ſhall be ſaved with an everlaſting one: ſo that the different effects of the oppoſition of the one, and the conſtancy of the other, are made uſe of as ſo many reaſons why the ſaints ſhould not be terrified by their enemies: 'tis added, *and that of God*; meaning either that the whole of this is of God, as that there are adverſaries, hereticks, and perſecutors; this is by divine permiſſion, and in order to anſwer ſome ends and purpoſes of God, and the perdition or everlaſting puniſhment of ſuch perſons will be righteouſly inflicted upon them by him; and that the conſtancy, faith, patience, and perſeverance of the ſaints and their ſalvation, are all of God: or it particularly reſpects the latter, the ſalvation of thoſe who perſevere to the end; this is not of themſelves, or merited by their conſtancy, patience, and perſeverance, but is God's free gift. The *Syriac*, *Arabic*, and *Ethiopic* verſions, join this clauſe to the beginning of the next verſe thus, *and this is given of God to you*, &c.

Ver. 29. *For unto you it is given in the behalf of Chriſt*, &c.] For the ſake of his Goſpel; for the good of his intereſt, and the glory of his name. The *Alexandrian* copy reads, *to us it is given*, &c. *not only to believe in him*; for faith in Chriſt, which is not merely believing that he is the Chriſt, and all that is ſaid of him, or all that he himſelf ſays, but is a ſeeing of the Son, a going to him, receiving, embracing, leaning, relying, and living upon him, as God's ſalvation, is a pure gift of grace; it is not in nature, nor in every man, and in whom it is, it is not of themſelves, it is the gift of God; the firſt implantation of it, all its acts and exerciſe, its increaſe, and the performance of it at laſt with power, are all owing to the grace of God; and this is only given to the elect; for it is a diſtinguiſhing gift; it's given to them, and them alone, and therefore called the faith of God's elect: *but alſo to ſuffer for his ſake*; for the ſake of Chriſt perſonal; for the ſake of Chriſt myſtical, for his body's ſake the church; for the ſake of his Goſpel, and for the ſake of his cauſe and intereſt in the world: now to ſuffer in name and character, in eſtate or perſon, not as an evil-doer, but as a chriſtian, is a gift of God, as faith in Chriſt is; all the ſufferings of the ſaints are appointed by God; their being called forth to ſuffer ſhame for the ſake of Chriſt, is an high honour conferred upon them; all the grace and ſtrength by which they are ſupported under ſufferings for Chriſt, are given to them; and all the glory conſequent upon them, is not merited by them, which are by no means to be compared with it, but is the free gift of God through Chriſt. The ſame perſons to whom it is given to believe in Chriſt, to them it is given to ſuffer for him; and they all do in ſome ſhape or another, though ſome more, others leſs; yet all are partakers of ſufferings for Chriſt, and ſo are conformed to him their head, and hereby enter the kingdom; now all this is ſaid, as containing ſo many reaſons to encourage believers to have their converſation as becomes the Goſpel of Chriſt, by a ſteady adherence to it, and a joint contention and ſtriving for it, without being intimidated by their enemies.

Ver. 30. *Having the ſame conflict*, &c.] For it ſeems that the *Philippians* were now under perſecution for the Goſpel of Chriſt; but this was no new or ſtrange thing; it was the ſame the Apoſtle was under formerly, and at that time: *which ye ſaw in me, and now hear to be in me*; when he and *Silas* were at *Philippi*, and firſt preached the Goſpel there, they were exceedingly ill uſed, and ſhamefully intreated; they were dragged to the market-place, or court, were beaten and ſcourged, and put into the inner priſon, and their feet made faſt in the ſtocks, *Acts* xvi. 19, 22, 23, 24. 1 *Theſſ.* ii. 2. of all this the *Philippians* were eye-witneſſes, and to which he here refers when he ſays, *which ye ſaw in me*; and now he was a priſoner at *Rome*, as they had heard, hence he ſays, *and now hear to be in me*; for they had ſent *Epaphroditus* to him with a preſent, as a token of their love to him, and to ſupport him under his affliction; and which he mentions, in order to animate them to bear their ſufferings patiently for Chriſt's ſake, ſince the ſame were accompliſhed in him, as well as in the reſt of their brethren and fellow-chriſtians in the world.

CHAP. II.

THIS chapter contains ſeveral exhortations to unity, love, and concord, to humility, and lowlineſs of mind, and to a becoming life and converſation; and concludes with commendations of two eminent miniſters of Chriſt, *Timothy* and *Epaphroditus*. The arguments engaging to harmony and mutual affection, are taken from the conſolation that is in Chriſt, the comfort there is in love, the fellowſhip of the Spirit, and the bowels and mercies which become ſaints, ver. 1. as alſo from the joy this would fill the Apoſtle with; and the things exhorted to, are expreſſed by likeneſs of mind, ſameneſs of love, and unity of ſoul, ver. 2. and the manner directed to for the preſervation of ſuch a ſpirit, is to do nothing in a contentious and vain glorious way, but in an humble and lowly manner, having a better opinion of others than themſelves; and obſerving their ſuperior gifts and graces, and ſo ſubmit things unto them, ver. 3, 4. and which humble deportment is further urged, from the inſtance and example of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, ver. 5. which is illuſtrated by the dignity of his perſon, the glorious divine form in which he was, and his indiſputable equality with his Father, ver. 6. and yet ſuch was his great condeſcenſion, that he became man, appeared in the form of a ſervant, and was humbled to the loweſt degree, even to die the death of the croſs, ver. 7, 8. nevertheleſs God exalted him as man, and gave him ſuperior honour to all creatures; and will oblige all to be ſubject to him, and acknowledge his dominion over them, to the glory of his divine Father, ver. 9, 10, 11. hereby ſuggeſting, that in like manner, though not to the ſame degree, ſuch who are humble and lowly minded, ſhall be exalted by the Lord; and then with the greateſt affection to the *Philippians*, and with high commendations of them, the Apoſtle renews his exhortation to do all the duties of religion with humility and modeſty; knowing that all the grace and ſtrength in which they performed them, was owing to the internal operation of divine power in them, ver. 12, 13. and therefore ſhould be done without murmuring againſt God, or diſputings among themſelves, ver. 14. and next he proceeds to exhort to an unblemiſhed and inoffenſive life and converſation, as the end and iſſue of a modeſt and humble behaviour; and this he enforces on them, from the conſideration of their relation to God, being his children, which would appear hereby; and from the wickedneſs and perverſeneſs of the people they lived among; and therefore ſhould be careful, leſt they be enſnared by them, to the diſhonour of God, and the grief of themſelves; and from their character as lights in the world, whoſe buſineſs it was to hold forth the word of life; and alſo from this conſideration, that it would be the joy of the Apoſtle in the day of Chriſt, that his labours among them had not been fruitleſs, ver. 15, 16. yea, ſuch was his love to them, that if even he was to die on their account, it would be matter of joy and gladneſs to him; and he deſires they would expreſs the ſame joy with him, ver. 17, 18. and though he could not be with them in perſon, he hoped in a little time to ſend *Timothy*, for this end, that he might know how things ſtood with them; which if well, would be a comfort to him, ver. 19. the reaſons why he pitched upon *Timothy* as a meſſenger to them were, becauſe there were none like him, for the ſincere regard he had for their ſpiritual good, ver. 20. and which is illuſtrated by the contrary diſpoſition and conduct of others, who ſought themſelves, and not Jeſus Chriſt, his honour and intereſt, ver. 21. and beſides, they themſelves were witneſſes of his filial affection to the Apoſtle, and of his faithful ſervice with him in the Goſpel, ver. 22. and then he repeats his hopes of ſending him quickly, as ſoon as ever he knew how it would go with him, whether he ſhould be releaſed or ſuffer, ver. 23. the former of which he had ſome confidence of, and that he ſhould be able to ſee them himſelf in a little time, ver. 24. however, in the mean while he thought it proper to ſend *Epaphroditus* to them, whom he commends as a brother of his, a co-worker, a fellow-ſoldier, a meſſenger of theirs, and a miniſter to his wants, ver. 25. the reaſons of ſending him were, becauſe he longed to ſee them, and becauſe he was uneaſy that they had heard of his ſickneſs; which was not only true that he had been ſick, but his ſickneſs was very dangerous, and threatned with death; however, through the mercy of God to him, he was recovered; and which was a mercy alſo to the Apoſtle, who otherwiſe would have had an additional ſorrow; wherefore another reaſon of ſending him was, that upon the ſight of him they might be filled with joy, and the Apoſtle himſelf have leſs ſorrow, ver. 26, 27, 28. and then he exhorts them, that when he was returned to them, they would gladly receive him, and highly eſteem of him; and the rather, ſince the dangerous illneſs he was attended with, was brought upon him through his laboriouſneſs in the ſervice of Chriſt, and alſo of the Apoſtle, which he performed in their ſtead, even to the neglect of his health and life, ver. 29, 30.

Ver. 1. *If* there be *therefore any conſolation in Chriſt*, &c.] Or *exhortation*, as the word is ſometimes rendered; that is, either if there is any exhortation of Chriſt to love and unity, as there is in *John* xiii. 34. and xv. 11, 17. and this is of any weight and value; or if an exhortation hereunto made in the name of Chriſt, by any of his miniſters, meſſengers, and ambaſſadors, will be regarded, as it ought to be, then *fulfil ye my joy*, &c. but as the word is frequently tranſlated *conſolation*, as it is here in the *Vulgate Latin*, *Syriac*, and *Arabic* verſions; the ſenſe may be either, if there is any comfort to be given to them that are in Chriſt Jeſus, as every converted man is, and as the Apoſtle was, and eſpecially to them that are afflicted and perſecuted for the ſake of Chriſt, are priſoners in him, and on his account, which was the Apoſtle's caſe, then he deſired they would attend to his following requeſt: or if there was any conſolation for them, and they had had any comfort in and from Chriſt; as all true, ſolid, ſtrong, and everlaſting conſolation is only in Chriſt, and is founded on the greatneſs of his perſon, as God our Saviour, on the fulneſs of his grace, the efficacy of his blood, the perfection of his righteouſneſs and ſacrifice, and on the great ſalvation he is the author of: agreeably the *Syriac* verſion renders it, *if therefore ye have any conſolation in Chriſt*; and the *Arabic* verſion, *if therefore ye enjoy any conſolation from the grace of Chriſt*; which is diſplayed in the Goſpel, as undoubtedly they did; and ſince then all this comfort was enjoyed by them, through the Goſpel the Apoſtle preached to them, the argument from hence muſt be ſtrong upon them, to attend to what he deſired of them: *if any comfort of love*; in it, or from it; as from the love of God the Father, which is everlaſting and unchangeable, and muſt be comforting, when ſhed abroad in the heart by the Spirit; and from the love of the Son, which is the ſame, and equally immoveable and laſting, and which paſſeth knowledge; and from the love of the Spirit, in applying the grace of the Father, and of the Son, whereby he becomes a glorifier of them, and a comforter of his people; and from the love of the ſaints to one another, which renders their communion with each other comfortable, pleaſant, and delightful: or the Apoſtle's ſenſe is, if they had ſo much love for him, as to wiſh and deſire he might be comforted in his preſent ſituation, and that they would be willing to make uſe of any methods to comfort him, then he deſires this; and this is all he deſires, mutual love, peace, harmony, and agreement among themſelves: *if any fellowſhip of the Spirit*; of the ſpirit of one ſaint with another; if there is ſuch a thing as an union of ſpirits, an oneneſs of ſouls, a taſting of each others ſpirits, and a communion with one another, then care ſhould be taken to keep this unity of the Spirit, in the bond of peace: or if there is any fellowſhip of the Holy Spirit of God, any communion with him, any ſuch thing as a witneſſing of him to, and with our ſpirits, or as fellowſhip with the Father and the Son by him, and ſaints are baptized into one body by one Spirit, and have been made to drink of the ſame Spirit, then it becomes them to be of one mind, and to ſtand faſt in one ſpirit: *if any bowels and mercies*; as there are in God, and in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, moving towards the ſaints; or ſuch as become chriſtians, who as the elect of God, holy and beloved, ought to put on bowels of mercies to one another; expreſs the moſt hearty, inward, tender, and compaſſionate concern for each others welfare, temporal and ſpiritual. Thus the Apoſtle premiſes the moſt moving and pathetic arguments, leading on to the exhortations and advice, to love, harmony, and unity, given in the following verſe.

Ver. 2. *Fulfil ye my joy*, &c.] The *Arabic* verſion adds, *by theſe things*; meaning not his joy in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, which aroſe from views of intereſt in his perſon, blood, and righteouſneſs; which was had by believing in him, by enjoying communion with him, and living in hope of the glory of God; this is a fruit of the Spirit, and is called joy in the Holy Ghoſt; who as he was the author, muſt be the finiſher of it, and not the *Philippians*; much leſs does he mean that fulneſs of joy in the preſence, and at the right-hand of God in heaven, which he expected to have; but that which aroſe from the ſtate, conduct, and mutual reſpect of the ſaints to each other; he had much joy in them, on account of the good work being begun, and carrying on in their ſouls; and becauſe of their ſtedfaſtneſs in the faith, notwithſtanding the perſecutions they met with; and on account of their continued love to him, and the late freſh inſtance of it they had given, in ſending their miniſter with a preſent to him, and who had given him a particular account of their affairs; but his joy was not yet full, there were ſome things which damped it; as the unbecoming walk and converſation of ſome, of whom he ſpoke with grief of heart, and tears in his eyes; and the inclination of others to liſten to the falſe teachers, thoſe of the conciſion, or circumciſion; and the murmurings, diſputings, and diviſions of others among them, that were contentious and quarrelſome; wherefore to crown his joy, and fill it brimful, he ſignifies that their unity in affection, judgment, and practice, would do it, for ſo he explains it as follows: *that ye be like minded*, or *equally affected to one another*; that ſince they were but as one man, were one body, and had but one head, and one Spirit that quickned and comforted them, and had but one faith and one baptiſm, they ought to be one in affection, practice, and judgment; this is the general,

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neral, of which the following are the particulars: *having the ſame love*; both for quality, being hearty, ſincere, and unfeigned; and for quantity, returning the ſame that is meaſured to them; and with reſpect to objects, loving the ſame Chriſt, the ſame doctrines of Chriſt, the ſame miniſters of the Goſpel, and all the ſaints, rich and poor, high and low, weak or ſtrong believers, without making any difference, by which means unity is preſerved: for if one loves Chriſt, and another antichriſt; one loves one doctrine, and another the oppoſite to it; one loves a teacher of the law, and another a preacher of the Goſpel; one loves one Goſpel miniſter, and one loves another, in diſtinction from, and oppoſition to the other; one loves the rich and not the poor, men of great gifts and grace, and neglects the meaner ſaints; when this is the caſe, they can't be ſaid to have the ſame love, nor can there be harmony, concord, and agreement: *being of one accord*, or *being alike in ſoul*; having the ſame ſoul, not in ſubſtance and number, as ſome philoſophers have aſſerted, but having the ſame affection, judgment, and will, as the firſt chriſtians are ſaid to be of one heart and of one ſoul; or *unanimous* in their ſentiments about doctrines and ordinances, being all of a piece in their practices; and agreeing in all their counſels, debates, acts, and votes, in their church meetings: *of one mind*; in the doctrines of grace, in the ordinances of the Goſpel, and in the diſcipline of the church: the means of preſerving and increaſing ſuch affection, unity, and agreement, are next directed to.

Ver. 3. Let *nothing* be done *through ſtrife*, &c.] About words merely; otherwiſe they were to ſtrive for the faith of the Goſpel, the purity of Goſpel ordinances, worſhip, and diſcipline; but the Apoſtle would not have them ſtrive merely to carry a point determined on, without having any regard to reaſon and truth, or yielding to the infirmities of the weak; which is the caſe and conduct of contentious perſons; than which nothing can be more contrary to the ſpirit of the Goſpel, or the peace of churches: the Apoſtle adds, *or vain-glory*; for where this is predominant, perſons will always be ſingular in their ſentiments, and never relinquiſh them, let what reaſons ſoever be given againſt them; nor will they give way to the judgment of others, but right or wrong will have their own wills; *Diotrephes* like, loving to have the preeminence in all things; and ſuch perſons and conduct, are very injurious to the comfort and harmony of the ſaints: *but in lowlineſs of mind, let each eſteem other better than themſelves*; not as to the things of the world, in reſpect of which one man may be a better man than another, and he muſt know and think himſelf ſo; nor with reſpect to the endowments of the mind, and acquired abilities, which one man may have above another; and the difference being ſo great in ſome, it muſt be eaſily diſcerned, that one is more learned and knowing, in this or the other language, art, or ſcience; but with regard to grace, and to ſpiritual light, knowledge, and judgment: and where there is lowlineſs of mind, or true humility, a perſon will eſteem himſelf in a ſtate of grace, as the great Apoſtle did, the chief of ſinners, and leſs than the leaſt of all ſaints; one in whom this grace reigns, will pay a deference to the judgment of other ſaints, and will prefer their experience, light, and knowledge, to his own; and will readily give way, when he ſees ſuch that are of longer ſtanding, of greater experience, and more ſolid judgment, as he has reaſon to think, than himſelf, are on the other ſide of the queſtion; and ſo peace, love, and unity, are preſerved. This grace of humility is an excellent ornament to a chriſtian, and wonderfully uſeful in chriſtian ſocieties.

Ver. 4. *Look not every man on his own things*, &c.] Not but that a man ſhould take care of his worldly affairs, and look well unto them, and provide things honeſt in the ſight of all men, for himſelf and his family, otherwiſe he would be worſe than an infidel; but he is not to ſeek his own private advantage, and prefer it to a public good; accordingly the *Syriac* verſion reads it, *neither let any one be careful of himſelf, but alſo every one of his neighbour*; and the *Arabic* verſion thus, *and let none of you look to that which conduces to himſelf alone, but let every one of you look to thoſe things which* may *conduce to his friend*; but this reſpects ſpiritual things, and ſpiritual gifts: a chriſtian ſhould not ſeek his own honour and applauſe, and to have his own will, and a point in a church carried his own way, but ſhould conſult the honour of Chriſt, the good of others, and the peace of the church; he ſhould not look upon his own gifts, he may look upon them, and aſcribe them to the grace of God, and make uſe of them to his glory, but not to admire them, or himſelf for them, and pride himſelf in them, and lift up himſelf above others, neglecting and taking no notice of the ſuperior abilities of others: *but every man alſo on the things of others*; not on their worldly things, buſying himſelf with other mens matters, and which he has nothing to do with, but on the ſentiments and reaſons of others; which he ſhould well weigh and conſider, and if they out-do and overbalance his own, ſhould yield unto them; he ſhould take notice of the ſuperior gifts of others, and own and acknowledge them; which is the way to ſubmit to one another in the fear of God, and to promote truth, friendſhip, and love.

Ver. 5. *Let this mind be in you*, &c.] The *Arabic* verſion renders it, *let that humility be perceived in you*. The Apoſtle propoſes Chriſt as the great pattern and exemplar of humility; and inſtances in his aſſumption of human nature, and in his ſubjection to all that meanneſs, and death itſelf, even the death of the croſs in it; and which he mentions with this view, to engage the ſaints to lowlineſs of mind, in imitation of him; to ſhew forth the ſame temper and diſpoſition of mind in their practice, *which alſo was in Chriſt Jeſus*; or as the *Syriac* verſion, *think ye the ſame thing as Jeſus Chriſt*; let the ſame condeſcending ſpirit and humble deportment appear in you as in him. This mind, affection, and conduct of Chriſt, may refer both to his early affection to his people, the love he bore to them from everlaſting, the reſolution and determination of his mind in conſequence of it; and his agreement with his Father to take upon him their nature in the fulneſs of time, and to do his will, by obeying, ſuffering, and dying in their room and ſtead; and alſo the open exhibition and execution of all this in time, when he appeared in human nature, poor, mean, and abject; condeſcending to the loweſt offices, and behaving in the moſt meek and humble manner, throughout the whole of his life, to the moment of his death.

Ver. 6. *Who being in the form of God*, &c.] The Father; being the brightneſs of his glory, and the expreſs image of his perſon. This form is to be underſtood, not of any ſhape or figure of him; for as ſuch is not to be ſeen, it is not to be ſuppoſed of him; or any accidental form, for there are no accidents in God, whatever is in God, is God;

he is nothing but nature and eſſence, he is the το ον, the Jehovah, I am what I am; and ſo is his Son, which is, and was, and is to come, the fountain of all created beings: nor does it intend any outward repreſentation and reſemblance of him, ſuch as in kings; who becauſe of the honour and dignity they are raiſed unto, the authority and power they have, and becauſe of the glory and majeſty they are arrayed with, are called gods: nor does it deſign the ſtate and condition Chriſt appeared in here on earth, having a power to work miracles, heal diſeaſes, and diſpoſſeſs devils, for the manifeſtation of his glory; and ſo might be ſaid to be in the form of God, as *Moſes* for doing leſs miracles is ſaid to be a God unto *Pharaoh*; ſince this account does not regard Chriſt as he was on earth in human nature, but what he was antecedent to the aſſumption of it; or otherwiſe his humility and condeſcenſion in becoming man, and ſo mean, will not appear: but this phraſe *the form of God*, is to be underſtood of the nature and eſſence of God, and deſcribes Chriſt as he was from all eternity; juſt as the form of a ſervant ſignifies, that he was really a ſervant, and the faſhion of a man in which he was found, means that he was truly and really man; ſo his being in the form of God intends, that he was really and truly God; that he partook of the ſame nature with the Father, and was poſſeſſed of the ſame glory: from whence it appears, that he was in being before his incarnation; that he exiſted as a diſtinct perſon from God his Father, in whoſe form he was, and that as a divine perſon, or as truly God, being in the glorious form, nature, and eſſence of God; and that there is but one form of God, or divine nature and eſſence, common to the Father and the Son, and alſo to the Spirit; ſo that they are not three Gods, but one God: what the form of God is, the Heathens themſelves [g] ſay cannot be comprehended nor ſeen, and ſo not to be enquired after; and they uſe the ſame word the Apoſtle does here [h]: and now Chriſt being in this glorious form, or having the ſame divine nature with the Father, with all the infinite and unſpeakable glories of it, *thought it no robbery to be equal with God*; the Father; for if he was in the ſame form, nature, and eſſence, he muſt be equal to him, as he is; for he has the ſame perfections, as eternity, omniſcience, omnipotence, omnipreſence, immutability, and ſelf-exiſtence: hence he has the ſame glorious names, as God, the mighty God, the true God, the living God, God over all, Jehovah, the Lord of glory, *&c.* the ſame works of creation and providence are aſcribed to him, and the ſame worſhip, homage, and honour given him: to be *in the form of God*, and to be *equal with God*, ſignify the ſame thing, the one is explanative of the other: and this divine form and equality, or true and proper deity, he did not obtain by force and rapine, by robbery and uſurpation, as ſatan attempted to do, and as *Adam* by his inſtigation alſo affected; and ſo the mind of a wicked man, as *Philo* the *Jew* ſays [i], being a lover of itſelf and impious, οιομενος ισος ειναι ϑεω, *thinks itſelf to be equal with God*, a like phraſe with this here uſed; but Chriſt enjoyed this equality by nature; he thought, he accounted, he knew he had it this way; and he held it hereby, and of right, and not by any unlawful means; and he reckoned that by declaring and ſhewing forth his proper deity, and perfect equality with the Father, he robbed him of no perfection; the ſame being in him as in the Father, and the ſame in the Father as in him; that he did him no injury, nor deprived him of any glory, or aſſumed that to himſelf which did not belong to him: as for the ſenſe which ſome put upon the words, that he did not *affect*, or *greedily catch* at deity; as the phraſe will not admit of it, ſo it is not true in fact; he did affect deity, and aſſerted it ſtrongly, and took every proper opportunity of declaring it, and in expreſs terms affirmed he was the Son of God; and in terms eaſy to be underſtood, declared his proper deity, and his unity and equality with the Father; required the ſame faith in himſelf as in the Father, and ſignified that he that ſaw the one, ſaw the other, *Mark* xiv. 61, 62. *John* v. 17, 18. and x. 30, 33. and xiv. 1, 10. Others give this as the ſenſe of them, that he did not in an oſtentatious way ſhew forth the glory of his divine nature, but rather hid it; 'tis true indeed, that Chriſt did not ſeek, but carefully ſhunned vain-glory and popular applauſe; and therefore often after having wrought a miracle, would charge the perſons on whom it was wrought, or the company, or his diſciples, not to ſpeak of it; this he did at certain times, and for certain reaſons; yet at other times we find, that he wrought miracles to manifeſt forth his glory, and frequently appeals to them as proofs of his deity and Meſſiahſhip: and beſides, the Apoſtle is ſpeaking not of what he was, or did in his incarnate ſtate, but of what he was and thought himſelf to be, before he became man; wherefore the above ſenſe is to be preferred as the genuine one.

Ver. 7. *But made himſelf of no reputation*, &c.] Or *nevertheleſs emptied himſelf*; not of that fulneſs of grace which was laid up in him from everlaſting, for with this he appeared when he was made fleſh, and dwelt among men; nor of the perfections of his divine nature, which were not in the leaſt diminiſhed by his aſſumption of human nature, for all the fulneſs of the Godhead dwelt in him bodily; though he took that which he had not before, he loſt nothing of what he had; the glory of his divine nature was covered, and out of ſight; and though ſome rays and beams of it broke out thro' his works and miracles, yet his glory, as the only begotten of the Father, was beheld only by a few; the minds of the far greater part were blinded, and their hearts hardened, and they ſaw no form nor comelineſs in him to deſire him; the form of God in which he was, was hid from them; they reputed him as a mere man, yea, as a ſinful man, even as a worm, and no man: and to be thus eſteemed, and had in ſuch account, he voluntarily ſubjected himſelf, though ſo infinitely great and glorious; as he did not aſſume deity by rapine, he was not thruſt down into this low eſtate by force; as the angels that ſinned when they affected to be as God, were drove from their ſeats of glory, and caſt down into hell; and when man, through the inſtigation of ſatan, was deſirous of the ſame, he was turned out of *Eden*, and became like the beaſts that periſh; but this was Chriſt's own act and deed, he willingly aſſented to it, to lay aſide as it were his glory for a while, to have it veiled and hid, and be reckoned any thing, a mere man, yea, to have a devil, and not be God: O wondrous humility! aſtoniſhing condeſcenſion! *and took upon him the form of a ſervant*; this alſo was voluntary; he *took upon him*, was not obliged, or forced to be in the form of a ſervant; he appeared as one in human nature, and was really ſuch; a ſervant to

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[g] Socraticus, Xenophon, & Ariſto Chius, apud Minuc. Felic. Octav. p. 20. & Hoſtanes apud Cæcil. Cyprian. de Idol. van. p. 46.

[h] Laertii proœm. ad vit. Philoſoph. p. 7.

[i] Leg. Alleg. l. 1. p. 48, 49.

his Father, who choſe, called, ſent, upheld, and regarded him as a ſervant; and a very prudent, diligent, and faithful one he was unto him: and he was alſo a ſervant to his people, and miniſtred to men; partly by preaching the Goſpel to them, and partly by working miracles, healing their diſeaſes, going about to do good, both to the bodies and ſouls of men; and chiefly by obtaining eternal redemption for his choſen ones, by being made ſin and a curſe for them; which though a very toilſome and laborious piece of ſervice, yet as he chearfully engaged in it, he diligently attended it, until he had finiſhed it: ſo he was often propheſied of as a ſervant, in *Iſa.* xlii. 1. and lii. 13. *Zech.* iii. 6. in which ſeveral places he is called in the *Targum*, עבדי משיחא, *my ſervant the Meſſiah:* put theſe two together, *the form of God*, and *the form of a ſervant*, and admire the amazing ſtoop! *and was made in the likeneſs of men*; not of the firſt *Adam*, for though, as he, he was without ſin, knew none, nor did any; yet he was rather like to ſinful men, and was ſent in the likeneſs of ſinful fleſh, and was traduced and treated as a ſinner, and numbered among tranſgreſſors; he was like to men, the moſt mean and abject, ſuch as were poor, and in lower life, and were of the leaſt eſteem and account among men, on any ſcore: or he was like to men in common, and particularly to his brethren the ſeed of *Abraham*, and children of God that were given him; he partook of the ſame fleſh and blood, he had a true body, and a reaſonable ſoul, as they; he was ſubject to the like ſorrows and griefs, temptations, reproaches, and perſecutions; and was like them in every thing, excepting ſin: a ſtrange and ſurprizing difference this, that he who was *equal to God*, ſhould be *like to* ſinful *men!*

Ver. 8. *And being found in faſhion as a man*, &c.] Not that he had only the ſhew and appearance of a man, but he was really a man; for *as* here, denotes not merely the likeneſs of a thing, but the thing itſelf, as in *Matt.* xiv. 5. *John* i. 14. ως here, anſwers to the *Hebrew* כ, which is ſometimes by the *Jews* [k] ſaid to be כף חדמיון, and ſignifies likeneſs, and ſometimes כף האמתות, and deſigns truth and reality; which is the ſenſe in which the particle is to be taken here: though he was ſeen and looked upon as a mere man, and therefore charged with blaſphemy when he aſſerted himſelf to be the Son of God, he was more than a man; and yet found and known by men in common, to be no more than a man, than juſt ſuch a man, as other men are; and ſo far is true, that his ſcheme, his habit, his faſhion, his form, were like that of other men; though he was not begotten as man, but conceived in an extraordinary manner by the power of the Holy Ghoſt, yet he lay nine months in his mother's womb, as the human fœtus ordinarily does; he was born as children are, was wrapped in ſwaddling-bands when born, as an infant is; grew in ſtature by degrees, as men do; the ſhape and ſize of his body were like other mens, and he was ſubject to the ſame infirmities, as hunger, thirſt, wearineſs, pain, grief, ſorrow, and death itſelf, as follows: *he humbled himſelf*; by becoming man, and by various outward actions in his life; as ſubjection to his parents, working at the trade of a carpenter, converſing with the meaneſt of men, waſhing his diſciples feet, *&c.* and the whole of his deportment both to God and man, his compliance with his Father's will, though diſagreeable to fleſh and blood, his behaviour towards his enemies, and his forbearance of his diſciples, ſhewed him to be of a meek and humble ſpirit; he humbled himſelf both to God and man: *and became obedient unto death*, or *until death*; for he was obedient from the cradle to the croſs, to God, to men, to his earthly parents, and to magiſtrates; he was obedient to the ceremonial law, to circumciſion, the paſſover, *&c.* to the moral law, to all the precepts of it, which he punctually fulfilled; and to the penalty of it death, which he voluntarily and chearfully bore, in the room and ſtead of his people: *even the death of the croſs*; which was both painful and ſhameful; it was an accurſed one, and ſhewed that he bore the curſe of the law, and was made a curſe for us: this was a puniſhment uſually inflicted on ſervants, and is called a ſervile puniſhment [l]; and ſuch was the form which he took, when he was found in faſhion as a man: this is now the great inſtance of humility the Apoſtle gives, as a pattern of it to the ſaints, and it is a matchleſs and unparalleled one.

Ver. 9. *Wherefore God alſo hath highly exalted him*, &c.] The Apoſtle proceeds to obſerve the exaltation of Chriſt, for the encouragement of meek and humble ſouls; that whereas Chriſt, who ſo exceedingly demeaned himſelf, was afterwards highly exalted by God, ſo all ſuch who in imitation of him, behave to one another in lowlineſs of mind, ſhall be exalted in God's due time; for whoſo humbleth himſelf, ſhall be exalted. The firſt ſtep of Chriſt's exaltation, was his reſurrection from the dead, when he had a glory given him as man; his body was raiſed in incorruption, in glory, in power, and a ſpiritual one; it became a glorious body, and the pledge and exemplar of the ſaints at the general reſurrection, of which his transfiguration on the mount was an emblem and prelude; and he was alſo glorified then as Mediator, he was then juſtified in the Spirit, and acquitted and diſcharged from all the ſins of his people, he took upon him and bore, having ſatisfied for them; and all God's elect were juſtified in him, for he roſe as a public perſon, as their head, for their juſtification; yea, in ſome ſenſe he was then glorified, as a divine perſon; not that any new additional glory was, or could be made to him as ſuch; but there was an illuſtrious manifeſtation of his natural, eſſential, and original glory; he was declared to be the Son of God with power, by his reſurrection from the dead: the next ſtep of his high exaltation, was his aſcending on high up to the third heaven, where he is made higher than the heavens; when he was accompanied by an innumerable company of angels, and by thoſe ſaints whoſe bodies roſe out of their graves after his reſurrection; and was received and carried up in a bright glorious cloud; and paſſing through the air, the ſeat of the devils, he led captivity captive, and triumphed over principalities and powers, having before ſpoiled them on his croſs; and then entering into heaven, he ſat down at the right-hand of God, which is another branch of his exaltation; and ſhews that he had done his work, and that it was approved and accepted of; and had that glory and honour beſtowed on him, which never was on any mere creature, angels or men, to ſit down on the right-hand of the majeſty on high; which as it is the higheſt pitch of the exaltation of the human nature of Chriſt, ſo by it there is a moſt illuſtrious diſplay of the glory of his divine perſon as the Son of God; who was with God, as one brought up with him from all eternity; and was ſo likewiſe when here on earth, but not ſo manifeſtly; but now he is openly and manifeſtatively glorified with himſelf, with that glory he had with him before the world began: moreover, Chriſt's exaltation lies in his having the gifts of the Spirit without meaſure, to beſtow on his miniſters and churches, in all ſucceeding generations, for the carrying on of his intereſt, and the enlargement of his kingdom; in having all power in heaven and in earth, to compleat his work and great deſigns; in having dominion and authority over all creatures and things, which are made to be ſubſervient to the execution of his mediatorial office; and in having the right and power of judging the world at the laſt day, when there will ſtill be a more glorious diſplay of his eternal deity and divine Sonſhip; for he'll come in his Father's glory, and in his own, and with his holy angels: now the cauſes of Chriſt's exaltation are theſe: the efficient cauſe is God; though he made himſelf of no reputation, and humbled himſelf, theſe were voluntary acts of his own; yet he did not exalt himſelf, but God exalted him, even God the Father; with him the covenant of grace and redemption was made, in which glory was promiſed Chriſt, in conſideration of his obedience, ſufferings, and death; and which he prayed to him for, and pleaded for with him, having done his work; and which exaltation of Chriſt is always aſcribed to God, even the Father; ſee *Acts* ii. 33. and iii. 13. and v. 31. the impulſive or moving cauſe, and indeed the meritorious cauſe, were the humiliation of Chriſt; becauſe he, though he was originally ſo great and glorious, yet made himſelf as it were nothing, humbled himſelf to become man, and was contented to be accounted a mere man, and went up and down in the form of a ſervant; and becauſe he became ſo chearfully obedient to the whole law, and to death itſelf, for the ſake of his people, and out of love to them, *therefore* God exalted him: the exaltation of Chriſt, was not only a conſequence of his obedience and death, and his humiliation, merely the way to his glory; but his high and exalted eſtate were the reward of all this; it was what was promiſed him in covenant, what was then agreed upon, what he expected and pleaded, and had as a recompence of reward, in conſideration of his having glorified God on earth, and finiſhed the work he undertook to do: it follows as an inſtance of the exaltation of Chriſt, *and hath given him a name which is above every name.* The *Syriac* verſion renders it, *which is more excellent than every name*; and the *Arabic* verſion tranſlates it, *which is more eminent than every name*; and the *Ethiopic* verſion thus, *which is greater than every name*; by which is meant, not any particular and peculiar name by which he is called; not the name of God, for though this is his name, the mighty God, and ſo is even the incommunicable name *Jehovah*, and which may be truly ſaid to be every name; but neither of theſe are given him, but what he has by nature; and beſides were what he had before his exaltation in human nature: 'tis true indeed, upon that this name of his became more illuſtrious and manifeſt unto men; it is a more clear point, that he is God over all bleſſed for evermore; and it will ſtill be more manifeſt at his glorious appearing, that he is the great God, as well as our Saviour: to which may be added, that the name *Jehovah* in the plate of gold on the high-prieſt's forehead, was ſet above the other word; ſo ſays *Maimonides* [m], “the plate of gold was two “fingers broad, and it reached from ear to ear; “and there was written upon it two lines, *holineſs* “*to the Lord*; קדש *holineſs* was written below, and “ליהוה מלמעלה, *to the Lord*, or *to Jehovah*, “above:” whether here may not be an alluſion to this, I leave to be conſidered: nor do I think that the name of the Son of God is meant; this is indeed a name of Chriſt, and a more excellent one than either angels or men have; for he is in ſuch ſenſe the Son of God, as neither of them are; but this is a name alſo which he has by nature, and is what he had before his exaltation; and was before this atteſted by his Father, and confeſſed by angels, men, and devils; though indeed upon his exaltation, he was declared more manifeſtly to be the Son of God, as he will be yet more clearly in his kingdom and glory: much leſs is the name Jeſus intended, which was given him by the angel before his conception and birth, and was a name common to men among the *Jews*; but it ſeems to deſign ſuch fame and renown, honour, glory, and dignity, as were never given unto, and beſtowed upon creatures; as his riſing from the dead as a public perſon, his aſcending on high in the manner he did, his ſeſſion at the right-hand of God, his inveſtiture with all gifts, power, dominion, authority, and with the judgment of the world; and whatever name of greatneſs there is among men or angels, Chriſt has that which is ſuperior to it. Was a prieſt a name of honour and dignity among the *Jews?* Chriſt is not only a prieſt, and an high-prieſt, but a great high-prieſt; a prieſt not after the order of *Aaron*, but after the order of *Melchizedec*, and a greater than he himſelf. Is a king a great name among men? Chriſt has on his veſture and on his thigh, a name written king of kings, and lord of lords. Is a deliverer of a nation a title of great honour? Chriſt is exalted to be a prince and a ſaviour of men of all nations; nor is there any other name but his, that is given among men, whereby we muſt be ſaved. Is a mediator between jarring princes and kingdoms, accounted a name of greatneſs and glory? Chriſt is the one only mediator between God and man, and of a new and better covenant. Are angels, ſeraphim, cherubim, thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers, great names in the other world? Chriſt is the angel of God's preſence, an increated one, the angel of the covenant, the head of all principality and power. Theſe are all ſubject to him, and he is ſet at God's right-hand far above them.

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[k] Vid. Kimchi in Joſh. iii. 4.

[l] Lipſius de cruce, l. 1. c. 12.

Ver. 10. *That at the name of Jeſus every knee ſhould bow*, &c.] Which is to be underſtood, not of the outward act of bowing the knee upon hearing the name, and the ſyllables of the mere name Jeſus pronounced; for in the bare name there can be nothing which can command ſuch a peculiar reſpect; it was a name common with the *Jews*: *Joſhua* is ſo called in *Heb.* iv. 8. and the name of *Elymas* the ſorcerer was *Bar-Jeſus*; that is, the ſon of *Jeſus*, *Acts* xiii. 6. Now, how monſtrouſly ridiculous and ſtupid would it be, for a man, upon hearing theſe paſſages, and upon the pronouncing of this word, to bow the knee? Moreover, the words ought not to be rendered *at*, but *in the name of Jeſus*; that is, in and by reaſon of the power, authority, and dignity of Jeſus, as exalted at God's right hand, every creature is to be ſubject to him: add to this, that there are ſeveral creatures included in the following account, who, in a corporal ſenſe, have not knees to bow with, as angels, the ſouls of men departed, and devils; and therefore an external corporal bowing of the knee cannot be meant. The *Jews* indeed, upon hearing the name *Jehovah* pronounced by the high-prieſt, in the holy of holies, uſed to bow: they ſay[n], "that the prieſts, and the "people, that ſtand in the court, when they hear "*Shembamphoraſh*, (*i. e.* the name *Jehovah*) pro"nounced by the high-prieſt, היו כורעים, *bowed*, "and worſhipped, and fell upon their faces, and "ſaid, bleſſed be the name of the glory of his "kingdom, for ever and ever:" tho' it can hardly be thought there's any reference to this here. But inaſmuch as this action is a token of reverence, worſhip, and ſubjection, it is uſed for thoſe things themſelves; and the ſenſe is, that Chriſt is exalted as before deſcribed, that every creature may give him reverence, worſhip, and adoration, ſubmit and be ſubject to him, as all do, and ſhall, either freely or forcedly. Some really and heartily truſt in his name, are baptized in his name, and aſcribe honour, and glory, and bleſſing to him from their whole hearts; and others feignedly, and whether they will or no, are ſubject to him, and ſooner or later ſhall acknowledge his authority over them: and he ſhall be owned to be Lord *of things in heaven*; the angels there, and the ſouls of departed ſaints, with thoſe who are already clothed with their bodies: *and things in earth*; both good men, and bad men: *and things under the earth*; or *in the abyſs*, as the *Ethiopic* verſion renders it; meaning either the devils in the bottomleſs pit; or rather the dead bodies of men in the grave, which ſhall come forth and ſtand before the judgment-ſeat of Chriſt.

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[m] Hilchot Cele Hamikdaſh, c. 9. §. 1.

Ver. 11. *And that every tongue ſhould confeſs*, &c.] Whether of angels or men, or of men of whatſoever nation. Confeſſion is either true and hearty, as when the mouth and heart agree in confeſſing, and which is made only by true believers; or verbal only, or in mere outward form, and by force, as in hypocrites, wicked men, and devils themſelves; who all either have confeſſed, or will confeſs, *that Jeſus Chriſt is Lord*: the holy angels confeſs him to be Lord, and their Lord truly, and are unfeignedly ſubject to him; and true believers heartily own him as their Lord, and chearfully ſubmit to his commands and ordinances; and the fooliſh virgins, and the goats on Chriſt's left-hand, will, at the laſt day, call him Lord, Lord; and the worſt of men, yea, even devils, will be obliged to own his lordſhip and dominion; which will be *to the glory of God the Father*. The *Syriac* reads, *his Father*, who has choſe and conſtituted him as the mediator, inveſted him with his office, ordained him to be judge of quick and dead, and given him all power and authority, and exalted him at his own right-hand; ſo that he that honoureth the Son, honoureth the Father alſo. The *Vulgate Latin* verſion renders the words, *becauſe the Lord Jeſus Chriſt is in the glory of God the Father*; being in the form of God, of the ſame nature and eſſence with him, and equal to him; as he will appear to be at his ſecond coming, for then he'll come in the glory of his Father.

Ver. 12. *Wherefore, my beloved*, &c.] This is an inference from the inſtance and example of Chriſt; that ſince he, who was God over all, bleſſed for ever, made himſelf ſo low in human nature, in which he is now ſo highly exalted, having done the work and buſineſs he came about with ſuch condeſcenſion, humility, and meekneſs; therefore it becomes thoſe who profeſs to be his followers, to do all their affairs as men and chriſtians, with, and among one another, in all lowlineſs of mind. The Apoſtle calls the ſaints here, *my beloved*, he having a ſtrong affection for them, which he frequently expreſſes in this Epiſtle; and he chuſes to make uſe of ſuch an endearing appellation, that it might be obſerved, that what he was about to ſay to them, ſprung from pure love to them, and a hearty deſire for their welfare, and from no other end, and with no other view: and to encourage them to go on in a courſe of humble duty, he commends them for their former obedience, *as ye have always obeyed*; not *me*, as the *Arabic* and *Ethiopic* verſions ſupply; but either God, acting according to his revealed will, they had knowledge of; or Chriſt by receiving him as prophet, prieſt, and king, by ſubmitting to his righteouſneſs, and the ſceptre of his grace; or the Goſpel, by embracing the truths of it, profeſſing them, and abiding in them, and by ſubjecting to the ordinances of it, and doing all things whatſoever Chriſt has commanded: and this they did *always*; they were always abounding in the work of the Lord, doing his will; they abode by Chriſt, and continued ſtedfaſtly in his doctrines, and kept the ordinances as they were delivered to them, and walked in all the commandments of the Lord blameleſs. *Not as in my preſence only, but now much more in my abſence*; which clauſe may either be referred to the foregoing, which expreſſes their obedience; and ſo ſignifies that that was carefully and chearfully performed, not only whilſt the Apoſtle was with them, but now when he was abſent from them, and much more when abſent than preſent; which ſhows, that they were not eye-ſervants, and men-pleaſers, but what they did they did ſincerely and heartily, as to the Lord: or to the following exhortation, that they would attend to it; not only as they had done when he was among them, of which he was witneſs, but that they would much more do ſo now he was abſent from them, namely, *work out your own ſalvation with fear and trembling*; which is to be underſtood not in ſuch ſenſe as tho' men could obtain and procure for themſelves ſpiritual and eternal ſalvation by their own works and doings; for ſuch a ſenſe is contrary to the ſcriptures, which deny any part of ſalvation, as election, juſtification, and vocation, and the whole of it to be of works, but aſcribe it to the free grace of God; and is alſo repugnant to the perfections of God, as his wiſdom, grace, and righteouſneſs; for where are the wiſdom and love of God, in forming a ſcheme of ſalvation, and ſending his Son to effect it, and after all it is left to men to work it out for themſelves? and where's the juſtice of God in admitting of an imperfect righteouſneſs in the room of a perfect one, which muſt be the caſe, if ſalvation is obtained by men's works? for theſe are imperfect, even the beſt of them; and is another reaſon againſt this ſenſe of the paſſage; and were they perfect, they could not be meritorious of ſalvation, for the requiſites of merits are wanting in them. Moreover, was ſalvation to be obtained by the works of men, theſe conſequences would follow; the death of Chriſt would be in vain, boaſting would be encouraged in men, they would have whereof to glory, and their obligations to obedience taken from the love of God, and redemption by Chriſt would be weakened and deſtroyed: add to all this, that the ſcriptures aſſure us, that ſalvation is alone by Chriſt; and that it is already finiſhed by him, and not to be wrought out now by him, or any other; and that ſuch is the weakneſs and impotence of men, even of believers, to whom this exhortation is directed, that it is impoſſible for them ever to effect it; therefore, whatever ſenſe theſe words have, we may be ſure that this can never poſſibly be the ſenſe of them. The words may be rendered, *work about your ſalvation*; employ yourſelves in things which accompany ſalvation, and to be performed by all thoſe that expect it, tho' not to be expected for the performance of them; ſuch as hearing of the word, ſubmiſſion to Goſpel-ordinances, and a diſcharge of every branch of moral, ſpiritual, and evangelical obedience, for which the Apoſtle before commends them, and now exhorts them to continue in; to go on in a courſe of chearful obedience to the cloſe of their days, believing in Chriſt, obeying his Goſpel, attending conſtantly to his word and ordinances, and diſcharging every duty in faith and fear, until at laſt they ſhould receive the end of their faith, the ſalvation of their ſouls: agreeably the *Syriac* verſion renders the words, פלוחו פולחנא דחייכון, *do the work*, or *buſineſs of your lives*; the work you are to do in your generation, which God has preſcribed and directed you to, which the grace of God teaches, and the love of Chriſt conſtrains to. Do all that *with fear and trembling*; not with a ſlaviſh fear of hell and damnation, or leſt they ſhould fall away, or finally miſcarry of heaven and happineſs; ſince this would be a diſtruſt of the power and faithfulneſs of God, and ſo criminal in them; nor is it reaſonable to ſuppoſe, that the Apoſtle would exhort to ſuch a fear, when he himſelf was ſo confidently aſſured, that the good work begun in them would be performed; and beſides, the exhortation would be very oddly formed, if this was the ſenſe, *work out your ſalvation with fear* of damnation: but this fear and trembling ſpoken of, is ſuch as is conſiſtent with the higheſt acts of faith, truſt, confidence, and joy, and is oppoſed to pride and vain-glory; ſee *Pſ.* cxv. 11. and ii. 11. *Rom.* xi. 20. and intends modeſty and humility, which is what the Apoſtle is preſſing for throughout the whole context; and here urges to a chearful and conſtant obedience to Chriſt, with all humility of ſoul, without dependance on it, or vain-glorying in it, but aſcribing it wholly to the grace of God, for the following reaſon.

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[n] T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 66. 1. Maimon. Yom Haccippurim, c. 2. §. 7.

Ver. 13. *For it is God which worketh in you*, &c.] Which is both an encouragement to perſons conſcious of their own weakneſs to work, as before exhorted to; ſee *Hagg.* ii. 4. and a reaſon and argument for humility and meekneſs, and againſt pride and vain-glory, ſince all we have, and do, is from God; and alſo points out the ſpring, principle, and foundation of all good works; namely, the grace of God wrought in the heart, which is an internal work, and purely the work of God: by this men become the workmanſhip of God, created unto good works, and are new men, and fitted for the performance of acts of righteouſneſs, and true holineſs; and this grace, which God works in them, is wrought in a powerful and efficacious manner, ſo as not to be fruſtrated and made void. The word here uſed ſignifies an inward, powerful, and efficacious operation; and the *King's manuſcript*, mentioned by *Grotius* and *Hammond*, adds another word to it, which makes the ſenſe ſtill ſtronger, reading it thus, *which worketh in you*, δυναμει, *by power*; not by moral ſuaſion, but by his own power, the power of his efficacious grace. The *Alexandrian* copy reads, δυναμεις, *powers*, or *mighty works*: God works in his people *both to will and to do of his good pleaſure*; God works in converted men a *will* to that which is ſpiritually good; which is to be underſtood, not of the formation of the natural faculty of the will; or of the preſervation of it, and its natural liberty; or of the general motion of it to natural objects; nor of his influence on it in a providential way; but of the making of it good, and cauſing a willingneſs in it to that which is ſpiritually good. Men have no will naturally to come to Chriſt, or to have him to reign over them; they have no deſire, nor hungrings and thirſtings after his righteouſneſs and ſalvation; where-ever there are any ſuch inclinations and deſires, they are wrought in men by God; who works upon the ſtubborn and inflexible will, and without any force to it, makes the ſoul willing to be ſaved by Chriſt, and ſubmit to his righteouſneſs, and do his will; he ſweetly and powerfully draws it with the cords of love to himſelf, and to his Son, and ſo influences it by his grace and Spirit, and which he continues, that it freely wills every thing ſpiritually good, and for the glory of God: and he works in them alſo to *do*; for there is ſometimes in believers a will, when there wants a power of doing. God therefore both implants in them principles of action to work from, as faith and love, and a regard for his glory, and gives them grace and ſtrength to work with, without which they can do nothing, but having theſe, can do all things: and all this is *of* his *good pleaſure*; the word *his* not being in the original text, ſome have taken the liberty to aſcribe this to the will of man; and ſo the *Syriac* verſion renders it, *both to will, and to do that*, רצבין אנתון, *which ye will*, or according to your good will; but ſuch a ſenſe is both bad and ſenſeleſs; for if they have a good will of themſelves, what occaſion is there for God to work one in them? no; theſe internal operations of divine power and grace, are not owing to the will of men, nor to any merits of theirs, or are what God is obliged to do, but what flow from his ſovereign will and pleaſure; who works when, where, and as he pleaſes, and that for his own glory; and who continues to do ſo in the hearts of his people; otherwiſe, notwithſtanding the work of grace in them, they would find very little inclination to, and few and faint deſires after ſpiritual things, and leſs ſtrength to do what is ſpiritually good; but God of his good pleaſure goes on working what is well-pleaſing in his ſight.

Ver. 14. *Do all things*, &c.] Not evil things, theſe are to be abhorr'd, ſhuned, and avoided, even all appearance of them, they are not to be done, even for the ſake of good; nor all indifferent things at all times, and under all circumſtances, when the peace and edification of others are in danger of being hurt by ſo doing; but all good things, all that are agreeable to the righteous law and good-will of God; all thoſe good things which accompany ſalvation, as hearing the word, and attendance on ordinances; all church affairs relating to public worſhip, private conference, every thing at church meetings, and which concern the diſcipline and laws of Chriſt's houſe; and all things that are civilly, morally, ſpiritually, and evangelically good; even all things that God would have done, or we would deſire ſhould be done to us by fellow-creatures and fellow-chriſtians: let all theſe be done *without murmurings*; either againſt God and Chriſt, as if any thing hard and ſevere was enjoined, when Chriſt's yoke is eaſy, and his burden light, and none of his commands grievous; and becauſe their preſence is not always enjoyed, and that communion and comfort in ordinances had, which may be deſired: or againſt the miniſters of the Goſpel, in whoſe power it is not to give grace, comfort, and ſpiritual refreſhment; any more than it was in *Moſes* and *Aaron* to give bread and water to the *Iſraelites* in the wilderneſs, for which they murmured againſt them, and in ſo doing, againſt God himſelf: or againſt one another, becauſe of ſuperior enjoyments in nature, providence, and grace; but all things, both of a moral, civil, and religious nature, with reſpect to God, and one another, ſhould be done readily, freely, chearfully, and heartily: and alſo without *diſputings*; or *without heſitations*, as the *Vulgate Latin*, *Arabic*, and *Ethiopic* verſions render it. Whatever appears to be agreeable to the will of God, ſhould be done at once without diſpute upon it, or heſitation about it, however diſagreeable it may be to carnal ſenſe and reaſon; the will of God is not to be diſputed, nor fleſh and blood to be conſulted, in oppoſition to it; nor ſhould the ſaints enter into any carnal reaſonings, and contentious diſputations, either at their public or private meetings, but do all they do decently, and in order, and in the exerciſe of brotherly love.

Ver. 15. *That ye may be blameleſs*, &c.] This, and what follows, ſhew the end to be anſwered, by obſerving the above exhortation. This reſpects not their being blameleſs in the ſight of God, which the ſaints are not in themſelves, being not without ſin, tho' they are, as conſidered in Chriſt, clothed with his righteouſneſs, and waſhed in his blood; but their being blameleſs before men: and this may be underſtood, both actively and paſſively; actively, that they might be without blaming others; ſome are ſo unhappy in their diſpoſition and conduct, as to be always finding fault with, and blaming all perſons they are concerned with, and all things in them, and done by them right or wrong, without any juſt reaſon; and this ought not to be, and may be prevented by doing all things, as before directed: or paſſively, that they might not be blamed by others juſtly; for no man can eſcape the blame and cenſure of every one; our Lord himſelf did not, nor this our Apoſtle; but doing, as before exhorted to, will, in a great meaſure, preclude any juſt reaſon for blame and complaint: 'tis added, *and harmleſs*; that is, that they might be, and appear to be ſo; harmleſs as doves, in imitation of Chriſt, who was holy in his nature, and harmleſs in his converſation, as his followers ſhould be; doing no injury to any man's perſon or property, behaving in an inoffenſive manner to all men, to *Jew* and *Gentile*, and to the church of God: it follows, *the ſons of God*; not that they might be ſons by ſo doing; but be *as the ſons of God*, as the *Syriac* verſion renders it, be like them, and behave as ſuch; for they were the ſons of God already; not by creation only, as angels, and all men are, nor merely by profeſſion of religion, but by adopting grace; they were predeſtinated to the adoption of children, and were taken into this relation in the covenant of grace, Chriſt had redeemed them from under the law, that they might receive this bleſſing, and it was actually beſtowed upon them by him in converſion: but the ſenſe is, that they might appear to be the children of God, by acting as becomes ſuch; not that they might appear ſo to themſelves, for they were openly and manifeſtatively to themſelves the children of God, by faith in Chriſt Jeſus, and through the teſtimony of the Spirit, witneſſing to their Spirits that they were in ſuch a relation to God; but that they might appear ſo to others, that they were the adopted ſons of God, and alſo begotten again by him, and made partakers of the divine nature; by their being followers of God as dear children, and by their being obedient ones to him in all holineſs and godly converſation, yielding a ready and chearful obedience to his will, without repining at it, or diſputing about it: and to be *without rebuke*; not without the rebuke of their heavenly Father, for whom he loves he rebukes; and every ſon that he receives into his family he ſcourges and chaſtizes, not in wrath and anger, or with rebukes of fury, but of love; but without the rebuke of men, both of the churches and miniſters of Chriſt, whoſe buſineſs it is to reprove and rebuke, publickly and privately, as caſes and their circumſtances require; and of the men of the world, who when they have any occaſion, make uſe of it to ſpeak reproachfully, as a railing *Rabſhakeh* did, when it is a time of rebuke and blaſphemy, and to be ſhunned and guarded againſt as much as poſſible: eſpecially ſince the ſaints live *in the midſt of a crooked and perverſe nation*; or age and generation, as every age is; ſaints are like lilies in the vallies, liable to be trampled upon by the foot of every wild beaſt; like roſes among thorns, to be ſcratched and torn; and like *Lots* in the midſt of *Sodom*, vexed with the filthy converſation of the wicked: the whole world lies in ſin, and the ſaints are encloſed on every ſide with wicked men. *Philippi*, where theſe ſaints lived, was a place of wickedneſs, and ſo no doubt was the whole region of *Macedonia*; the inhabitants were evil for the moſt part; their ways were crooked, and their works perverſe, being contrary to the law of God, and Goſpel of Chriſt; and therefore the following exhortation to the ſaints there was very ſuitable. *Among whom ye ſhine*; or *ſhine ye*, as it may be rendered, *as lights in the world*. This world is, in a moral ſenſe, what the original chaos was in a natural ſenſe, covered with darkneſs; the darkneſs of ignorance and unbelief, of impiety and ſuperſtition, has ſpread itſelf over the far greater part of the world; the men of it are children of the night, and of darkneſs; their works are works of darkneſs, and they are going on in darkneſs, not knowing where they are going. The ſaints are the lights of the world, they were once darkneſs itſelf, but are made light in and by the Lord; they are called into marvellous light, and are filled with light ſpiritual and evangelical; they are like the moon and ſtars, that give light to the world in the night; and as they receive their light from the ſun, and communicate it to the world, ſo do the ſaints receive theirs from Chriſt, the ſun of righteouſneſs, and ſhew it forth to others, both by doctrine and practice: or rather the churches of Chriſt are as candleſticks, in which the light of the Goſpel is put, and held forth to men, as follows; ſee *Matt.* v. 14, 15, 16.

Ver. 16. *Holding forth the word of life*, &c.] By which may be meant, either Chriſt the eſſential Word, in whom life was, and is, and who is called the quick or living Word, *John* i. 1, 4. *Heb.* iv. 12. and here may be ſtiled the Word of life, becauſe he has all life in him; he has a divine life in him, as God, he is the living God; and it is given to him to have life in himſelf, as mediator, for all his people; and he ever lives as man to make interceſſion for them; and becauſe he is the author of life in every ſenſe, of natural life to all men, of ſpiritual and eternal life to as many as the Father has given him: or elſe the Goſpel is intended, and the doctrines of it; and which are ſometimes called the words of eternal life, and of this life, *John* vi. 68. *Acts* v. 20. and that becauſe they are a means of quickening dead ſinners, they are a ſavour of life unto life, and the Spirit that giveth life, and of enlivening and comforting living ſaints; they treat of Chriſt who is the life; by the Goſpel, life and immortality are brought to light; that gives an account of everlaſting life; points out Chriſt as the way to it, ſhews that meetneſs for it lies in regenerating grace, and a right unto it is in the righteouſneſs of Chriſt. Now this Word of life is held forth, partly by the preaching of it to a dark world, as by ſome; and partly by profeſſing it publickly, as it ſhould be by all who are enlightened with it; and alſo by living lives and converſations becoming and ſuitable to it. *That I may rejoice in the day of Chriſt.* The Apoſtle having obſerved the advantages that would accrue to themſelves, and the benefit they might be of to the men of the world, by regarding the ſeveral exhortations he had given them, and which ends he mentions as reaſons and arguments to enforce them, cloſes with taking notice of the uſe and ſervice it would be to himſelf; it would give him joy and pleaſure when Chriſt ſhould come a ſecond time to judge the world; and when the dead in Chriſt would be raiſed, and ſet at his right hand, and theſe among the reſt, to whom the Apoſtle had been uſeful; and who continued to bear an honourable teſtimony in the world to Chriſt, and his Goſpel, to the end: *that I have not run in vain, nor laboured in vain*; being bleſſed with ſuch converts under his miniſtry, as were a credit to religion, an honour to the Goſpel, and a crown of rejoicing to him. He expreſſes his miniſterial function, and the diſcharge of it, by running in a race, as the miniſtry of a perſon is ſometimes called his *courſe*, *Acts* xiii. 25. and xx. 24. 2 *Tim.* iv. 7. in alluſion to the *Olympic* games, which the Apoſtle often refers to, when the conqueror obtained a crown; and it was enough for our Apoſtle, and a crown of rejoicing to him, that his ſpiritual children walked in the truth, and as became it, to the end: and alſo by labour, and hard ſervice, as the miniſterial work is, when faithfully performed; and eſpecially as his was, which was attended with ſo many difficulties, and yet with ſuch conſtancy, diligence, and indefatigableneſs, all which was not in vain; and he could look back upon it with pleaſure, when his followers ſtood faſt in the faith, and adorned the doctrine of Chriſt.

Ver. 17. *Yea, and if I be offered*, &c.] Or *poured out*, as the drink-offerings of wine or oil were; meaning the effuſion of his blood, which he compares to a libation, or drink-offering, which was poured upon the ſacrifice; and the laying down of his life for the ſake of Chriſt, and his Goſpel, which he knew not how ſoon might be, tho' he was in ſome hopes of a deliverance for the preſent, and therefore ſpeaks of it in an hypothetical way; yet he expected it ſooner or later; and that whenever it was, it would be as the libation upon the offering. *Upon the ſacrifice and ſervice of your faith*; he had been the means of bringing them to the faith of Chriſt, in which they were an offering acceptable to God, being ſanctified by the Holy Ghoſt; ſee *Rom.* xv. 16. and ſhould he ſuffer and ſhed his blood in the cauſe of Chriſt, it would be as a libation on them, as a ſacrifice; it would be for the ſake of preaching the doctrine of faith, by which they were brought to believe on Chriſt; and it would be for the further confirmation of their faith, and as a drink-offering acceptable unto God; upon all which accounts it would be matter of joy to him. *I joy and rejoice with you all*; meaning at his ſufferings and death, and the advantages thereof to Chriſt, to his churches, and to himſelf.

Ver. 18. *For the ſame cauſe alſo do ye joy and rejoice with me.*] He would not have them be ſorrowful, ſhould they hear of his death for the ſake of the Goſpel, and of his blood being poured out in ſuch a cauſe; ſince it was as a libation on their faith, and for the confirmation of it, and would be gain to Chriſt, and his intereſt, and to the Apoſtle alſo; and therefore they ſhould be ſo far from indulging grief and ſorrow on that account, that they ſhould rather joy and rejoice with him, who was ready to be offered up, or poured out; ſince he had run out his race, and that not in vain, but to ſo good a purpoſe, and eſpecially among them.

Ver. 19. *But I truſt in the Lord Jeſus*, &c.] Or *hope*; not in himſelf, his wiſdom, will, reſolutions and purpoſes; nor in an arm of fleſh, in any human aid and power; nor in princes, not in *Nero*, the *Roman* emperor, as expecting a releaſe from bonds by him, when he could the more eaſily part with *Timothy*; but in the Lord Jeſus, in the Lord whom every tongue ſhall confeſs to be ſo; and in that Jeſus, in whoſe name every knee ſhall bow; who is king of kings, and lord of lords, and the only ſaviour and deliverer of his people; who has the hearts of all men in his hands, and all power in heaven and in earth: he hoped and truſted, that thro' the goodneſs and power of Chriſt, opening a way for him, he ſhould be able *to ſend Timotheus ſhortly unto you*; one that had known the ſcriptures from his youth, and was very early converted to the chriſtian faith, was an eminent preacher of the Goſpel, and well known to the *Philippians*. The Apoſtle hoped to ſend him to them *ſhortly*, in a very little time; this he ſaid in order to encourage them, and thereby ſuggeſting, that he thought his own deliverance was at hand: this hope did not ariſe from a ſure and certain perſuaſion of the thing, but from love to theſe ſaints; he had a very great affection for them; he knew that a Goſpel-miniſter, and particularly *Timothy*, would be of great comfort and ſervice to them; wherefore, from that love which hopes all things, he hoped he ſhould, in a ſhort time, be able to ſerve them in love that way: the end he propoſed in it is next expreſſed, *that I alſo may be of good comfort when I know your ſtate*; not their wordly eſtate, their ſecular affairs, and whether they proſpered in their trades and buſineſs, and increaſed in riches; nor their corporal eſtate, or ſtate of health, and whether they proſpered in their bodies, not but that the knowledge of each of theſe would be welcome to the Apoſtle; nor every one's perſonal ſpiritual eſtate, what was the particular caſe and ſtate of each member; for tho' it is the buſineſs of a paſtor of a church to look diligently to the ſtate of his flock, and learn the caſe of every particular member, the Apoſtle could not be thought to come at ſuch an exact knowledge of things, who had the care of all the churches upon him; but their eccleſiaſtical ſtate, their church ſtate in general; how the Goſpel ſtood with them, and they in that; whether they held it faſt, and ſtrove for it, and what ground the falſe teachers got among them; how the ordinances of the Goſpel were regarded and attended on by them; with what life and light, and liberty and zeal, their miniſters preached the word; and what ſucceſs they had to the converſion of ſinners, and comfort of ſaints; and how they behaved towards them, in honouring, obeying, and ſubmitting to them, and eſteeming them highly for their works ſake; what an increaſe of gifts, grace, and numbers there was among them; and what harmony, love, peace, and concord ſubſiſted between them; and what afflictions and perſecutions they endured for the ſake of Chriſt; and with what patience, faith, and chearfulneſs they bore them By the return of *Timothy* he hoped to have know ledge of theſe things, that ſo he might *alſo be of good comfort*; as they would be by the coming of *Timothy* to them, by his preaching among them, and relating to them the caſe and circumſtances of the Apoſtle, how chearful he was under his afflictions, and of what uſe they were to the cauſe of Chriſt. The comfort and pleaſure of Goſpel miniſters lie in the good of the churches of Chriſt; it puts them in good heart and ſoul, as the word here uſed ſignifies, when they hear of their ſtedfaſtneſs in the faith of Chriſt, of their love to one another, and all the ſaints, and of their patience under ſufferings.

Ver. 20. *For I have no man like-minded,* &c.] With myſelf; *as my ſoul,* ſo the *Syriac* verſion renders it. *Timothy* had a ſoul like the Apoſtle's, which none that were with him, beſides him, had; he was of the ſame judgment with him in the doctrines of grace; he received and preached the ſame Goſpel as he did; he preached the ſame Chriſt, the Son of God, without yea and nay; he had the ſame affection for the Apoſtle, and the ſouls of men, as he had; his ſoul was knit to his, and they had, as it were, but one ſoul in two bodies; he was engaged in the ſame work of the Lord, and purſued it with the ſame zeal and diligence; he was a ſecond *Paul* in the pulpit; and there was no man like-minded as he, or ſo well diſpoſed to the *Philippians* as he was, that had their good and cauſe at heart, and was willing to take ſo long a journey to do them ſervice; for he had a particular affection for them, having been among them with the Apoſtle, when he firſt preached the Goſpel to them: *who will naturally care for your ſtate.* There were none like him that would; many were like the ſhepherds of *Iſrael*, that fed themſelves and not the flock; but he was one that was diligent to know the ſtate of the flock, and looked well to the herd under his care; and had an anxious care and ſolicitude, as the word ſignifies, for the good of ſouls. The work of a faithful Goſpel-miniſter is a work of care; one of his characters is, that he cares for the church of God; and tho' anxious care in worldly things is forbidden, yet in the affairs of Chriſt's houſe it is highly commendable, and eſpecially when it is natural, or genuine and ſincere, as *Timothy*'s was: he had a ſincere love, an hearty and real concern for their good; and which he would ſhew by delivering to them the ſincere milk of the word, by preaching the Goſpel in the power and purity of it, with all ſincerity and uprightneſs, with a ſingle eye to the glory of Chriſt, and the good of their ſouls; and which is the Apoſtle's reaſon for ſending him unto them.

Ver. 21. *For all ſeek their own,* &c.] Meaning not every individual, but the greateſt part; and not merely ſuch as were manifeſtly falſe teachers, but ſuch as were with the Apoſtle, as miniſters of the word; and we may ſuppoſe him to be ſtripped, by one means or another, of the more valuable preachers of the Goſpel, and to be in much ſuch a caſe as he deſcribes himſelf to be, in 2 *Tim.* iv. 10, 11, 12. He had none with him, excepting a very few, but ſuch as he ſpeaks of in the preceding chapter, that preached Chriſt of envy, ſtrife, and contention; and theſe chiefly ſought their own worldly intereſt and advantage; they ſought great things for themſelves, and looked every man for his gain from his quarter, *Demas* like, loving this preſent world; they ſought for dominion and authority over men, and their faith, to lord it over God's heritage, as *Diotrephes*, who loved to have the pre-eminence; they ſought for popular applauſe, for honour and glory of men, as the *Phariſees* of old did; and particularly their own eaſe and health, and did not chuſe to undertake ſuch a fatiguing journey as from *Rome* to *Philippi*: *not the things which are Jeſus Chriſt*; they had no true regard to the Goſpel of Chriſt, to the continuance, eſtabliſhment, and ſpread of it in the world, or in any particular place; nor any hearty affection for the ordinances of Chriſt, and the retaining and preſerving of them in their purity and ſimplicity; nor for the churches of Chriſt, and their ſpiritual good and welfare, as the *Jews* formerly, they cared not if the houſe of God lay waſte, provided they dwelt in their cieled houſes; nor had they any concern for the honour and glory of Chriſt. But *Timothy* was a man of a quite different ſpirit and complexion; and which is another reaſon of the Apoſtle's ſending him to this place and people.

Ver. 22. *But ye know the proof of him,* &c.] They had had an experiment of him, a trial of his ſpirit, and a proof of his gifts and miniſtry, when he was among them with the Apoſtle at his firſt preaching the Goſpel to them, to the converſion of *Lydia*, and of the jaylor, and their houſholds, which laid the foundation of a Goſpel church-ſtate among them, ſee *Acts* xvi. 3, 12. The *Vulgate Latin* verſion reads in the imperative, *know ye the proof of him*; but the former reading is to be preferr'd: *that as a ſon with the father, he hath ſerved with me in the Goſpel*; he ſerved not the Apoſtle, but with him; he ſerved God as the Apoſtle did, in the Goſpel of his Son; he ſerved Jeſus Chriſt, whoſe Goſpel he preached, the intereſt and ſpread of which he greatly laboured in with him, as a fellow-ſervant or work-fellow; ſee *Rom.* xvi. 21. which expreſſes the modeſty of the Apoſtle, and the great honour put upon *Timothy*, and which was not abuſed by him; for as a Son honours, obeys, and imitates his father, ſo did he honour the Apoſtle, and give him all reſpect and reverence that was due to him on account of his office, age, and uſefulneſs; and obeyed his orders chearfully, going where-ever he ſent him, and doing whatever he bid him; and imitated him in his miniſtry, in his conſtancy, diligence, and zeal, having a true filial affection for him.

Ver. 23. *Him therefore I hope to ſend preſently,* &c.] For the reaſons now given: *ſo ſoon as I ſhall ſee how it will go with me*; whether he ſhould be releaſed from his bonds or no; whether he ſhould live or die; whether he ſhould be ſet free, or be called to ſuffer martyrdom for the ſake of Chriſt; for he expected, that the matter would be determined in a very ſhort time, when, be it as it would, *Timothy* would be ſpared.

Ver. 24. *But I truſt in the Lord,* &c.] The *Syriac* verſion reads, *in my Lord: that I alſo myſelf ſhall come ſhortly*; this he adds, partly to let them ſee, that he ſtill retained a ſecret hope and perſuaſion in his own mind of a deliverance, tho' he could not be certain of it, how things would go with him; and partly, that he might not be thought to put them off with ſending *Timothy* to them; for notwithſtanding that, his intention ſtill was, ſhould he be releaſed, to pay them a viſit himſelf. The *Alexandrian* copy adds, *to you*; ſo the *Vulgate Latin*, *Syriac*, and *Arabic* verſions.

Ver. 25. *Yet I ſuppoſed it neceſſary to ſend to you Epaphroditus,* &c.] In the mean while, before either he or *Timothy* could come to them. This man was ſent by the *Philippians* to the Apoſtle with a preſent, and had been detained at *Rome* for ſome time, partly thro' buſineſs, and partly thro' ſickneſs; but now the Apoſtle thought it proper, he being recovered, to ſend him to them, who was one of their miniſters. One of this name lived at *Rome* about this time, and was one of *Nero*'s freemen [*], but not the ſame perſon here intended. This perſon has a very high character. The Apoſtle calls him, *my brother*; not in a natural relation, or as being his countryman, and ſo according to a way of ſpeaking with the *Jews*, and himſelf, his brother and kinſman according to the fleſh; for by his name and country he ſeems to be a *Greek*; but in a ſpiritual relation, being born again of the ſame Father, belonging to the ſame houſhold and family, and alſo a brother in the miniſtry, as it follows: *and companion in labour*; in the laborious work of preaching the Goſpel. The miniſtry of the word is a work; it is called the work of the miniſtry; and it is a laborious one when diligently and faithfully performed: the Apoſtle was a workman that needed not to be aſhamed, a labourer in Chriſt's vineyard, and one that laboured more abundantly than others; and he was not alone, he had companions in his work, and this good man was one of them: he adds, *and fellow-ſoldier*; the life of every believer is a warfare; he's always engaged in a war with ſin, and ſatan, and the world; and is often called to fight the fight of faith, to contend earneſtly againſt falſe teachers for the faith once delivered to the ſaints, to ſtand up for it, and faſt in it; and is provided for with the whole armour of God, with weapons of warfare, which are not carnal, but ſpiritual and mighty, being inliſted as a voluntier under the great captain of his ſalvation Jeſus Chriſt, under whoſe banner he fights, and is more than a conqueror thro' him: but tho' this is the common caſe and character of all the ſaints, it more eſpecially belongs to miniſters of the Goſpel; who are ſet for the defence of it, and at the front of the battle, and are called to meet the enemy at the gate, and endure hardneſs as good ſoldiers of Jeſus Chriſt; and ſuch an one was the Apoſtle; and he had other fellow-ſoldiers, and this perſon among the reſt, who were engaged in the ſame common cauſe with the ſame enemies, under the ſame captain, and would enjoy the ſame crown: *but your meſſenger*; or *Apoſtle*; meaning either that he was the paſtor of them, a preacher to them, a miniſter among them; for ordinary miniſters of the word were ſometimes called Apoſtles, as well as extraordinary ones, ſee *Rom.* xvi. 7. or rather, that he was their meſſenger to him, to relieve, comfort, and aſſiſt him in his bonds; and ſuch perſons were called the meſſengers of the churches, 2 *Cor.* viii. 23. which ſenſe is ſtrengthened by what follows: *and he that miniſtred to my wants*; to his perſonal wants in priſon, and to the wants of the poor ſaints, which the Apoſtle reckoned as his own, and which he uſed to ſupply, but now not able; and to his miniſterial wants, filling up his place in preaching the Goſpel to the ſaints at *Rome*.

Ver. 26. *For he longed after you*, &c.] This, and a following verſe, contain the reaſons of the Apoſtle's ſending him; and the firſt is, becauſe he had a very vehement and longing deſire after all of them; to ſee them, as the *Syriac* and *Ethiopic* verſions add, and as it is read in the *Alexandrian* and *Claromontane* copies, and in others: it was not the city of *Philippi* he longed to ſee, which might be his native place, nor his natural relations and family, but the church there; and not the officers of it only, the biſhops and deacons, but all the members of it, rich and poor, high and low, ſtrong and weak believers: *and was full of heavineſs*; almoſt preſſed down, quite diſheartened and diſpirited, ready to ſink and die away, not ſo much with his own diſorder and illneſs, as with ſorrow on account of the church at *Philippi*: *becauſe that ye had heard that he had been ſick*; he underſtood that the news of his ſickneſs had reached them, and he knew how diſtreſſing it would be to them, that it would cut them to the heart, and preſs them heavily, fearing they ſhould never ſee his face, nor hear his voice more. We have here an inſtance of that mutual love, tender affection and ſympathy, which were in the firſt churches, and what ſubſiſted between miniſters and people; ſee how they loved one another! but, alas! this firſt love is left.

Ver. 27. *For indeed he was ſick nigh unto death*, &c.] It was not a mere rumour, or a falſe alarm, but was real matter of fact; and it was not a light diſorder, a ſlight indiſpoſition, but a very dangerous illneſs; tho' the ſickneſs was not unto death, yet near it. Good men, ſuch as Chriſt loves, as he did *Lazarus*, are ſometimes ſick; tho' their ſpiritual diſeaſes are healed, and their ſins forgiven, ſo that the inhabitants of *Zion* have no more reaſon to ſay that they are ſick, ſince Chriſt has took their infirmities, and bore their ſickneſs, yet they are not exempt from bodily diſorders; and which are ſometimes ſuch as bring them to the brink of the grave, and, as it were, to the gates of death; and ſuch was this good man's caſe: *but God had mercy on him*; his diſorder was ſuch as was out of the reach of man; his recovery was not by man, but by God, and owing to his power, mercy, and goodneſs; and indeed, whenever means are made uſe of, and they ſucceed to the reſtoration of health, it ought to be aſcribed to the divine bleſſing on them. The raiſing up of this man is reckoned as an inſtance of mercy to him; as it was the removing of a grievous affliction, a return of him to his delightful work of the miniſtry, and the continuation of an uſeful life for the good of others; and ſo a mercy to him, and to the churches of Chriſt, and to the Apoſtle alſo: who adds, *but on me alſo, leſt I ſhould have ſorrow upon ſorrow*; one affliction added to another; the death of this brother of his to his bonds: moreover the ſickneſs of this companion of his filled him with ſorrow; and had he died, it would have greatly increaſed it, and which would have had a freſh addition by the loſs this church would ſuſtain, and the grief and trouble, they would be overwhelmed with: grace, and the doctrine of grace, tho' they regulate the paſſions, and reſtrain them from immoderate ſorrow, they do not deſtroy them, nor deny the proper uſe of them. Chriſtianity does not countenance a ſtoical apathy, but requires and encourages a chriſtian ſympathy, and directs us to weep with them that weep within due bounds.

Ver. 28. *I ſent him therefore the more carefully*, &c.] Or in greater haſte, and as ſoon as poſſible: *that when ye ſee him again ye may rejoice*; for this muſt greatly increaſe their joy, to ſee him again after he had been ſo long from them, and under ſuch a diſorder, which had made them to fear they ſhould never ſee him more. The *Syriac* verſion renders it, *that when ye ſee him ye may rejoice again*; as they had done heretofore in his converſation and miniſtry, when among them: *and that I may be the leſs ſorrowful*; when he ſhould hear of his ſafe arrival among them, and of their joyful reception of him to their mutual ſatisfaction, which would be an alleviation of the Apoſtle's ſorrow in his preſent circumſtances; for he did not expect to be wholly without ſorrow whilſt in this life.

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[*] Arrian. Epictet. l. 1. c. 1, 19, 26. & Aurel. Victor. Epitome Rom. Imp. in Nerone.

Ver. 29. *Receive him therefore*, &c.] Not only into their houſes, where ſuch as bring the doctrine of Chriſt ſhould be admitted, and not others; but into their boſoms, into their hearts and affections, as he had reaſon to believe they would, and into their fellowſhip and communion, and to the exerciſe of his office among them, as their miniſter: and that *in the Lord*; or *for the Lord*, as the *Arabic* verſion renders it; for his ſake, becauſe he was one that was put into the miniſtry by him, was called unto it, and qualified for it, and ſent forth to miniſter in it by him; or in the name of the Lord, as an ambaſſador of his, as repreſenting him, and as if he himſelf was preſent; for he that receives a miniſter of Chriſt, receives Chriſt himſelf; ſee *Luke* x. 16. *Gal.* iv. 14. *with all gladneſs*; with ſincere affection, undiſſembled joy, perfect pleaſure, and with all demonſtrations of reſpect unto him, and delight in him at his return to them. *And hold ſuch in reputation*; account ſuch as he precious and valuable; highly eſteem of them for their works ſake; reckon them worthy of double honour, and give it to them.

Ver. 30. *Becauſe for the work of Chriſt he was nigh unto death*, &c.] Meaning either the work the church ſent him about, and which he chearfully undertook, and faithfully performed in carrying of a preſent to, and viſiting the Apoſtle in priſon; which is called the work of Chriſt, becauſe taken by Chriſt as if it was done to himſelf; and which, what with the long and fatiguing journey from *Philippi* to *Rome*, and the frequent viſits he made to the Apoſtle, and the much buſineſs beſides that lay upon his hands, brought upon him a diſorder which greatly threatened his life, and had almoſt iſſued in his death: or elſe the work of preaching the Goſpel ſo frequently and conſtantly, and with ſo much zeal and vehemency at *Rome*; and which may be called the work of Chriſt, becauſe it is what he calls unto, and qualifies for, and in which his glory is greatly concerned; and on which this good man was ſo intent, gladly ſpending himſelf, and being ſpent in it, that he was brought thro' it to the brink of the grave: *not regarding his life*; he was careleſs of that, and of his health; he loved not his life, nor counted it dear to himſelf; he rather deſpiſed it, and made no account of it, being very willing to deliver it up, and ſacrifice it in ſuch a good work and cauſe: *to ſupply your lack of ſervice towards me*; to do that in their name, room, and ſtead, which they, thro' abſence, could not do in perſon; ſignifying, that what was done to him, and for him, was but a piece of ſervice and duty to him; and which this good man, and faithful miniſter and meſſenger of theirs having done for them to the hazard of his life, he ought therefore to be received by them with great joy, and to be highly honoured and reſpected.

CHAP. III.

IN this chapter the Apoſtle cautions the *Philippians* againſt falſe teachers, whom he deſcribes as evil men, and exhorts them to walk as they had him, and other faithful miniſters for an example. And whereas theſe judaizing teachers were for drawing them off from Chriſt, and weakening their joy and glorying in him, he exhorts them in the firſt place to rejoice in Chriſt, ver. 1. and to beware of them, whom he deſcribes as dogs, as evil workers, as the conciſion, ver. 2. and oppoſes to them the characters of real ſaints, who are truly what they vainly boaſted of, really circumciſed perſons in a Goſpel ſenſe, ſpiritual worſhippers of God, joyful believers in Chriſt, and ſuch as placed no confidence in outward things, ver. 3. This the Apoſtle illuſtrates in his own caſe, who had as much reaſon for truſting in ſuch things as any man whatever, ver. 4. of which he gives an enumeration in ſeveral particulars, ver. 5, 6. upon which he paſſes his judgment, and ſhows of what account, and in what eſteem they were with him before, and now; that formerly they were reckoned gain, but now loſs, ver. 7. and which he explains as referring to every thing ſhort of Chriſt, and in compariſon of the knowledge of him, and which he preferred to every thing; and this he confirms by his willingneſs to ſuffer the loſs of all things for him; his ends in which were, that he might win him, and be found in him, without his own righteouſneſs, that legal one the falſe teachers extolled, and with the righteouſneſs of God which faith receives, and is the only juſtifying one; and that he might know more of him, feel more of his power, have more fellowſhip with him, and conformity to him, ver. 8, 9, 10. His view in all which was, that he might attain to that glorious and happy ſtate of the reſurrection of the dead in Chriſt, ver. 11. and to prevent miſtakes, and anticipate an objection that might be made to him, as if he aſcribed perfection to himſelf in the preſent ſtate, he owns he had not arrived to it: all he meant was, that it was his deſire to enjoy that which Chriſt had laid hold on him for; in order to which he buried in oblivion what was paſt, looking and preſſing to things before him, even to Chriſt, and the glory he was called unto, which was with him, ver. 12, 13, 14. Next follow various exhortations, as to be of the ſame mind with the Apoſtle in preſſing after ſpiritual and heavenly things, to which he exhorts thoſe that had a greater knowledge of them than others; and who, tho' otherwiſe minded, the Apoſtle was perſuaded would have the ſame revealed to them, ver. 15. and both he exhorts, according to their different attainments, to walk by the ſame rule, and mind the ſame thing, ver. 16. and to be followers of him, and of them that walked after his example, ver. 17. giving this as a reaſon, becauſe there were men who walked otherwiſe, to the grief of him, to the diſhonour of Chriſt, and to their own ſhame and deſtruction, whom he deſcribes as ſenſual and earthly-minded men, ver. 18, 19. and to engage them to follow him, and others, and not ſuch perſons, he draws a character of them oppoſite unto them; that whereas the minds of thoſe others were carnal and earthly, their minds were ſpiritual and heavenly; their converſation was in heaven, and they were waiting for Chriſt from hence, ver. 20. and the bleſſedneſs they expect from him then, is the reſurrection of their bodies, which is illuſtrated by the efficient cauſe of it, Chriſt; the ſubject of it, their vile bodies, as in this life, and in the grave; the exemplar and pattern of it, the glorious body of Chriſt; and the means by which it will be effected, the energy and power of Chriſt, who is omnipotent, ver. 21.

Ver. 1. ***Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord***, &c.] The *Syriac* verſion reads, *in our Lord*, i. e. Chriſt. The Apoſtle ſeems as if he was about to conclude his Epiſtle; and therefore, as if he was taking his farewel of this church, and giving his laſt advice to them, he exhorts them in a moſt affectionate manner, as his dear brethren in a ſpiritual relation, that they would make Chriſt their chief joy; that whatever ſorrow they might have on account of his bonds, or the ſickneſs of *Epaphroditus*, yet he obſerves they had reaſon to rejoice in their Lord and Saviour; and however, it might be matter of rejoicing to them to hear of his hope of coming once more to them, and of the recovery of their miniſter, and his return to them, yet Chriſt ſhould be the principal object of their joy. A believer has always reaſon to rejoice in Chriſt; in the greatneſs of his perſon, he being in the form of God, and equal to him, and therefore able to ſave his to the uttermoſt, by his obedience and death, and has intereſt enough in heaven to make his interceſſion prevalent and ſucceſsful, and power to keep ſafe all that are committed to him; and in the fitneſs of his perſon to be a mediator, and day's man, to take care of things pertaining to the glory of God, and to make reconciliation for ſin; and in the fulneſs of his perſon, he having all grace in him for his people, which is all theirs, and with joy may they draw water out of the full wells of ſalvation in him; and in the beauty of his perſon, which ſurpaſſes all others, a ſight of which fills with joy unſpeakable, and full of glory. They may, and ſhould rejoice, as they ſometimes do, in his ſalvation; in the contrivance of it by infinite wiſdom; in the impetration of it by himſelf; and in the application of it by his Spirit; and that becauſe hereby juſtice is ſatisfied, the law is magnified and made honourable, ſin is finiſhed, and an everlaſting righteouſneſs brought in. Alſo, they are called upon to rejoice in his reſurrection, which is for their juſtification; in his aſcenſion, ſeeing he then received gifts for men; and in his ſeſſion at the right hand of God, which is in their nature; and in his interceſſion, which is to their advantage; and in all the relations he ſtands in to them, as head, huſband, father, brother, friend; and in every thing that is his, and that belongs unto him, as his Goſpel, ordinances, ways, and worſhip. *To write the ſame things to you.* The Apoſtle finding he had more time on his hands, or freſh thoughts occurred to him, writes on, and makes an apology for writing the ſame things, which he had either wrote to other churches, or which he had delivered when firſt among them, or which he had ſince wrote to them. For ſometimes it is neceſſary to ſay and write the ſame things over and over again, partly that they may be the better underſtood, and partly that they may be more ſtrongly fixed in the memory; as alſo, that the ſaints may be the more eſtabliſhed in the preſent truth: and which he ſays, *to me indeed is not grievous*; or troubleſome; he found no backwardneſs to it, nor ſluggiſhneſs in it; he was not loth to do it, nor was it weariſome to him; or made him ſlothful, as the *Arabic* renders it; nor was he afraid to repeat what he had wrote, or again to warn them againſt falſe teachers, of whom he ſtood in no fear: *but for you it is ſafe*; or *neceſſary*, as the *Vulgate Latin* verſion reads, being a means of preſerving them from the error of the wicked; for tho' the ſaints are ſafe in Chriſt, and can never finally and totally be deceived, yet the Goſpel, and the frequent miniſtration of it, are a means of keeping them from the deception of evil men; for as the *Syriac* verſion renders it, *they make you more cautious*; when truth is repeated, and afreſh confirmed, it guards againſt falling in with damnable hereſies. And ſo the *Arabic* verſion renders it, *is a guard*, or *garriſon to you*.

Ver. 2. *Beware of dogs*, &c.] By whom are meant the *judaizing* teachers, who were for impoſing the works and ceremonies of the law upon the *Gentiles*, as neceſſary to ſalvation; and they have the name retorted on them they uſed to give to the *Gentiles*; ſee *Matt.* xv. 26, 27. nor ſhould they think it too ſevere, ſince the *Jews* themſelves ſay [p], "the face of that generation (in which the Meſſiah "ſhall come) ſhall be, כפני הכלב, *as the face of* "*a dog.*" The Apoſtle calls them ſo, becauſe they returned to *Judaiſm*, as the dog to its vomit; and becauſe of the uncleanneſs in which many of them lived, and the impudence they were guilty of in transforming themſelves into the Apoſtles of Chriſt, and putting themſelves upon an equal foot with them; as alſo for their calumny and detraction, their wrangling with the Apoſtles, ſnarling at their doctrines, and biting them with the devouring words of reproach and ſcandal: likewiſe, they may be ſtiled dogs for their covetouſneſs, being ſuch greedy ones as in *Iſ.* lvi. 10. with feigned words making merchandize of men; and for their love of their bellies, which they ſerved, and not Chriſt, and made a God of. Moreover, becauſe they were without, as dogs are, *Rev.* xxii. 15. having gone out from the communion of the ſaints, becauſe they were not of them; or if among them, yet not true members of Chriſt, nor of his myſtical body; all which are ſo many arguments why the ſaints ſhould beware of them, and why their perſons, converſation, and doctrine ſhould be avoided. *Beware of evil workers*; meaning the ſame perſons, who were deceitful workers, did the work of the Lord unfaithfully, walked in craftineſs, and handled the word of God deceitfully, endeavoured to ſubvert the Goſpel of Chriſt, and the faith of men in it; who worked from bad principles, and with evil views; and notwithſtanding their large pretenſions to good works, teaching that juſtification and ſalvation were by them, which notion the Apoſtle tacitly refers to in this character; yet were bad livers, and ſuch as Chriſt will reject another day as workers of iniquity; a character they deſervedly bear, if there was no other reaſon for it than their preaching the doctrine of ſalvation by mens own works of righteouſneſs, and who, and their miniſtry are by all means to be ſhunned. *Beware of the conciſion*; the men of the circumciſion, as the *Arabic* verſion renders it; they choſe to be called ſo, but the Apoſtle would not give them that name, but calls them the *conciſion*; or *the conciſion of the fleſh*, as the *Syriac* verſion renders it; referring either to the cuttings in the fleſh, forbidden *Lev.* xxi. 5. or to the circumciſion of the fleſh rather, which they valued themſelves upon, and were for introducing among the *Gentiles*, whereby they made ſad diviſions, and cutting work among the churches; and were ſome of them at leaſt *cut* off, as the *Ethiopic* verſion renders it, from the churches; and who, as much as in them lay, cut themſelves off from Chriſt, and rendered him unprofitable to them; ſee *Gal.* v. 2, 4.

Ver. 3. *For we are the circumciſion*, &c.] And not they; they have the name, and we the thing, or that which legal circumciſion was a ſhadow of, namely, circumciſion of the heart; which lies in being pricked to the heart under a true ſenſe of ſin; in having the hardneſs of the heart removed, and the iniquity of it laid to open view; in pain and contrition of heart about it, joined with ſhame for it, and loathing of it, the conſequence of which is, a putting off of the body of the ſins of the fleſh, according to the former converſation; and alſo in a renouncing a man's own righteouſneſs in point of juſtification before God, and acceptance with him. All which is the work of God, and not man, and is therefore called the circumciſion made without hands; it has God, and not man for its author; and its praiſe is of God, and not of men; and its ſeat is in the heart and ſpirit, and not in the fleſh; and ſuch whoſe hearts are circumciſed to love the Lord their God, and fear him, are the true circumciſion: *which worſhip God in the ſpirit*. The object of worſhip is *God*, and him only; not a creature animate or inanimate, ſtocks or ſtones, beaſts, birds, men or angels; only God, Father, Son and Spirit: that the Father is to be worſhipped, is not diſputed, ſee *John* iv. 21, 23. and the Son is to be worſhipped with the ſame worſhip the Father is; ſince he is in the form of God, and equal to him, is the creator of all, the Lord of angels and men, and is to be, and is worſhipped by both; prayer is made unto him, baptiſm is adminiſtred in his name, and truſt and confidence are placed in him; and ſo is the Holy Ghoſt, he being equally God with the Father, and the Son, and therefore the ſame homage is to be given to him as to them: and ſo ſome indeed read the words here, *which worſhip God the Spirit*; or the Spirit, who is God. *Worſhip* is either inward or outward; inward worſhip lies in the exerciſe of grace on God, as of faith, hope, love, fear, *&c.* outward worſhip is the performance of certain external actions required by God, and both are to be performed: and it is alſo either private or public; private worſhip is in the cloſet, or in the family, and conſiſts of praying, ſinging of praiſes, *&c.* public worſhip lies in the obſervance of the outward ordinances of preaching, praying, hearing, ſinging, *&c.* in the church of God; even all ſuch ordinances as God has appointed, which are recorded in the ſcriptures, and are confirmed by the authority of Chriſt. The manner in which worſhip is to be performed, is *in the ſpirit*; either in and with the Spirit of God, without whoſe grace and aſſiſtance no part of it can be performed well. And the *Alexandrian* copy reads, *which worſhip in the ſpirit of God*; and ſo the *Complutenſian* edition, and ſeveral copies. Or in and with our own hearts and ſpirits, which ſhould be engaged in every part of religious worſhip with much attention, diligence, and fervency; or in a ſpiritual manner, in oppoſition to the carnal worſhip of the *Jews*, and the bodily exerciſe of formal profeſſors; and which lies in drawing nigh to God with true hearts, ſincere and fervent ones, with grace in them, and that in exerciſe: *and rejoice in Chriſt Jeſus*; or *glory in* him, and make their boaſt of him; for a different word is here uſed from that in ver. 1. Such who have a true ſenſe of themſelves, and a ſpiritual ſight of Chriſt, will not glory in themſelves, in their wiſdom, ſtrength, riches, or righteouſneſs, but in Chriſt, in his wiſdom and ſtrength, in his riches and righteouſneſs, and in his perſon and grace only: *and have no confidence in the fleſh*; in any carnal deſcent, or birth-privilege, as to be of the ſeed of *Abraham*, of the ſtock of *Iſrael*, or of ſuch a tribe, or family, or born of ſuch a parent; nor in circumciſion, or any of the carnal ordinances of the ceremonial law; nor in any civil, moral, legal, and external righteouſneſs, for ſo to do is but to make fleſh an arm; or indeed, to truſt in any thing out of Chriſt, or ſhort of him; and all this makes up the character and deſcription of a true believer in Chriſt.

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[p] Miſn. Sota, c. 9. §. 15.

Ver. 4. *Though I might alſo have confidence in the fleſh*, &c.] This he ſays, leſt it ſhould be objected to him, that the reaſon why he had no confidence in the fleſh, and did not boaſt of it, was, becauſe he could not; he had nothing to glory of, and put his confidence in, and therefore acted the common part of ſuch perſons, who deſpiſe what either they have not, or are ignorant of: but this was not the Apoſtle's caſe, he had as much reaſon, and as good a foundation for truſt in himſelf, his privileges and attainments, as any man had, and more; and his meaning here is not, that he might lawfully have confidence in the fleſh, for that is criminal in every one, but that he had as good pretenſions to it; and were it lawful, might with greater appearance of truth do it than ſome other perſons, or indeed any other: *if any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might truſt in the fleſh, I more*; the ſenſe is, if there were any other perſon beſides the falſe teachers he ſpeaks of in ver. 2. that were of the *Judaizing* ſect, or any whatever of the *Jewiſh* nation, be he who he will, who thought within himſelf he had, or ſeemed to others to have, (for all ſuch confidence, and the grounds of it, are only in ſhow and appearance, and in imagination, not in reality) reaſons for boaſting and truſting in himſelf, and in his carnal privileges and performances, the Apoſtle had more, and which he enumerates in the following verſes; not but that he might be exceeded by ſome in ſome one particular or another; as for inſtance, he was not of the tribe of *Levi*, nor of *Judah*; he was neither of the houſe of *Aaron*, nor of *David*; neither of the prieſtly line, nor of the blood royal; but taking all together, there was not a man in whom ſo many reaſons met, for boaſting and confidence in the fleſh, as in himſelf.

Ver. 5. *Circumciſed the eighth day*, &c.] Circumciſion was an appointment of God to *Abraham*, and his male iſſue; to him and them God gave the covenant of circumciſion: this to *Abraham* perſonally was a ſign and ſeal, that the righteouſneſs of faith, which he had while he was an uncircumciſed perſon, ſhould come upon the uncircumciſed *Gentiles* in the times of the Meſſiah, when the Goſpel ſhould come among them; and it was a diſtinguiſhing character of the *Jews* from the *Gentiles*, until the coming of Chriſt; it was typical of the effuſion of his blood to cleanſe from all the impurity of original and actual ſin, and repreſented the circumciſion of the heart. The *Jews* valued themſelves much upon it, and treated the *Gentiles* with contempt for the want of it; and would neither converſe with them in a civil or religious way, becauſe they were uncircumciſed: but the Apoſtle was no *Gentile*, or an uncircumciſed perſon; he had this mark in his fleſh to glory in as well others, if it had been lawful to truſt in it; he was the ſubject of this ordinance whilſt it was a ſtanding one, and before it was aboliſhed by Chriſt; and it was performed on him at the preciſe time fixed in the original inſtitution of it, which was not always obſerved; for not to take notice of *Jewiſh* proſelytes, who were circumciſed at any age, when they became ſuch, whether in youth, manhood, or old age; and which by the way ſhews, that the Apoſtle was no proſelyte, but a natural *Jew*; *Gerſhom*, the ſon of *Moſes*, was not circumciſed till ſome years after his birth; and all the while the children of *Iſrael* were in the wilderneſs this ordinance was neglected, till *Joſhua* had led them into

Canaan's land, and then he circumciſed all that generation that was born in the wilderneſs, ſome of whom muſt be near forty years of age; and in after-times it was uſual with the *Jews*, for one reaſon or another, to put off circumciſion to a longer time. Take the following ſtory as an illuſtration of this[q]: "'tis a tradition of *R. Nathan*; once, ſays he, I went to the cities of the ſea, and a woman came to me who had circumciſed her firſt ſon, and he died; the ſecond, and he died; the third ſhe brought to me, I ſaw him that he was red, I ſaid unto her, my daughter, *wait a while* for him till his blood is ſwallowed up in him; ſhe waited for him a while, and circumciſed him, and he lived; and they called him *Nathan* the *Babylonian*, after my name. And again another time I went to the province of *Cappadocia*, (the *Jeruſalem Talmud*[r] has it *Ceſarea* of *Cappadocia*) a certain woman came to me, who had circumciſed her firſt ſon, and he died; the ſecond, and he died; the third, (the above *Talmud* adds, and he died, the fourth) ſhe brought to me, I ſaw that he was green, I inſpected him, and the blood of the covenant was not in him, I ſaid unto her, my daughter, המתינו, *tarry a while* for him; (the *Jeruſalem Talmud* has it, הניחוהו לאחר זמן, *let him alone to another time*) till his blood fall in him, ſhe waited for him, and circumciſed him, and he lived; and they called him *Nathan* the *Babylonian*, after my name." The *Jewiſh* canon, with regard to the time of circumciſion, runs thus[s]: "an infant may be circumciſed at eight days, or at nine, or at ten, or at eleven, or at twelve, neither leſs nor more, (not leſs than eight, nor more than twelve) how? according to its courſe at eight. If it is born between the two evenings, it is circumciſed on the ninth day; if between the two evenings of the ſabbath eve, it is circumciſed on the tenth day; if on a feaſt-day after the ſabbath, it is circumciſed on the eleventh; if on the two days of the beginning of the year, it is circumciſed on the twelfth. An infant that is ſick, they don't circumciſe him until he is recovered." And in the laſt caſe, they reckon ſeven days from the time of the recovery of the child, as *Maimonides*[t] obſerves; with whom may be read other caſes, in which circumciſion was not always performed on the eighth day, but ſometimes was deferred, and ſometimes it was done the ſame day the child was born. But circumciſion on the eighth day was reckoned moſt valid and authentic, and according to rule; and therefore it is not without reaſon, that the Apoſtle mentions the time of his circumciſion, and puts an emphaſis upon it. *Of the ſtock of Iſrael*; this is ſaid to diſtinguiſh him from an *Iſhmaelite*, or an *Edomite*, who were circumciſed, and from the ſon of a proſelyte, who might be circumciſed on the eighth day; but he was a natural *Iſraelite*, to whom the various privileges belonged, mentioned in *Rom.* ix. 4, 5. and therefore had as much reaſon to truſt in the fleſh as any *Iſraelite* whatever. *Of the tribe of Benjamin*; who was a genuine and legitimate ſon of *Jacob*, whom he had by his lawful and beloved wife *Rachel*. Of which tribe was the firſt king of *Iſrael*, whoſe name was *Saul*, and which was the Apoſtle's firſt and *Jewiſh* name, and which perhaps was common in that tribe on that account. In this tribe ſtood the city of *Jeruſalem*, and the temple of the Lord; this tribe retained the true worſhip of God with *Judah*, when the ten tribes revolted, and worſhipped the calves at *Dan* and *Bethel*, and returned with *Judah* from captivity, when the others did not. And the Apoſtle was not only able to make himſelf appear to be of the ſtock of *Iſrael*, but could name the tribe to which he belonged, which many of the *Jews*, that were of one, or rather of the ten tribes, were not able to do, and may be his chief reaſon for mentioning this circumſtance. *An Hebrew of the Hebrews*; not ſo called only becauſe he could trace his pedigree from *Abraham* the *Hebrew*, or underſtood, and could ſpeak the *Hebrew* language, which the *Helleniſtical Jews* could not, or was an illuſtrious one among them, but becauſe both his parents were *Hebrews*; he was an *Hebrew* by the father and mother's ſide both; he was a genuine *Hebrew*. The *Arabians* have the ſame way of ſpeaking; and with them a genuine *Arab* is called an *Arab of the Arabs*[u], as here. Some there were whoſe mothers were *Hebrews*, and their fathers *Gentiles*; ſuch an one was *Timothy*, *Acts* xvi. 1. and there were others whoſe fathers were *Hebrews*, and their mothers *Gentiles*; and theſe are thought by ſome to be the ſame, the *Talmudiſts*[w] call, חללים, *prophane*; they not being reckoned ſo holy as ſuch whoſe fathers and mothers were both *Hebrews*; of which the latter gloried over the other. *As touching the law, a Phariſee*; with reſpect to the interpretation and obſervance of the law, which was according to the traditions of the elders, and not the literal and genuine ſenſe of it, he followed; and was of the ſect of the *Phariſees*, which was the ſtricteſt ſect among the *Jews*, and in the greateſt eſteem among the people: and tho' they had put many falſe gloſſes on the ſcripture, and held many erroneous principles, and were very tenacious of human traditions, yet they were preferable to the *Sadducees*, who denied the reſurrection of the dead, and other things; and were more zealous in their devotion and religion, and more ſtrict in their morals, and external holineſs of life and converſation. They ſeparated and diſtinguiſhed themſelves hereby from other people, and hence they had their name; ſee the note on *Matt.* iii. 7. Now the Apoſtle was not only a *Phariſee*, but the ſon of one; he was always brought up in that ſtrict ſect and ſevere way, *Acts* xxiii. 6.

Ver. 6. *Concerning zeal, perſecuting the church*, &c.] The *Vulgate Latin* verſion adds, *of God*, as in *Gal.* i. 13. The Apoſtle was very zealous of the traditions of the elders, and for the law of God, and towards God alſo; tho' his zeal was not according to knowledge, but blind, ignorant and furious; which puſhed him on to perſecute the followers of Chriſt, and the church of Chriſt at *Jeruſalem* more eſpecially, in a very violent and outrageous manner; he held the clothes of thoſe that ſtoned *Stephen*; he conſented unto his death; he made havock of the church at *Jeruſalem*, haling men and women to priſon; he continued breathing out threatenings and ſlaughter againſt the diſciples of Chriſt; gave his voice againſt them when put to death, puniſhed them frequently in the ſynagogues by ſcourging them, and compelled them to blaſpheme the name of Chriſt; was exceeding mad againſt them, purſued them to ſtrange cities, and perſecuted the church of God exceedingly, more than any one ſingle perſon beſides. *Touching the righteouſneſs which is in the law blameleſs*. This he mentions laſt, as including the whole of his righteouſneſs,

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[q] T. Bab. Cholin, fol. 47. 2.

[r] T. Hieroſ. Yebamot, fol. 7. 4.

[s] Miſn. Sabbat, c. 19. §. 5. Vid. Maimon. & Bartenora in ib. & Miſn. Eracin, c. 2. §. 2. & Bartenora in ib.

[t] Hilch. Mila, c. 1. 16.

[u] Pocock. Specim. Arab. Hiſt. p. 39.

[w] T. Bab. Kidduſhin, fol. 69. 1.

neſs, civil, ceremonial, and moral; and which he fancied was ſo perfect, that whatever righteouſneſs was in the law, or required by it, he had it, and to ſuch a degree, that he was blameleſs before God and men; that he was juſtified by it in the ſight of God, and could not juſtly be found fault with by any, or be charged with any defect in his obedience, either to the moral or ceremonial law; which muſt ariſe from great ignorance of the righteouſneſs of God, and the ſtrictneſs of his juſtice, and of the law of God, and the purity, ſpirituality and extent of it, which reaches to the thoughts of the heart, and the firſt motions of ſin; and of himſelf, the plague of his own heart, of the ſin of luſt, and of the exceeding ſinfulneſs of ſin, in every inſtance of it.

Ver. 7. *But what things were gain to me*, &c.] As circumciſion, and the obſervance of the ceremonial law, which he thought were neceſſary to ſalvation; and his natural and lineal deſcent from *Abraham*, which he ſuppoſed entitled him to the favour of God, and eternal life, as well as to outward privileges; and his being of that ſtrict ſect of religion, a *Phariſee*, which he doubted not, being brought up and continued in, would ſecure to him everlaſting happineſs; and his zeal in perſecuting the church of Chriſt, in which he thought he did God good ſervice, and merited heaven for himſelf; and his legal righteouſneſs which he fancied was perfect, and ſo juſtified him in the ſight of God, and rendered him acceptable to him: for the Apoſtle's meaning is, not only that theſe things were judged by him, whilſt in an unconverted ſtate, good in themſelves, and in ſome reſpects uſeful, but that they were really gainful, and meritorious of happineſs in another world. But being converted, he ſaw all thoſe things in a different light, and had a different opinion of them: *thoſe I counted loſs for Chriſt*; circumciſion he ſaw was now aboliſhed, and was nothing, and that the circumciſion of the heart was the main thing; and that the other was ſo far from being uſeful and neceſſary to ſalvation, that it was hurtful, was a yoke of bondage, bound men over to keep the whole law, and made Chriſt of none effect to them; and the ſame opinion he had of the whole ceremonial law: as for natural deſcent, which he once valued and truſted in, he now rejected it, well knowing it ſignified not whether a man was a *Greek*, or a *Jew*, a *Barbarian*, or *Scythian*, provided he was but a believer in Chriſt; and as for any outward form or ſect of religion, he knew there was no ſalvation in it, nor in any other name but that of Chriſt; and he was ſo far from thinking, that on account of his zeal in perſecuting the church, he was deſerving of heaven, that for that reaſon he was not worthy to be called an Apoſtle of Chriſt; and as for his legal righteouſneſs, he now ſaw it to be as filthy rags; that many things in it were really evil in themſelves, ſuch as his obſervance of the traditions of the elders, whereby the commands of God were tranſgreſſed, and his mad zeal in perſecuting the followers of Chriſt; and other things, which had the appearance of good works, were not truly ſo, did not ſpring from love, were not done in faith, and with a view to the glory of God; and that the beſt of them were very imperfect, and exceeding blameable; yea, that if they had been perfect, they could not have been meritorious of eternal life, as he once thought them to be; he ſaw now they were of no uſe in juſtification and ſalvation; nay, that they were hurtful and pernicious, being truſted to, as keeping perſons off from Chriſt, and his righteouſneſs: wherefore, he gladly ſuffered the loſs of all his legal righteouſneſs, and renounced and diſclaimed it, and all pretenſions to juſtification and ſalvation by it, for the ſake of Chriſt; of life and ſalvation by him, and in compariſon of him; of the knowledge of him, and of his juſtifying righteouſneſs, as the following verſes ſhew. Hence, what before he pleaſed himſelf much with, and promiſed himſelf much from, he could not now reflect upon with any pleaſure and ſatisfaction of mind; which is the ſenſe of this phraſe with *Jewiſh* writers[x]: ſo it is obſerved of a drunken man, when he comes to himſelf, and it is told him what he did when in liquor, he grieves at it, ויחשוב הכל הפסד ולא ריוח, *and counts all loſs and not gain*; *i. e.* can take no pleaſure in a reflexion on it.

Ver. 8. *Yea, doubtleſs, and I count all things but loſs*, &c.] Not only the things before mentioned, but any thing, and every thing elſe but Chriſt, or that ſtood in competition with him, or were ſhort of him; as his natural and acquired parts; the whole compaſs of learning he had attained to; all that honour, credit, reputation, and popularity he was in for knowledge and devotion; all worldly ſubſtance, the comforts of life, and life itſelf; and all his righteouſneſs ſince converſion, as well as before; of this, no doubt could be made by thoſe who knew him, his principles and his practices: and all this *for the excellency of the knowledge of Chriſt Jeſus my Lord*; by *the knowledge of Chriſt* is not meant ſubjectively the knowledge that is in Chriſt, or which he has of others, either as God or man; but objectively, that knowledge which believers have of him, who know him not only in his perſon, as God over all, but as a ſaviour and redeemer, and as theirs; they know him in all his relations, and particularly as their Lord, not by creation only, but by rdemption and grace, as the Apoſtle did, putting an emphaſis on theſe words, *my Lord*; thereby expreſſing his faith of intereſt in him, his great affection for him, and chearful ſubjection to him. And this knowledge is not general, but ſpecial, ſpiritual, and ſaving; it is a knowledge of approbation of Chriſt above all others; a fiducial one, which has faith in him joined with it, and is both experimental and practical, and at leaſt at times, appropriating; and tho' imperfect, it is progreſſive and capable of being increaſed, and will at laſt be brought to perfection. It is attained to, not by the light of nature, nor by the help of carnal reaſon, nor by the law of *Moſes*, but by the Goſpel of the grace of God, as a means; and the efficient cauſe of it is Father, Son, and Spirit; the Father reveals Chriſt in his ſaints; the Son gives them an underſtanding to know him; and the Spirit is a Spirit of wiſdom and revelation in the knowledge of him; and this knowledge is very excellent: a ſpiritual knowledge of Chriſt is more excellent than a general and notional one, or than a knowledge of Chriſt after the fleſh; and the knowledge of Chriſt under the Goſpel-diſpenſation, tho' the ſame in nature, is more excellent than that which was under the legal diſpenſation, by promiſes, prophecies, and the ceremonial law, in degree, extenſiveneſs, and clearneſs; but the moſt excellent knowledge of Chriſt is that of the ſaints in heaven; yea, even there is an excellency in what the ſaints have here on earth, and a ſuperior one to all other knowledge, if the author and original of it is conſidered: it is not of ourſelves, nor by the aſſiſtance of men; it is not in the book of nature, nor in

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[x] Sepher Coſri, p. 3. §. 16. fol. 152. 1.

the ſchools of the philoſophers; it is not of earth, nor earthly, but it comes from afar, from above, from heaven, from God the Father of lights; it is a free grace-gift, a diſtinguiſhing one, and is very comprehenſive, unſpeakable, and unchangeable: and as to the object of it, it is Chriſt, the chiefeſt among ten thouſands; who made the heavens, earth, and ſeas, and all that in them are, the ſun, moon, and ſtars, men and beaſts, birds and fiſhes, foſſils, minerals, vegetables, and every thing in nature; and therefore the knowledge of him muſt be ſuperior to the knowledge of every thing elſe; and which adds to its excellency, it makes Chriſt precious, engages faith and confidence in him, influences the life and converſation, humbles the ſoul, and creates in it true pleaſure and ſatisfaction; when all other knowledge fills with ſelf-love, pride, and vanity, and increaſes ſorrow; whereas this is not only uſeful in life, but ſupports as under afflictions, ſo in the views of death and eternity; thro' it grace is received now, and by it glory hereafter; for it is the beginning, earneſt, and pledge of eternal life. Well may the believer count all things but loſs for it, as the Apoſtle did; who adds for further confirmation of what he had aſſerted, *for whom I have ſuffered the loſs of all things*; he dropped all confidence in his carnal privileges, and civil, ceremonial, and moral righteouſneſs, for Chriſt and his righteouſneſs; he parted with all for this pearl of great price; he loſt his good name, credit, and reputation among men, and ſuffered afflictions and perſecutions in various ſhapes; he loſt the comforts of life, being often in cold and nakedneſs, in hunger and thirſt, and was ready to ſuffer the loſs of life itſelf for profeſſing and preaching Chriſt: *and do count them but dung*; or dog's meat; ſee ver. 2. what is fit only to be caſt to dogs, as the word ſignifies; and intends every thing that is baſe, mean, and worthleſs; as the fæces of men, the dregs and lees of liquor, the falling of fruit, chaff, ſtubble, the droſs of metals, dung, and what not: ſo he eſteemed his carnal deſcent, his form and ſect of religion, and zeal in it; his ceremonial and moral righteouſneſs before and after converſion; and every thing of the creature, or what was his own, and but fleſh; being of the ſame opinion with the church of old, who reckoned her righteouſneſſes, the beſt, and the whole of them, as *filthy rags*. The Apoſtle next expreſſes his end and views in this, *that I may win Chriſt*; not get an intereſt in him, for this he had already, and he knew he had, and that he ſhould never loſe it; and beſides, an intereſt in Chriſt is not a thing that begins in time, but commenced from all eternity; and is not gotten at all, not by good works, nor repentance, nor faith; for theſe, if right and genuine, are the fruits and effects of an intereſt in Chriſt, but is what is freely given. The Apoſtle's meaning is, either that he might gain or acquire a larger knowledge of Chriſt; and he cared not what pains he took, what expences he was at, nor what loſs he ſuſtained for what he eſteemed the moſt excellent, and for which he had already ſuffered the loſs of all things; and if he had had more to loſe, he could willingly part with it for more of this knowledge; compare ver. 10. or his ſenſe is, that he might gain by Chriſt, or that Chriſt might be gain to him, as he found him to be, and as he is to every believer; who by parting with all for Chriſt, gains much by him, as a juſtifying righteouſneſs, acceptance with God, peace, pardon, life, grace, and glory.

Ver. 9. *And be found in him*, &c.] This is another end the Apoſtle had in view, in counting all things loſs and dung, and ſuffering the loſs of all for Chriſt. *Calvin*, different from other interpreters, reads the words actively, *and may find in him*; and thinks the ſenſe is, that the Apoſtle renounced all things for Chriſt, that he might recover all in him: and true it is, that for the loſs of carnal privileges, he found in Chriſt ſpiritual bleſſings; and for the loſs of his own righteouſneſs, another, and a better, even the righteouſneſs of God; and in lieu of external goods, or worldly ſubſtance he was ſtripped of, true and laſting riches; and in the room of outward credit, peace and plenty, true honour, real peace, and ſpiritual paſture; and inſtead of the comforts of life, and life itſelf, ſpiritual and eternal life; tho' it is beſt to read the words paſſively, *and be found in him*; that is, be in him, as the *Ethiopic* verſion renders it; ſo the word *found* is uſed in *Gal.* ii. 17. *Phil.* ii. 8. and he means not a nominal being in Chriſt, or a being in him by profeſſion, but a real one; and which is either ſecret or open: a ſecret being in Chriſt he had from everlaſting, being choſen in him, given to him, loved by him, betrothed unto him, preſerved in him, and repreſented by him; and an open one he had at converſion, when he became a new creature, and was created in Chriſt Jeſus unto good works: and here he intends a more clear and evident manifeſtation of his being in Chriſt; and his deſire is, that he might appear to be in him, in life and at death, and at the day of judgment, and in the following manner: *not having mine own righteouſneſs, which is of the law*; by which he means his obedience to the moral, as well as the ceremonial law; for the one was as much his own as the other, and more properly his righteouſneſs: this he calls his *own*, becauſe performed by him, and wrought out in his own ſtrength; and which he had an high opinion of, as if it was perfect and blameleſs; and which he had before put his truſt and confidence in; as alſo to diſtinguiſh it from another's righteouſneſs, even that which he had in Chriſt: he moreover calls it, *the righteouſneſs which is of the law*; which the law required, and he performed in obedience to it, ſeeking for juſtification by it; this character diſtinguiſhes it from the righteouſneſs of God, which is revealed in the Goſpel, and is manifeſted without the law: and this his own legal righteouſneſs he did not deſire to *have*, and to be found in; not but that he deſired to live ſoberly and righteouſly, to have, and do works of righteouſneſs, but not depend on them; he would not have, and account this his moral righteouſneſs, as a juſtifying one; he knew it was imperfect, filthy, and unprofitable, and that by it he could not be juſtified and ſaved, therefore he deſired to have another. *But that which is through the faith of Chriſt*; not thro' that faith which Chriſt himſelf, as man, had and exerciſed on God, as his God; but that which he is the author and finiſher of, and which has him and his righteouſneſs for its object; not through faith, as the cauſe of it; for the moving cauſe of juſtification is the free grace of God, and the efficient cauſe is God himſelf: and it appears from hence, that faith is not the matter of our juſtification, or is not our righteouſneſs; for faith and righteouſneſs are two diſtinct things, otherwiſe righteouſneſs could not be ſaid to be *through* faith. The righteouſneſs of Chriſt is here meant, and which is the ſole matter of juſtification, and comes to us thro' faith apprehending, receiving, and embracing it; and which ſhows, that it muſt be before faith, or it could not be thro' it; as water that runs thro' a bridge muſt be before and above that bridge thro' which it runs. This righteouſneſs is further deſcribed, as *the righteouſneſs which is of God by faith*; that righteouſneſs which Chriſt, who is the true God, is the author of, hence it is a pure and perfect one, infinite, and ſerves for many; which God the Father approves of, and is well pleaſed with, becauſe his law is magnified, and made honourable by it; and what he graciouſly gives, and freely imputes without works, to his people: and this is *by faith*, which beholds the excellency of it, acknowledges its ſufficiency, renounces its own righteouſneſs, and ſubmits to, and lays hold on this, and rejoices in it; and thus men are juſtified openly and manifeſtatively by faith, receiving the juſtifying righteouſneſs of Chriſt: or the words may be rendered *upon faith*. This righteouſneſs is as a garment put upon faith, or put upon him by God, who has true faith in Chriſt; ſee *Rom.* iii. 22. This laſt clauſe, *by faith*, is omitted in the *Syriac* and *Ethiopic* verſions, and ſeems to be read by them as belonging to the beginning of the next verſe. Now this righteouſneſs the Apoſtle deſired to have, and be found in; and this he ſays not, as ſuppoſing that a perſon may be found in Chriſt, and yet not have his righteouſneſs; nor as if he himſelf had not this righteouſneſs, and an intereſt in it; but to ſhew his value for it, and his deſire to be continually exerciſing faith on it, and the truſt and confidence he placed in it; well knowing that in this he was ſafe and ſecure from all condemnation; this would anſwer for him in a time come; being found in this he ſhould not be naked nor ſpeechleſs, and ſhould have a right and an admiſſion into the kingdom and glory of Chriſt Jeſus.

Ver. 10. *That I may know him*, &c.] The *Ethiopic* verſion reads *by faith*; and to the ſame ſenſe the *Syriac*. The Apoſtle did know Chriſt, and that years ago; he knew whom he had believed; he knew him for himſelf; he knew his perſonal intereſt in him; nor did he know any but him in the buſineſs of ſalvation: but his knowledge of Chriſt, tho' it was very great, it was imperfect; he knew but in part, and therefore deſired to know more of Chriſt, of the myſtery and glories of his perſon, of the unſearchable riches of his grace, of his great ſalvation, and the benefits of it, of his love, which paſſes perfect knowledge, and to have a renewed and enlarged experience of communion with him. The Apoſtle here explains what he means by winning Chriſt, for the ſake of which he ſuffered the loſs of all things, and counted them but dung; it was, that he might attain to a greater knowledge of the perſon and grace of Chriſt: *and the power of his reſurrection*; not that power which was put forth by his Father, and by himſelf, in raiſing him from the dead; but the virtue which ariſes from it, and the influence it has on many things; as on the reſurrection of the ſaints: it is the procuring cauſe of it, they ſhall riſe by virtue of union to a riſen Jeſus; it is the firſt-fruits, which is the earneſt and pledge of their reſurrection, as ſure as Chriſt is riſen, ſo ſure ſhall they riſe; it is the exemplar and pattern of theirs, their bodies will be raiſed and faſhioned like to the glorious body of Chriſt; and this the Apoſtle deſired to know, experience, and attain unto. Chriſt's reſurrection has an influence alſo on the juſtification of his people; when Chriſt died he had the ſins of them all upon him, and he died for them; when he roſe again, he was juſtified from them, and diſcharged as their public head and repreſentative, and they in him: hence it is ſaid of him, that *he was raiſed again for our juſtification*, *Rom.* iv. 25. Now, though the Apoſtle was acquainted with this virtue and influence of Chriſt's reſurrection, he deſired to know more of it, for the encouragement of his faith to live upon Chriſt, as the Lord his righteouſneſs. Moreover, the regeneration of men is owing to the reſurrection of Chriſt; as to the abundant mercy of God, as the moving cauſe, ſo to the reſurrection of Chriſt, as the means or virtual cauſe; and therefore are ſaid to be *begotten again by the reſurrection of Chriſt from the dead*, 1 *Pet.* i. 3. This power and virtue the Apoſtle had had an experience of, yet he wanted to feel more of it, in exciting the graces of the Spirit to a lively exerciſe, in raiſing his affections, and ſetting them on things above, and in engaging him to ſeek after them, and ſet light by things on earth, and in cauſing him to walk in newneſs of life, in likeneſs or imitation of Chriſt's reſurrection, to all which that ſtrongly animates and encourages; ſee *Col.* iii. 1, 2. *Rom.* vi. 4, 5. *And the fellowſhip of his ſufferings*; either his perſonal ſufferings, and ſo ſignifies a ſharing in, and a participation of the benefits ariſing from them; ſuch as reconciliation for ſin, peace with God, pardon, righteouſneſs, nearneſs to God, &c. or the ſufferings of his members for him, and with him, and which Chriſt reckons his own: theſe the Apoſtle was willing to take his part in, and lot of, knowing, that thoſe that are partakers of his ſufferings in this ſenſe, ſhall reign with him, and be glorified together. What the *Jews* deprecated, the Apoſtle was deſirous of; namely, ſharing in the ſorrows and ſufferings of the Meſſiah, and which they reckon the greateſt happineſs to be delivered from. "The diſciples "of *R. Eleazar* [y] aſked him, what a man ſhould "do that he may be delivered, מחבלו של משיח, "*from the ſorrows of the Meſſiah?* he muſt ſtudy "in the law, and in beneficence." And elſewhere they ſay [z], "he that keeps the three meals on the "ſabbath-day ſhall be delivered from three puniſh-"ments, מחבלו של משיח, *from the ſorrows of the* "*Meſſiah*, and from the damnation of hell, and "from the war of *Gog* and *Magog*." But our Apoſtle rejoiced in his ſufferings for Chriſt, and was deſirous of filling up the afflictions of Chriſt in his fleſh, for his body ſake the church: *being made conformable unto his death*; either in a ſpiritual ſenſe dying daily unto ſin, having the affections, with the luſts, crucified, and the deeds of the body mortified, and ſo planted in the likeneſs of his death; or rather in a corporal ſenſe, bearing always in the body the dying of the Lord Jeſus, and being continually expoſed to death for his ſake, and ready to ſuffer it, whenever called to it.

Ver. 11. *If by any means I might attain unto the reſurrection of the dead.*] Not in a figurative ſenſe, the reſurrection from the death of ſin to a life of grace, of which Chriſt is the efficient cauſe, for this the Apoſtle had attained to; unleſs the conſummation of that ſpiritual life, in perfect holineſs, ſhould be intended, than which, nothing was more deſirable by him; nor in a repreſentative ſenſe, for this alſo he enjoyed in Chriſt his head, being riſen with him, and in him, when he roſe from the dead; but in a literal ſenſe, and deſigns not the general reſurrection of the juſt and unjuſt, which he believed; for he knew that every one muſt, and will attain to this, even *Pharaoh*, *Judas*, and the worſt of men; but the ſpecial and particular reſurrection of the righteous, the better reſurrection, which will be firſt, and upon the perſonal coming of Chriſt, and by virtue of union to him, and in a glorious manner, and to everlaſting life and happineſs: and when the Apoſtle ſays, *if by any means* he might attain to this, it is not to be underſtood as if he doubted of it, which would be inconſiſtent with his firm perſuaſion, that nothing ſhould ſeparate him from the love of God, and with his full aſſurance of faith, as to intereſt in Jeſus Chriſt; but it denotes the difficulty of attaining it; ſince through various afflictions and great tribulations, a believer muſt paſs, before he comes to it; and alſo the Apoſtle's earneſt deſire of it, and ſtrenuous endeavour for it; not caring what ſcenes of trouble, or ſea of ſorrow, what fiery trials, ſevere ſufferings, or cruel death he went through, ſo be it he obtained, as he believed he ſhould, the glorious and better reſurrection; he counted not his life dear to himſelf, he loved it not unto death, having in view the bliſsful and happy ſtate after it.

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[y] T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 98. 2.

[z] T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 118. 1. See Cetubot, fol. 111. 1.

Ver. 12. *Not as though I had already attained*, &c.] Or *received*; he had received much grace out of the fulneſs of it in Chriſt; he had received the gift of righteouſneſs, the forgiveneſs of his ſins, and the adoption of children; he had attained to a lively hope of the incorruptible inheritance, and had received a right unto it, and had a meetneſs for it; but as yet he had not received the thing itſelf, nor was he come to the end of his race, and ſo had not received the crown of righteouſneſs laid up for him; he had not yet attained to perfect knowledge, nor perfect holineſs, nor perfect happineſs: wherefore he adds, *either were already perfect*; he was perfect in compariſon of others, that were in a lower claſs of grace, experience, and knowledge, in which ſenſe the word is uſed in ver. 15. and in 1 *Cor.* ii. 6. he was ſo, as perfection intends ſincerity, uprightneſs, and integrity; the root of the matter, the truth of grace was in him; his faith was unfeigned, his love was without diſſimulation, his hope was without hypocriſy, his converſation in the world was in godly ſimplicity, and his preaching and his whole conduct in his miniſtry were of ſincerity, and in the ſight of God: he was perfect as a new creature with reſpect to parts, having Chriſt formed in him, and all the parts of the new man, though not as to degrees; this new man not being as yet grown up to a perfect man, or to its full growth, to the meaſure of the ſtature of the fulneſs of Chriſt; he was perfect with reſpect to juſtification, being perfectly juſtified from all things, by the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, but not with reſpect to ſanctification; and though his ſanctification was perfect in Chriſt, yet not in himſelf; his knowledge was imperfect, ſomething was wanting in his faith, and ſin dwelt in him, of which he ſometimes grievouſly complained: now this he ſays, leſt he ſhould be thought to arrogate that to himſelf, which he had not: *but I follow*; Chriſt the forerunner, after perfect knowledge of him, perfect holineſs from him, and perfect happineſs with him: the metaphor is taken from runners in a race, who purſue it with eagerneſs, preſs forward with all might and main, to get up to the mark, in order to receive the prize; accordingly the *Syriac* verſion renders it, רהט אנא, *I run*, and ſo the *Arabic*: the Apoſtle's ſenſe is, that though he had not yet reached the mark, he preſſed forward towards it, he had it in view, he ſtretched and exerted himſelf, and followed up very cloſely to it, in hope of enjoying the prize: *if that I may apprehend that for which alſo I am apprehended of Chriſt Jeſus*; he was apprehended of Chriſt, when he met him in his way to *Damaſcus*, ſtopped him in his journey, laid him proſtrate to the ground, and laid hold on him as his own, challenged and claimed his intereſt in him, as one that the Father had given him, and he had purchaſed by his blood; he entered into him, and took poſſeſſion of him, and took up his reſidence in him, having diſpoſſeſſed the ſtrong man armed, and ever ſince held him as his own; and he apprehended, or laid hold on him, to bring him as he had engaged to do, to a participation of grace here, and glory hereafter; that he might know him himſelf, and make him known to others; that he might be made like unto him, have communion with him, and everlaſtingly enjoy him: and theſe things the Apoſtle purſued after with great vehemence, that he might apprehend them, and be in full poſſeſſion of them; and which he did, in the way and manner hereafter deſcribed.

Ver. 13. *Brethren, I count not myſelf to have apprehended*, &c.] That for which he was apprehended of Chriſt: he had not attained to perfect knowledge, was not come to the mark, had not received the prize, or laid hold on eternal life; though he had received ſo much grace, and ſuch gifts, as had qualified him for an Apoſtle; and he had been ſo many years in that office, and had ſo great a knowledge in the myſtery of the Goſpel, and had laboured in it more abundantly than others, and with great ſucceſs; and even though he had been caught up into the third heaven, and had heard unſpeakable words, not lawful to be uttered, yet he had no ſuch opinion of himſelf, as if he was perfect: by which way of ſpeaking, he tacitly ſtrikes at the arrogance and vain confidence of falſe teachers, that pretended to perfection; and in this way led the brethren to conclude, that they could never have arrived to it, ſince ſo great an Apoſtle had not; ſome copies read *not yet*, and ſo the *Ethiopic* verſion: *but this one thing* I do; which he was intent upon, conſtantly attended to, and earneſtly purſued; it was the main and principal thing he was ſet upon, and which he employed himſelf in; and which engroſſed all his thoughts, deſires, affections, time, and labour; ſee *Pſal.* xxvii. 4. *Luke* x. 42. The *Syriac* verſion reads, *this one thing I know*; ſignifying that whatever he was ignorant of, and however imperfect his knowledge was in other things, this he was full well apprized of, and acquainted with. The *Arabic* verſion renders the whole thus, *I do not think that I have now obtained and received any thing, but the one thing*; namely, what follows: *forgetting thoſe things which are behind*; meaning not the ſins of his paſt life, which were indeed forgotten by God, and the guilt of which was removed from him, by the application of the blood of Chriſt, ſo that he had no more conſcience of them; yet they were remembered and made mention of by him, partly for his own humiliation, and partly to magnify the grace of God: nor earthly and worldly things, which believers are too apt to have reſpect to, to look back upon, and hanker after, as the *Iſraelites* did after the fleſh-pots in *Egypt*; though theſe were forgotten by the Apoſtle, ſo as not anxiouſly to care for them, and ſeek after them, to ſet his affections on them, or truſt in them: nor his fleſhly privileges, and legal righteouſneſs, which he purſued, valued, and truſted in before converſion, but now dropped, renounced, diſregarded, and counted as loſs and dung; but rather his labours and works of righteouſneſs ſince converſion, which though he ſometimes

times took notice of for the magnifying of the grace of God, for the defence of the Goſpel, and to put a ſtop to the vain boaſting of falſe teachers, yet he forgot them in point of dependance on them, and truſt to them; and having put his hand to the plough, he did not look back, nor deſiſt, but went on in his laborious way, not thinking of what he had done; and gone through, nor diſcouraged at what was before him; as alſo he intends all his growth in grace, and proficiency in divine knowledge, which was very great; and though he was thankful for theſe things, and would obſerve them to the glory of the grace of God, yet he truſted not in them: nor did he ſit down eaſy and ſatisfied with what he had attained unto, *and* therefore was *reaching forth unto thoſe things which are before*; to perfection of knowledge, holineſs, and happineſs, which were before him, and he as yet had not attained unto; but was deſirous of, and purſued after with great vehemence and eagerneſs: the metaphor is taken from runners in a race, who do not ſtop to look behind them, and ſee what way they have run, and how far they are before others, but look and move forwards, and ſtretch themſelves out to the uttermoſt, and run with all their might and main to the mark before them; and ſo the Apoſtle did in a ſpiritual ſenſe.

Ver. 14. *I preſs toward the mark*, &c.] The alluſion is to the white line, or mark, which the runners in the *Olympic* games made up to, and to which he that came firſt received the prize; and by which the Apoſtle intends the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who is σκοπος, the *ſcope*, or *mark*, of all the thoughts, purpoſes, and counſels of God, to which they all aim, and in which they all center; and of the covenant of grace, of which he is the ſum and ſubſtance, the mediator, ſurety, and meſſenger, in whom are all the bleſſings and promiſes of it; and of the ſcriptures of truth, the writings of the Old and New Teſtament, which all teſtify of him, and agree in him; and of both law and Goſpel, he is the end of the law, and the ſubſtance of the Goſpel; and of all the graces of the Spirit, in the hearts of his people, faith looks at him, hope is concerned with him, and love has him for its object; and of all the duties believers are concerned in, they all point at him, they are done in his name and ſtrength, through faith in him, and from a principle of love to him, and with a view to his glory; and ſo he is of their thoughts, affections, and deſires: and to this mark they preſs, or *run*, as the *Syriac* verſion renders it; they look to Jeſus, whilſt they are running their chriſtian race; they keep him in their view, and follow after him, becauſe he is their forerunner, and the captain of their ſalvation; they ſet him before them as their guide to direct them, according to whom they ſteer their courſe, that ſo they may not loſe their way, nor move out of it, to the right-hand or the left; and from whom they take great encouragement to go on, and preſs through the difficulties they do; and beſides, they know that there is no coming at the prize, but through the mark, for there is ſalvation in no other; and that whoever comes up to the mark, or believes in Chriſt, ſhall enjoy the prize of eternal life, which is next mentioned: *for the prize of the high calling of God in Chriſt Jeſus*; by which is meant, the incorruptible crown; the crown of life, righteouſneſs, and glory, that fadeth not away, ſtiled *the prize of the calling of God*; becauſe it is what God in effectual vocation calls his people to, even to a kingdom and glory, and to eternal glory and happineſs; of which they have a ſight, though but a glimmering view of it, and are bleſſed with hope in it; in which they rejoice, and ſee their right unto it, in the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, and have a meetneſs for it: this is named *the high calling of God*, becauſe God is on high, who calls them to it, in alluſion to the judge in the *Olympic* games, who was placed in an exalted ſituation, near the mark, with the crown in his hand, which he gave to him that came firſt; and becauſe the grace by which the ſaints are called, is from above, as every good and perfect gift is; and becauſe the prize they are called unto, conſiſts of things above, where Jeſus is, and is the hope laid up in heaven, and the inheritance reſerved there; and expreſſes the great honour and dignity of called ones, who are called to a crown and kingdom, are raiſed from the dunghill, to ſit among princes, and to inherit the throne of glory, and are made kings and prieſts unto God: and may alſo denote, that the calling to ſuch high honour is from above, and not below; and is owing to the ſpecial grace and favour of God, and not to any merits of men; nor is the prize to which they are called, of him that willeth and runneth, but of God's grace and mercy: and moreover, this calling is ſaid to be *in Chriſt Jeſus*; for both the purpoſe and grace, according to which men are called, are in him; the grace by which they are called, and which is implanted in them when called, is all in and from Chriſt; the bleſſings of grace, which they then in perſon enjoy, are ſpiritual bleſſings in him; and even the glory they are called unto, is in his hands; not only the promiſe of eternal life, but that itſelf; the gift of it is with him, and it comes through him; yea, they are called by him, and ſaid to be the called of Chriſt Jeſus: now the prize of this calling, which is what God has prepared from all eternity, which Chriſt has in his hands, and will give to all his, and which is of immenſe richneſs and eternal duration, and ſhall be beſtowed on all chriſtian runners, or true believers, is what the Apoſtle was preſſing for, purſuing after, with much difficulty, through great toil and labour, diligent ſearching of the ſcriptures, frequent wreſtling with God in prayer, and conſtant attendance on the means of grace, and ordinances of the Goſpel.

Ver. 15. *Let us therefore as many as be perfect*, &c.] Not abſolutely, but comparatively, with reſpect to other believers, in a lower claſs of knowledge and experience; and not with reſpect to degrees, but parts; and regards ſuch who were not children, but of riper age in divine things, unleſs the words are ſpoken ironically: *be thus minded*; as the Apoſtle was, to count what were gain to him, loſs for Chriſt; to reckon all things but loſs and dung, for the excellency of the knowledge of Chriſt; to be willing to ſuffer the loſs of all things, to win him; to deſire to be found in him, and in his righteouſneſs, and not a man's own; to know more of him in his perſon, righteouſneſs, ſufferings, death, and reſurrection from the dead; and to attain to ſuch a ſtate, and yet to diſclaim all perfection, and acknowledge their imperfection; and to forget things behind, and reach to thoſe before; and preſs towards the mark Chriſt, for the prize of eternal glory: *and if in any thing ye be otherwiſe minded*; as to ſeek for juſtification by the works of the law, or partly by Chriſt and partly by the law, and to imagine and expect perfection in this life: *God ſhall reveal even this unto you*; ſuch errors will be made manifeſt ſooner or later; the day will declare them, and ſuch wood, hay, and ſtubble will be burnt up by the fire, which will reveal every man's work.

Ver. 16. *Nevertheleſs, whereto we have already attained*, &c.] Whatever degree of knowledge of Chriſt, and the truths of his Goſpel, is attained to, let it be retained, and not departed from: *let us walk by the ſame rule*; either the doctrine of juſtification by Chriſt's righteouſneſs in particular, which is a rule of judgment concerning other things; for ſo far as they agree or diſagree with this, they are to be received or rejected; or the ſcriptures of truth, which are the rule of faith and practice, and the ſtandard and teſt, to which all are to be brought and tried: *let us mind the ſame thing*; be of one heart and affection to each other, and of the ſame judgment in the doctrines of the Goſpel, and purſue the ſame meaſures; particularly preſs towards the ſame mark, and for the ſame prize the Apoſtle did, and be followers of him, as is exhorted to in the next verſe.

Ver. 17. *Brethren, be followers together of me*, &c.] Not that the Apoſtle ſet up himſelf as the head of a party, which is what he always blamed in others; he did not aſſume a dominion over the faith of men, or ſeek to lord it over God's heritage; nor did he deſire any to be followers of him, any further than he was a follower of Chriſt; and in what he was, whether in doctrine or practice, he deſires to be followed in: and here he has a particular regard to what went before, concerning reckoning what was gain loſs; accounting all things but dung, in compariſon of the knowledge of Chriſt; looking to his righteouſneſs alone for juſtification; diſclaiming perfection, yet forgetting things behind; reaching towards things before, and preſſing to the mark for the prize, and walking according to the rule of God's word; in which things he had ſome that followed him, who were his ſpiritual children, and to whom he had been uſeful in converſion and edification; ſee 1 *Cor.* iv. 15, 16. 1 *Theſſ.* i. 6, 7. and he would therefore have theſe *Philippians* followers of him, *together* with them; and which contains in it an encouraging reaſon, or argument, ſince others were followers of him; or together with one another; he was deſirous, that one and all of them might follow him; that they might all go in the ſame way, profeſs the ſame truth, be found in the practice of the ſame things, worſhip the Lord with one conſent, purſue the ſame ends, and draw all the ſame way; and ſo be as the church was, like a company of horſes in *Pharaoh*'s chariot: *and mark them which walk ſo*; as the Apoſtle did, and thoſe that were followers of him; theſe he would have them mark, obſerve, attentively look to; not as others, who cauſe offences and diviſions, and obey not the word, in order to ſhun, avoid, and keep no company with; but to imitate and follow, and next to Chriſt the mark, to make uſe of them as inferior ones: *as ye have us for an enſample*, or *type*; believers ſhould be enſamples one to another, eſpecially miniſters of the word; paſtors of churches are not to be lords over God's heritage, but to be enſamples to the flock, in word, in converſation, in charity, in ſpirit, in faith, in purity, as the Apoſtle exhorts *Timothy*, 1 Epiſt. iv. 12. and in theſe things they are to be followed by believers.

Ver. 18. *For many walk*, &c.] אחרניאית, *otherwiſe*, as the *Syriac* verſion adds; and which truly explains the words, and gives the ſenſe; they walked not as the Apoſtle and his followers; they walked as men, as carnal men, according to the courſe of the world, after their ungodly luſts; or according to the rites and ceremonies of the *Moſaic* diſpenſation, and not uprightly, and according to the truth of the Goſpel: and there were many that walked ſo; the road both of profaneneſs and error, is a broad one, and many walk therein, which makes it the more dangerous; the examples of many have great force, though a multitude is not to be followed to do evil; the converſation of a great part of profeſſors is not to be imitated; the few names in *Sardis* that have not defiled their garments with error or immorality, ſhould be marked for enſamples, and the majority ſhunned: *of whom I have told you often*; both when preſent among them by word of mouth, and when abſent from them by writing; for the Apoſtle was a faithful watchman and monitor to this church, and to all the churches, the care of which lay upon him; and diligent he was to warn them againſt falſe teachers, whoſe doctrines and practices he knew were of pernicious conſequence: *and now tell you even weeping*; partly on account of thoſe evil men, whoſe ſtate and condition, notwithſtanding their profeſſion, was very bad; and partly on account of the glory of God and Chriſt, and the honour of religion, which ſuffered much through them; and alſo on account of the *Philippians*, leſt they ſhould be drawn aſide by them; and becauſe they had taken ſo little notice of his frequent cautions and advice: and that they might the better know the men he ſpoke of, and avoid them, he deſcribes them by the following characters, that they are *the enemies of the croſs of Chriſt*; not that, though they might be *Jews*, they were like the unbelieving *Jews*, who were open and implacable enemies of a crucified Chriſt, called Jeſus accurſed, and anathematized him and his followers, and to whom the preaching of Chriſt crucified, was an offence and ſtumbling-block; for theſe were profeſſors of Chriſt, and pretended to preach Chriſt, and him crucified: nor were they ſuch hereticks, that denied that Chriſt really aſſumed human nature, and was really crucified and died; and affirmed that all this was only in appearance, or that an image was hung upon the croſs for him, or *Simon* the *Cyrenian* was crucified in his room, as ſome have thought, which was the hereſy of *Simon Magus*, and his diſciple *Baſilides*: nor is the ſenſe that they were averſe to the crucifixion of the affections with the luſts, though this ſeems to be their true character, ſince they were ſenſual and minded earthly things; but the meaning is, that they diſliked the croſs of Chriſt; they were unwilling to take it up for his ſake, and follow him; they ſtudied all ways and means to ſhun it; they ingratiated themſelves into the affections of the unbelieving *Jews*, by complying with the ceremonies of the law, and bearing hard upon the Apoſtle and his miniſtry, that ſo they might not ſuffer perſecution for the croſs of Chriſt; and beſides, by enjoining circumciſion and an obſervance of the law as neceſſary to ſalvation, they as much as in them lay, made void the efficacy of the croſs and death of Chriſt, and made that and him unprofitable, and of no effect to the ſouls of men; and were both doctrinally and practically enemies of the croſs of Chriſt: and ſo all ſuch profeſſors of Chriſt, who walk not according to the Goſpel, though they are not open and direct enemies to the Goſpel, which is the preaching of the croſs, yet they are ſecret and indirect ones, and oftentimes do more miſchief to it by their lives, than the keeneſt adverſaries of it can by their pens.

Ver. 19. *Whoſe end is deſtruction*, &c.] Everlaſting deſtruction, the deſtruction of both body and

and ſoul in hell; and this is the end, the reward and iſſue of bad principles and practices; the broad roads of ſin and error lead to deſtruction; however pleaſing ſuch ways may be to men, the end of them is eternal death; deſtruction and miſery are in all the ways of profaneneſs and hereſy; not only immoralities, but hereſies, ſuch as ſtrike at the efficacy of Chriſt's croſs, his blood, righteouſneſs, and ſacrifice, are damnable ones, and bring upon men ſwift deſtruction; and how ſhould it otherwiſe be, for there is no ſalvation but by the croſs of Chriſt? and if men are enemies to that, and the efficacy of it, and the way of ſalvation by it, there is no more, nor any other ſacrifice for ſin, but a fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation; and this will be the caſe of all barren and unfruitful profeſſors, who are like the earth, that brings forth briars and thorns, and is nigh unto curſing, whoſe end is to be burned; for what will the hope of ſuch an one, founded on his profeſſion, though he may have got credit and reputation among men avail, when God takes away his ſoul? *whoſe God is their belly*; the belly was the god of the *Cyclopes*, they ſacrificed to none but to themſelves, and to the greateſt of the gods, their own belly[a]; as money is the covetous man's god, whom he loves, adores, and puts his confidence in, ſo the belly is the god of the ſenſualiſt, the epicure, and voluptuous perſon; he has more regard for the ſervice of that, than for the ſervice of God: and of this complexion were theſe profeſſors; they were lovers of pleaſure, more than lovers of God; all their pretenſions to religion, to Chriſt, and his Goſpel, were only to ſerve themſelves, their own bellies, and not the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and to do good to the ſouls of men: or their belly may be ſaid to be their god, becauſe they placed religion in the obſervance of meats and drinks, either allowed or forbidden in the law of *Moſes*, which profited not thoſe that were occupied therein; for the kingdom of God, the Goſpel diſpenſation, internal religion, and the exerciſe of it, lies not in theſe things, but in righteouſneſs, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghoſt: *and* whoſe *glory* is *in their ſhame*; in their evil practices committed in ſecret, of which it was a ſhame to ſpeak; in their hidden things of diſhoneſty, crafty walking, and deceitful handling of the word of God, which were vile and ſcandalous; in corrupting the Goſpel and the churches of Chriſt, with their falſe doctrine; in obſerving and urging the ceremonies of the law, which were dead, and ought to be buried; and particularly circumciſion in the fleſh, in that part of the body which cauſes ſhame, and in this were their glory, *Gal.* vi. 13. The idol *Baal Peor*, and which is no other than the *Priapus* of the Heathens, is called by this name, *Hoſ.* ix. 10. ſo the prophets of *Baal* are in the *Septuagint* on 1 *Kings* xviii. 19, 25. called the prophets, της αισχυνης, *of that ſhame*; it may be the Apoſtle may have a regard to the ſecret debaucheries of theſe perſons; or becauſe they made their belly their god, he calls it their ſhame in which they gloried, and which was the name given to the idols of the *Gentiles*: *who mind earthly things*. The *Arabic* verſion renders it, *who entertain earthly opinions*; and ſome by *earthly things* underſtand, the ceremonies of the law, called the elements and rudiments of the world, which theſe falſe teachers were fond of, and were very diligent to inculcate and urge the obſervance of; though rather worldly things, ſuch as honour, glory, and popular applauſe, and wealth, and riches, are meant; for they ſought their own things, and not the things of Chriſt; through covetouſneſs, with feigned words, they made merchandize of men, and amaſſed to themſelves great ſums of money; and yet were greedy dogs, could never have enough, every one looking for his gain from his quarter: and now perſons of ſuch characters as theſe, were by no means to be followed, but ſuch who are hereafter deſcribed.

Ver. 20. *For our converſation is in heaven*, &c.] The *Ethiopic* verſion renders it, *we have our city in heaven*; and the words may be truly rendered, *our citizenſhip is in heaven*; that is, the city whereof we are freemen is heaven, and we behave ourſelves here below, as citizens of that city above: heaven is the ſaints city; here they have no continuing city, but they ſeek one to come, which is permanent and durable; a city that has foundations, whoſe builder and maker is God: as yet they are not in it, though fellow-citizens of the ſaints, and of the houſhold of God; they are pilgrims, ſtrangers, and ſojourners on earth; but are ſeeking a better country, an heavenly one, and God has prepared for them a city; they have a right unto it through the grace of God, and righteouſneſs of Chriſt, and a meetneſs for it in him; and their converſation is here before-hand, whilſt their commoration is below; their thoughts are often employed about it; their affections are ſet upon it; their hearts are where their treaſure is; the deſires of their ſouls are towards it, and they are ſeeking things above, and long to be in their own city, and Father's houſe, where Chriſt is; and to be at home with him, and for ever with him. This is the work and buſineſs of their lives now, and what their hearts are engaged in. The *Syriac* verſion renders it, *our work is in heaven*; the buſineſs, the exerciſe of our lives, and of our graces, tend that way: *from whence alſo we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt*; Chriſt is now in heaven, at the Father's right-hand, appearing in the preſence of God for his people, and making interceſſion for them; and ſo will remain, until the time of the reſtitution of all things; when he'll deſcend from heaven, and be revealed from thence: and this the ſaints look for, and expect; as they have good reaſon for it; from his own words, from the words of the angels at the time of his aſcenſion, and from the writings of the Apoſtles: and they expect him not merely as a judge, under which conſideration he will be terrible to the ungodly, but as a Saviour; who as he has already ſaved their ſouls from ſin, and the dreadful effects of it, from the bondage and curſe of the law, from the captivity of ſatan, and from eternal ruin and wrath to come, ſo he will ſave and redeem their bodies from the grave, corruption, mortality, and death, as follows.

Ver. 21. *Who ſhall change our vile body*, &c.] Which is defiled with ſin, attended with frailty, and is mortal; and being dead, is ſown and laid in the grave in corruption, weakneſs, and diſhonour: in the *Greek* text it is, *the body of our humility*; ſin has ſubjected the body to weakneſs, mortality, and death; and death brings it into a very low eſtate indeed, which is very humbling and mortifying to the pride and vanity of man: now this vile body in the reſurrection morn, ſhall be ſtripped of all its vileneſs, baſeneſs, and meanneſs; and be changed, not as to its ſubſtance, nor as to its form and figure, which ſhall always remain the ſame, as did the ſubſtance and form of our Lord's body after his reſurrection; but as to its qualities, it ſhall be changed from corruption to incorruption, from mortality to immortality, from weakneſs to power, and from diſhonour to glory, and be free from all ſin: ſo the *Jews* ſay [b], that "the evil imagination, or "corruption of nature, goes along with man in "the hour of death, but does not return with him "when the dead ariſe:" and this change will be made by the Saviour, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, when he ſhall deſcend from heaven; who as he is the pledge, the firſt-fruits, the exemplar, and meritorious cauſe, ſo he will be the efficient cauſe of the reſurrection of the ſaints; who will be raiſed and changed by him, by his power, and by virtue of union to him: *that it might be faſhioned like unto his glorious body*; or *the body of his glory*, as it is now in heaven, and of which his transfiguration on the mount was an emblem and pledge; for glory, power, incorruption, and immortality, the bodies of the ſaints in the reſurrection, ſhall be like to Chriſt's, though not equal to it, and ſhall ſhine like the ſun in the kingdom of their Father. The *Jews* [c] have a notion, that "the holy bleſſed God "will beautify the bodies of the righteous in future time, like the beauty of the firſt *Adam*:" but their beauty and glory will be greater than that, 'twill be like the glory of the ſecond *Adam*, the Lord from heaven, whoſe image they ſhall then bear: and whereas this requires almighty power, of which Chriſt is poſſeſſed, it will be done *according to the working*, the energy of his power and might; or as the *Syriac* verſion renders it, *according to his great power*; which was put forth in raiſing himſelf from the dead, and whereby he was declared to be the Son of God: and *whereby he is able even to ſubdue all things unto himſelf*; not only ſin, ſatan, and the world, but death and the grave; and ſo conſequently able to raiſe the dead bodies of his ſaints, and to change the qualities of them, and make them like unto his own: and now who would but follow ſuch perſons, who are citizens of heaven, have their converſation there, look for Chriſt the Saviour from thence, who when he comes will raiſe the dead in Chriſt firſt, put ſuch a glory on their bodies as is on his own, and take them to himſelf, that where he is they may be alſo? ſee *Heb.* vi. 12.

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[a] Euripides.

CHAP. IV.

THIS chapter contains exhortations to various duties becoming chriſtians, the Apoſtle's thankfulneſs to the *Philippians* for their preſent to him, and the concluſion of the Epiſtle with the ſalutations of the brethren: in ver. 1. the Apoſtle exhorts the ſaints with great affection, to perſeverance in the doctrine and faith of Chriſt; and in ver. 2. mentions ſome perſons by name, and to whom he recommends unity and agreement; and in ver. 3. entreats others to aſſiſt them therein; and in ver. 4. exhorts them all in general to joy in the Lord, and to moderation, enforced by this argument, the Lord being at hand, ver. 5. and to calmneſs and quietneſs of mind, and to prayer, and ſupplication, with thankſgiving, ver. 6. to which they are encouraged, by the promiſe of having the peace of God, keeping their minds through Chriſt, ver. 7. and to conclude, he exhorts them to every thing that is virtuous and commendable; to which he ſtimulates them, from the conſideration of the nature of the things themſelves, from his own example, and from the preſence of God with them, they might expect to enjoy, ver. 8, 9. and then he proceeds to take notice of the kindneſs of the *Philippians* to him, declares his joy on account of it, and expreſſes it by their care of him again; which he corrects, by obſerving that it was not for want of care in them before, but of opportunity of ſhowing it, ver. 10. nor did he take notice of this preſent of theirs, with ſo much exultation on account of his own penury, for he had learnt the great leſſon of contentment in every ſtate, ver. 11. which he enlarges upon and explains; namely, that he had been taught, and knew how to behave in fulneſs and want, in proſperity and adverſity; though this was not owing to himſelf, but to the power and ſtrength of Chriſt, ver. 12, 13. however, he commends the *Philippians* for their communicating to him in his affliction, both at the firſt preaching of the Goſpel to them, and at ſeveral times ſince, ver. 14, 15, 16. the reaſon of which commendation, was not becauſe he was covetous of gifts and preſents from them, but to encourage them to bring forth fruit, which would turn to their own advantage, ver. 17. as for himſelf he had enough, and therefore ſaid not this on his own account, but becauſe ſuch communication was a ſacrifice well pleaſing to God, and a return would be made by him; who as he was able to ſupply all their need, would; of which he aſſures them, and for which he prays, ver. 18, 19. and to whom he gives the glory of what they had given, and he had received, ver. 20. and then the Epiſtle is concluded with the ſalutation of the Apoſtle, and the ſaints, and brethren with him, and with his uſual benediction, ver. 21, 22, 23.

Ver. 1. *Therefore, my brethren*, &c.] Not in a natural, but ſpiritual relation; having the ſame Father, being of the ſame family, and houſhold of faith: ſeeing that on the one hand there were falſe teachers, who ſtand deſcribed by various characters in the preceding chapter, by whom they were in danger of being carried away from the ſimplicity of the Goſpel; and on the other hand, ſuch were the conduct and converſation of the Apoſtle, and other true believers, and ſuch were their expectations of Chriſt from heaven, and of happineſs from him as there expreſſed; therefore he exhorts to ſtedfaſtneſs in him, and that under the moſt tender, affectionate, and indearing appellations; given in the uprightneſs of his ſoul, without any manner of flattery, to ſignify his ſtrong affection for them, and to engage them to attend the more to what he was about to exhort them to; and which aroſe from pure love to them, an hearty concern for their good, and the honour of Chriſt Jeſus: *my dearly beloved*; as belonging to Chriſt, intereſted in him, members of him, redeemed by him, and bearing his image; and as his brethren, and ſo not loved with a carnal, but ſpiritual love: *and longed for*; to ſee them, converſe with them, and impart ſome ſpiritual gift to them; being the excellent in the earth, as other ſaints, towards whom was his deſire, and with whom was all his delight. Theſe epithets are joined with the word *brethren*, in the

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[b] Midraſh Tillim apud Galatin. de arcan. Cathol. ver. l. 12. c. 2. fol. 69. 1.

[c] Midraſh Hanneelam in Zohar in Gen.

Vulgate Latin, *Syriac*, and *Arabic* verſions, and read thus, *my dearly beloved, and longed for brethren*; and in the *Ethiopic* verſion, *our beloved brethren*: to which are added, *my joy and crown*; they were matter of *joy* to him, as he had reaſon to hope well of them; yea, to be confident that the good work was begun, and would be carried on in them; and that they had hitherto continued in the doctrine of the Goſpel, and walked worthy of it: and they were his *crown*, as they were ſeals of his miniſtry; and whom he valued more, and reckoned a greater honour and ornament to him, than the richeſt diadem, ſet with the moſt coſtly jewels and precious ſtones, and which he hoped and believed would be his crown of rejoicing another day; when he with them, ſhould ſtand at the right hand of Chriſt triumphing, as victors crowned, over ſin, ſatan, the world, death, and hell: *ſo ſtand faſt in the Lord*; or *by the Lord*; by his power and ſtrength, which is only able to make to ſtand faſt; ſaints are liable to falling, and would fall, were they not upheld with his right hand, and kept by his power; they only ſtand faſt, as they ſtand ſupported by his ſtrength, truſting in his might, and leaning on his arm. Chriſt is the only foundation where they can ſtand ſafe and ſure; and ſuch as are rooted and grounded, and built up in him, are eſtabliſhed and ſtand; though they are ſtill in need of being exhorted to hold the head, abide by him, and cleave unto him; to ſtand faſt in his grace, exerciſing the graces of faith, hope, and love upon him; in the liberty of Chriſt, in oppoſition to the bondage of the law, falſe teachers were for bringing them into; and in the doctrine of faith, and not depart from it in any degree, nor give way in the leaſt to the oppoſers of it, but continue ſtedfaſt in it without wavering, and which is chiefly intended here: ſo the *Arabic* verſion renders it, *ſo ſtand in the faith of the Lord*; both in the grace of faith, and in the doctrine of it, and in the profeſſion of both; ſee 1 *Cor.* xvi. 13. The Apoſtle bids them *ſo* ſtand faſt; that is, either as they had hitherto done, or as they had him and others for an example; whoſe views, converſation, and behaviour, are deſcribed in the foregoing chapter: *my dearly beloved*; this which otherwiſe would be a repetition of what is before ſaid, is by ſome connected with the former clauſe, and read thus, *ſo ſtand faſt my dearly beloved in the Lord*; and contains a reaſon, both why they were dearly beloved by the Apoſtle, becauſe beloved in and by the Lord; and why it became them to ſtand faſt in him, and abide by him, his truths, ordinances, cauſe, and intereſt.

Ver. 2. *I beſeech Euodias, and beſeech Syntyche*, &c.] Two women, who were members of this church at *Philippi*, and who ſeem to have been at variance; either with each other, on account of ſome temporal and civil things, as often is the caſe of the dear children of God, who fall out by the way; and it becomes a very hard and difficult taſk to reconcile them, though as here intreated in the moſt tender and importunate manner to agree: or elſe with the church, having entertained ſome ſentiments in religion different from it; being drawn aſide by falſe teachers, from the ſimplicity of the Goſpel, and their ſtedfaſtneſs in the faith; and this may rather be thought to be the meaning, ſince the Apoſtle would ſcarcely take notice of a private difference in ſo public a manner, and ſince this exhortation follows ſo cloſely the former: *that they be of the ſame mind in the Lord*; either that they agree together, and be reconciled to each other, conſidering the relation they ſtood in to one another, and to the Lord; or that they become of the ſame mind, and embrace the ſame truths, and profeſs and maintain the ſame principles the church did; and ſo the *Arabic* verſion renders it, *that ye entertain one and the ſame opinion concerning the faith of the Lord.*

Ver. 3. *And I intreat thee alſo, true yoke-fellow*, &c.] Not his wife, as ſome think [d]; for he had none, as appears from 1 *Cor.* vii. 7, 8. at the writing of which Epiſtle he was at *Epheſus*; where he ſtaid ſome little time, and then went to *Jeruſalem*; where he was quickly apprehended, and ſent a priſoner to *Rome*, and where he now was as ſuch; and therefore it is not likely that he ſhould marry a wife within this compaſs of time, and much leſs that he ſhould have one at *Philippi*; beſides, the word uſed is of the maſculine gender, and deſigns a man and not a woman: ſome think it is the proper name of a man, who was called *Syzygus*, and ſo the *Arabic* interpreter ſeems to underſtand it; and by the Apoſtle, true *Syzygus*, ſignifying that as was his name, ſo was he, really and in truth a companion and fellow-labourer, that drew in the ſame yoke with him; the *Syriac* verſion renders it, *the ſon of my yoke*; and the *Ethiopic* verſion, *my brother and my companion*: ſome think this perſon was the huſband, or brother of one of the above women; and therefore is intreated to uſe his intereſt, and compoſe the difference between them, or endeavour to reconcile them to the church; and others that it was the jailor, that was converted by the Apoſtle: but it ſeems moſt likely to have been one that was under the ſame yoke of the Goſpel, and who had been employed with him in preaching of it, a fellow labourer; ſuch an one as *Barnabas*, *Silas*, and *Timothy*, and might be one of thoſe; or rather *Epaphroditus*, who was miniſter in this church, and by whom the Apoſtle ſent this letter, and whom he might addreſs and importune in this manner; the word may very well be thought to anſwer to the *Hebrew* word חבר, often uſed in *Jewiſh* writings, for an aſſociate, a collegue, and a diſciple of the wiſe men, to which the Apoſtle may allude; ſee ch. ii. 25. *help thoſe women*; *Euodias* and *Syntyche*. The *Syriac* and *Ethiopic* verſions read *them*, referring to the above women; and the *Arabic* verſion reads, *help both*; that is, both thoſe women; not by relieving their temporal wants, which it does not appear they were in; but either by compoſing their differences, or by aſſiſting them with good counſel and advice; and giving them proper inſtructions in the doctrines of the Goſpel, that they might be brought to think the ſame things the church did: and the rather ſuch pains ſhould be taken with them, ſince they were ſuch, ſays the Apoſtle, *which laboured with me in the Goſpel*; not in preaching it, for he ſuffered not a woman to teach in the church; but by profeſſing it, and bearing reproach and perſecution for it; and by ſupporting and encouraging, and ſpreading it with their worldly ſubſtance: *with Clement alſo*; which ſome think is the ſame with *Clemens Romanus*, who was afterwards biſhop of *Rome*, and whoſe epiſtle to the *Corinthians* is ſtill extant; other writings are aſcribed to him, but are ſpurious: however, by his name he ſeems to be a *Roman*; and from his being joined with the Apoſtle, as one with whom theſe women alſo laboured in the Goſpel, he appears to be a preacher of it at *Philippi*: *and with other my fellow-labourers*; in the work of the miniſtry, as *Timothy*, who was with him at *Philippi*, when he firſt preached the Goſpel there, and ſome others: *whoſe names are in the book of life*; the book of God's eternal purpoſes and decrees, divine predeſtination to eternal life; and this being called a *book*, and the names of perſons being ſaid to be in it, denote the love of God to his elect, his care of them, his value for them, his remembrance of them, and the exact knowledge which he has of them; as well as imply, that his eternal election of them is perſonal and particular, is well known to him, and is ſure and unchangeable; being more ſo, than the writing of *Pilate* on the croſs, who ſaid, *what I have written, I have written*: and it is called the *book of life*, becauſe thoſe whoſe names are written in it, have a ſpiritual life here, and an eternal one hereafter; to both which they are fore-written in this book, or pre-ordained in God's counſels, and certainly and infallibly enjoy it: now the Apoſtle's knowledge of theſe perſons being written in this book, did not ariſe from any ſpecial revelation, as being ſhown the book of life, and the names of the elect in it, when he was caught up into the third heaven; nor was his knowledge of this matter peculiar and limited to theſe perſons only, but common to all that he had reaſon to hope and believe, had received the grace of God in truth, and walked worthy of the vocation wherewith they were call'd; ſuch perſons in a judgment of charity, which hopes and believes all things, he concluded were in this book of life; and the ſame judgment, faith, and hope, ought all believers to form and entertain one of another, nothing appearing contrary to it, in their faith and converſation.

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[d] Vid. Euſeb. Eccl. Hiſt. l. 3. c. 30.

Ver. 4. *Rejoice in the Lord alway*, &c.] This is a repetition of the exhortation in ch. iii. 1. ſee the note there, with this addition *alway*; for there is always cauſe and matter for rejoicing in Chriſt, even in times of affliction, diſtreſs, and perſecution; ſince he is always the ſame; his grace is always ſufficient; his blood has a continual virtue in it, and always ſpeaks for peace and pardon; his righteouſneſs is an everlaſting one, and ſo is his ſalvation, and ſuch is his love; though ſome join this word with what follows, *and again, I always ſay, rejoice*; this is what was continually inculcated by him, as being of great importance and uſe for the comfort of believers, and the honour of Chriſt.

Ver. 5. *Let your moderation be known unto all men*, &c.] The *Vulgate Latin* reads, *your modeſty*. The *Syriac* and *Arabic* verſions, *your meekneſs*, or *humility*; graces which accompany moderation, and are very neceſſary to it, but not that itſelf. The *Ethiopic* verſion renders it, *your authority*, which by no means agrees; for moderation lies not in exerting authority and power to the uttermoſt, at leaſt with rigour, but in ſhewing clemency and lenity; not dealing with men according to the ſeverity of laws and ſtrict juſtice, but according to equity, and with mildneſs and gentleneſs; giving up ſtrict and proper right, receding from what is a man's due, and not rigidly inſiſting on it; putting up with affronts and injuries, and bearing them with patience; and interpreting things in the beſt ſenſe, and putting the beſt conſtructions on words and actions they will bear; and in uſing inferiors and equals, with all humanity, kindneſs, and reſpect: and this is what is here intended, which the Apoſtle would have made *known*; exerciſed and practiſed publickly, that it might be ſeen and known of all, and God might be glorified, by whoſe name they were called, through their agreeable converſation among men; ſee *Matt.* v. 16. and he would not only have this known unto, but exerciſed towards *all men*; not only to believers, the members of the church, by ruling with gentleneſs, by bearing the infirmities of the weak, and by forgiving offences; but alſo to unbelievers, to the men of the world, by not avenging themſelves, but giving way to wrath; by patient ſuffering for well doing, without making any returns of ill, either by words or deeds: this is the moderation here meant, and not moderation in eating and drinking, and in apparel, and in the love and uſe of, and care for the things of this world; though ſuch moderation highly becomes profeſſors of religion; and much leſs moderation in religion, or towards the falſe teachers, thinking and ſpeaking well of them, and interpreting their notions in the beſt ſenſe, hoping they may mean otherwiſe than they ſay, and therefore ſhould treat their perſons with great reſpect, and their principles with tenderneſs; but this can never be thought to be the Apoſtle's ſenſe, after he had himſelf given them ſuch names and characters, as in ch. iii. 2, 18, 19. and beſides, though we may, and many times ought, as men and chriſtians, to give way, and yield up what is our right and due, for the ſake of peace, yet we cannot, nor ought to give up any thing, that of right belongs to God and Chriſt, in matters of doctrine or worſhip; nor in the leaſt abate of our zeal for the ſame, or give way to falſe teachers in any reſpect, nor for any time: moreover, moderation in religion, is nothing elſe but lukewarmneſs and indifference, than which nothing is more deteſtable, or abhorred by Chriſt. The argument or reaſon, enforcing moderation in the above ſenſe of it follows, *the Lord is at hand*. The *Syriac* verſion reads, *our Lord*; and the *Ethiopic* verſion, *God is at hand*. The ſenſe is, either the Lord is near, he's omnipreſent, and ſees and obſerves the conduct of his people, their deportment in the world, and to one another; and therefore, as in his preſence, and under his eye, they ſhould behave according to equity, and with kindneſs and tenderneſs towards their fellow-creatures and fellow-chriſtians: or the Lord is nigh unto them, as he is to all that call upon him in truth; he's a preſent help in time of trouble; he's in the midſt of them, and will help, and that right early; and will avenge his elect, and vindicate their cauſe, and right all their wrongs in his due time; and therefore they ſhould take all things patiently, and not avenge themſelves: or in a little while Chriſt will come to judgment, when he'll plead the cauſe of his people, and convince ungodly ſinners of their ungodly deeds, and hard ſpeeches againſt him and his; and therefore they ſhould leave all to that time, and commit themſelves to him that judgeth righteouſly.

Ver. 6. *Be careful for nothing*, &c.] This muſt be underſtood not in the moſt extenſive ſenſe, but with a limitation and reſtriction. There are many things that ſaints are to be careful for, as men and chriſtians; they are to be careful of their bodies, as well as of their ſouls; of the health of them, which is to be preſerved by all lawful means, and not expoſed to unneceſſary danger; and for their families, to provide things honeſt for them, proper food and raiment, and the neceſſaries of life; for whoever does not do that, denies the faith, and is worſe than an infidel; and even for the things of this world in a moderate way, uſing all diligence and induſtry in obtaining them; men ought to be careful to diſcharge the duties of their calling in civil life, and to care and concern themſelves for the honour of God, the intereſt of religion, and the ſupport of the Goſpel; and that they offend not God, by ſinning againſt him: but the carefulneſs the Apoſtle ſpeaks of, is an anxious ſolicitude for worldly things, an immoderate concern for the things of life, ariſing from diffidence, or negligence, of the power, providence, and faithfulneſs of God: ſaints ſhould not be anxiouſly, or in a diſtreſſing manner concerned for the things of this world, but be content, whether they have leſs or more; nor be over-much preſſed with what befals them, but ſhould caſt their care upon the Lord, and carry every caſe to him, and leave it there: *but in every thing*. The *Syriac* and *Ethiopic* verſions render it, *in every time*; always, conſtantly, every day, as often as there is opportunity, and need requires. The *Vulgate Latin* and *Arabic* verſions join it with the following clauſe, *in every prayer and ſupplication*; but the grammatical conſtruction of the words will not admit of ſuch a verſion; 'tis beſt to underſtand it of every thing, or caſe, which ſhould be brought to God; whether it be of a temporal or ſpiritual kind, relating to body or ſoul, to ourſelves or others, to our families, relations, and acquaintance, the church, or the world: *by prayer and ſupplication*; which may include all ſorts of prayer, mental or vocal, private or public, ordinary or extraordinary, and every part of prayer: *prayer* may deſign petition, or aſking for good things that are wanted; and *ſupplication*, a deprecating of evils that are feared; though theſe two are often uſed together for the ſame thing, for prayer in general: which ought always to be accompanied *with thankſgiving*; for mercies received; for a man can never come to the throne of grace, to aſk for grace and mercy, but he has mercies to bleſs God for, and ſo to do is very acceptable to God; nor can a perſon expect to ſucceed in the enjoyment of future mercies, when he is not thankful for paſt and preſent ones: in this manner therefore, at all times, upon every occaſion, in a way of humble petition and ſupplication, joined with thankfulneſs for all favours, *let your requeſts be made known to God*; not to men; fly not to an arm of fleſh, but to God, to him only, and that in the moſt private manner, as not to be known by men; and put up ſuch requeſts, as there may be reaſon to hope and believe God will *know* and approve of; ſuch as are agreeable to his will, to the covenant of his grace, and the declaration of his word: uſe familiarity with God, tell him as you would do a friend, freely and fully all your caſe, pour out your ſouls and your complaints before him. This God would have his people do, and he expects it from them; and though he knows all their wants, and what are their deſires before they expreſs them, yet he'll ſeem not to know them, or take any notice of them, until they open them to him in ſome way or other; either by vocal prayer, or mental; by ejaculations, or ſighs and groans, by chattering as a crane or ſwallow, all which he underſtands: and be the caſe made known in what way or manner ſoever, with ever ſo much weakneſs, ſo be it it is made known, 'tis enough, it ſhall be regarded and not deſpiſed.

Ver. 7. *And the peace of God which paſſeth all underſtanding*, &c.] Not that peace which God calls his people to among themſelves in their effectual vocation; and which he requires of them to cultivate and maintain; and which he encourages in them by the promiſe of his gracious preſence among them; and which indeed he is the author of, and therefore is ſo called, *Col.* iii. 15. and which may be ſaid to ſurpaſs or exceed all ſpeculative knowledge, and underſtanding; for the one puffs up and profits nothing, but the other edifies; and much leſs that peace which God has in himſelf, who is all peace and love, and which paſſes all underſtanding, human and angelic; but either that peace which is made with God by the blood of Chriſt, and is publiſhed in the Goſpel of peace, which paſſes and ſurprizes all underſtanding of men and angels, that it ſhould be; that the thoughts of God ſhould be concerning it from everlaſting; that a council of peace ſhould be called and held between the eternal Three, and a covenant of peace entered into; that Chriſt ſhould be appointed the peace-maker, and the chaſtizement of it laid on him; that he ſhould make it by the blood of his croſs, and for men, whilſt enmies to God and to himſelf: or elſe that peace of conſcience, which ariſes from a view of peace made by Chriſt; of juſtification by his righteouſneſs, and atonement by his ſacrifice; and which may be called *the peace of Chriſt*, as the *Alexandrian* copy reads; both becauſe it is founded upon, and ſprings from him, and is what he is the donor of: and this is what paſſes the underſtanding of every natural man; he knows nothing of this peace, what this tranquillity of mind means; he intermeddles not with this joy; it is unaccountable to him how it ſhould be, that ſuch men ſhould have peace, who have ſo much trouble, are ſo much reproached, afflicted, and perſecuted, and yet have peace in Chriſt, whilſt they have tribulation in the world: which *ſhall keep your hearts and minds thro' Chriſt Jeſus*, or *in Chriſt Jeſus*; ſome read theſe words prayer-wiſe, or as a wiſh, *let it*, or *may it keep*, ſo the *Vulgate Latin*; but they are rather a promiſe, encouraging the ſaints to the diſcharge of the above duties; as rejoicing always in the Lord, ſhewing their moderation to all men, avoiding anxious care, and betaking themſelves at all times, on all occaſions, to prayer to God; in which way they may expect peace, and ſuch as will be of that ſervice to them, as here expreſſed; that is, be a means of their final perſeverance; for the peace of God in either ſenſe, is a preſervation of the ſaints: peace made with God, ſecures them in Chriſt from all condemnation by the law, ſin, ſatan, the world, or their own hearts; and peace in their own ſouls on ſo good a foundation as it is, keeps them thro' Chriſt as in a garriſon, from being overſet with the troubles of the world, or the temptations of ſatan; and is a means of preſerving them from being carried away with the errors and hereſies of the wicked, having a witneſs to truth within themſelves; and from every evil way and work, from profaneneſs and immorality; the grace of God teaching them, and the love of Chriſt conſtraining them, which is ſhed abroad in their hearts, to live and act otherwiſe.

Ver. 8. *Finally, brethren, whatſoever things are true*, &c.] To cloſe all with reſpect to the duties of chriſtianity incumbent on the profeſſors of it, the Apoſtle exhorts to a regard to every thing that is true; that is agreeable to the ſcriptures of truth, to the Goſpel the word of truth, or to the law and light of nature; and whatever was really ſo, even among the very heathens in oppoſition to falſhood, lying, and hypocriſy: *whatſoever things* are *honeſt*; in the ſight of men; or *grave*, or *venerable* in ſpeech, in action or attire, in oppoſition to levity, frothineſs, or foppery: *whatſoever things* are *juſt*; between man and man, or with reſpect both to God and men; giving to God what belongs to him, and to man what is his due; ſtudying to exerciſe a conſcience void of offence to both, in oppoſition to all impiety, injuſtice, violence, and oppreſſion: *whatſoever things* are *pure*; or *chaſte*, in words and deeds, in oppoſition to all filthineſs and fooliſh talking, to obſcene words and actions. The *Vulgate Latin* and *Arabic* verſions render it, *whatſoever things are holy*; which are agreeable to the holy nature, law and will of God, and which tend to promote holineſs of heart and life: *whatſoever things are lovely*; which are amiable in themſelves, and to be found even among mere moral men, as in the young man whom Chriſt as man is ſaid to love, *Mark* x. 21. and which ſerve to cultivate and increaſe love, friendſhip, and amity among men; and which things alſo are grateful to God and lovely in his ſight, in oppoſition to all contention, ſtrife, wrath, and hatred: *whatſover things* are *of good report*; are well ſpoken of, and tend to get and eſtabliſh a good name, which is better than precious ointment, *Eccleſ.* vii. 1. for tho' a good name, credit, and reputation among men, are to be ſacrificed for the ſake of Chriſt when called for; yet care is to be taken to preſerve them by doing things which may ſecure them, and cauſe profeſſors of religion to be well reported of; and which is beautiful in all, and abſolutely neceſſary in ſome: *if* there be *any virtue*; any where, among any perſons whatever, in oppoſition to vice: *and if* there be *any praiſe*; that is praiſe-worthy among men, and deſerves commendation, even tho' in an unjuſt ſteward, *Luke* xviii. 8. it ſhould be regarded. The *Vulgate Latin* adds, *of diſcipline*, without any authority from any copy. The *Claromontane* manuſcript reads, *if any praiſe of knowledge: think on theſe things*; meditate upon them, revolve them in your minds, ſeriouſly conſider them, and reaſon with yourſelves about them, in order to put them into practice.

Ver. 9. *Theſe things which ye have both learned*, &c.] Meaning from himſelf, in a doctrinal way: *and received*; not only into their heads but hearts, had embraced cordially, with great affection, in the love thereof, as well as gave a full aſſent to: *and heard*; either publickly or privately, from the pulpit, or in converſation; or had heard of him when abſent, or from him when preſent: *and ſeen in me*; in his life and converſation, which were well known, and were a pattern to them that believe; and therefore he adds, *do*: practiſe the ſame things which they had learned from him as their duty, and had heard him urge as ſuch, and had ſeen exemplified in himſelf: *and the God of peace ſhall be with you*; to give that peace which is beyond the conception of a natural man, and the expreſſion of a ſpiritual one, and is the great preſervative thro' Chriſt; and to enable to do and to continue to do the above things, and to keep them from all harm, and every enemy of their ſouls; to favour them with his gracious preſence here, and with endleſs peace hereafter.

Ver. 10. *But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly*, &c.] The Apoſtle proceeds to the laſt part of this epiſtle, and to take notice of the preſent which theſe *Philippians* had ſent him, on account of which this his rejoicing was; and which was not ſmall but great, and was not of a carnal but ſpiritual kind; it was a joy in the Holy Ghoſt, which is oppoſed to meats and drinks and earthly enjoyments; it was a joy in the Lord; *in our Lord*, as the *Syriac* verſion renders it; it was not ſo much on account of the nature, ſubſtance, quantity or quality of the things ſent him, and the ſuitableneſs of them to his preſent neceſſity; but becauſe this thing was of the Lord, he had put it into their hearts to do it, and had given them not only ability, but a willing mind, and had wrought in them both to will and to do; and becauſe what they did they did for the ſake of Chriſt, and to him as an Apoſtle of his, and in obedience to Chriſt, and with a view to promote his cauſe and intereſt, honour and glory: *that now at the laſt your care of me hath flouriſhed again*; which ſuppoſes that they had formerly, at the firſt preaching of the Goſpel, ſhewed great reſpect to him, and took great care of him, as appears from ver. 15, 16. but that for ſome time paſt, and it ſeems for a conſiderable while, they had dropped it, or at leaſt had not ſhown it; but that now it revived again, and was ſeen in the preſent they had now ſent him. The alluſion is to trees, which in the ſummer ſeaſon bear much fruit, in autumn caſt their leaves, and in the winter are entirely bare, and in the ſpring of the year revive again, and put forth leaves and fruit: and juſt ſo it is with the ſaints, they are compared to trees, and are called trees of righteouſneſs, and are fruitful ones; but they have their winter ſeaſons, when they are barren and unfruitful, and look as if they were dead; but when it is a ſpring time with them they revive again, as in the exerciſe of their faith and hope in Chriſt, ſo of their love to him, and to one another, and the miniſters of the Goſpel; when the ſouth wind of the Spirit blows, the ſun of righteouſneſs ariſes, and the dews of divine grace fall upon them; and ſuch a revival was now in this church; and this was what the Apoſtle ſo much rejoiced in, not ſo much for the gift beſtowed on him, as for the fruit that appeared in them; ſee ver. 17. but whereas he had ſaid that this care of him flouriſhed again, *at laſt*; leſt this ſhould be thought as finding fault with them, and bringing a charge againſt them, he corrects himſelf by adding, *wherein ye were alſo careful, but ye lacked opportunity*; ſignifying that he believed they had entertained the ſame ſentiments of him, had the ſame affection and inward care for him all along; but they had no opportunity of ſhewing it, he being at ſuch a diſtance, and they having no conveniency or proper perſons to ſend to him; or were hindred thro' multiplicity of buſineſs on their hands, that they could not attend to him; and ſo the *Vulgate Latin* verſion renders it, *but ye were buſied*, or taken up and employed in buſineſs: or it was for want of ability; for the words will bear to be rendered, *but ye lacked ability*; and to this ſenſe does the *Syriac* verſion render it, אלא לא ספקין הויתון, *but ye were not ſufficient*; or had not a ſufficiency, were not able to do it, and therefore to be eaſily excuſed.

Ver. 11. *Not that I ſpeak in reſpect of want*, &c.] Either of want of will in them; of their ſlowneſs and backwardneſs in their care of him, poſtponing him to others, caring for him laſt of all; this gave him no uneaſineſs, he did not take it ill, knowing and owning himſelf to be leſs than the leaſt of all ſaints: or of his own want before this preſent came; and his ſenſe is, that he did not expreſs himſelf with ſo much joy, becauſe of the penury and diſtreſs he was in before the things came to him which they ſent; for he was not in want; tho' he had nothing, he poſſeſſed all things, and was as happy, and in as comfortable a frame, and in as much content then as now: *for I have learned in whatſoever ſtate I am*, therewith *to be content*; or *to be ſufficient*, as the *Vulgate Latin* verſion renders it; or *that that is ſufficient for me which I have*, as the *Syriac* verſion renders it; for the word here uſed ſignifies to be ſelf-ſufficient, or to have a ſufficiency in ones ſelf, which in the ſtrict ſenſe of the phraſe is only true of God, who is *El-ſhaddai*, God all-ſufficient; but in a lower ſenſe, is true of ſuch who are contented with their preſent ſtate and condition, with ſuch things as they have, be they more or leſs, and think that they have enough, as old *Jacob* did, *Gen.* xxxiii. 11. and ſuch perſons have a ſort of an all-ſufficiency in them; they are thankful for every thing they have, be it little or more, and in every ſtate, whether of adverſity or proſperity; and quietly and patiently ſubmit to the will of God, and chearfully take and bear whatever is aſſigned them as their portion; and ſuch an one was the Apoſtle: he was not only content with food and raiment, and ſuch things as he had, but even when he had nothing at all; when he had neither bread to eat nor clothes to wear; when he was in hunger and thirſt, in cold and nakedneſs, as was ſometimes his caſe; and therefore he does not ſay here, that he had learned to be content with ſuch things, as he had, but εν οις ειμι, *in what I am:* and this he had not by nature, but by grace; it was not natural, but adventitious to him; it was not what he had acquired by his induſtry, but what he had *learned*; and that not in the ſchool of nature and reaſon, whilſt an unregenerate man; nor at the feet of *Gamaliel*, whilſt he was training up under him in the law of *Moſes*, and in the traditions of the elders; but he learned it of God, and was taught it by the revelation of Chriſt, and under the teachings of the Spirit of God, and that in the ſchool of affliction, by a train of experiences, of many ſorrows, afflictions, and diſtreſſes; for this leſſon is learned quite contrary to all the rules and reaſons among men, not by proſperity, but by adverſity: many are the things that may excite and encourage to the exerciſe of this heavenly grace, where it is wrought; as the conſideration of the unalterable will of God, according to which every man's ſtate and condition is ſettled, and therefore what God has made crooked can never be made ſtraight; and of our caſe when we came into the world, and what that will be when we go out of it, naked and bare of this world's things; and of our unworthineſs of the leaſt mercy at the hand of God: add to which, the conſideration of God being our portion and exceeding great reward; of having an intereſt in Chriſt and all things in him; and of the profits and pleaſures of a life of contentment; and of the promiſes which God has made to ſuch; and of that future glory and happineſs which will ſhortly be enjoyed: ſo that a believer may ſay who has the ſmalleſt pittance of earthly enjoyments, this with a covenant God, with an intereſt in Chriſt, with grace here and heaven hereafter, is enough.

Ver. 12. *I know both* how *to be abaſed*, &c.] Or *humbled*; to be treated with indignity and contempt, to be trampled upon by man, to ſuffer hardſhips and diſtreſs, to be in a very mean and low condition, to work with his own hands, and miniſter to his own and the neceſſities of others in that way; yea, to be in hunger and thirſt, in cold and nakedneſs, and have no certain dwelling-place; and he knew how to behave under all this; not to be depreſſed and caſt down, or to fret, repine, and murmur: *and I know* how *to abound*; or *to excel*; to be in the eſteem of men, and to have an affluence of the things of this world, and how to behave in the midſt of plenty; ſo as not to be lifted up, to be proud and haughty, and injurious to fellow-creatures; ſo as not to abuſe the good things of life; and ſo as to uſe them to the honour of God, the intereſt of religion, and the good of fellow-creatures, and fellow-chriſtians: *every where*; whether among *Jews* or *Gentiles*, at *Jeruſalem* or at *Rome*, or at whatſoever place; or as the *Arabic* verſion renders it, *every time*; always, in every ſeaſon, whether of adverſity or proſperity: *and in all things*; in all circumſtances of life: *I am inſtructed*; or *initiated*, as he was by the Goſpel; and ever ſince he embraced it, was taught this leſſon of contentment, and inured to the exerciſe of it, and was trained up and inſtructed how to behave himſelf in the different changes and viciſſitudes he came into: *both to be full, and to be hungry*; to know what it was to have plenty and want, to have a full meal and to want one, and be almoſt ſtarved and famiſhed, and how to conduct under ſuch different circumſtances: *both to abound and to ſuffer need*; which the Apoſtle repeats for confirmation ſake; and the whole of what he here ſays, is an explanation of the leſſon of contentment he had learned; and the knowledge he ſpeaks of was not ſpeculative but experimental, and lay not merely in theory, but in practice; and now leſt he ſhould be thought guilty of arrogance, and to aſcribe too much to himſelf, he in the following verſe attributes all to the power and grace of Chriſt.

Ver. 13. *I can do all things*, &c.] Which muſt not be underſtood in the greateſt latitude, and without any limitation; for the Apoſtle was not omnipotent, either in himſelf, or by the power of Chriſt; nor could he do all things that Chriſt could do; but it muſt be reſtrained to the ſubject matter treated of: the ſenſe is, that he could be content in every ſtate, and could know how to behave himſelf in adverſity and proſperity, amidſt both poverty and plenty; yea, it may be extended to all the duties incumbent on him both as a chriſtian and as an Apoſtle, as to exerciſe a conſcience void of offence towards God and men; to take the care of all the churches; to labour more abundantly than others in preaching the Goſpel; and to bear all afflictions, reproaches, and perſecutions for the ſake of it; yea, he could willingly and chearfully endure the moſt cruel and torturing death for the ſake of Chriſt: all theſe things he could do, not in his own ſtrength, for no man was more conſcious of his own weakneſs than he was, or knew more of the impotency of human nature; and therefore always directed others to be ſtrong in the Lord, and in the power of his might, and in the grace that is in Chriſt, on which he himſelf always depended, and by which he did what he did; as he adds here, *thro' Chriſt which ſtrengtheneth me*. The *Vulgate Latin* and *Ethiopic* verſions leave out the word *Chriſt*, and only read *him*; and ſo the *Alexandrian* copy and others; but intend Chriſt as thoſe that expreſs it: ſtrength to perform duty and to bear ſufferings is in Chriſt, and which he communicates to his people; he ſtrengthens them with ſtrength in their ſouls, internally as the word here uſed ſignifies; by virtue of which they can do whatever he enjoins them or calls them to, tho' without him they can do nothing.

Ver. 14. *Notwithſtanding ye have well done*, &c.] This he ſays leſt they ſhould think he ſlighted their kindneſs, and leſt they ſhould be diſcouraged from doing any ſuch thing of this kind another time, either to himſelf or others; for tho' he was ſo well contented with his ſtate, and knew how to be abaſed and to ſuffer need, and could do all things thro' the ſtrength of Chriſt, yet he obſerves they did well in communicating to him; for communicating to poor ſaints or miniſters is a conſiderable branch of well doing; it is a good work when it is done in faith, and from love, and with a view to the glory, honour, and intereſt of Chriſt; it is what is agreeable to the will of God, and is an odour of a ſweet ſmell and acceptable to him: *that ye did communicate with my affliction*; by which is meant, not any affliction of mind, for he was in as comfortable a frame, had as clear views of his intereſt in God, as his covenant God, and was as contented and ſatisfied as ever he was in his life; nor any diſorder or diſtemper of body; but he was in priſon and penury: theſe *Philippians* communicated with him in it, both by ſympathizing with him in his tribulation; and by ſending their miniſter to viſit him, and with him a preſent for his relief and ſupport; in doing which they did well.

Ver. 15. *Now ye Philippians know alſo*, &c.] As well as the Apoſtle did, that they not only communicated now, but alſo had done formerly, and when none elſe beſide them did; wherefore he not only commends them for their preſent kindneſs to him, but for their paſt favours: *that in the beginning of the Goſpel*; of the preaching of it by the Apoſtle in the parts of *Macedonia*, particularly at *Philippi*; as ſoon as ever the Goſpel was preached to them, they ſhewed a grateful and beneficent ſpirit; of which we have an inſtance in *Lydia*, the firſt perſon we read of converted there, and alſo in the *jailor* who was the next; ſee *Acts* xvi. 12, 14, 15, 34, 40. yea, not only while he was with them they communicated to him, but when he was gone from them: *when I departed from Macedonia*; when he went to *Corinth* and other places, to preach the Goſpel in other parts and to other people, they ſent the brethren after him with preſents which ſupplied what was lacking to him, and in which other churches were deficient; ſee 2 *Cor.* xi. 8, 9. the *Ethiopic* verſion reads, *when ye went from Macedonia with me*; but is not ſupported by any copy or other verſion: *no church communicated with me, as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only*; the phraſe *giving and receiving*, is the ſame with משא ומתן, which is often uſed by the *Jews* for trading and commerce[e]; and the alluſion is, to the keeping of accounts by men in buſineſs, by debtor and creditor in a book, putting down in one column, what is delivered out, and in the other what is received, whereby accounts are kept clear: the Apoſtle's meaning is, that whereas he and his fellow-miniſters had delivered out ſpiritual things to this church, they had in return communicated their carnal things; ſo that there was a proper account kept, which was not obſerved by other churches, and which was greatly to the commendation of this.

Ver. 16. *For even in Theſſalonica*, &c.] When the Apoſtle was there; for from *Philippi* he went to *Theſſalonica*; ſee *Acts* xvii. 1. *ye ſent once and again unto my neceſſity*; for his uſe and ſervice, to ſupport him whilſt he was at that place, and relieve and aſſiſt him in his neceſſities; for the people at *Theſſalonica* were either not able to communicate, or were not of a beneficent diſpoſition, or the Apoſtle did not care to be chargeable to them; and they ſeem many of them to have been idle and lazy, and therefore he wrought among them with his own hands to ſet them an example; and the *Philippians* hearing and knowing that this was the caſe, ſent frequently, whilſt he was there, ſome of the brethren with gifts unto him.

Ver. 17. *Not becauſe I deſire a gift*, &c.] This commendation of them he entred into, not becauſe he deſired another preſent to be made to him, either by them or others; he was not a man of ſuch a diſpoſition, he was not like one of thoſe that could never have enough; he was fully ſatisfied and highly contented with what he had; he was not like the falſe teachers that made merchandize of men; he ſought not theirs but them: *but I deſire fruit that may abound to your account*; he had planted them, or had been an inſtrument in planting of them, as trees of righteouſneſs; and his great deſire was to ſee fruits of righteouſneſs grow upon them; by which ſometimes are meant *acts* of beneficence, as in 2 *Cor.* ix. 10. and that theſe might be abundant, and turn to their profit and advantage, as ſuch fruit does; for God does not forget to recompenſe acts of bounty, and labours of love, but if even a cup of cold water is given to a prophet or miniſter of Chriſt, on account of his being ſo, it ſhall have its reward in the iſſue of things, upon the caſting up of accounts; for the Apoſtle ſtill has reference unto that; his view was that the ballance might be on their ſide, and that much might be received by them; ſo that it was not for himſelf, but for their encouragement and future good he ſaid this; for as for himſelf he adds,

Ver. 18. *But I have all things, and abound*, &c.] Or *I have received all things*, as the *Syriac* verſion renders it; all that they had ſent by *Epaphroditus*; and for which he now gives a receipt; and by virtue of which he now abounded; and which abundance of his, was not ſo much owing to the largeneſs of their preſents, as to the contentation of his mind; looking upon this gift of theirs, tho' it might be but ſmall in itſelf, a fulneſs to him; for he adds, *I am full*; as much as he deſired, he wanted no more, he had enough: *having received of Epaphroditus the things* which were ſent *from you*; and which he acknowledged, that the character of this good man might ſtand clear, who had been entruſted with this affair: *an odour of a ſweet ſmell, a ſacrifice acceptable, well-pleaſing to God*; this is ſaid in alluſion to the ſacrifices under the former diſpenſation, in which God ſmelled a ſweet ſavour, *Gen.* viii. 21. in reference to which, as the ſacrifice of Chriſt is ſaid to be of a ſweet-ſmelling ſavour, and as the ſpiritual ſacrifices of the ſaints, as praiſes and prayers are called odours, and are ſaid to be acceptable unto God; ſo acts of beneficence are called ſacrifices, with which he is well pleaſed.

Ver. 19. *But my God ſhall ſupply all your need*, &c.] Or *fulfil all your need*: the *Jews* when they would comfort any, under the loſs of any worldy enjoyment, uſed to ſay, המקום ימלא לך חסרונך, *God fulfil*, or *will fulfil thy need*[f]. The *Vulgate Latin*, *Syriac*, and *Arabic* verſions, read theſe words as a wiſh or prayer, *but may my God ſupply* or *fulfil all your need*; I am not able to make you any returns, but I pray that my God would recompenſe it to you, that as you have ſupplied my want, he would ſupply all yours; but we with others, and as the *Ethiopic* verſion, read, *ſhall* or *will ſupply*; as an aſſertion by way of promiſe, tho' he could not, yet his God would; he who was his God, not only as the God of nature and providence, or as the God of the *Iſraelites*, but as the God of all grace; who had loved him as ſuch, had choſen, adopted, regenerated and ſanctified him; who was his God in Chriſt, and by virtue of the covenant of grace, and which was made known in effectual vocation; whoſe ambaſſador he was, and whom he had faithfully ſerved in the Goſpel of his Son; this God who had been his God, was and would be ſo unto death, in whom he had an intereſt, and becauſe he had an intereſt in him and was thus related to him, he firmly believed, and fully aſſures theſe ſaints, that he would ſupply their wants who had been ſo careful of him: believers tho' they need nothing as conſidered in Chriſt, being compleat and filled full in him, having in him all grace, and all ſpiritual bleſſings, and under believing views of this at times, ſee themſelves compleat and wanting nothing; yet in themſelves, they are poor and needy, and often want freſh diſcoveries of the love of God to them, freſh ſupplies of grace from Chriſt, ſtand in need of more light from him, and to be quickened according to his word; they want freſh ſupplies of ſtrength from him anſwerable to the ſervice and work they are daily called to; and as their trials and afflictions abound, they have need of renewed comfort to ſupport under them; and have alſo need of freſh manifeſtations and applications of pardoning grace to their ſouls, and freſh views of the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, as their juſtifying righteouſneſs before God; and in a word, need daily food for their ſouls as for their bodies: now God who is alſo their God, is able and willing to ſupply their wants; and he does ſo, he withholds no good thing from them, nor do they want any good thing needful for them, for he ſupplies *all their need*; and this they may expect, ſince he is the God of all grace, and a fulneſs of grace is in his Son; and this grace is ſufficient for them, and a ſupply of it is given them by the Spirit: *according to his riches*; God is rich not only in the perfections of his nature, which are inconceivable and incommunicable; and in the works of his hands, of creation and providence, the whole earth is full of his riches, and according to theſe riches of his goodneſs, he ſupplies the wants of all creatures living; but he is alſo rich in grace and mercy, and it is according to the riches of his grace, he ſupplies the ſpiritual wants of his people, and he does it like himſelf, according to the riches he has; he gives all things richly to enjoy, plenteouſly and abundantly: *in glory*; in a glorious manner, ſo as to ſhew himſelf glorious, and make his people ſo, to the glory of his rich grace; and *with glory*, as it may be rendered, with eternal glory; he will not only give grace here, and more of it as is needful, according to the abundance of it in himſelf and in his Son, but glory hereafter: and all *by Chriſt Jeſus*; and thro' him, who is full of grace and truth; who is the mediator in whom the fulneſs of it lies, and thro' whoſe hands, and by whom it is communicated to the ſaints: or *with Chriſt Jeſus*; along with him God gives all things freely, all things pertaining to life and godlineſs: or *for the ſake of Chriſt Jeſus*; not for any worth or merit in men, but for the ſake of Chriſt, in whom they are accepted, and on whoſe account reſpect is had to their perſons, and ſo to their wants.

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[e] Vid. Kimchi in Pſal. xv. 3. & Targum in Iſ. ix. 4.

[f] T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 16. 2. Debarim Rabba, §. 4. fol. 239. 4.

Ver. 20. *Now unto God and our Father*, &c.] To God who is our Father in Chriſt, be *glory for ever and ever, Amen*; for all the grace he gives now, and for all the glory and happineſs expected hereafter; for the ſupply of every want both temporal and ſpiritual; ſeeing every good gift comes from him, and is to be aſcribed to his free grace and favour, and not to any deſerts of men; and particularly he may mean for what they had ſent him, and he had received from them.

Ver. 21. *Salute every ſaint in Chriſt Jeſus*, &c.] Meaning at *Philippi*, whether rich or poor, leſſer or greater believers, common ſaints, as well as the officers of the church, biſhops and deacons; who were in Chriſt by electing grace, and as their covenant head, and repreſentative from everlaſting, and which was manifeſted and made known by their converſion and effectual vocation: *the brethren which are with me greet you*; ſuch as *Timothy*; ſee chap. ii. 19. and *Epaphras*, *Marcus*, *Ariſtarchus*, *Demas*, and *Lucas*, *Philemon* ver. 23, 24. he makes no mention of *Peter* any where, when he writes from *Rome* or to it, which ſhews he was not there then, or a biſhop of that place, as the *Papiſts* ſay.

Ver. 22. *All the ſaints ſalute you*, &c.] The members of the church at *Rome*, *chiefly they that are of Cæſar's houſhold*; for by means of the Apoſtle's bonds which were made manifeſt in the Emperor's palace, Chriſt was made known to ſome there likewiſe; tho' *Nero*, the then reigning Emperor, was a very wicked prince, and his court a very debauched one, yet the grace of God reached ſome there: who theſe were cannot be ſaid; as for the conjecture that *Seneca* the philoſopher, *Nero*'s maſter, was one of them, it is without foundation; the eight letters of his to the Apoſtle *Paul*, and the ſix letters of the Apoſtle to him are ſpurious, tho' of ancient date being made mention of by *Auſtin* and *Jerom*[g]: a like groundleſs conjecture is that, that *Lucan* the poet, *Seneca*'s brother's ſon was another; for there is nothing in his writings, or in any account of him, any more than in the former, that ſhews him to be a chriſtian. *Torpes*, a man in great favour and dignity in *Nero*'s court, and *Evellius* his counſellor, who both ſuffered martyrdom under him, according to the *Roman* martyrology, are alſo mentioned.

Ver. 23. *The grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt be with you all*, &c.] The *Vulgate Latin* and *Ethiopic* verſions read, *with your Spirit*, as in *Gal.* vi. 18. and ſo the *Alexandrian* copy and ſome others read. This is the Apoſtle's token in all his epiſtles of the genuineneſs of them, and which he wrote with his own hand, 2 *Theſſ.* iii. 17, 18. ſee the notes on *Rom.* xvi. 20, 24. *Amen*; with which all the epiſtles are concluded; ſee the note on *Rom.* xvi. 27. The ſubſcription is, *it was written to the Philippians from Rome, by Epaphroditus*; that is, this epiſtle was written to the *Philippians* by the Apoſtle *Paul*, when he was a priſoner at *Rome*, and ſent to them by *Epaphroditus* their miniſter, when he returned from him to them.

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[g] Vid. Fabricii Bibliothec. Latin. p. 69.

AN EXPOSITION, &c.

The Epiſtle of PAUL the Apoſtle to the *COLOSSIANS.*

THE *Coloſſians*, to whom this Epiſtle is written, were not the *Rhodians*, by ſome called *Coloſſians*, from *Coloſſus*, the large ſtatue of the ſun, which ſtood in the iſland of *Rhodes*, and was one of the ſeven wonders of the world; but the inhabitants of *Coloſſe*, a city of the greater *Phrygia*, in the leſſer *Aſia*, near to which ſtood the cities of *Laodicea* and *Hierapolis*, mentioned in this Epiſtle. *Pliny* [a] ſpeaks of it as one of the chief towns in *Phrygia*, and [b] *Herodotus* calls it the great city of *Phrygia*; it is ſaid to have periſhed a very little time after the writing of this Epiſtle, with the above cities, by an earthquake, in the year of Chriſt 66, and in the 10th of *Nero* [c]; tho' it was afterwards rebuilt; for *Theophylact* ſays, that in his time it was called *Chonæ*. When the Goſpel was brought hither, and by whom, is not known, nor who was the founder of the church in this place; for the Apoſtle *Paul* was not, ſince his face had never been ſeen by them, ch. ii. 1. tho' it is ſaid that *Epaphras*, the ſame name with *Epaphroditus*, was fixed by him paſtor of this church; and others ſay *Philemon* was ſet over it by him. The occaſion of this Epiſtle was this, *Epaphras*, who had preached the Goſpel to the *Coloſſians*, and very likely was the firſt that did, came to *Rome* where the Apoſtle *Paul* was a priſoner, and gave him an account of them, how they had heard and received the Goſpel, and of their faith in Chriſt, and love to the ſaints; and alſo declared to him, in what danger they were thro' ſome falſe teachers that had got among them, who were for introducing the philoſophy of the *Gentiles*, the ceremonies of the law of *Moſes*, and ſome pernicious tenets of the followers of *Simon Magus*, and the *Gnoſticks*; upon which the Apoſtle writes this Epiſtle to them, to confirm them in the faith of the Goſpel *Epaphras* had preached unto them, and which was the ſame he himſelf preached; and to warn them againſt thoſe bad men, and their principles; and to exhort them to a diſcharge of their duty to God, and men, and one another. It was written by the Apoſtle, when in bonds at *Rome*, as many paſſages in it ſhew, and about the ſame time with thoſe to the *Philippians* and *Epheſians*; and the Epiſtle to the latter greatly agrees with this, both as to ſubject and ſtile. Dr. *Lightfoot* places it in the year of Chriſt 60, in the ſecond of the Apoſtle's impriſonment, and in the ſixth of *Nero*'s reign.

CHAP. I.

THIS chapter contains the inſcription of the Epiſtle; the Apoſtle's uſual ſalutation; his thankſgiving to God on behalf of the *Coloſſians* for grace received; his prayers, that more might be given them; an enumeration of various bleſſings of grace, which require thankfulneſs, in which the glories and excellencies of Chriſt are particularly ſet forth: and it is concluded with an exhortation to a ſtedfaſt adherence to the Goſpel, taken from the nature, excellency, and uſefulneſs of the miniſtry of it. The inſcription, and the ſalutation, are in ver. 1, 2. and are the ſame with thoſe in the Epiſtle to the *Epheſians*, only *Timothy* is joined with the Apoſtle here, and the *Coloſſians* have the additional character of *brethren* given them. The thankſgiving is in ver. 3, 4, 5. the object of it is God, the Father of Chriſt; the time when made, when in prayer to him; its ſubject-matter, the faith and love of the ſaints; to which is added, their happineſs ſecured for them in heaven, their hope was converſant with: and whereas the Goſpel was the means by which they came to the hearing and knowledge of it, this is commended from the ſubject of it, the doctrine of truth; from the ſpread of it in the world; and from its efficacy in bringing forth fruit in all, to whom it came in power, and that with conſtancy, ver. 5, 6. and alſo from the teſtimony of *Epaphras*, a faithful miniſter of Chriſt, and theirs, who was dear to the Apoſtle, and of whom he had the above account of them, ver. 7, 8. And then follow his prayers for them, that they might have an increaſe of ſpiritual knowledge, and that they might put in practice what they knew; and for that purpoſe he intreats they might be bleſſed with ſtrength, patience, and long-ſuffering, ver. 9, 10, 11. And in order to excite thankfulneſs in himſelf and them, he takes notice of various bleſſings of grace; of the Father's grace

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[a] Nat. Hiſt. l. 5. c. 32.

[b] Polymnia, l. 7. c. 30.

[c] Euſebius in Chron.

in giving a meetneſs for eternal glory and happineſs, by delivering from the power of darkneſs, and tranſlating into the kingdom of his Son, ver. 12, 13. and of the Son's grace in obtaining redemption by his blood, and procuring the remiſſion of ſins, ver. 14. which leads the Apoſtle to enlarge upon the excellencies of the author of theſe bleſſings, in his divine perſon, as the image of God, and the firſt cauſe of all created beings, ver. 15. which he proves by an enumeration of them, as created by him, and for his ſake, by his pre-exiſtence to them, and their dependance on him, ver. 16, 17. and in his office-capacity, as mediator, being the head of the church, the governor of it, and the firſt that roſe from the dead; by all which it appears that he has, and ought to have the pre-eminence, ver. 18. And this is ſtill more manifeſt from his having all fulneſs dwelling in him, to ſupply his body the church, of which he is the head, ver. 19. and from the reconciliation of all the members of it to God by him, ver. 20. which bleſſing of grace is amplified partly by the ſubjects of it, who are deſcribed by their former ſtate and condition, aliens and enemies, and by their preſent one, reconciled by the death of Chriſt in his fleſhly body; and partly by the end of it, the preſentation of them holy, blameleſs, and irreproveable in the ſight of God, ver. 21, 22. Wherefore it is a duty incumbent on ſuch to abide by the Goſpel of Chriſt, which brings the good tidings of peace and reconciliation, and is the means of faith and hope; and the rather, ſince they had heard it themſelves, and others alſo, even every creature under heaven; and the Apoſtle was a miniſter of it, ver. 23. and on his miniſtration of it he enlarges, by obſerving his ſufferings for the church on account of the Goſpel, which he endured with pleaſure; and therefore they ſhould, by his example, be encouraged to continue in it, ver. 24. Moreover, he argues the ſame from his commiſſion of God to preach it for their ſakes, ver. 25. and from the nature and ſubject-matter of it, being a hidden myſtery, and containing riches and glory in it; yea, Chriſt himſelf, the foundation of hope of eternal glory, ver. 26, 27. and from the end of preaching it, which was to preſent every man perfect in Chriſt; which end the Apoſtle laboured and ſtrove to obtain thro' the power and energy of divine grace, which wrought in him, and with him, ver. 28, 29.

Ver. 1. *Paul an Apoſtle of Jeſus Chriſt*, &c.] The Apoſtle puts his name to this Epiſtle, by which he was known in the *Gentile* world, as he uſually does in all his Epiſtles; and ſtiles himſelf *an Apoſtle*, as he was, having ſeen Chriſt in perſon, and received his commiſſion, doctrine, and qualifications immediately from him, with a power of doing miracles to confirm the truth of his miſſion. This he choſe to make mention of, partly becauſe the falſe teachers every where inſinuated, that he was not an Apoſtle; and partly to give the greater ſanction and authority, and command the greater regard and credit to what he ſhould ſay; as well as to excuſe his freedom in writing to them whom he had never ſeen, ſince he was an Apoſtle of the *Gentiles*, and ſo to them: he calls himſelf an Apoſtle *of Jeſus Chriſt*; not of men, he was not ſent out by men, but by Chriſt, who appeared to him, made him a miniſter of his, gave him his Goſpel by revelation, abundantly qualified him for the work, ſent him forth unto the *Gentiles*, in whoſe name he went as an ambaſſador and meſſenger of his, and whom he preached, and by whom he was greatly ſucceeded, to the converſion of many ſouls, who were ſeals of his Apoſtleſhip in every place: into which office he came *by the will of God*; not by the will of men, for he derived no authority and power, nor received any doctrine from men; nor by his own will, of his own head, by any uſurpation of his; he did not take this office upon him of himſelf, but was inveſted with it, according to the ſecret will and purpoſe of God, from everlaſting, who had ordained and appointed him to this ſervice, and according to his will of command made known to him in time, when he told him what he ſhould do, and openly ſeparated, and ſent him forth to do the work he had called him to; and which aroſe not from any merits or worthineſs of the Apoſtle, but from the ſovereign good-will and pleaſure, free grace and favour of God, to which the Apoſtle continually aſcribes it in all his Epiſtles: *and Timotheus our brother*; who joined with the Apoſtle in this Epiſtle, and whom he calls a *brother*; partly becauſe of the chriſtian relation he ſtood in to him, and them, they being all brethren, children of the ſame Father, partakers of the ſame grace of regeneration, belonging to the ſame family, and ſo ſhould own and love one another as brethren; and partly and chiefly becauſe of his being a brother, companion, fellow-ſoldier, and a fellow-labourer in the Goſpel. He mentions him, either becauſe he was known unto them, or that he might be ſo; and to ſhew the agreement there was between them in the doctrine of Chriſt, which might have the greater weight with them to abide in it.

Ver. 2. *To the ſaints and faithful brethren in Chriſt*, &c.] This is the inſcription of the Epiſtle, in which the perſons wrote unto are deſcribed as *ſaints*, or holy men; not by birth, for all are unholy and unclean by nature; nor by baptiſm, for that neither takes away ſin, nor gives grace; nor merely externally, by an outward reformation; but by ſeparation, being by an act of eternal election ſet apart for God, for holineſs, and happineſs; and by imputation, Chriſt being made ſanctification to them; and by the ſanctifying grace of the Spirit of God in regeneration, being called with an holy calling, and having principles of grace and holineſs wrought in them, and they formed as new men in righteouſneſs and true holineſs: and as *brethren*; being born of God, having him for their Father, and being of his houſhold, and a part of the family in heaven and earth named of Chriſt, and heirs together of the grace of life, and of the heavenly glory: and as *faithful* ones; true and ſincere believers in Chriſt, conſtant and perſevering in the faith of him; faithful to the Goſpel, and their profeſſion of it, and to Chriſt, whoſe name they bore, and to one another, to whom they ſtood in the relation of brethren: and all this *in Chriſt*; and by, and thro' him; they were ſaints in him; they were choſen in him, and ſanctified in him their head, and received all their holineſs from him; they were brethren in him the firſt-born of them; his God being their God, and his Father their Father; and had their faith and faithfulneſs from him, as well as it was exerciſed towards, and on him: and they are further deſcribed by the place of their abode, *which are at Coloſſe*; a city of *Phrygia*: *grace be unto you, and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt*. This is the ſalutation, and which ſtands in this form in moſt of *Paul*'s Epiſtles; ſee the note on *Rom.* i. 7. The *Syriac* verſion puts peace before grace, and leaves out the laſt clauſe, *and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt*; as does alſo the *Ethiopic* verſion.

Ver. 3. *We give thanks to God*, &c.] Meaning himſelf and *Timothy*. This is the beginning of the Epiſtle, which is introduced with a thankſgiving to God; to whom praiſe and thankfulneſs are always due as a creator and preſerver, as the author of all good things, as the Father of mercies, temporal and ſpiritual, and as the covenant God and Father of his people thro' Chriſt: wherefore it follows, *and the Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*; the ſenſe of which either is, that God the Father, who is the object of praiſe and thanſgiving, is both the God of Chriſt, and the Father of Chriſt, the God of Chriſt, as Chriſt is man, and the Father of Chriſt, as Chriſt is God; or the latter is exegetical of the former, and may be rendered thus, *God, even the Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt:* and very properly are thanks given to him under this character, becauſe it is as he is the Father of Chriſt, that he bleſſes his people with all ſpiritual bleſſings; and becauſe he is their God, as well as his God; and their Father, as well as his Father, though in a different ſenſe, his by nature, theirs by adoption. Moreover, as all their bleſſings come from God, as the Father of Chriſt, and thro' Chriſt, and for his ſake, ſo it is very proper that thanks ſhould be returned unto him under that character; and thro' Chriſt, by whom alone ſuch ſacrifices of praiſe are acceptable to God: 'tis added, *praying always for you*; which, as it is expreſſive of the conſtant diſcharge of the duty of prayer, and the continual remembrance of theſe ſaints in it, and ſhows the affection the Apoſtle had for them; ſo it points out the time when, and the way and manner in which *Paul* and *Timothy* gave thanks to God on account of them; 'twas when they were at the throne of grace, and in their frequent prayers to God; thankfulneſs for mercies received, both by ourſelves and others, being a branch of the duty of prayer.

Ver. 4. *Since we heard of your faith in Chriſt Jeſus*, &c.] This expreſſes the matter of their thankfulneſs, or what it was they gave thanks to God for, their faith in Chriſt; by which is not only meant their hearty aſſent to the whole doctrine of faith, concerning the perſon, offices, and grace of Chriſt, their ſoundneſs and ſtedfaſtneſs in it, and their ſincere and conſtant profeſſion of it; but the grace of faith in them, the operation of the Spirit of God in their ſouls, which had not *Moſes*, nor any mere man, but Chriſt for its object; by which they looked unto him as a ſaviour, went unto him as ſuch, ventured on him, committed themſelves unto him, leaned and relied upon him; that grace which comes from him, has him for its author and finiſher, and returns unto him, and lives on him. This *Paul* and *Timothy* had heard of by their miniſter *Epaphras*; and it ſhews that they made no ſecret of it, did not keep it to themſelves, but declared, confeſſed, and publiſhed it to others, as is the duty of all believers to do; and thanks being given for it to God, makes it a clear point that it was not of themſelves, but was the gift of God, otherwiſe there would have been no need of thankfulneſs for it; as alſo, that it is a very eminent grace, and of great uſe and ſervice to ſuch who are poſſeſſed of it. *And of the love which ye have to all the ſaints*; this is another thing for which thanks are given to God. The object of this grace are *ſaints*; all men indeed are to be loved, and even our very enemies; and good is to be done to all, but eſpecially to holy and good men, to the houſhold of faith; and theſe are *all* to be loved and reſpected; nor is any reſpect or difference of perſons to be made on account of country, or natural relation, as *Jews* or *Gentiles*, or of outward ſtate and condition, as rich or poor, bond or free, or of greater or leſſer gifts and grace, weak or ſtrong believers, or of different ſentiments in the leſſer matters of religion. It denotes both the grace of love itſelf, which is a fruit of the Spirit implanted in regeneration, and is an evidence of the new birth, and always is, where true faith in Chriſt is, for faith works by it; and alſo the effects of it, which lies not in bare words, in expreſſions of ſpiritual affection and friendſhip, but in deeds, by ſerving one another in love, by relieving in neceſſity, ſympathizing in diſtreſs, praying with, and for one another, and the like; all which theſe ſaints were famous for.

Ver. 5. *For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven*, &c.] Theſe words may be conſidered either in connexion with the foregoing, and expreſs the reaſon or motive which encouraged theſe ſaints to believe in Chriſt, and to go on believing in him, and hold faſt the profeſſion of their faith in him, and to love the ſaints, and ſhew it upon all occaſions, and in every caſe; becauſe of the rich treaſure of glory and happineſs in reſerve for them in heaven, which they were hoping and waiting for; this encouraged their faith in Chriſt, and enlarged their love and beneficence to the ſaints: or elſe with the thankſgiving of the Apoſtle, and ſo contains freſh matter of it, that as thanks were given for faith and love, ſo for *hope*; by which is meant, not the grace of hope, for that is not in heaven, tho' it enters within the vail, and is converſant with heavenly things, but is in the heart; and tho' it ſuppoſes it, and which theſe perſons had; they were not without it; they had a good hope thro' grace of eternal glory, for faith, hope, and love always go together: nor Chriſt the foundation of hope; there are many things in him, which are a ground of hope of happineſs, as his ſufferings, and death, and redemption thereby; his reſurrection from the dead, his interceſſions and preparations; the promiſe of life in him, and the thing itſelf being in his gift; his righteouſneſs and grace, which give a title to it, and meetneſs for it; and he is alſo in heaven, but then he can't be ſaid to be laid up there: but the thing hoped for, everlaſting happineſs, is intended; ſee *Tit.* ii. 13. *Gal.* v. 5. 2 *Tim.* iv. 8. which is ſo called, becauſe it is the object of hope; is not yet poſſeſſed; is future; is not ſeen; is difficult, and yet poſſible to be enjoyed: this is ſaid to be *laid up*; which denotes the preciouſneſs and valuableneſs of it, it is a treaſure, an inheritance, a kingdom, and riches of glory; and the ſecrecy and hiddeneſs of it, it conſiſts of things inviſible to the bodily eye, and which are out of the reach of carnal ſenſe and reaſon, of which faith only has ſome ſmall glimpſe; and alſo the ſafety of it, 'tis hid in Chriſt, 'tis reſerved in heaven, and can't be come at, and ſpoiled by men or devils; and likewiſe the free grace and goodneſs of God in laying up and providing things of ſuch a nature for his children and friends: the place where it is, *in heaven*, where moth and ruſt corrupt not, and thieves cannot break thro' and ſteal; and ſo is ſafe, and muſt be of an heavenly nature, as it is for heavenly perſons: *for you*; the ſaints and faithful brethren in Chriſt, for thoſe who were choſen in Chriſt, for whom it was prepared from the foundation of the world; for this is not laid up for any, for every one, but for the choſen of God, and precious; whom God has diſtinguiſhed by his grace, Chriſt has redeemed by his blood, and the Spirit regenerates and ſanctifies, and who have faith, hope and love given unto them; and this was not only laid up for them, but they knew of it, they were made acquainted with it: *whereof ye heard before*; before the writing of this Epiſtle, under the miniſtry of their faithful teacher *Epaphras*: *in the word of the truth of the Goſpel*; or in the true word of the Goſpel; which comes from the God of truth, is endited by the Spirit of truth, is concerning Chriſt the truth, and which contains nothing but truth, and lies in the ſcriptures of truth: or *in the word of truth, even the Goſpel*; which explains what word of truth is meant. The law is the word of truth; and many of the words of men, of the philoſophers, were words of truth; but it was not in either of them, they had heard of eternal life laid up in heaven; of which there were hopes to be entertained by ſinful creatures, enjoying it thro' Chriſt: this is what only the Goſpel brings an account of; life and immortality are only brought to light by the Goſpel; which not only ſpeaks of it, but lays that before men, which give them ground and encouragement to hope for it.

Ver. 6. *Which is come unto you*, &c.] That is, the Goſpel, which came to them from God, from heaven, from Chriſt, out of *Jeruſalem*, from whence the word of the Lord was to come, by the miniſters of the Goſpel, who being ſent, came to *Coloſſe*, and there preached it; and ſo the *Syriac* verſion renders the words, הי דאתכרזת, *which is preached* unto you. And a wonderful inſtance of the free grace of God this was; they did not ſeek, enquire for, and go after the Goſpel, but it came to them; and ſo Chriſt was found of them by it, who ſought him not, and made manifeſt in his perſon, grace, and righteouſneſs to them that aſked not after him: for this Goſpel came not to them in word only, but with the power of the holy Spirit: it was come, εις υμας, *into you*, as the phraſe may be rendered, into their very hearts, and wrought effectually there, enlightening, convincing, comforting, and inſtructing them; where it had a place, and remained; for the words may be read, as they are by the *Arabic* verſion, *which is preſent with you*. The Goſpel is always in one place or another, and will be to the end of the world; but it is not always in the ſame place; but as yet it was not removed from *Coloſſe*; it was ſtill with them in the external miniſtry of it, and it remained in their hearts in the powerful and comfortable experience of it: *as it is in all the world*; as it was come into, and preached to all the world, and was made uſeful, and continued in all the world at that time. Chriſt gave his diſciples a commiſſion to go into all the world, and preach the Goſpel to every creature; it was no more to be reſtrained to a particular nation, but was made general and common to all the nations of the world, and accordingly they preached it to all; and by this time had delivered the joyful meſſage to the greater part of the world, which is ſometimes meant by all the world, and the whole world; or it had been now preached in all the known and habitable parts of the world by one Apoſtle and another, ſome being ſent into one part, and ſome into another; ſo that the grace of God appeared to all men, and the doctrine of it had been preached to every creature under the heaven, according to Chriſt's commiſſion; the Goſpel of the kingdom was to be preached in all the world, for a witneſs to all nations, before the end of the *Jewiſh* ſtate came, or before the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, which was not many years after the writing of this Epiſtle. Now this ſhows, that it was the ſame Goſpel which had been preached at *Coloſſe* by their faithful miniſter there, as had been diſpenſed in other, and in all parts of the world by the Apoſtles; which is ſaid in the commendation of the Goſpel, it being one, uniform, conſiſtent, and all of a-piece in every place, and as preached by every faithful miniſter, and might ſerve greatly to confirm the *Coloſſians* in their faith of it: *and bringeth forth fruit*; by which is meant, either the converſion of ſinners, the fruit of the Goſpel-miniſtry, when attended with a divine bleſſing and power; or the graces of the Spirit, as faith, hope, love, repentance, humility, ſelf-denial, *&c.* with all the effects thereof, in new obedience, and a godly converſation, which come from Chriſt, the green fir-tree, and are produced by the Spirit, thro' the preaching of the Goſpel. The *Vulgate Latin* adds, *and encreaſeth*; the *Syriac* verſion has the ſame; and it is ſo read in ſome *Greek* copies, as in the *Alexandrian* copy, two of *Stephens*'s, and in the *Complutenſian* edition; and may intend the ſpread of the Goſpel among others, beſides thoſe who firſt received it, and the growing fruitfulneſs of the profeſſors of it under its influence: *as it doth alſo in you, ſince the day ye heard of it*; as ſoon as ever it came among them, they hearkened to it, they were inclined to hear it externally, and a divine power going along with it, giving them hearing ears, and underſtanding hearts, they heard it, ſo as to know it, love it, and believe it; and from that time it brought forth fruit, and increaſed in them, and they continued in the faith and profeſſion of it; ſo that as the Goſpel is commended both from the large ſpread and efficacy of it, as well as its uniformity in every place, theſe *Coloſſians* alſo are commended for their hearing of it, both externally and internally, and for their perſeverance in it: and which is further illuſtrated in the following clauſe, *and know the grace of God in truth*; by *the grace of God* may be meant, the love and favour of God, in the miſſion and gift of his Son, to be the ſaviour and redeemer of loſt ſinners, diſplayed in the Goſpel, of which they had a comfortable experience, it being ſhed abroad in their hearts by the Spirit; or the bleſſings of grace revealed in the Goſpel, as free juſtification by the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, full pardon of ſin, according to the riches of grace, and adoption of children, ariſing out of the love, and free favour of God, of which they had had a real application made to them thro' the Goſpel, by the Spirit of God; or rather the doctrine of grace itſelf, ſo called, becauſe it is a declaration of the free grace of God in the ſalvation of ſinners, and the means of implanting grace in the heart. This they knew not merely in a notional and ſpeculative manner, but experimentally; for the Goſpel was not only come to them, but into them; they had a ſpiritual knowledge of it, and affection for it; they felt the power of it in their hearts, and taſted and reliſhed the ſweetneſs of it; and owned and *acknowledged* it, as the word here uſed may be rendered; for as with the heart they believed it, ſo with the mouth they made publick profeſſion of it: and this they did *in truth*; they came by the knowledge of the love of God, and the bleſſings of grace, and the doctrines of it, by the Goſpel, the word of truth; in and thro' that they became acquainted with theſe things; and having known and embraced the doctrine of the Goſpel of the grace of God, in the truth of it, without any mixture of error, as it had been purely, and without adulteration, truly and faithfully preached by their miniſter, they profeſſed it truly, heartily, and ſincerely, and without hypocriſy; which is another part of their commendation, and involves in it the praiſe of their miniſter alſo, which is enlarged upon in the following verſes.

Ver. 7. *As ye alſo learned of Epaphras*, &c.] To know the grace of God, believe the truth of the Goſpel, and to own and profeſs it ſincerely. *Our dear fellow-ſervant*; a *ſervant* of Chriſt he was, and a *fellow*-ſervant of the Apoſtles, jointly engaged with them in preaching the Goſpel; which character, as it greatly commends *Epaphras*, and ſhews him to be a very conſiderable preacher of the word, ſo it expreſſes the great humility and condeſcenſion of the Apoſtle, in putting him upon a level with himſelf, tho' he was not in that high office of the Apoſtleſhip he was. And *dear* this precious ſervant of Chriſt was to him, and his fellow-miniſters, on account of the grace and gifts beſtowed on him, becauſe of his uſefulneſs in the miniſtry, and his faithfulneſs and integrity in the diſcharge of it; and whoſe company and converſation in the priſon greatly endeared him to them, for he was a fellow-priſoner, as well as a fellow-ſervant, *Philemon* ver. 23. It follows, *who is for you a faithful miniſter of Chriſt*; one whom Chriſt had made a *miniſter*, and not man; who was qualified, and ſent forth, and made ſucceſsful by him in his ſervice; and who preached none but Chriſt, and him crucified, in the buſineſs of ſalvation: and he was a *faithful* one; one that ſought not his own glory, but the glory of him that ſent him; nor to pleaſe men, but his maſter; who concealed no part of his meſſage, but freely and fully declared the whole; he was faithful to Chriſt, who put him into the miniſtry, and to the ſouls of men, to whom he miniſtred: and therefore 'tis ſaid, he was ſuch an one *for you*; for them, not for himſelf; for their ſpiritual good and advantage; he ſought not theirs, but them; he had a great zeal for them, dearly loved them, and ſpent his time and ſtrength, and made uſe of his gifts and talents while among them, for their uſe and benefit.

Ver. 8. *Who alſo declared unto us your love in the Spirit.*] Not only their love to God, and Chriſt, and to all the ſaints, which is before mentioned, but their love to the Apoſtle; tho' they had only heard of him, and of his great capacity for, and faithfulneſs and uſefulneſs in preaching of the Goſpel, which had greatly endeared him to them. This, he ſays, was *in the Spirit*; it was ſpiritual love, to diſtinguiſh it from a carnal and worldly one; they loved him for the ſpiritual grace that was in him, the ſpiritual gifts beſtowed on him, the ſpiritual ſervice he was engaged in, and the ſpitual uſefulneſs he was of: or they loved him in, and with their ſpirits, with all their hearts, ſincerely, and without diſſimulation; and tho' they had never ſeen him in the fleſh, yet being, as it were, preſent with him in ſpirit, their affections were knit unto him: or this their love was *in the holy Spirit*, as the *Ethiopic* verſion reads it; it was a fruit of the Spirit of God, which he had implanted in their hearts in regeneration, as is alſo love to God, and likewiſe to Chriſt.

Ver. 9. *For this cauſe we alſo*, &c.] Not merely for their love to the Apoſtle, and the reſt that were with him; which ſenſe is too much contracted, and carries ſome appearance of meanneſs and ſelfiſhneſs; but becauſe of their faith in Chriſt, their love to all the ſaints, and the good hope they had of eternal happineſs; and becauſe they had heard the Goſpel, and truly knew it, and ſincerely profeſſed it: therefore, *ſince the day we heard it, do not ceaſe to pray for you, and to deſire*; which ſhows, that the Apoſtles prayed without ceaſing; not that they were every moment praying, without intermiſſion, but that they were frequent and conſtant every day at the throne of grace; and as often as they were there, they were mindful of theſe *Coloſſians*, even ever ſince they heard of their reception of the Goſpel, of their profeſſion of it, and of the fruit it brought forth in them; and in their petitions *prayed* and *deſired*, earneſtly and importunately intreated God on their behalf: *that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will*; the will *of God*, as the *Syriac* verſion reads it; by which is meant, not the ſecret will of God, according to the counſel of which he does all things in nature, providence, and grace, but his revealed will; and that either as it is ſignified in the law, which declares the good, and perfect, and acceptable will of God, relating to what he would have done, or avoided by his creatures; or rather, as it is exhibited in the Goſpel, which contains the will of God reſpecting the ſalvation of his choſen ones; as that it is his will that Chriſt ſhould obtain eternal redemption for them, to do which he voluntarily ſubſtituted himſelf in their room, came into this world, and has accompliſhed it; and that all thoſe that are redeemed by Chriſt ſhould be regenerated by the Spirit; and that whoever ſees the Son, and believes in him, ſhould not periſh, but have everlaſting life; as alſo, that all thoſe whom he has choſen in Chriſt, and given to him, and he has redeemed by his blood, and who are ſanctified by his Spirit, none of them ſhould be loſt, but that they ſhould be all ſaved with an everlaſting ſalvation. Now the Apoſtle does not pray that they might have a *knowledge* of this will of God, for ſome knowledge of it they had already; they had heard of the hope laid up in heaven, in the truth of the word of the Goſpel; they had not only had the external revelation, and had heard the Goſpel outwardly preached, but they had known truly the grace of God; and therefore what he aſks for is, that they might be *filled* with the knowledge of it; which ſuppoſes that they had knowledge, but it was not full and compleat; it was imperfect, as is the knowledge of the beſt of ſaints in this life; and that they might have a larger meaſure of it, and ſuch a fulneſs of it as they were capable of in the preſent ſtate, and not ſuch an one as the ſaints will have in heaven, when they ſhall know even as they are known. He adds, *in all wiſdom and ſpiritual underſtanding*; his meaning is, that they might be led into *all* the *wiſdom* of God, which is ſo largely diſplayed in the revelation of his will concerning the ſalvation of his people, which is made in the Goſpel; which is the manifold wiſdom of God, wherein he has abounded in all wiſdom and prudence; and contains ſuch a ſcheme of things, ſo wiſely contrived and formed, that angels deſire to look into it; and that they might have a *ſpiritual underſtanding* of the myſteries of grace, without which they cannot be diſcerned to ſpiritual advantage, nor indeed without the Spirit of wiſdom and revelation in the knowledge of them: and the *Ethiopic* verſion renders it, by *the prudence of the Holy Ghoſt*; who ſearches the deep things of God, and reveals them to the ſaints, and improves and increaſes their ſpiritual and experimental knowledge of them, which is what is here intended.

Ver. 10. *That ye might walk worthy of the Lord*, &c.] The *Vulgate Latin* verſion reads, *of God*; to which the *Ethiopic* verſion agrees; but rather the Lord Jeſus Chriſt ſeems to be deſigned: and to *walk worthy* of him, is to walk by faith in him; to walk after his Spirit, and according to his word, and in his ordinances; to have the converſation as becomes his Goſpel, and worthy of that vocation wherewith the ſaints are called by grace to the obtaining of his kingdom and glory. The Apoſtle prays, that their knowledge might iſſue in practice; for knowledge, without practice, is of no avail: he firſt aſks for knowledge, and then practice; for how ſhould men act according to the will of God, or Chriſt, unleſs they know it? and when they know it, they ſhould not reſt in their knowledge, but put it in practice: *unto all pleaſing*. The *Syriac* reads it, *that ye may pleaſe God in all good works*: an unregenerate man can't pleaſe God in any thing; without faith in Chriſt it is impoſſible to pleaſe him by any thing man can do; Chriſt only could, and did always the things that pleaſed his Father; there are many things done by believers which are diſpleaſing to God; nor is there any thing they can do that is pleaſing to God but thro' Chriſt, in whom their perſons and ſervices are accepted; good works being done in faith, and from a principle of love, and with a view to the glory of God, are acceptable unto him thro' Chriſt; and therefore are to be carefully maintained, and ſtudiouſly performed by all thoſe that have a ſpiritual underſtanding of the will of God, and believe in Chriſt their Lord and redeemer: *being fruitful in every good work*; ſaints are trees of righteouſneſs, the planting of the Lord; good works are the fruit, which, under the influence of divine grace, they bring forth; and this is not of one ſort only, as trees uſually do, but of every kind; being engrafted into Chriſt the true vine, and deriving life, ſap, and nouriſhment from him, they are filled with the fruits of righteouſneſs by him, which they bring forth and bear, to the glory of his heavenly Father; and being ſuch, they are pleaſant plants to him, as fruit-bearing trees are to the owner of them: wherefore, in order to the ſaints walking in their lives and converſations unto all pleaſing, or pleaſing in all things, the Apoſtle prays they might be fruitful in good works, and that in every one, in every kind of good works: *and increaſing in the knowledge of God*; not barely of his nature and perfections, as they are diſplayed in the works of creation; but of his mind, and will, and the myſteries of his grace, as they are revealed in the Goſpel; of the knowledge of him in Chriſt, as the God of all grace, and as a covenant God and Father. The Apoſtle had before prayed for an increaſe of the knowledge of the will of God, previous to his requeſt, for the putting of it in practice; and now ſuggeſts, that an increaſe of the knowledge of God himſelf may be expected in a practical uſe of means, an attendance on the ordinances of Chriſt, and a diligent performance of good works: from the whole of theſe petitions, it may be obſerved by the Apoſtle's aſking for them, that all our knowledge, and the increaſe of it, and all our fruitfulneſs in good works, are all from the Lord; and therefore we have no reaſon to boaſt of our knowledge, nor depend upon our works, but frankly to own, that notwithſtanding all we know, and do, we are but unprofitable ſervants.

Ver. 11. *Strengthened with all might*, &c.] This is ſtill a continuation of the Apoſtle's prayer for theſe believers; for having prayed for an increaſe of ſpiritual knowledge, and that this might be put into practice, he proceeds to pray for ſtrength for them, that they might be enabled to practiſe what they had knowledge of; to walk worthily, to pleaſe God in all things, to bring forth fruit with patience, to perſevere in knowledge, practice, fruitfulneſs, and in an increaſe thereof. It implies, that believers are weak in themſelves, and inſufficient to do or bear any thing of themſelves, but ſtand in need of ſtrength from above, even of *all might*; of all kind of ſpiritual might and ſtrength, proportionate to the various kinds of ſervices, temptations, and trials they are called unto, and exerciſed with: they have need of every kind, degree, and ſupply of ſtrength to enable them to reſiſt the temptations of ſatan, to ſtand againſt them, and bear up under them; to oppoſe the corruptions of their own nature, that great company which comes upon them, wars againſt them, threatens to carry them captive, and deſtroy them, and againſt which they have no power of their own; to bear the croſs, which, without the preſence and grace of Chriſt, is very heavy, and all afflictions and adverſities of every ſort, which are grievous to the fleſh, and at which it recoils; to perform the various duties of religion, and the whole of the work of their generation; which tho' they have a will unto, yet often know not how to perform, they want renewed ſtrength in their ſouls; and alſo to perſevere in faith and holineſs, and hold on and out to the end: and which ſtrength they can't expect to have from themſelves, or from any creature, but *according to his glorious power*; the glorious power of God. Power belongs to God, is a perfection of his nature, and has been, and is gloriouſly diſplayed in many things; as in the creation of the heavens and the earth; in the upholding of all things in their being; in the redemption and ſalvation of ſinners; in their faith and converſion; in ſupporting the ſaints under various trials and exerciſes; and in the ſafe keeping them thro' faith unto ſalvation: from this glorious power of God ſaints may hope to be ſupplied with all might, or a ſufficient ſupply of ſtrength for every ſervice, and for every difficulty; as alſo from the grace that is in Chriſt, who has ſtrength as well as righteouſneſs for his people, who is the glorious power and arm of the Lord, without whom they can neither do, nor bear any thing, but thro' him ſtrengthening them, they can do, and bear all things; as likewiſe from the Spirit of the Lord, who is the finger of God, by whom Chriſt wrought his miracles; and is that glorious power from on high, with which the Apoſtles being endued, did the wonderous things they did; and 'tis by the ſame ſpirit that believers are ſtrengthened with might in the inner man: *unto all patience*; to bring forth fruit with patience; to run with patience the race ſet before them; to bear patiently all afflictions and tribulations; to wait patiently for the things promiſed by God, and for the coming and appearance of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and the heavenly glory or hope laid up for them in heaven: *and long-ſuffering*; to be ſlow to anger, and not eaſily provoked to wrath; to be ready to forgive injuries; and to bear long, and with patience, all reproaches and perſecutions for the ſake of Chriſt, and his Goſpel; all which require daily freſh ſupplies of grace and ſtrength, eſpecially to endure all *with joyfulneſs*, as well as with patience and long-ſuffering, with a chearful ſpirit, or with joy in the Holy Ghoſt; to eſteem reproach for Chriſt's ſake, above the riches and honours of this world; to rejoice when counted worthy to ſuffer ſhame for his name. This requires ſtrength above that of nature, and a renewed ſupply of that of grace. This laſt clauſe, *with joyfulneſs*, the *Syriac* verſion connects with the following verſe, reading it, *with joy do ye give thanks*, &c.

Ver. 12. *Giving thanks unto the Father*, &c.] To God the Father, as the *Vulgate Latin* and the *Syriac* verſions read the clauſe; and the *Complutenſian* edition, and ſome copies, *God and the Father*; who is both the Father of Chriſt by nature, and of all his people by adoption. The *Ethiopic* verſion renders it, as an exhortation or advice, *give ye thanks to the Father*; and ſo the *Syriac* verſion: but the words rather ſeem to be ſpoken in the firſt, than in the ſecond perſon, and are to be conſidered in connexion with ver. 9. So when the Apoſtle had made an end of his petitions, he enters upon thankſgiving to God: *which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the ſaints in light*; by the *inheritance*, or *lot*, is meant not the common lot of the children of God to ſuffer perſecution for the ſake of Chriſt, and thro' much tribulation to enter into the kingdom, which they are by God the Father counted and made worthy of, with the reſt of ſaints called out of darkneſs into light; nor their preſent ſtate and condition, having a power to become the children of God, and to be fellow-citizens with the ſaints, to enjoy communion with them, under the the Goſpel-diſpenſation, called *light*, in oppoſition to *Jewiſh* and *Gentile* darkneſs, to be brought into which ſtate is an high favour of God; but the heavenly glory, ſo called, in alluſion to the land of *Canaan*, which was divided by lot to the children of *Iſrael*, according to the will and purpoſe of God; and becauſe it is not acquired by the works of men, but is a pure free-grace gift of God, and which he, as the Father of his people, has bequeathed unto them; and which they enjoy thro' the death of the teſtator Chriſt; and of which the Spirit is the earneſt; and becauſe this glory is peculiar to ſuch as are the children of God by adopting grace. It is no other then that inheritance which is incorruptible and undefiled, and which fades not away, reſerved in the heavens; and deſigns that ſubſtance, or thoſe ſolid and ſubſtantial things they ſhall poſſeſs hereafter; that kingdom, ſalvation and glory they are heirs of; and includes all things they ſhall inherit, and even God himſelf, who is their portion, their inheritance, their exceeding great reward, and of whom they are ſaid to be heirs. This is the inheritance *of the ſaints*, and of none elſe; who are ſanctified, or ſet apart by God the Father in eternal election; who are ſanctified by the blood of Chriſt, or whoſe ſins are expiated by his atoning ſacrifice; who are ſanctified in Chriſt, or to whom he is made ſanctification; and who are ſanctified by the Spirit of Chriſt, or have the work of ſanctification begun upon their ſouls by him; in conſequence of which they live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly in the world. And this inheritance of theirs is *in light*; unleſs this clauſe ſhould be read in connexion with the word *ſaints*, and be deſcriptive of them; they being called and brought out of darkneſs into light, and made light in the Lord, light being infuſed into them; in which light they ſee light, ſin to be exceeding ſinful, and Chriſt to be exceeding precious: or this phraſe ſhould be thought to deſign the means by which the Father makes meet to partake of the inheritance; namely, in or by the light of the Goſpel, ſhewing the way of ſalvation by Chriſt, and by the light of grace put into their hearts, and by following Chriſt the light of the world, which is the way to the light of life: tho' it rather ſeems to point out the ſituation and nature of the heavenly inheritance; it is where God dwells, in light inacceſſible to mortal creatures, and who is light itſelf; and where Chriſt is, who is the light of the new *Jeruſalem*; and where is the light of endleſs joy, and uninterrupted happineſs; and where the ſaints are bleſſed with the clear, full, and beatific viſion of God in Chriſt, and of Chriſt as he is, ſeeing him, not thro' a glaſs darkly, but face to face. This may be ſaid in reference to a notion of the *Jews*, that the *light* which God created on the firſt day, is that goodneſs which he has laid up for them that fear him, and is what he has treaſured up for the righteous in the world to come [d]. Now the ſaints meetneſs for this is not of themſelves; by nature they are very unmeet for it, being deſerving of the wrath of God, and not of an inheritance; and are impure and unholy, and ſo not fit to partake of the inheritance of ſaints, or holy ones, and much leſs to dwell and converſe with an holy God; and being darkneſs itſelf, can't bear ſuch light, or have communion with it: but God the Father makes them meet, which includes all the acts of his grace towards them, upon them, and in them; ſuch as his chuſing them in Chriſt, and their inheritance for them; in preparing that for them, and them for that; bleſſing them with all grace, and all ſpiritual bleſſings in Chriſt; putting them among the children by an act of adoption, of his own ſovereign will, and free grace, and thereby giving them a goodly heritage, and a title to it; juſtifying them by the righteouſneſs of his Son, and ſo making them heirs according to the hope of eternal life, and forgiving all their treſpaſſes for Chriſt's ſake; cleanſing them from all in his blood, ſo that being the undefiled in the way, without ſpot or wrinkle, or any ſuch thing, they are fit for the undefiled inheritance; regenerating them by his Spirit, and implanting principles of light and life, grace and holineſs in them, without which no man ſhall ſee the Lord, or enter into the kingdom of heaven. One copy, as *Beza* obſerves, reads it, *which hath called us to be partakers*; &c. and ſo does the *Ethiopic* verſion. And all ſuch as the Father has thus called, and made meet, ſhall certainly be partakers of the inheritance; they partake of it already in Chriſt their head, and in faith and hope, having the Spirit as an earneſt and pledge of it, and will wholly and perfectly enjoy it hereafter: for though, like *Canaan*'s land, 'tis diſpoſed of by lot, by the will, counſel, and free grace of God, yet will not be divided into parts as that was; there is but one undivided inheritance, but one *part* and portion, which all the ſaints ſhall jointly and equally partake of, having all and each the ſame right and title, claim and meetneſs. For which they have abundant reaſon to give thanks to the Father, when they conſider what they were, beggars on the dunghill, and now advanced to ſit among princes, and to inherit the throne of glory; were bankrupts, over head and ears in debt, owed ten thouſand talents, and had nothing to pay, and now all is frankly forgiven; and beſides, a title to, and meetneſs for, the heavenly inheritance, are freely beſtowed on them; and particularly when they conder they are no more worthy of this favour than others that have no ſhare in it, and alſo how great the inheritance is.

Ver. 13. *Who hath delivered us from the power of darkneſs*, &c.] That is, from the power of ſatan; ſee *Acts* xxvi. 18. who, tho' once an angel of light, is now darkneſs itſelf, and is reſerved in chains of darkneſs; he is a ruler of the darkneſs of this world; his kingdom is a kingdom of darkneſs; and he blinds the minds of them that believe not, keeps them in darkneſs, and increaſes the natural darkneſs of their minds; he delights in works of darkneſs, and tempts men to them; and his everlaſting ſtate and portion will be blackneſs of darkneſs: his power over men, in a ſtate of unregeneracy, which he uſurps, and is ſuffered to exerciſe, is very great; he works effectually in them, and leads them captive at his will; and nothing leſs than the power of God, who is ſtronger than the ſtrong man armed, can deliver out of his hands; and which is at leaſt one part of the mercy for which thanks are here given; ſee the note on *Luke* xxii. 53. with the *Jews*, one of the names of ſatan is, חשך, *darkneſs* [e]. Moreover, the darkneſs of ſin, ignorance, and unbelief, with which God's elect, whilſt in a ſtate of nature, are ſurrounded, and, as it were, ſhut up and impriſoned, ſo that they have not the leaſt ſpark of true ſpiritual light and knowledge, may be alſo meant; under the power of which they are to ſuch a degree, that they know nothing of God in Chriſt, of the way of ſalvation by him, or of the work of the Spirit on their ſouls, or of the doctrines of the Goſpel in an experimental manner; and ſo they continue, till by an almighty power, they are turned from darkneſs to light; when, by powerful grace, they are plucked as brands out of the burning, and delivered from wrath to come, and from that utter darkneſs of miſery and deſtruction, their ways of ſin and darkneſs led and expoſed them to. This deliverance is wrought out for them in effectual vocation, when they are internally called, and powerfully brought out of this darkneſs, by introducing light into them, revealing Chriſt in them, cauſing the prince of darkneſs to flee from them, and the ſcales of darkneſs and blindneſs to fall from their eyes; and which is both an inſtance of the wonderful grace of God, and of his almighty power, and in which lies in part the ſaints meetneſs for the inheritance; for theſe words are, in ſome ſort, explanative of the former; for ſo long as a perſon is under the power of darkneſs, he cannot be meet for an inheritance which is in light: it follows, as another branch of this mercy, for which thanks are given, *and hath tranſlated us into the kingdom of his dear Son*; not into the kingdom of glory; for tho' the ſaints are heirs of it, and rejoice in hope of it, they have not yet an entrance into it; which they will have abundantly when Chriſt ſhall introduce them into it, not only as his Father's, but as his own kingdom and glory: but the kingdom of grace is here meant, or that ſtate of grace, light, and life, which ſuch are brought into, when reſcued out of ſatan's hands, and recovered out of their former ſtate of ignorance and infidelity; when they are by the drawings of the Father, by his powerful and efficacious grace, brought to Chriſt, and in the day of his power on their ſouls, are made willing to ſubmit to his righteouſneſs, and to embrace him as the alone ſaviour and redeemer, and be ſubject to him as king of ſaints, obſerving his commands, keeping his ordinances, and walking in his ſtatutes and judgments with other ſaints, in a Goſpel church-ſtate; which is Chriſt's kingdom here on earth, where he reigns as king over God's holy hill of *Zion*, being ſet there by his Father, from whom he has received this kingdom, and will deliver it to him, when it is compleat and perfect. Now thoſe whom *Jehovah* the Father ſnatches out of ſatan's hands, and breaks in upon their ſouls with divine light and knowledge, he brings into ſuch a ſtate, and into this kingdom of Chriſt, who is called *his dear ſon*; or *the ſon of his love*; or *his ſon of love*; who being his ſon by nature, of the ſame nature with him, and equal to him, always was, is, and will be the object of his love, complacency, and delight; as he cannot be otherwiſe, ſince he is the brightneſs of his glory, and the expreſs image of his perſon; and even as this Son of his is in an office-capacity, as the mediator between God and man, he is his elect, in whom his ſoul delights; and he is always well pleaſed with all the choſen ones in him, who are the ſons of God thro' him, and always beloved in him. This clauſe is added, partly to diſtinguiſh the kingdom of Chriſt, into which the ſaints are brought in this life, from the kingdom of the Father, or the ultimate glory they ſhall poſſeſs hereafter; and partly to expreſs the ſecurity of the ſaints, and their continuance in the love of God, being in the kingdom, and under the care and government of the Son of his love; and alſo to make way for what the Apoſtle has further to diſcourſe concerning the perſon, office, and grace of Chriſt, in the following verſes.

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[d] Zohar in Gen. fol. 6. 3. & in Exod. fol. 32. 3. & in Lev. xiv. 4. & xxxvii. 4. Bereſhit Rabba, fol. 3. 2.

Ver. 14. *In whom we have redemption*, &c.] Which is an excellent and wonderful bleſſing of grace ſaints have in and by Chriſt; and lies in a deliverance from ſin, all ſin, original and actual, under which they are held captive, in a ſtate of nature, and by which they are made ſubject to the puniſhment of death; but thro' the ſacrifice of Chriſt it is taken, and put away, finiſhed, and made an end of; and they are freed from the damning power of it, or any obligation to puniſhniſhment for it; and in conſequence of this, are delivered from the enſlaving, governing power of it by his grace and Spirit, and will hereafter be entirely rid of the very being of it: it conſiſts alſo of a deliverance from the law, the curſe, and bondage of it, under which they are held on account of ſin, the tranſgreſſion of it; but being delivered from ſin, they are alſo from the law, its accuſations, charges, menaces, curſes, and condemnation; as likewiſe out of the hands of ſatan, by whom they are led captive; for thro' the ranſom-price paid by Chriſt, they are ranſomed out of the hands of him that was ſtronger than they, the prey is taken from the mighty, and the lawful captive delivered by him that has led captivity captive: in ſhort, this redemption is a deliverance out of the hands of all their enemies, and from all evils and miſery, the effects of ſin, from death, and hell, and wrath to come. The author of it is Chriſt, the Son of God, the Son of his love, his dear Son: he was called to this work in the council of peace, in which the affair of redemption was conſulted; and he agreed to undertake it in the covenant of grace, of which this is a principal article; and being in his conſtitution, as mediator, every way fit and proper for it: as man, the right of redemption belonged to him, being the near kinſman of his people, and as God, he was mighty and able to perform it; as man, he had ſomething to offer, and as God, could make that ſacrifice valuable and effectual to all ſaving purpoſes; as man, he had compaſſion on human nature, and as God, was concerned for things pertaining to his honour and glory. And thus being every way qualified, he was ſent, and came on this errand, and has obtained a redemption, which is precious, plenteous, compleat and eternal: it is now with him, and *in him*; and he is made this, and every thing elſe to his people, that they want. The ſubjects of this bleſſing are, not angels, but men; and not all men, but ſome that are redeemed from among men, out of every kindred, tongue, people, and nation; who are called by the name of *Jacob*, the people of Chriſt, a peculiar people, and the church of God; and evidentially are ſuch, who have faith in Chriſt, love to the ſaints, and good hope of eternal life; who know the grace of God in truth, are made meet to be partakers of the eternal inheritance, being delivered from the power of darkneſs, and tranſlated into the kingdom of Chriſt, and are deſigned by the *we* in this text: the means by which this bleſſing is procured, is *through his blood*. This phraſe is left out indeed in the *Syriac* and *Ethiopic* verſions, and in the *Complutenſian* edition, and in ſome copies; but rightly ſtands here, as it does in *Eph*. i. 7. where there is another clauſe added, which is here omitted, at the end of the verſe, *according to the riches of his grace*. This is the blood of Chriſt, his own blood, and not the blood of bulls and goats, and the ſame with that of the perſons he redeems, but untainted with ſin; the blood of Chriſt, as of a lamb without ſpot and blemiſh, of original or actual ſin, otherwiſe it would not have been a ſufficient redemption-price for his people; nor even then, were it not as it was the blood of the Son of God, of one that was God as well as man, whereby it came to have a proper value and efficacy in it to obtain this bleſſing: Chriſt's ſhedding his blood freely on this account, is a proof of his great love to his redeemed ones; the efficacy that was in it to anſwer this purpoſe, ſhews the dignity and greatneſs of his perſon; and it not being to be effected without it, demonſtrates the ſtrictneſs of divine juſtice, and that the redemption of men is brought about in a way entirely conſiſtent with the righteouſneſs and holineſs of God. A particular branch of this bleſſing follows, and which ſerves, in ſome ſenſe, to illuſtrate and explain it, *even the forgiveneſs of ſins*; of all ſin, original and actual; of heart, lip, and life, ſecret and open, paſt, preſent, and to come; which lies in a non-imputation of ſin, a remembrance of it no more, a removing of it entirely out of the way, a covering and blotting it out of ſight, ſo as to be no more viſible and legible: this is in Chriſt, where all ſpiritual bleſſings are; nor is it to be had or expected from an abſolute God, but from God in Chriſt, and thro' him, thro' his propitiatory ſacrifice; for as redemption, ſo forgiveneſs of ſin is thro' his blood, which was ſhed for it; ſo that it proceeds upon the foot of ſatisfaction made to the juſtice of God by a price paid, and is an act of juſtice as well as grace, and belongs to the ſame perſons as redemption does; hence thoſe that are redeemed are repreſented as without fault before the throne; and indeed, the reaſon why their iniquities are blotted out, and will be remembred no more againſt them is, becauſe they are redeemed.

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[e] Shirhaſhirim Rabba, fol. 25. 4.

Ver. 15. *Who is the image of the inviſible God*, &c.] Not of deity, tho' the fulneſs of it dwells in him; nor of himſelf, tho' he is the true God, and eternal life; nor of the Spirit, who alſo is God, and the Spirit of the Son; but the Father, called *God*, not to the excluſion of the Son or Spirit, who are with him the one God: *and he is inviſible*; not to the Son who lay in his boſom, and had perfect and infinite knowledge of him; nor, in ſome ſenſe, to angels, who always behold his face, but to men: no man hath ſeen him corporally with the eyes of his body, tho' intellectually with the eyes of the underſtanding, when enlightned; not in his eſſence and nature, which is infinite and incomprehenſible, but in his works of creation, providence, and grace; nor immediately, but mediately, in and thro' Chriſt, in whom he gives the light of the knowledge of the glory of his perſon and perfections; and this not perfectly now, but in the other ſtate, when the ſaints ſhall ſee him face to face. But chiefly the Father is ſaid to be inviſible, becauſe he did not appear to Old Teſtament ſaints; as his voice was never heard, ſo his ſhape was never ſeen; he never aſſumed any viſible form; but whenever any voice was heard, or ſhape ſeen, it was the ſecond perſon that appeared, the Son of God, who is here ſaid to be his *image*, and that, as he is the Son of God; in which ſenſe he is the natural, eſſential, and eternal image of his Father, an increated one, perfect and compleat, and in which he takes infinite complacency and delight: this deſigns more than a ſhadow and repreſentation, or than bare ſimilitude and likeneſs; it includes ſameneſs of nature and perfections; aſcertains the perſonality of the Son, his diſtinction from the Father, whoſe image he is; and yet implies no inferiority, as the following verſes clearly ſhew, ſince all that the Father hath are his. *Philo* the *Jew* [f] often ſpeaks of the Λογος, or Word of God, as the image of God. Alſo, this may be underſtood of him as mediator, in whom, as ſuch, is a moſt glorious diſplay of the love, grace, and mercy of God, of his holineſs and righteouſneſs, of his truth and faithfulneſs, and of his power and wiſdom: *the firſt-born of every creature*; not the firſt of the creation, or the firſt creature God made; for all things in the next verſe are ſaid to be created by him, and therefore he himſelf can never be a creature; nor is he the firſt in the new creation, for the Apoſtle in the context is ſpeaking of the old creation, and not the new: but the ſenſe either is, that he was begotten of the Father in a manner unconceivable and inexpreſſible by men, before any creatures were in being; or that he is the *firſt parent*, or bringer forth of every creature into being, as the word will bear to be rendered, if inſtead of πρωτότοκος, we read πρωτοτόκος; which is no more than changing the place of the accent, and may be very eaſily ventured upon, as is done by an ancient writer [g], who obſerves, that the word is uſed in this ſenſe by *Homer*, and is the ſame as πρωτογόνος, *firſt parent*, and πρωτοκτίστης, *firſt creator*; and the rather this may be done, ſeeing the accents were all added ſince the Apoſtles days, and eſpecially ſeeing it makes his reaſoning, in the following verſes, appear with much more beauty, ſtrength, and force: he is the firſt parent of every creature, *for by him were all things created*, &c. or it may be underſtood of Chriſt, as the king, Lord, and governour of all creatures; being God's firſt-born, he is heir of all things, the right of government belongs to him; he is higher than the kings of the earth, or the angels in heaven, the higheſt rank of creatures, being the creator and upholder of all, as the following words ſhew; ſo the *Jews* make the word, *firſt-born*, to be ſynonymous with the word *king*, and explain it by גדול ושר, *a great one, and a prince* [h]; ſee *Pſ*. lxxxix. 27. and *Heb*. i. 2, 6.

Ver. 16. *For by him were all things created*, &c.] This is a reaſon proving Chriſt to be before all creatures, to be the common parent of them, and to have the government over them, ſince he is the creator of them. The creation of all things, by him, is not to be underſtood of the new creation, for whenever that is ſpoken of, the word *new* is generally uſed, or what is equivalent to it, or ſome clauſe or phraſe added, which determines the ſenſe, and is not the caſe here: beſides, all things that are in heaven are ſaid to be created here; which, to ſay nothing of the ſun, moon, and ſtars, which are not capable ſubjects of the new creation, to reſtrain them to angels, cannot be true of them; for as for thoſe who were once in heaven, but kept not their firſt eſtate, and quitted their habitation, theſe find no place there any more; they never were, nor will be renewed and reſtored by Chriſt; and as for the good angels, ſince they never ſinned, they ſtand in no need of renovation. Moreover, all things that are on earth are alſo ſaid to be created by him, and are, but not a-new: for to confine theſe only to men, all men are not renewed in the ſpirit of their minds; all have not faith, nor a good hope thro' grace, nor love to God and Chriſt, the greater part of the world lies in open wickedneſs; and all that profeſs religion are not new creatures, theſe are a choſen generation, and a peculiar people: wherefore theſe words muſt be underſtood, not metaphorically, but literally; in which ſenſe all things are created by Chriſt, not by him as an inſtrument, but as the efficient cauſe; for the prepoſition *by* does not always ſignify the former, but ſometimes the latter; ſee 1 *Cor.* i. 9. *Gal.* i. 1. nor to the excluſion of the Father and Spirit, who with the Son, were jointly concerned in the creating of all things out of nothing: and theſe, *all things*, can only refer to the things that are made; increated things can never be ſaid to be created; this is a contradiction in terms; the Father is not created by him, nor he himſelf as the Son of God, nor the Spirit; but every thing that is made is created by him: hence it follows, that he himſelf is no creature, otherwiſe he muſt create himſelf, which alſo is a contradiction, ſince every creature is made by him; and conſequently he muſt be God, for he that made and built all things is God. Theſe are divided as to the ſubject of them, or place where they are, into things *that are in heaven, and that are in earth.* The things that are in heaven, are the things that are in the airy and ſtarry heavens, and in the heaven of heavens. The things in the airy heavens, the fowls thereof, were on the fifth day created by him; and the things in the ſtarry heaven, the ſun, moon, and ſtars, were on the fourth day ordained by him; and the inhabitants of the third heaven, the angels were made by him, *Heb.* i. 7. and as the *Jewiſh* writers [i] ſay, on the ſecond day of the creation, tho' ſome ſay on the fifth. The earth comprehends the whole terraqueous globe, conſiſting of land and ſea; and the things in it, are all that are in the ſeas, the fiſhes and other things in it; and all that are in the bowels of the earth, as well as on the ſurface of it, all metals and minerals, all plants, herbs, and trees, every beaſt of the foreſt, the cattle on a thouſand hills, the fowls on the mountains, and the wild beaſts of the field, and all human creatures. Again, theſe all things are, as to the quality of them, diſtributed into *viſible and inviſible*, both in heaven and in earth: the viſible things in heaven are the fowls that fly in the airy heaven, the ſun, and moon, and ſtars in the ſtarry heaven, and the bodies of thoſe ſaints that have been either tranſlated, or raiſed, in the third heaven; the viſible things in the earth are all creatures, animate and inanimate, rational and irrational, all bodies, all corporeal and material beings: the inviſible things in earth are not only thoſe that are in the innermoſt parts of it, but the ſpirits or ſouls of men; and thoſe in heaven are not the inviſible God, Father, Son, and Spirit, but the angels, who are incorporeal and immaterial ſpirits, and ſo inviſible; and which, *whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers*, are all made by him; by theſe ſome underſtand civil magiſtrates among men, and the various degrees and orders of them. By *thrones* they think kings, or monarchs, are meant, who ſit on thrones; and by *dominions*, little petty kings, or lords, dukes, and earls; and by *principalities*, governours of provinces and cities; and by *powers*, inferior magiſtrates; and indeed, political governours are ſometimes called dominion, dignities, principalities, and powers; and there are different orders of them, the king as ſupreme, and governours under him; ſee *Jud.* viii. *Tit.* iii. 1. 1 *Pet.* ii. 13, 14. But ſince theſe ſeem rather to be ſaid of the inviſible things in heaven, and to be an explanation of them, angels may rather be thought to be intended; and are ſo called, not as denoting different orders and degrees among them, which ſome have raſhly ventured to deſcribe, but becauſe of the uſe that God makes of them in the government of the world, and the executions of the various affairs of providence relating to particular perſons and kingdoms; tho' theſe ſeveral names are not ſo much ſuch as the Apoſtle choſe to call them by, as what they were called by others; the three latter are indeed elſewhere uſed by himſelf, *Eph.* i. 21. and iii. 10. *Col.* ii. 10. but not the former, *thrones*, which yet are uſed by *Jewiſh* writers, and given to angels. Thus in a book of theirs, which they eſteem very ancient, and aſcribe to the patriarch *Abraham*, it is ſaid [k], "there is no angel "in which the name Jehovah is not found, which "is every where, as the ſoul is in every member; "wherefore men ought to allow Jehovah to reign "in all the members, ובכל כרסין, *and in all the "thrones*, and in all the angels, and in every "member of men." And elſewhere, ſpeaking of the garments of God, "by theſe, ſay they [l], "ברא קבה״ כרסיין, *the holy bleſſed God created the "thrones*, and the angels, and the living creatures, "and the *ſeraphim*, and the heavens, and the earth, "and all that he created." And the *thrones* in *Dan.* vii. 9. are interpreted [m], of "*the ſuperior princes*, "למלאכים רוחניים, *the ſpiritual angels*, who ſit "firſt in the kingdom; and they are called in the "words of the *Rabbins*, *the throne of glory*; for "ſo is the way of kings, that their princes ſit before them, every one on his throne, according "to their dignity." Now the Apoſtle's ſenſe is, that the angels, the inviſible inhabitants of the upper world, are all created by Chriſt, let them be called by what names they will, that the *Jews*, or the falſe teachers, or any ſort of hereticks of thoſe times thought fit to give them, whether they called them thrones or dominions, *&c.* And ſo the *Arabic* verſion, rather interpreting than tranſlating the words, renders them thus, *whether you ſay thrones, or whether you mention dominions, or whether you underſtand princes, or whether you ſay powers*; ſpeak of them under what title or appellation you pleaſe, they are all the creatures of the Son of God. The Apoſtle ſeems to have in view, and to oppoſe ſome notions of ſome hereticks of his time, the followers of *Simon Magus*, who held, that the angels were created by his *Helena*; or, as others, by what they call *Ennea*, and that theſe angels created the world, and are to be worſhipped; but he here affirms, that all things are created by Chriſt, even all the angels; and therefore he and not they are to be worſhipped, a notion he afterwards takes notice of in the following chapter: and as all things are affirmed to be created by him, which demonſtrates the dignity and deity of his perſon, ſo likewiſe *for him*; that is for his pleaſure, that he may take delight and complacency in them, and in his own perfections diſplayed by them; and for his ſervice and uſe, as the angels, to worſhip him and miniſter to him and for others, he ſends them to: elect men are made to ſerve and glorify him with their bodies and ſpirits, which are his; and even the non elect are made to ſubſerve his mediatorial kingdom and intereſt; yea, the whole world is built and kept in being purely on his account, until he has finiſhed the great affair of the ſalvation of his people, in the application of it to each of them, as he has compleated the impetration of it; and then he will diſſolve the heavens, and burn up the earth and all the works that are therein: all are made for his glory, and that end is, and will be anſwered by them in one way or another.

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[f] De Mund. Opific. p. 6. de Plant. Noe, p. 216, 217. de Confuſ. Ling. p. 341. de Somniis, p. 600. de Monarch. p. 823.

[g] Iſidor. Peluſiot. l. 3. Ep. 31.

[h] R. Sol. Urbin. Ohel Moed, fol. 50. 1.

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[i] Targum Jon. in Gen. i 26. Bereſhith Rabba, fol. 1. 1. & 3. 3. Menaſſ. ben Iſrael, Conciliator in Gen. Qu. 12.

[k] Sepher Jetzira, p. 17. Ed. Rittangel.

[l] Tikkune Zohar in ib. p. 127, 128. & Zohar in Exod. fol. 18. 2. & in Lev. fol. 39. 1. & 47. 2.

[m] Abarbinel in Dan. fol. 45. 4. & 46. 4.

Ver. 17. *And he is before all things*, &c.] Not only in dignity, being preferable to angels and men in his nature, names, offices, and works, and worthy of more honour than all creatures; but he is before them in exiſtence, as he muſt needs be, ſince they are all made by him; he was not only before *John* the *Baptiſt*, his fore-runner, before *Abraham* who ſaw his day and was glad, before the firſt man was made, but before the angels were in being, or the heavens and the earth, or any creature were formed; and therefore muſt be God, who is from everlaſting to everlaſting: *and by him all things conſiſt*; he upholds all things by the word of his power; the heavens have their ſtability and continuance from him; the pillars of the earth are bore up by him, otherwiſe that and the inhabitants of it would be diſſolved; the angels in heaven are confirmed in their eſtate by him, and have their ſtanding and ſecurity in him; the elect of God are in his hands, and are his peculiar care and charge, and therefore ſhall never periſh; yea, all mankind live and move, and have their being in him; the whole frame of nature would burſt aſunder and break in pieces, was it not held together by him; every created being has its ſupport from him, and its conſiſtence in him; and all the affairs of providence relating to all creatures, are governed, directed, and managed by him, in conjunction with the Father and the bleſſed Spirit.

Ver. 18. *And he is the head of the body, the church*, &c.] By *the church* is meant, not any particular congregated church, as the church at *Coloſſe*, or *Corinth*, or any other; but the whole election of grace, the general aſſembly and church of the firſt-born, whoſe names are written in heaven in the lamb's book of life; the church which Chriſt has given himſelf for, and has purchaſed with his blood, and builds on himſelf the rock, and will at laſt preſent to himſelf a glorious church without ſpot or wrinkle, or any ſuch thing; this is compared to an human body, and therefore called *the body*; which is but one, conſiſting of many members in union with each other, ſet in their proper places, in juſt ſymmetry and proportion to each other, and ſubſervient to one another, and are neither more nor fewer; ſee 1 *Cor.* xii. 12, 13, 14, *&c.* and of this body, the church, Chriſt is *the head*; he was the repreſentative head of this body of elect men from all eternity, and in time; he is a political head of them, or in ſuch ſenſe an head unto them, as a king is to his ſubjects, he reigns in them by his Spirit and grace, and rules them by wholeſome laws of his own enacting, and which he inſcribes on their hearts, and he protects and defends them by his power; he is an œconomical head, or in ſuch ſenſe an head of them, as the huſband is the head of the wife, and parents and maſters are the heads of their families, he ſtanding in all theſe relations to them; and he is to them what a natural head is to an human body; of all which ſee the note on 1 *Cor.* xi. 3. The Meſſiah is called *one head*, in *Hoſ.* i. 11. which *Jarchi* explains by *David* their king, and *Kimchi* on the place ſays, this is the king *Meſſiah*: *who is the beginning*; which either denotes the eternity of Chriſt, who was not only in the beginning, and was ſet up from the beginning, from everlaſting, but is alſo the beginning, and the end; and who is indeed without beginning of days, or end of life: or his dominion; he is *the principality* as the word may be rendered; he is the principality of principalities, the head of all principality and power, the angels; he is the prince of the kings of the earth; he is king of ſaints; the kingdom of nature and providence is his, and the government of his people in a ſpecial manner is on his ſhoulders: or this may deſign his being the firſt cauſe of all things; he is the beginning of the creation of God; the efficient cauſe of all created beings; he is the beginning of the church, of which he is the head; as *Eve* was from *Adam*, ſo is the church from Chriſt; it is a body of his preparing, and a temple of his building, and where he ſits as a prieſt on his throne, and has the goverment of it: the ſecond number, wiſdom, in the cabaliſtic tree of the *Jews*, is called *the beginning*[n], as is the logos or word by *Philo* the *Jew*[o]: *the firſt-born from the dead*; the firſt that roſe from the dead by his own power, and to an immortal life; for tho' others were raiſed before him and by him, yet not to a ſtate of immortality; the path of life, to an immortal life was firſt ſhewn to him as man; and who alſo is the firſt-fruits of them that ſleep, and ſo the pledge and earneſt of the future reſurrection of the ſaints; and is both the efficient and exemplary cauſe of it; the reſurrection of the dead will be by him as God, and according to his own as man: *that in all things he might have the preeminence*; or might be the firſt and chief over all perſons, angels and men; having a ſuperior nature, name, and place, than the former, and being the firſt-born among many brethren deſigned by the latter: and in all things he is the firſt, and has the precedence and primacy; in ſonſhip, no one is a ſon in the ſenſe he is; in election, he was choſen firſt, and his people in him; in the covenant, he is the ſurety, mediator, and meſſenger of it, he is that itſelf; in his human nature, he is fairer than the children of men; in redemption, he was alone, and wrought it out himſelf; in life, he exceeded all others in purity, in doctrine and miracles; and in dying he conquered death, and roſe firſt from it; in ſhort, he died, revived, and roſe again, that he might be lord both of dead and living; and he ought to have the pre-eminence and firſt place in the affections of our hearts, in the contemplations of our minds, in the deſires of our ſouls, and in the higheſt praiſes of our lips.

Ver. 19. *For it pleaſed the Father*, &c.] The phraſe *the Father*, is not in the original text, but is rightly ſupplied; ſince he is expreſsly mentioned in the context, as he who makes the ſaints meet to be partakers of the heavenly glory; who delivers them from the power and dominion of ſin, and tranſlates them into the kingdom of his dear Son; and who by Chriſt reconciles all things to himſelf, ver. 12, 13, 20. and whoſe ſovereign will and pleaſure it is, *that in him ſhould all fulneſs dwell*; by which is meant, not the fulneſs of the deity, tho' it is read by ſome, *the fulneſs of the Godhead*; which ſeems to be tranſcribed from chap. ii. 9. but tho' all the perfections of God are in Chriſt, as eternity, omnipotence, omniſcience, omnipreſence, immutability, independence and neceſſary exiſtence, and every other, or he would not be equal with God; nor could all the fulneſs of the Godhead be ſaid to dwell in him, ſhould any one be wanting; yet this is a fulneſs poſſeſſed by him, that does not ſpring from, nor depend upon the Father's good will and pleaſure; but what he naturally and neceſſarily enjoys by a participation of the ſame undivided nature and eſſence with the Father and Spirit: nor is the relative fulneſs of Chriſt intended, which is his church, ſo called, *Epheſ.* i. 23. and will be ſo when all the elect are gathered in, and filled with all the gifts and graces of his Spirit, and are arrived to the meaſure of the ſtature of the fulneſs of Chriſt; for tho' every believer dwells in Chriſt, and Chriſt in him, yet the church is not ſaid to dwell in Chriſt, but Chriſt in the church; moreover, as yet ſhe is not his fulneſs, at leaſt in the ſenſe ſhe will be, and much leſs can ſhe be ſaid to be all fulneſs: nor is this to be underſtood of Chriſt's fulneſs of fitneſs and abilities, as God-man and mediator, to perform his work and office as ſuch; tho' this may be taken into the ſenſe of the text as a part, yet is not the whole; but rather chiefly that diſpenſatory, communicative fulneſs, which is of the Father's good will and pleaſure, put into the hands of Chriſt to be diſtributed to others, is here deſigned. There is a fulneſs of nature in Chriſt; the light of nature is from him, and communicated by him to mankind; the bleſſings of nature are the bleſſings of his left hand, which he diſtributes to his people as he thinks fit; and all things in nature are ſubſervient to his mediatorial kingdom and glory. There is a fulneſs of grace in him, out of which ſaints receive, and grace for grace, or a large abundance of it; the fulneſs of the Spirit of grace, and of all the graces and gifts of the Spirit is in him; and of all the bleſſings of grace, as a juſtifying righteouſneſs, pardon of ſin, adoption, ſanctification, even of all that grace that is implanted in regeneration, that is neceſſary to carry on and finiſh the good work upon the ſoul; there is a fulneſs of all light and life, of wiſdom and ſtrength, of peace, joy, and comfort, and of all the promiſes of grace, both with reſpect to this world and that which is to come; and there is alſo a fulneſs of glory in him, not only the grace, but the glory of the ſaints, is laid up and hid with him, and is ſafe and ſecure in him: this is ſaid to *dwell* in Chriſt, which implies its being in him; it is not barely in intention, deſign, and purpoſe, but it is really and actually in him, nor is it in any other; and hence it comes to be communicated to the ſaints: and it alſo denotes the continuance of it with him; it is an abiding fulneſs, and yields a continual daily ſupply to the ſaints, and will endure to the end of time, and be as ſufficient for the laſt as the firſt believer; it is like the ſubject of it, the ſame yeſterday, to day, and for ever: and it alſo intends the ſafety of it; the ſaints life both of grace and glory is hid with Chriſt, and is ſecure, it is out of the reach of men and devils, and can never be loſt, or they deprived of it; and all this is owing not to any merits of men, to their faith and holineſs, or good works, which are all the fruits of this fulneſs, but to the good will of God; *it pleaſed the Father* to place it here for them; it was owing to his good will to his Son, and therefore he puts all things into his hands; and to his elect in him, for having loved them with an everlaſting love, he takes everlaſting care of them, and makes everlaſting proviſion for them; it was his pleaſure from all eternity to take ſuch a ſtep as this, well knowing it was not proper to put it into the hands of *Adam*, nor into the hands of angels, nor into their own at once; he ſaw none ſo fit for it as his ſon, and therefore it pleaſed him to commit it unto him; and it is his good will and ſovereign pleaſure, that all grace ſhould come thro' Chriſt, all communion with him here, and all enjoyment of him hereafter; which greatly enhances and ſets forth the glory of Chriſt as mediator, one conſiderable branch of which is, that he is full of grace and truth; this qualifies him to be the head of the church, and gives a reaſon, as theſe words be, why he has, and ought to have the pre-eminence in all things.

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[n] Cabala denudata, par. 2. p. 7. & Lex. Cabal. p. 679, 681.

[o] Philo de Conf. ling. p. 341.

Ver. 20. *And by him to reconcile all things to himſelf*, &c.] This depends upon the preceding verſe, and is to be connected with that phraſe in it, *it pleaſed the Father*; and the ſenſe is, that it was the good will and pleaſure of God from all eternity, as to lay up all fulneſs in Chriſt for his choſen people, ſo to reconcile them to himſelf by him; and which is another reaſon why Chriſt is, and ought to be conſidered as the head of the church, whoſe reconciliation he has procured, and why he ought to have the chief place in all things, and among all perſons. Reconciliation ſuppoſes a former ſtate of amity and friendſhip, and in ſuch an one, man was originally with God; and a breach of that friendſhip, which was made and iſſued in real enmity in the heart of man; and alſo a reſtoration to friendſhip again: and it is to be underſtood not of a reconciliation of God to men, which the ſcriptures no where ſpeak of, but of men to God; and is a reconciliation of them, not to the love of God, which his elect always ſhared in, but to the juſtice of God, offended by the tranſgreſſion of a righteous law; and is, indeed, properly a reconciliation, atonement, and ſatisfaction for their ſins, and ſo of their perſons, and whereby all the perfections of God are reconciled to and agree with each other in the ſalvation of ſuch ſinners: now this takes its firſt riſe from God the Father; it is owing to his ſovereign good will and pleaſure; he took the firſt ſtep towards it; he knew what a ſtate of enmity and rebellion his people would fall into; his thoughts ran upon their peace and reconciliation from everlaſting; he called a council of peace about it, and in it drew the model of it; he entered into a covenant of peace with his Son, and in conſequence of it, ſent him in the fulneſs of time to effect it, laying on him the chaſtiſement of their peace; it was his pleaſure that this affair of reconciliation ſhould be brought about, not by the means of angels, in whom he could put no ſuch truſt and confidence, and who tho' they rejoice at peace being made on earth, could never have effected it; nor that it ſhould be done by men, who have no knowledge of the way of it, no inclination to it, nor power to make it; but *by him*, his Son Jeſus Chriſt, whom he appointed and called to this work, and ſent to do it; and who is therefore in prophecy before this reconciliation was actually made, ſtiled *Shiloh*, the prince of peace, and the peace: and this when made, was made *to himſelf*; meaning either to Chriſt, in whom all the elect were gathered together, as in one head, and were reconciled in one body, whether *Jews* or *Gentiles* thro' him; or rather to God the Father, to whom they were enemies, yea, enmity itſelf, and to whom the ſatisfaction and atonement were made; it being his law that was broken, and his juſtice that was injured, and to whom they are always in ſcripture ſaid to be reconciled; tho' not to the excluſion of the Son and Spirit, the one God with the Father: moreover, the ſenſe of this phraſe may be, that the reconciliation of the elect made by Chriſt, in a way of full ſatisfaction to law and juſtice, is to the glory of God, the glory of all his perfections; as of his grace and mercy, wiſdom, power, and faithfulneſs, ſo of his righteouſneſs and holineſs: the means by which Chriſt has effected it are, his ſacrifice, ſufferings, and death, expreſſed in the following clauſe; *having made peace thro' the blood of his croſs.* This was what man could not do, what Chriſt was appointed and ſent to do, and what he was every way qualified for as God and man; as man he had blood to ſhed, and could make reconciliation for ſin in the nature which had ſinned, and as God, could draw nigh to his Father, and treat with him about terms of peace, and perform them; and ſo a fit day's man and mediator, between God and man: this peace he has made by his *blood*, that is by the ſhedding of it, by his death as a ſacrifice, which he underwent on the *croſs*; partly to denote the ſhame, and chiefly to ſignify the curſe he endured in the room of his people: all which ſhews the malignant nature of ſin, the ſtrictneſs of juſtice, and that peace is made in a way of full ſatisfaction, is upon honourable terms, will be laſting, as it is joyful, being attended with a train of bleſſings: *by him, I ſay, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven*; by which are intended not the whole univerſe and fabric of the world, all creatures and things, animate and inanimate, rational and irrational, which have been curſed for the ſin of man, and have proved unfriendly to him, but in conſequence of redemption and reconciliation by Chriſt, will, as ſome think, in the time of the reſtitution of all things, be reſtored to their former ſtate, and to their friendly uſe to mankind; nor elect men and elect angels, and their reconciliation together, for the Apoſtle is not ſpeaking of the reconciling of theſe things together, but of the reconciling of them to God, which tho' it is true of elect men, is not of elect angels, who never fell, and tho' they have confirming grace, yet not reconciling grace from Chriſt, which they never needed; nor *Jews* and *Gentiles*, for tho' it is true that God was in Chriſt reconciling the world of the *Gentiles*, as well as of the *Jews* to himſelf, and the choſen of God among both are actually reconciled to God by the death of Chriſt, yet the one are never called things in heaven, or the other things on earth, in diſtinction from, and oppoſition to each other; but rather all the elect of God are here meant, the family of God in heaven and in earth; all the ſaints that were then in heaven, when actual reconciliation was made by the blood of Chriſt, and who went thither upon the foot of peace, reconciliation, and redemption, to be made by his ſacrifice and death; and all the choſen ones that were or ſhould be on the face of the earth, until the end of time; all theſe were reconciled to God by Chriſt: and then the Apoſtle proceeds particularly to mention the *Coloſſians*, as alſo being inſtances of this grace, good will, and pleaſure of God by Chriſt.

Ver. 21. *And you that were ſometime alienated,* &c.] The general bleſſing of grace, reconciliation, which belongs to the whole body of Chriſt, the church univerſal, all the elect of God, whether in heaven or in earth, is here particularly applied to the ſaints at *Coloſſe*, who were eminent inſtances of it; and that the free grace of God towards them in it might more illuſtriouſly appear, the Apoſtle takes notice of what they were before the coming of Chriſt in the fleſh, before the Goſpel came among them, and whilſt in a ſtate of unregeneracy, as that they were *alienated*; that is from God, not from his general preſence, power, and providence, which reach to all his creatures, but from the life of God; ſee *Epheſ.* iv. 18. from living agreeably to the will of God, being eſtranged from him who is the fountain of moral and ſpiritual, as well as natural life; from the law, the rule of life, and from a principle of life in themſelves; and altogether diſapproving of ſuch a life as contrary to their carnal affections and luſts: and which alienation from God greatly lay in their forſaking him, the one only and true God, and following and ſerving ſtrange Gods, not attending to the dictates and light of nature; and being deſtitute of a divine revelation, they went further and further off from God, and from his people, worſhip, and ordinances; and were aliens from the commonwealth of *Iſrael*, and ſtrangers to the covenants of promiſe; the ſource of all which was ſin, and was owing to themſelves: God did not alienate himſelf from them firſt; they alienated themſelves from him; their ſins ſeparated between God and them, ſet them at a diſtance from him, and at enmity to him, and which very early appeared, for they were eſtranged from the womb: *and enemies in your mind by wicked works.* They were enemies to God, the true God, and were lovers and worſhippers of idols; they were enemies to the being and perfections of God, as all men in a ſtate of nature are; and more or leſs ſhew it, by either denying there is a God, or wiſhing there was none, or fancying him to be ſuch an one as themſelves; or they diſpute his ſovereignty, deny his omniſcience, arraign his juſtice and faithfulneſs, and deſpiſe the riches of his grace and goodneſs: they are enemies to his purpoſes, providences, and word; cannot bear that he ſhould determine any thing concerning them or others; their eye is evil to him becauſe he is good to others; they reply againſt him, they run upon him, and charge his decrees with unrighteouſneſs and cruelty; murmur at and quarrel with the diſpenſations of his providence, as unequal and unjuſt; caſt away the law of the Lord, will not be ſubject to it, and contemn the revelation of his will. They are enemies to Chriſt in one ſhape or another; either to his perſon, denying his proper deity, or real humanity; or to his offices, not hearkening to him as a prophet, trampling on his blood and ſacrifice as a prieſt, and unwilling to have him to rule over them as a king; or to the way of ſalvation by him, of pardon by his blood, atonement by his ſacrifice, juſtification by his righteouſneſs, and acceptance with God thro' his perſon; or to his doctrines and ordinances, which are unſuitable to their vicious taſtes, carnal affections and appetites: they are enemies to the Spirit of Chriſt, by either denying his deity and perſonality, or by ridiculing the operations of his grace; or treating with contempt, and as fooliſh, every thing of his, the Bible and all the truths contained in it, dictated by him. They are enemies to the people of God, exceeding mad againſt them, hate them and perſecute them, reckon them the filth of the world, and the off-ſcouring of all things, living in malice to them, and hateful and hating one another: and this enmity to every thing divine and good, is ſeated *in the mind*; the mind is not the object of this enmity, as ſome read the words, *to the mind*; for the mind of a carnal man is enmity itſelf againſt God; but it is the ſubject of it, where it has its chief place, and from whence it proceeds, and ſhews itſelf in evil actions; and tho' the word *your* is not in the original text, it is rightly ſupplied; for the meaning is not that they were enemies *of his mind*; of the mind of the Lord, of his counſels and will, as ſome read and explain the words, tho' there is a truth in this, but in their own minds: ſo that not the body but the ſoul is the ſeat of this enmity; and not the inferiour faculties of the ſoul only, the ſenſitive appetite and paſſions, but the underſtanding, the judgment and will, the more noble and rational powers of the ſoul; from hence ſpring all the malice and enmity expreſſed in word and actions: where then is man's free will to that which is good? and hence it is that the mind ſtands in need of being renewed, enlightened, cleanſed and ſanctified, and renovation begins here, which is the effect of almighty power; for nothing elſe can remove the rooted enmity in the heart of men; and which as deep and as ſecret as it is, ſooner or later, in one way or another, ſhews itſelf *by wicked works*; and that frequently, as by loving what God hates, and hating what he loves; by omitting what he commands, and committing what he forbids; by maintaining friendſhip with the world, and by harbouring his profeſſed enemies, and perſecuting his dear friends; and by their wicked words, and evil lives and converſations; and by the various works of the fleſh, which are manifeſt, ſome being more directly againſt God, others by which they wrong themſelves, and others by which they injure their neighbours: *yet now hath he reconciled*; which may be underſtood either of the Father's reconciling them to himſelf by his Son; and ſo the words are a continuation of the account of the Father's grace, as to all the elect in general, ſo to the *Coloſſians* in particular, notwithſtanding the black characters in which they ſtand deſcribed in their natural eſtate: or elſe of Chriſt's reconciling them to his Father, by the ſacrifice of himſelf, which he voluntarily offered for them, tho' this was their caſe, and of enemies made them friends: and may be meant either of the impetration of reconciliation for them by his ſufferings and death; or of the virtue and efficacy of it in the application of it; in the former ſenſe the *now* refers to the coming of Chriſt into the world, and the time of his death, and the offering up of his body once for all, when peace and reconciliation were compleatly made at once for all God's elect; in the latter ſenſe it refers to the time of the converſion of theſe *Coloſſians*, when Chriſt by his Spirit, in conſequence of reconciliation made in the body of his fleſh, thro' death reconciled them to God; to his mind and will, to the way of ſalvation by himſelf, to the ſaints the excellent in the earth, to the Goſpel and the ordinances of it, and to all his ways and worſhip.

Ver. 22. *In the body of his fleſh thro' death*, &c.] Or *thro' his death*, as the *Alexandrian* copy and ſome others, and all the *Oriental* verſions read. Theſe words expreſs the means by which that reconciliation was made, which in the virtue and efficacy of it was applied particularly to theſe *Coloſſians* at their converſion, whereby their minds were actually reconciled to God, as *in* or *by the body of his fleſh*; that is, by the offering up of his body on the accurſed tree, in which he bore the ſins of his people, and made reconciliation for them: and it is ſo called either to diſtinguiſh it from his myſtical and ſpiritual body the church, of which he is the head before ſpoken of; or from his glorious and immortal body, as now raiſed and exalted at God's right hand; and to denote the truth of his human body, that it was a real fleſhly body, conſiſting of fleſh and blood as ours does, and the ſame with ours, and not an aerial, celeſtial body, or a mere phantom; and alſo to ſignify the infirmity and mortality of it, being, excepting, ſin in all points like to ours, and ſubject to death; and that it was in that body his Father prepared for him, and he aſſumed, and as he was clothed with it in the days of his fleſh, or mortal ſtate, that he made reconciliation for the ſins of his people, and that *thro' death* in it; even the death of the croſs, by which he bore the penalty of the law, the curſe of it, made ſatisfaction to juſtice, obtained life, aboliſhed death, and deſtroyed him that had the power of it, and fixed a ſure and laſting peace for all his ſaints: his end in which was, *to preſent you holy and unblameable, and unreproveable in his ſight*. This preſentation of the ſaints by Chriſt is either in his own ſight, *before himſelf*, as the *Arabic* verſion reads it; and is here in this preſent ſtate, they being conſidered by him both as ſanctified and as juſtified; he taking delight in the graces of his Spirit, and the exerciſe of them on himſelf, tho' imperfect, and in them as clothed with his ſpotleſs righteouſneſs, in which they are perfectly comely, all fair, and without ſpot: or in the latter day glory, the new *Jeruſalem*-church-ſtate; when the church will be as a bride prepared for her huſband, will be brought into his preſence in raiment of needlework, in fine linen clean and white, the righteouſneſs of the ſaints, and be preſented to himſelf a glorious church, without ſpot or wrinkle, or any ſuch thing: or in the ultimate glory, when all the ſaints ſhall be for ever with him, continually before him, and in his ſight; which is what his heart was ſet upon from everlaſting, which he had in view in his ſufferings and death, and ſtill has in his prayers and preparations: or elſe this preſentation is what has been or will be made before his Father, and in his ſight; and which was partly done, when he gathered together all the elect in himſelf, and repreſented them on the croſs, in the body of his fleſh; and partly is now doing in heaven, where he appears in the preſence of God for them, bears their names on his breaſt-plate, preſents their perſons and their caſes; and eſpecially will be done at the laſt day, when he will deliver up the kingdom to the Father, and ſay, lo, I and the children thou haſt given me: and who will be preſented *holy* by him; he being their ſanctification, and they having all their ſins expiated by his ſacrifice, and their perſons waſhed and cleanſed in his blood, and their hearts ſanctified by his Spirit; which ſanctification, tho' it is imperfect in this life, yet will be compleated by the author of it at death; for without perfect holineſs no man ſhall ſee God, or be preſented in his ſight: and this is in conſequence of the death of Chriſt and reconciliation by it, and a fruit of electing grace, by which perſons are choſen in Chriſt, that they ſhould be holy and without blame; and as here, *unblameable and unreproveable:* as they are, not now in themſelves, but in Chriſt, as arrayed with his robe of righteouſneſs and garments of ſalvation, being all glorious within, and their cloathing of wrought gold, in which they will be introduced and preſented to himſelf, and to his Father faultleſs, with exceeding joy, and ſtand ſo before the throne, and that to all eternity.

Ver. 23. *If ye continue in the faith,* &c.] In the doctrine of faith which they had received and embraced; and in the grace of faith, and the exerciſe of it, which was implanted in them; and in the profeſſion of faith which they had made: not that the virtue and efficacy of Chriſt's blood, ſufferings, and death, and reconciliation of their perſons to God thereby, depended upon their faith, and abiding in it; but that faith and continuance in it were neceſſary means of their preſentation in unblemiſhed holineſs and righteouſneſs; for if they had not faith, or did not abide in it, or if the good work of grace was not wrought upon their ſouls, and that performed until the day of Chriſt, they could not be preſented holy and blameleſs: this ſhews the neceſſity of the ſaints final perſeverance in faith and holineſs, and is mentioned with this view, to put them upon a concern about it, and to make uſe of all means, under divine grace, to enjoy it; and nothing could more ſtrongly incline and move unto it, than the bleſſed effect of Chriſt's death, reconciliation, and the end of it, to preſent the reconciled ones blameleſs; in order to which 'tis neceſſary they ſhould hold on and out to the end: hence the *Ethiopic* verſion reads the words, not as a condition, but as an exhortation enforced by what goes before; *therefore be ye eſtabliſhed in the faith:* it follows, *grounded and ſettled;* not on the ſandy foundation of man's own righteouſneſs, and peace made by his own performances; but upon the foundation and rock, Chriſt, againſt which the gates of hell cannot prevail; and ſo ſhall never finally and totally fall away, being rooted and built up in him, and eſtabliſhed in the faith of him, in the doctrines of faith, reſpecting peace by his blood, juſtification by his righteouſneſs, and life by his death; and ſo continue ſtedfaſt and immoveable, always abounding in his work: *and be not moved away from the hope of the Goſpel;* the hope of eternal life and happineſs, which is ſet before us in the Goſpel; which that gives a good and ſolid ground and foundation of, in the perſon, blood, and righteouſneſs of Chriſt; and is the inſtrumental means in the hand of the Spirit, of begetting to it, and of encouraging and increaſing it: the law gives no hopes of eternal life to a poor ſinner; it works wrath, and miniſters death; there is nothing but a fearful looking for of judgment by it; but the Goſpel encourages to hope in the Lord, from the conſideration of rich mercy and plenteous redemption in him; and this hope of the Goſpel is an anchor of the ſoul, ſure and ſtedfaſt, and not to be let go; this confidence and rejoicing of the hope is to be kept firm unto the end: *which ye have heard;* that is, which Goſpel they had heard from *Epaphras* their faithful miniſter, and that not only externally, but internally; they had heard it and believed it, and it had brought forth fruit in them; for it came to them not in word only, but in power; which is ſaid in commendation of it, and to engage them to continue in it, and abide by it; as is alſo what follows: *and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven;* and therefore ſince it was the ſame which was every where preached, they might depend upon the truth of it, ſhould have the greater value for it, and by no means relinquiſh it. This muſt be underſtood not of every individual creature, even human and rational, that was then, or had been in the world; but that it had been, and was preached far and near, in all places all over the world, to the *Gentiles* as well as to the *Jews;* who are ſometimes ſtiled, *every creature, the creature, the whole creation, all men,* &c. ſee *Mark* xvi. 15. *Rom.* viii. 19, 20, 21, 22. *Titus* ii. 11. and of this, the firſt preaching of the Goſpel by *Peter* after our Lord's reſurrection, was an emblem and pledge, *Acts* ii. 5. and ſome time after that, the ſound of all the Apoſtles went into all the earth, and their words to the end of the world: *whereof I Paul am made a miniſter;* by Jeſus Chriſt, who appeared unto him, and called, qualified and ſent him forth as ſuch; and this is mentioned to encourage the *Coloſſians* to abide by the truths of the Goſpel, ſince what they had heard and received were what were every where preached by the faithful miniſters of the word; and particularly by the Apoſtle, who was ordained to be a teacher and preacher of it to the *Gentiles.* The *Alexandrian* copy reads, *a preacher and an Apoſtle, and a miniſter;* ſee 1 *Tim.* ii. 7.

Ver. 24. *Who now rejoice in my ſufferings for you,* &c.] The Apoſtle, as ſoon as he had made mention of his being a miniſter of the Goſpel, thinks and ſpeaks of his *ſufferings;* for thoſe are what always more or leſs attend perſons in ſuch an office; they are appointed to them by God; Chriſt has foretold them of them; they are neceſſary for them; they muſt expect them, and patiently endure them: the Apoſtle was under them *now* at this preſent time, for he wrote this epiſtle in his bonds when a priſoner at *Rome,* not for any immorality, any crime he had committed, but for Chriſt's ſake, for his Goſpel's ſake, for the ſake of the churches of Chriſt to whom he preached, for the confirmation of them, and ſo of theſe *Coloſſians;* and therefore he ſays, *for you;* and which he mentions to animate them to abide by the Goſpel, for which he was ſuffering, that it might continue with them and others: nor was he diſtreſſed and diſcouraged at his afflictions, he *rejoiced* in them, becauſe he had the preſence of God in them, the Spirit of God and of glory reſted on him, and God was glorified by them; he eſteemed it an honour done him that grace was given, and he counted worthy to ſuffer for the ſake of Chriſt; and as well knowing that he ſhould live and reign with him, ſince he ſuffered with him and for him: and what greatly cauſed and increaſed his joy was what follows, *and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Chriſt in my fleſh;* by which are meant not the afflictions or ſufferings of Chriſt in his own perſon; for theſe were all over, he was now entered into his glory, was exalted at the Father's right hand, and was crowned with glory and honour: there was nothing left behind of his ſufferings, to be undergone by any of his people; he had drank of the cup, and all the dregs of it; he had ſuſtained the whole of his Father's wrath, and all the curſes of the law, being abated nothing, but was made perfect thro' ſufferings; having perfectly ſuffered all, he ſuffered once and once for all, he will ſuffer no more; nor is there any need of his ſuffering more or again, for he has finiſhed ſin, wrought righteouſneſs, made peace, and obtained eternal redemption; nor had he any partner in his ſufferings, nor did he need any, or left any part of his ſufferings to be filled up by others; for he endured all and the whole, which the law and juſtice of God could require in his own body, in the body of his fleſh thro' death; of theſe ſufferings the Apoſtle does not ſpeak, but of ſuch which he filled up in *his own fleſh*; and deſign the afflictions of Chriſt in his members, which are called *his*, becauſe of that near union there is between Chriſt and them; ſo that what befalls them may be predicated of him, when any one of them ſuffers, he ſuffers with him, as the ſufferings of a part of the body are aſcribed to the whole perſon; and becauſe of that ſympathy there is between them, he has a fellow-feeling with his people in all their infirmities; in all their afflictions he is afflicted; if *Saul* perſecutes his ſaints, he perſecutes him; whatever injury is done to them, he takes it as done to himſelf, who are to him as the apple of his eye. Moreover, hereby they are conformed unto him, and made like him; as he was ſo are they in this world; there is a good deal of likeneſs between the afflictions of Chriſt and his people, tho' in ſome things there is a great diſparity; add to this, that the afflictions of the ſaints are endured for Chriſt's ſake, for the ſake of his Goſpel, and the profeſſion of his name, and therefore called his, and the more chearfully bore by them: now of theſe there were ſome remains to be filled up by the Apoſtle; not that all the afflictions of the whole body of Chriſt were to be, or have been filled up by him; there was a great deal left behind by him to be filled up by others, and which has been filling up ever ſince, and ſtill is, and yet all is not fulfilled to this day, nor will be till the end of time; but he ſpeaks only of that part and meaſure of them, which was to be filled up in his fleſh; he had his meaſure of afflictions allotted to him, great part of which he had endured already but ſome remained, the meaſure was not yet full, tho' pretty near being compleated, which gave him pleaſure; it was juſt filling up, and the time of his departure was at hand, when there would be no more ſorrow; for it was only while he was in the fleſh, he was filling up this meaſure, and would be quickly up: and what added to his joy was that as theſe were the afflictions of Chriſt, and the meaſure of them was appointed by his heavenly Father, to be filled up by him in this mortal ſtate, ſo they were *for his body's ſake, which is the church*; not in the room and ſtead of the church, and people of Chriſt, as were the ſufferings of Chriſt perſonal; or to exempt them from ſufferings who all have their ſhare in this life; nor for their ſins to make reconciliation for them, and procure the remiſſion of them; nor to redeem them, or obtain ſalvation for them, all which is compleated by Chriſt; but for their good and profit, that the Goſpel might continue and be bleſſed to the converſion of many, for the increaſe of the church and additions to it, and for the furtherance of the Goſpel, and that ſuch who profeſſed it might be eſtabliſhed and confirmed in it, by the ſufferings of the Apoſtle for it: and ſuch good effects did follow upon his ſufferings and afflictions; they were for the conſolation of many ſouls, the ſtrengthening of weak believers, and cauſing even preachers of the Goſpel to wax more confident, and more boldly preach the Goſpel without fear of man.

Ver. 25. *Whereof I am made a miniſter*, &c.] Not of Chriſt, or of the Goſpel as before, tho' both were true; but of the churches for whoſe ſake he endured afflictions; and which carries in it a reaſon of his ſuffering for them: he was not a ſaviour of the body, nor a redeemer of the church, nor Lord of it; but a miniſter, a ſervant of it, that miniſtered to it in holy things, in the word and ordinances; not a deacon, as the word ſometimes ſignifies, nor an ordinary miniſter, or a paſtor of a particular church; but a miniſter of the church in general, being an Apoſtle ſent to preach the Goſpel every where: he was *made* a miniſter of it, not by men, or any thing he received from men; nor by himſelf, not by uſurpation, he did not thruſt himſelf into this office, or take it upon him of himſelf; but was put into it by Chriſt, who counted him faithful, he appeared to him, and made him a miniſter, qualified him for this office, called him to it, and ſent him to perform it: and which he executed *according to the diſpenſation of God*; or divine œconomy, which denotes ſuch an authority and adminiſtration, which is uſed in a family. The church is God's family; it is called the houſe and houſhold of God, and the houſhold of faith, part of which is in heaven and part on earth; God is the houſholder or maſter of the family; Chriſt is the Son over his own houſe; miniſters are ſtewards in it, and their work is to give to every one their portion of meat in due ſeaſon; their authority from God to do ſo, and the exerciſe of it are the œconomy or diſpenſation of the Goſpel committed to them: this is of God and not man, for none but God can give them a power to diſpenſe it, and which is purely of his grace, called therefore the diſpenſation of the grace of God, *Epheſ.* iii. 2. and here ſaid to be given, *which is given to me for you*; not according to any merits of his, who was before a blaſphemer, a perſecutor, and an injurious perſon to Chriſt and his Goſpel; but according to the pure grace of God, and that not for himſelf, but for the good of others, for the *Gentiles* eſpecially, and ſo for the *Coloſſians*: *to fulfil the word of God*; either the promiſes and propheſies contained in the word of God, reſpecting the preaching of the Goſpel to the *Gentiles*, and their converſion by it; which had in a great meaſure their accompliſhment thro' the miniſtry of the Apoſtle: or to fill all places with the word of God and Goſpel of Chriſt, as the Apoſtle did from *Jeruſalem*, and round about to *Illyricum*, diffuſing the ſavour of the knowledge of Chriſt in every place; and ſinners being converted, churches were planted and daily filled with ſuch as ſhould be ſaved: or to preach fully and faithfully the Goſpel, keeping back nothing that was profitable, but declaring the whole counſel of God, continuing faithful to it to the end, as he did: to fill up or fulfil words, is an *Hebraiſm*, and ſignifies to confirm them, or act according to them; ſee 1 *Kings* i. 14. and the *Septuagint* there.

Ver. 26. *Even the myſtery which hath been hid from ages and generations*, &c.] This is ſaid, as explanative of the word of God; ſignifying that he did not mean the ſcriptures in general, which are the word of God, and every part of them; ſome part of which is hiſtorical, another prophetical, another practical, and another doctrinal; nor the law, which alſo is the word of God, but the Goſpel, called *the myſtery*, as it often is; becauſe it contains things, which though revealed, are myſteries to a natural man; and even to enlightened perſons, who have the cleareſt view of them, the modus of them is not to be accounted for; ſuch as the doctrines of the Trinity, of the union of the two natures in Chriſt, the incarnation of the Son of God, the union and communion of the church with Chriſt, the reſurrection of the dead, &c. And though perhaps great and ſpecial regard may be here had to the calling of the *Gentiles*, which though revealed in the prophecies of the Old Teſtament, was in a great meaſure hid in them, and not ſo clearly known in ages and generations paſt as now, yet the whole may be applied to the Goſpel-myſtery in general; which was firſt hid in the heart of God, in his thoughts and purpoſes, in his counſel and covenant, and in his Son, in whom are hid all the treaſures of wiſdom and knowledge; and then in the ceremonies and ſhadows of the law, which but few had any inſight into, and diſcerning of; and during that diſpenſation, was wholly hid from the *Gentiles*; and but in part known by the *Jews*, and but by a few, and comparatively by them very darkly; and not ſo clearly by the angels themſelves, who pry into theſe myſteries, and now under the Goſpel diſpenſation, learn from the church the manifold wiſdom of God; and indeed it was hidden from all men, *Jews* and *Gentiles*, in a ſtate of nature, and even from the wiſe and prudent of this world: *but now is made manifeſt to his ſaints*; now under the Goſpel diſpenſation, ſince the coming of Chriſt; there is an external revelation of the Goſpel by him more clearly, by whom grace and truth came, called the revelation of Chriſt; and an internal revelation of it by his Spirit, who is the Spirit of wiſdom and revelation, in the knowledge of him; which is made to ſaints, the holy Apoſtles and Prophets, who are the ſaints to whom this faith, and the myſtery of it, were firſt delivered with ſo much power and evidence; and to all the elect of God, whom he has ſeparated for himſelf in eternal election; whom Chriſt has ſanctified by his blood, and to whom he is made ſanctification; and who are called with an holy calling, have principles of grace and holineſs wrought in them by the Spirit of God, and therefore called *his* ſaints; theſe have only a ſpiritual diſcerning of the Goſpel, for the natural man neither knows nor receives it.

Ver. 27. *To whom God would make known*, &c.] The ſpring and cauſe of the manifeſtation of the Goſpel to the ſaints, and choſen of God, is not their works, for God does not call them with an holy calling according to them, but according to his own grace; nor any preparations and diſpoſitions in them before ſuch manifeſtation, towards the Goſpel and the truths of it, for there are none ſuch naturally in men, but all the reverſe; nor a foreſight of their better improvement of it, when made known, for this is not the method of divine grace, witneſs the inſtances of *Sodom* and *Gomorrha*, *Tyre* and *Sidon*; nor any holineſs in them, or becauſe they were ſanctified, for they became ſo by the power of divine grace, through the Goſpel revelation; but it is the pure ſovereign good-will and pleaſure of God; ſee *Eph.* i. 9. *Matt.* xi. 25, 26. as appears from what they were before the Goſpel came unto them, what is made known to them in it and by it; and from this, that they and not others equally as deſerving, are favoured with it: *what is the riches of the glory of this myſtery among the Gentiles.* The Apoſtle beſides calling the Goſpel a *myſtery*, as before, aſcribes *glory* to it; 'tis a glorious myſtery, there's a glory in all the myſteries of it; 'tis a glorious Goſpel, as it is often called, in its author, ſubject, matter, uſe, and efficacy: and alſo *riches* of glory, or glorious riches; containing rich truths, an immenſe treaſure of them, comparable to gold, ſilver, and precious ſtones; rich bleſſings of juſtification, pardon, reconciliation, adoption, and eternal life; and rich promiſes, relating both to this life, and that which is to come: all which were opened and made known, not to the *Jews* only, but *among the Gentiles* alſo; who before were aliens, enemies, exceeding wicked, poor, blind, and miſerable, but now through the Goſpel, were become rich and glorious, wiſe, knowing, and happy: *which is Chriſt in you, the hope of glory*; this is to be connected with all that goes before: Chriſt is the riches of the Goſpel; the riches of the divine perfections, which the Goſpel more clearly diſplays than the works of creation or providence are all in Chriſt, the fulneſs of them dwells in him; and this is the grace the Goſpel reveals, that he who was rich with all theſe, became poor to make us rich; the rich promiſes of the Goſpel were all made to Chriſt, and are all yea and *Amen* in him; the rich bleſſings of it are all in his hands, righteouſneſs, peace, and pardon, the riches both of grace and glory; the rich treaſures of its divine truths are hid in him, and he is the ſubſtance of every one of them: Chriſt is alſo the glory of the Goſpel, inaſmuch as he is the author, preacher, and ſubject of it; it is full of the glory of his perſon, both as the only begotten of the Father, and as the only mediator between God and man; it is the glaſs through which this is ſeen: moreover, the glory of God in him, is expreſſed hereby; the glory of his wiſdom and power, of his truth and faithfulneſs, of his juſtice and holineſs, of his love, grace, and mercy, and every other perfection, is eminently held forth in the Goſpel; as this is great in the ſalvation and redemption of his people by Chriſt, which the Goſpel brings the good news of; add to this, that that glory which the ſaints ſhall have with Chriſt, and will lie in the enjoyment of him to all eternity, is brought to light in the Goſpel: Chriſt is alſo the myſtery of the Goſpel; he is one of the perſons in the myſtery of the Trinity; the myſtery of his divine ſonſhip, of his divine perſon, being God and yet man, man and yet God, and both in one perſon, and of his incarnation and redemption, makes a conſiderable part of the Goſpel: and Chriſt who is the ſum and ſubſtance of it, is *in* his people; not only as the omnipreſent God, as the author of the light of nature, as the creator of all things, in whom all live, move, and have their beings, but in a way of ſpecial grace; and the phraſe is expreſſive of a revelation of him in them, of their poſſeſſion of him, of his inhabitation in them by his Spirit and grace, particularly by faith, and of their communion with him, in conſequence of their union to him; and being ſo, he is the ground and foundation of their hopes of glory. There is a glory which the ſaints are hoping for, which the glories of this world are but a faint reſemblance of; which is unſeen at preſent, and which the ſufferings of the preſent time are not worthy to be compared unto; 'tis what is eternal, and which Chriſt has entered into, and took poſſeſſion of; and what will greatly conſiſt in beholding his glory, and in everlaſting communion with him; this through grace ſaints have a good hope of, and are waiting for, and even rejoice at times in the hope of it; of which hope, Chriſt is the foundation: for not only the promiſe of it is with him, but the glory itſelf is in his hands; the gift of it is with him, and through him; he has made way by his ſufferings and death for the enjoyment of it, and is now preparing it for them, by his preſence and interceſſion; his grace makes them meet for it, his righteouſneſs gives them a title to it, and his Spirit is the earneſt of it, and the ſubſtance of it will be the fruition of himſelf.

Ver. 28. *Whom we preach*, &c.] Under the above conſiderations; as the riches, the glory, and the myſtery of the Goſpel; as the hope ſet before loſt ſinners to lay hold upon; as the only Saviour and Redeemer, by whoſe righteouſneſs believers are juſtified, through whoſe blood their ſins are pardoned, by whoſe ſacrifice and ſatisfaction atonement is made, and in whoſe perſon alone is acceptance with God: Chriſt and him crucified, and ſalvation by him, were the ſubject of the miniſtry of the Apoſtles; on this they dwelt, and it was this which was bleſſed for the converſion of ſinners, the edification of ſaints, the planting of churches, and the ſetting up and eſtabliſhing the kingdom and intereſt of Chriſt: *warning every man*; of his loſt ſtate and condition by nature; of the wrath to come, and the danger he is in of it; of the terrors of the Lord, and of an awful judgment; ſhewing ſinners that they are unrighteous and unholy, that their nature is corrupt and impure, their beſt righteouſneſs imperfect, and cannot juſtify them before God, that they ſtand guilty before him, and that deſtruction and miſery are in all their ways; and therefore adviſe them to flee from the wrath to come, to the hope ſet before them in the Goſpel: *teaching every man in all wiſdom*; not natural, but ſpiritual and evangelical; the whole Goſpel of Chriſt, the counſel of God, the wiſdom of God in a myſtery, and all the branches of it; teaching them to believe in Chriſt for ſalvation, to lay hold on his righteouſneſs for juſtification, to deal with his blood for pardon, and with his ſacrifice for the atonement of their ſins; and to obſerve all things commanded by Chriſt, and to live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly: by theſe two words, *warning* and *teaching*, the ſeveral parts of the Goſpel miniſtry are expreſſed; and which extend to all ſorts of men, rich and poor, bond and free, greater and leſſer ſinners, *Gentiles* as well as *Jews*; and who are chiefly deſigned here, and elſewhere by every man and every creature: *that we may preſent every man perfect in Chriſt Jeſus*; not in themſelves, in which ſenſe no man is perfect in this life; but in the grace, holineſs, and righteouſneſs of Chriſt, in whom all the ſaints are compleat: or it may regard that ripeneſs of underſtanding, and perfection of knowledge, which when arrived unto, ſaints become perfect men in Chriſt; and is the end of the Goſpel miniſtry, and to which men are brought by it; ſee *Eph.* iv. 13. and to be underſtood of the preſentation of the ſaints, not by Chriſt to himſelf, and to his Father, but by the miniſters of the Goſpel, as their glory and crown of rejoicing in the day of Chriſt.

Ver. 29. *Whereunto I alſo labour*, &c.] In the word and doctrine, by preaching Chriſt, warning ſinners of their danger, teaching them the way of ſalvation, and their duty; with this view, that in the great day of account, he might bring a large number of them, and ſet them before Chriſt as the ſeals of his miniſtry, as inſtances of the grace of Chriſt, and as perfect in him: *ſtriving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily*; meaning either in his prayers, earneſtly intreating of God that he would ſucceed his labours, and bleſs them to the converſion of many; which ſenſe is favoured by the *Syriac* verſion, which renders it, ומתכשף, *and make ſupplication*; that is, with that effectual fervent prayer, which was powerfully wrought in him: or in his miniſtry, combating with many enemies, fighting the good fight of faith; not in his own ſtrength, but through the power of Chriſt; which enabled him to preach the Goſpel far and near, in ſeaſon and out of ſeaſon; which ſupported his outward man, and ſtrengthened his inward man for that ſervice, and made it effectual to the good of the ſouls of many: ſome refer this to the ſigns, wonders, and miracles, which Chriſt wrought by him, for the confirmation of the Goſpel; but the other ſenſe, which takes in both the power by which he was aſſiſted in preaching, both in body and ſoul, and that which went along with his miniſtry to make it uſeful to others, is to be preferred.

CHAP. II.

IN this chapter the Apoſtle expreſſes his great concern for the *Coloſſians*, and others he had never ſeen; exhorts them to conſtancy in the faith of Chriſt; warns them of falſe teachers, and their tenets; takes notice of various bleſſings and privileges they had by Chriſt, and cautions againſt ſeveral ſuperſtitions and corruptions, which were obtaining among the churches of Chriſt: in ver. 1. the Apoſtle declares the conflict he had for the perſons he writes to, and for others, though they had never ſeen him, which he was deſirous they might be acquainted with; partly for the comfort of their hearts, their cement in love, and the improvement of their knowledge of divine things, the treaſures of which are in Chriſt, ver. 2, 3. and partly that they might not be deceived, by the enticing words of the falſe teachers, ver. 4. and ſhould his abſence and diſtance from them, be objected to his profeſſed concern and affection for them, he anſwers, that notwithſtanding that, he was preſent with them in ſpirit, and had a diſcerning of their faith and order, and the ſtedfaſtneſs thereof with pleaſure, ver. 5. wherefore he exhorts them to perſeverance in the faith of Chriſt, and to an abounding in it, ver. 6, 7. and to take heed of being hurt by the vain philoſophy and traditions of the *Jews*, but to keep cloſe to Chriſt, and the truths of his Goſpel, ſeeing all fulneſs is in him, and they were full in him, who is over all, and ſuperior to all, and therefore had no need to have recourſe unto, and hearken to any other, ver. 9, 10. nor did they need any *Jewiſh* ordinances, particularly circumciſion, ſince they were partakers of another and better circumciſion in Chriſt; and beſides, were buried in baptiſm with him; and even though they had been dead in ſin, and in their fleſhly uncircumciſion, yet they were alive, quickened with Chriſt, and had the forgiveneſs of all their ſins for his ſake; who had freed them from the ceremonial law, and had rid them of all their former lords and maſters, and had brought them into the liberty of the Goſpel, ver. 11, 12, 13, 14, 15. wherefore he concludes, by way of exhortation and advice, firſt with reſpect to *Jewiſh* ceremonies, not to ſuffer them to be impoſed upon them, or to regard the cenſures of men for the non-obſervance of them, ſince theſe were but ſhadows, of which Chriſt is the ſubſtance, ver. 16, 17. and next with reſpect to the worſhip of angels, under a notion of humility, ſome were for introducing; who are deſcribed as bold intruders, vain, proud, and conceited perſons, and as not holding the head Chriſt, to whom the body the church is joined, and by whom it is nouriſhed and increaſed, ver. 18, 19. and ſeeing now they that are Chriſt's, are dead with him to the ceremonial law, and that dead to them, the Apoſtle argues that they ſhould not be ſubject to the ordinances, commands, and doctrines of men; ſome of which he inſtances in, as if they were ſtill under the rudiments of the world; and the rather, ſince theſe things had no true wiſdom in them, only a ſhew of it, and were no other than will-worſhip and ſuperſtition, and lay in a negligence of the body, and were diſhonourable and unſatisfying, ver. 20, 21, 22, 23.

Ver. 1. *For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you,* &c.] This is occaſioned by what he had ſaid in the latter part of the former chapter, that he laboured and ſtrove according to the energy of divine power in him, to preſent every man perfect in Chriſt; and leſt theſe *Coloſſians* ſhould think that theſe labours and ſtrivings of his, were only for all and every of thoſe perſons among whom he was, and to whom he perſonally preached, he would have them know, obſerve, and aſſure themſelves, that the great conflict, ſtrife, and agony, in which he was engaged, was for them alſo; by which he means, his fervent prayers and wreſtlings with God, the conflicts he had in his own mind, with his own ſpirit, about the good of the churches of Chriſt, the care of which were upon him, and even of thoſe to whom he was by face unknown, ſometimes hoping, ſometimes fearing, ſometimes rejoicing, at other times weeping, at what he heard concerning them; alſo his combats with the falſe Apoſtles, ſtriving and earneſtly contending for the faith of the Goſpel, giving no place to them, no, not for an hour, defending truth, refuting error, and fighting the good fight of faith, by preaching, writing, and diſputing; likewiſe the various perſecutions, great afflictions and hardſhips he met with from men, for the ſake of the Goſpel; add to all this, the frequent battles he had with the enemy of ſouls, his wreſtlings againſt principalities and powers, the many temptations of ſatan with which he was attacked, to draw him off from the ſervice of Chriſt, to weaken his hands, and hinder his ſucceſs in it; all which he endured and went through with a greatneſs of mind, and that for the good of the churches of Chriſt, and the glory of his name, which were the great things he had in view: and among others, for the good of theſe *Coloſſians, and for them at Laodicea*; the ſaints of that place, the church of Chriſt which was there; and is the rather mentioned, becauſe near to *Coloſſe*: it was a famous city by the river *Lycus*, firſt called *Dioſpolis*, and then *Rhoas*[p], and afterwards *Laodicea*; it was the *metropolis* of *Phrygia*, in which *Coloſſe* ſtood: hence this Epiſtle is ordered to be read to them alſo, they being infeſted with falſe teachers, and in the ſame ſituation and circumſtances as the *Coloſſians* were; and though the Apoſtle was unknown to both of them, having never been at either place, yet was heartily concerned for each of their welfare, and he ſtrove for them as he did for others; one of *Stephens*'s copies adds, *and them in Hierapolis*; ſee ch. iv. 13. *And for as many as have not ſeen my face in the fleſh*; meaning the churches of Chriſt, and believers in him; ſuch as had never heard him preach, nor had any perſonal knowledge of him, and converſation with him, which tend to knit the hearts of chriſtians more firmly together; yet his heart was towards them, he laboured for them, by praying for them, writing to them, ſuffering all things for their ſakes, for the confirmation of them, and of the Goſpel of Chriſt. Chriſtian love and care, and the benefit of the labours and ſufferings of Goſpel miniſters, extend and reach to perſons that never ſaw them.

Ver. 2. *That their hearts might be comforted,* &c.] Here follow the reaſons why the Apoſtle had ſo great a conflict, on account of the above perſons, and why he was ſo deſirous they ſhould know it; one is, the conſolation of their hearts. The hearts of God's people often need comfort, by reaſon of indwelling ſin, the temptations of ſatan, the hidings of God's face, and afflictive providences; and by reaſon of falſe teachers, who greatly trouble them, unſettle their minds, weaken their faith, and fill them with doubts and perplexities, and which was the caſe with theſe churches: now the buſineſs of Goſpel miniſters, is to comfort ſuch; this is the commiſſion they are ſent with; the doctrines of the Goſpel are calculated for this very purpoſe, ſuch as full redemption, free juſtification, compleat pardon of ſin, peace and reconciliation; and the bent of their miniſtry is to comfort diſtreſſed minds, upon what account ſoever; and it muſt be a comfort to theſe churches, when they found that they were regarded by ſo great an Apoſtle; and it might tend to confirm them in the doctrine they had received at firſt, and deliver them from the ſcruples the falſe Apoſtles had injected into their minds, and ſo adminiſter comfort to them, when they perceived that the Apoſtle approved of the Goſpel they had heard and embraced, and rejected the notions of the falſe teachers: *being knit together in love*; as the members of an human body are, by joints and bands; as love is the bond of union between God and his people, Chriſt and his members, ſo between ſaints and ſaints; it is the cement that joins and keeps them together, and which edifies and builds them up, and whereby they increaſe with the increaſe of God; it makes them to be of one heart and one ſoul; it renders their communion with one another comfortable and delightful, and ſtrengthens them againſt the common enemy, who is for dividing, and ſo deſtroying; and is what is the joy of Goſpel miniſters, and what they labour at and ſtrive for, and which is another reaſon of the Apoſtle's conflict: *and unto all riches of the full aſſurance of underſtanding*; that is, ſpiritual knowledge and underſtanding, or the underſtanding of ſpiritual things; for the underſtanding of things natural and civil, is not deſigned; nor a mere notional knowledge of ſpiritual things, which perſons may have, and yet not charity, or love, with which this is here joined; and ſuch an one alſo, which is ſure and certain: for as there is ſuch a thing as the aſſurance of faith, and the aſſurance of hope, ſo likewiſe of underſtanding of the Goſpel, and the truths of it; concerning which there ought to be no doubt, being to be received upon the credit of a divine teſtimony: moreover, ſuch a knowledge and underſtanding of divine things is intended, as is large and abundant, ſignified by *all riches*; for though it is not compleat and perfect in this life, yet it takes a vaſt compaſs, and reaches to all the deep things of God; to whatever relates to the perſon and grace of Chriſt; to all the things of the Spirit of God; to all the bleſſings and promiſes of the covenant of grace; to the riches both of grace and glory, to the things of time and eternity, and which is more clearly explained by the following clauſe: *to the acknowledgment of the myſtery of God, and of the Father, and of Chriſt*; that is, to a greater and more perfect knowledge, approbation, and confeſſion of the Goſpel, which he had in the preceding chapter called *the myſtery*; ſee ver. 26, 27. and here *the myſtery of God*, which he is both the author and ſubject of; it is by him as the efficient

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[p] Plin. Nat. Hiſt. l. 5. c. 29.

cient cauſe, ordained by him, and hid in him before the world was; and it is of him, as the ſubject-matter of it; not as the God of nature and providence, which the works of both declare; but as the God of all grace, as God in Chriſt, which is the peculiar diſcovery of the Goſpel: and *of* him as *the Father* of Chriſt, which is not diſcoverable by the light of nature, nor known by natural reaſon, but is a point of divine revelation; and *of* him as the Father of his people by adoption; and of all his grace, in election to grace and glory; in predeſtination to ſonſhip, and in the council and covenant of grace; in the ſcheme of ſalvation and redemption; in the miſſion of his Son, and the gift of him as a ſaviour and redeemer. The copulative *and* before *the Father*, is left out in the *Vulgate Latin*, *Syriac*, and *Arabic* verſions, which read *the myſtery of God the Father*; and with it it may be rendered, as it ſometimes is, *God, even the Father:* though the word God may be conſidered eſſentially, and as after diſtinguiſhed into two of the perſons of the Godhead; *the Father* the firſt perſon, ſo called, in relation to his Son, which is no ſmall part of the myſtery of the Goſpel; and *Chriſt* the ſecond perſon, who is equally God with the Father; and the Spirit, who though not mentioned, is not excluded from this adorable myſtery: and which is the myſtery *of Chriſt*, he being both the efficient cauſe, and the ſubject-matter of it; it treats of his deity and perſonality; of his offices, as mediator, prophet, prieſt, and king; of his incarnation and redemption; of his grace, righteouſneſs, ſacrifice, and ſatisfaction; of juſtification by him, pardon thro' him, and acceptance in him.

Ver. 3. *In whom are hid all the treaſures of wiſdom and knowledge.*] This may be underſtood either of the myſtery of the Goſpel, which contains the rich mines and hidden treaſures of all divine truths; ſo called, becauſe of the richneſs and intrinſic value and excellency of them; and becauſe of their variety and abundance, being the unſearchable riches of Chriſt: or of Chriſt himſelf; and not ſo much of his perſonal wiſdom, either as God, being the all-wiſe God, the wiſdom of God, an omniſcient being, that knows all perſons and things whatever, within the whole circle of wiſdom and knowledge; or as man, whoſe wiſdom and knowledge though created, was very large and abundant; or as mediator, on whom the ſpirit of wiſdom and underſtanding, of counſel and of knowledge reſts; but of that fulneſs of truth as well as grace, which dwells in him as in its ſubject and fountain; by whom it comes, and from whom it is derived unto us; and our higheſt wiſdom and knowledge, lies in knowing him, whom to know is life eternal; and the excellency of whoſe knowledge, ſurpaſſes every thing elſe; it is the greateſt riches, and moſt valuable treaſure; nor is there any thing worth knowing, but what is in Chriſt, all is laid up in him: and being ſaid to be *hid* in him, ſhews the excellency of the wiſdom and knowledge that is in him, only valuable things being hid, or compared to hid treaſure; that this can't be had without knowing him; that it is imperfect in the preſent ſtate, and is not yet fully and clearly revealed; and therefore ſhould be enquired after, and ſearched for, and Chriſt ſhould be applied unto for it; גנזי חכמתא, *treaſures of wiſdom*, is a phraſe uſed by the *Targumiſt*[q].

Ver. 4. *And this I ſay*, &c.] That he had ſuch a conflict for them, and had told them of his care and fear on their account, and had ſignified his great deſire that they might arrive to a more large and certain knowledge of the myſteries of grace, and had aſſerted that all ſolid ſpiritual wiſdom and knowledge were in Chriſt; all which he ſaid, to ſhew his affection for them; to obſerve unto them, that there was no need to ſeek for wiſdom and knowledge elſewhere, ſince there was ſuch a fulneſs of it in Chriſt, and the Goſpel; and to put them upon their guard againſt falſe teachers: *leſt any man ſhould beguile you with enticing words*; by which are meant, not apt and pertinent words, ſuch as are ſuited to the minds of men, and proper to convey right ideas of divine truth, poignant expreſſions, ſound ſpeech, and ſtrong reaſonings; for ſuch the Apoſtle himſelf uſed, and yet not enticing words of mens wiſdom; and which deſign mere words, great ſwelling words of vanity, which like bubbles look big, and make a great noiſe, but contain nothing but wind and emptineſs; fair ſpeeches, ſpecious pretences, falſe colourings, fallacious reaſonings, a ſhew of probability, and appearance of ſcience, falſly ſo called; whereby deceitful workers, ſuch as the followers of *Simon Magus* and the *Gnoſticks* uſed, whom the Apoſtle had in view; beguiled unſtable ſouls, and deceived the hearts of the ſimple; wherefore the Apoſtle ſaid the above things, ſhewing that all true wiſdom was in Chriſt, and all ſpiritual knowledge was in the pure and unmixed Goſpel; which was not to be parted with for other things, which through art and management, and the cunning craftineſs of men, might at firſt ſight carry in them a ſhew of probability, an appearance of truth. The gold, the ſilver, and precious ſtones of divine truths, which have been proved by the ſtandard, are not to be given up for ſuch as only look like them, being wrought up through the fallacy of men; who by a ſett of unmeaning words, paralogiſms, and falſe reaſonings, lie in wait to deceive.

Ver. 5. *For though I be abſent in the fleſh*, &c.] Or *body*, as the *Ethiopic* verſion reads it, and as it is expreſſed in 1 *Cor.* v. 3. here the Apoſtle anticipates an objection which might be made, how he could have ſuch a conflict and concern for them, and expreſs ſo much affection for them, and know ſo much of their affairs, in what condition and ſituation they were, and how liable to be deceived by falſe teachers, when he was abſent from them, and had never been among them. That he had never been corporally preſent with them, nor was he then, he owns; but this did not hinder but that he might be in another ſenſe preſent with them, and ſo have cognizance of them and their ſtate, and be affected towards them, and concerned for them: *yet am I with you in the ſpirit*; as he was with the *Corinthians* in the place above cited, judging the inceſtuous perſon, determining concerning his caſe, and delivering him up to *ſatan*, and ſo he was with theſe *Coloſſians*; for as he was a member of the ſame body with them, he was actuated by the ſame Spirit; and by virtue of their union to each other in their common head, his ſpirit went out towards them, his heart was knit unto them; he had the ſame affection for them, and care of them, though he had never ſeen them with his bodily eyes, as he had for thoſe whom he had ſeen: moreover, this may regard that extraordinary diſcerning and preſence of his ſpirit which he had; and which was of the ſame kind with that of *Eliſha*, when his ſervant *Gehazi* went after *Naaman* the *Syrian*, and took a preſent of him, to whom on his return he ſaid, upon his denying that he had been any where, *went not mine heart with thee, when the man turned again from his chariot to meet thee?* 2 Kings v. 26. *Eliſha*'s ſpirit went and was preſent with him, and ſaw and knew all that paſſed, being under the impulſe and inſpiration of the Spirit of God, who made all known unto him: ſo the ſpirit of the Apoſtle *Paul* was at the church at *Coloſſe*, and ſaw and diſcerned their whole eſtate; this being made known by the Spirit of God, under whoſe inſpiration he wrote this letter, ſuitable to their caſe: *joying and beholding your order*; or as the *Syriac* verſion renders it, *I rejoice that I can ſee your order*; that is, with pleaſure obſerve, conſider it, and contemplate on it; and that partly from the relation of *Epaphras*, and chiefly from the intimations of the Spirit of God in an extraordinary way: by their *order* is meant, either their orderly walk and converſation, which being as becomes the Goſpel of Chriſt, was very pleaſing and delightful to the Apoſtle; or rather the order of their church diſcipline, they having regular officers, paſtors, and deacons, ordained among them; who rightly performed their offices, and had reſpect and ſubjection yielded to them; the ordinances of the Goſpel were duly adminiſtered, and conſtantly attended on; the members of the church were watched over, admonitions given, and cenſures laid where they were neceſſary, and every thing was done decently and in order; which was a beautiful ſight, and gave the Apoſtle an uncommon pleaſure. The word uſed, ſignifies a military order, ſuch as is obſerved in armies, in battle array; ſuggeſting, that theſe chriſtians were good ſoldiers of Chriſt, were enliſted under his banners, and kept in due order, in rank and file; ſtood faſt in one ſpirit, contended and ſtrove together for the faith of the Goſpel, fought the good fight of faith, nor could any hardſhip move them from their ſtation; ſo that they were in the Apoſtle's eye, beautiful as *Tirzah*, comely as *Jeruſalem*, and terrible as an army with banners, *Cant.* vi. 4. and ſo may denote their attachment to the Goſpel, and to one another; they were united to, and abode by each other; they ſerved the Lord with one conſent, and kept the unity of the Spirit, in the bond of peace, which is a pleaſant thing to behold, as well as what follows: *and the ſtedfaſtneſs of your faith in Chriſt*; either in the grace of faith, and the exerciſe of it on Chriſt, in oppoſition to doubtings and unbelief; whereby God is honoured, and with which he is well pleaſed; ſouls are filled with peace and joy; ſatan is reſiſted and overcome; and the hearts of others, particularly miniſters of the Goſpel, are comforted: or in the doctrine of faith reſpecting Chriſt, in which they ſtood faſt; notwithſtanding there was a majority againſt it, the wiſe and learned, the rich and mighty, did not receive it; and tho' it was oppoſed by falſe teachers, perſecuted by profane men, and loaded with reproach and obloquy; and alſo in the profeſſion of it, which they held without wavering: now to ſee a ſett of chriſtians, a church of Chriſt walking together in Goſpel order, ſteady in their faith on Chriſt, abiding by the doctrine of faith, and maintaining an honourable profeſſion, how beautiful and delightful is it!

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[q] Jonathan ben Uzziel in Exod. xl. 4.

Ver. 6. *As ye have therefore received Chriſt Jeſus the Lord*, &c.] Receiving Chriſt, is believing in him: faith is the eye of the ſoul, that ſees the beauty, glory, fulneſs, and ſuitableneſs of Chriſt; the foot that goes to him, and the hand that takes hold on him, and the arm that receives and embraces him; ſo that this is not a receiving him into the head by notion, but into the heart by faith; and not in part only, but in whole: faith receives a whole Chriſt, his perſon as God and man; him in all his offices, as prophet, prieſt, and king; particularly as a ſaviour and redeemer, he being under that character ſo exceeding ſuitable to the caſe of a ſenſible ſinner; and it receives all bleſſings of grace along with him, from him, and through him; as a juſtifying righteouſneſs, remiſſion of ſins, adoption of children, grace for grace, and an inheritance among all them that are ſanctified; and both Chriſt and them, as the free grace gifts of God; which men are altogether undeſerving of, and can't poſſibly give any valuable conſideration for: ſo theſe *Coloſſians* had received Chriſt gladly, joyfully, willingly, and with all readineſs; and eſpecially as *the Lord*, on which there is a peculiar emphaſis in the text; they had received him and believed in him, as the one and only Lord and head of the church; as the one and only mediator between God and man, to the excluſion of angels, the worſhip of which the falſe teachers were introducing; they had received the doctrines of Chriſt, and not the laws of *Moſes*, which *Judaizing* preachers were deſirous of joining with them; they had heard and obeyed the Son, and not the ſervant; they had ſubmitted to the authority of Chriſt as king of ſaints, and had been ſubject to his ordinances; wherefore the Apoſtle exhorts them to continue and go on, believing in him, and holding to him the head: *ſo walk ye in him*; not only in imitation of him as he walked, in the exerciſe of grace, as love, patience, humility, and meekneſs, and in the diſcharge of duty; but by faith in him, going on in a way of believing in him, always looking to him, leaning on him, and deriving grace and ſtrength from him: to walk in Chriſt, is to walk in and after the Spirit of Chriſt, under his influence, by his direction, and through his aſſiſtance; and to walk in the doctrine of Chriſt, abiding by it, and increaſing in the knowledge of it; and to walk in the ordinances of Chriſt, which with his preſence and Spirit, are ways of pleaſantneſs and paths of peace: particularly here it may ſignify, to make uſe of Chriſt, and walk on in him, as the way, truth and the life; as the only way of acceſs to God, and acceptance with him; as the way of ſalvation, as the only true way to eternal life and happineſs, in oppoſition to every creature, angels, or men; the worſhipping of the one, or works done by the other.

Ver. 7. *Rooted and built up in him*, &c.] By theſe metaphors, the Apoſtle expreſſes the ſafe and happy ſtate of theſe believers; and which he makes uſe of as arguments, to engage them to walk on in Chriſt, and as pointing out the manner in which they ſhould. Believers are ſometimes compared to trees, and are trees of righteouſneſs, the planting of the Lord; and their root is Chriſt, from whence as ſuch they ſpring, and by whom they are filled with the fruits of righteouſneſs; in him they are to abide, keep cloſe unto him, and walk in him; deriving all their life, nouriſhment, fruitfulneſs, grace, and perſeverance in it, from him as their root: they are alſo ſometimes compared to a building, to an houſe, a temple, an habitation for God; and Chriſt is the ſure and only foundation, on which they are laid, and where they are ſafe and ſecure; and being fitly joined together, grow up as an holy temple to the Lord; and this being their caſe, they are to go on laying the whole ſtreſs of their ſalvation on him, building their faith and hope of eternal glory entirely upon him; and building up one another alſo on their moſt holy faith, of which he is the ſubſtance, as it follows: *and ſtabliſhed in the faith*; that of Chriſt, or in the doctrine of faith which reſpects Chriſt: the Apoſtle here expreſſes the ſame thing without a figure, which he had ſignified by the two foregoing metaphors, and explains what he means by them; namely, that they were well ſettled and grounded in their faith in Chriſt, and thoroughly inſtructed and eſtabliſhed in the doctrines of the Goſpel; and a very good thing it is, to have the heart eſtabliſhed with grace, both as a principle and a doctrine; which is God's work, and was the happy caſe of theſe perſons; wherefore it became them to act as ſuch, and not be like children toſſed to and fro with every wind of doctrine, or carried about with divers and ſtrange doctrines, but abide by thoſe which had been preached to them by the faithful miniſters of Chriſt, and they had received: *as ye have been taught*; by *Epaphras* their miniſter, and others; and therefore ſhould not liſten to falſe teachers, and to a contrary doctrine taught by them; conſidering of whom they had learnt the true doctrine, what evidence it carried with it, and what uſe it had been of to them, in convincing, converting, comforting, inſtructing, and eſtabliſhing them: and therefore ſhould be *abounding therein with thankſgiving*; that is, in the faith; as in the grace, ſo in the doctrine of faith; for as ſaints are to abound in the work of the Lord, and in every good work, and in the exerciſe of every grace, ſo in the knowledge of truth; ſee 2 *Cor.* viii. 7. and to make uſe of all means for the increaſe of, and growth in Goſpel grace and light, and the knowledge of a crucified Chriſt, which is meant by abounding: for all which there's great reaſon for thankſgiving; both for the unſpeakable gift of Chriſt, who is received as ſuch by faith, and in whom believers are rooted and built up; and for faith itſelf, which is the gift of God; and alſo for the Goſpel, and the truths of it; and for every degree of ſpiritual light in it, and knowledge of it.

Ver. 8. ***Beware leſt any man ſpoil you,*** &c.] Or deſpoil you; rob you of the rich treaſure of the Goſpel, ſtrip you of your ſpiritual armour, take away from you the truths and doctrines of Chriſt, and deveſt you of your ſpiritual privileges and bleſſings; ſuggeſting, that the falſe teachers were thieves and robbers, and men of prey: or drive and carry you away as ſpoils, as the innocent harmleſs ſheep are drove, and carried away by wolves, and by the thief that comes to ſteal, to kill, and deſtroy; intimating, that ſuch as theſe were the hereticks of thoſe times; wherefore it became them to be upon their guard, to watch, look out, and beware, leſt they ſhould be ſurprized by theſe deceitful workers, who lay in wait to deceive; were wolves in ſheep's cloathing, who transformed themſelves into the Apoſtles of Chriſt; and therefore it became them to take heed, leſt any man hurt them, be he ever ſo wiſe and learned, or be thought ever ſo good, religious, and ſincere; ſince men of this caſt put on ſuch maſks and falſe appearances, on purpoſe to beguile. The things by which they impoſed upon weak minds are as follow, and therefore to be ſhunned, avoided, and rejected: ***through philoſophy***; not right philoſophy, or true wiſdom, the knowledge of God, of the things of nature, of things natural, moral, and civil; which may be attained unto by the uſe of reaſon, and light of nature. The Apoſtle does not mean to condemn all arts and ſciences, as uſeleſs and hurtful, ſuch as natural philoſophy in its various branches, ethics, logic, rhetoric, *&c.* when kept within due bounds, and in their proper place and ſphere; for with inſtances of theſe, the ſcriptures themſelves abound; but he means that philoſophy, or ſcience, which is falſly ſo called, the falſe notions of philoſophers; ſuch as the eternity of matter, and of this world, the mortality of ſouls, the worſhipping of dæmons and angels, *&c.* and alſo ſuch principles in philoſophy, which in themſelves, and in the things of nature are true, but when applied to divine things, to things above nature, the meer effects of divine power and grace, and of pure revelation, are falſe; as that out of nothing, nothing can be made, which in the things of nature is true, but not to be applied to the God of nature, who has made the world out of nothing; as alſo that from a privation to an habit, there is no return, which is naturally true, but not to be applied to ſupernatural things, and ſupernatural agency; witneſs the miracles of Chriſt, in reſtoring ſight to the blind, life to the dead, *&c.* and therefore is not to be employed againſt the reſurrection of the dead: philoſophy may be uſeful as an handmaid; 'tis not to be a miſtreſs in theological things; it may ſubſerve, but not govern; it is not to be made uſe of as a judge, or rule in ſuch matters; the natural man, on theſe principles, neither knows nor receives the things of the Spirit of God; judgment is not to be made, and formed according to them; as of a Trinity of perſons in the Godhead; of the ſonſhip of Chriſt, and his incarnation; of man's redemption by him, of reconciliation and ſatisfaction by his blood and ſacrifice, of the pardon of ſin, of a ſinner's juſtification, of the reſurrection of the dead, and ſuch like articles of faith: that philoſophy which is right, can only be a rule of judgment in things relating to it, and not in thoſe which are out of its ſphere: in a word, the Apoſtle here condemns the philoſophy of the *Jews*, and of the *Gnoſticks*; the former had introduced natural philoſophy into the worſhip and ſervice of God, and the things appertaining to their religion; and had made the tabernacle and temple, and the moſt holy place, and the things belonging thereunto, emblems and hieroglyphics of natural things; as of the ſun, moon, and ſtars, and their influences, and of the four elements, and of moral virtue, *&c.* as appears from the writings of *Joſephus*[r], and *Philo*[s]; when they were types and repreſentatives of ſpiritual things under the Goſpel diſpenſation; and the latter had brought in the philoſophy of *Pythagoras* and *Plato*, concerning abſtinencies, purgations, ſacrifices, and ceremonies of worſhip, given to dæmons and angels: in ſhort, the Apoſtle's meaning is, that philoſophy is not to be mixed with the pure Goſpel of Chriſt; it has always been fatal to it; witneſs the ſchool of *Pantænus* in *Alexandria*, in the early times of chriſtianity, by which the ſimplicity of the Goſpel was greatly corrupted; and the race of ſchoolmen a few centuries ago, who introduced the philoſophy of *Ariſtotle*, *Averrois*, and others, into all the ſubjects of divinity: to obſerve no more, ſuch kind of philoſophy is here meant, which may be truly called *vain deceit*; that is, that which is vain and empty, and has no ſolid foundation, even in nature and reaſon itſelf; and which being applied to divine things and religious obſervances, is deceitful and deluſory: ***after the tradition of men***; either of the *Gentiles*, who had their traditions in religion;

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[r] Antiqu. l. 3. c. 6. §. 4. 7.

[s] De Congreſſu quærend. Erud. p. 440, 441. de vita Moſis, l. 3. p. 665, &c. quod deterius pot. p. 184.

or of the *Jews*, called the traditions of the elders, and of the fathers, which the *Phariſees* were fond of, by which they tranſgreſſed the commandments of God; which the Apoſtle was brought up in, and was zealous of formerly, but now was delivered from, and rightly condemned, as idle, trifling, and pernicious: *after the rudiments of the world*, or *the elements of the world*; not the four elements of earth, air, fire, and water; or the worſhip of the ſun, moon, and ſtars, &c. among the idolatrous *Gentiles*, but the ceremonial laws of the *Jews*; ſee *Gal.* iv. 3, 9. which were that to them in religion, as the A B C, or letters, are in grammar, the elements and rudiments of it; and though theſe were to them when children uſeful, but now under the Goſpel diſpenſation are weak, beggarly, and uſeleſs, and not to be attended to: *and not after Chriſt*; what he has taught and preſcribed, the doctrines and commandments of Chriſt, the treaſures of wiſdom and knowledge which are in him; and therefore all ſuch vain and deceitful philoſophy, human traditions, and worldly rudiments, are to be rejected; Chriſt and his Goſpel, the revelation he has made, are the ſtandard of doctrine and worſhip; he only is to be heard and attended to, and whatever is contrary thereunto, is to be guarded againſt.

Ver. 9. *For in him dwelleth all the fulneſs of the Godhead bodily.*] This is to be underſtood, not of the doctrine, or Goſpel of Chriſt, as being a perfect revelation of the will of God; but of Chriſt, and particularly of his human nature, as conſiſting of a true body and a reaſonable ſoul, in which the Godhead dwells in a moſt eminent manner: God indeed is every where by his powerful preſence, was in the tabernacle and temple in a very ſingular manner, and dwells in the ſaints in a way of ſpecial grace; but reſides in the human nature of Chriſt, in the higheſt and moſt exalted manner; that is to deity, what the human body is to an human ſoul, it is the houſe in which it dwells: ſo *Philo* the *Jew* [t], calls the *Logos* the houſe of God, who is the ſoul of the univerſe; and elſewhere ſays [u], that God himſelf has filled the divine Logos wholly with incorporeal powers. The Godhead dwells in Chriſt as in a tabernacle, in alluſion to the tabernacle of *Moſes*, which looked mean without ſide, but glorious within; where God granted his preſence, and accepted the ſacrifices of his people; the human nature of Chriſt, is the true antitypical tabernacle, which God pitched and not man; and ſometimes is called a temple, in alluſion to *Solomon*'s; and which is filled with the train of the divine perfections, ſignified by fulneſs here: for not the fulneſs of grace, or a communicative fulneſs, is here meant; nor the relative fulneſs the church; but the fulneſs of the divine nature, of all the perfections of deity, ſuch as eternity, immenſity, omnipreſence, omnipotence, omniſcience, immutability, neceſſary and ſelf-exiſtence, and every other; for if any one perfection was wanting, the fulneſs, much leſs all the fulneſs of the Godhead, would not be in him. The act of inhabitation, denotes the union of the two natures in Chriſt, and expreſſes the diſtinction of them; and is to be underſtood of the Godhead, as ſubſiſting in the perſon of the Son of God, and not as ſubſiſting in the perſon of the Father, or of the Spirit; and ſhews the permanency of this union, 'tis a perpetual abiding one; and this fulneſs is not dependant on the Father's pleaſure; it is not ſaid of this as of another fulneſs, ch. i. 19. that it pleaſed the Father that it ſhould dwell in him: the manner in which it dwells, is *bodily*; not by power as in the univerſe; nor by grace as in the ſaints; nor by any glorious emanations of it as in heaven; nor by gifts, as in the prophets and eminent men of God; nor by ſigns, ſymbols, and ſhadows, as in the tabernacle and temple; but eſſentially and perſonally, or by perſonal union of the divine nature, as ſubſiſting in the Son of God to an human body, choſen and prepared for that purpoſe, together with a reaſonable human ſoul; which is the great myſtery of godlineſs, the glory of the chriſtian religion, and what qualified Chriſt for, and recommends him to us as a Saviour; and is a reaſon why, as theſe words are, that the Goſpel ſhould be abode by, continued in, and that with thankfulneſs; nor ſhould any regard be had to vain and deceitful philoſophy, to the traditions of men, or rudiments of the world: Chriſt only is to be looked to, attended and followed, who has all fulneſs in him.

Ver. 10. *And ye are compleat in him*, &c.] Or *filled up*, or *filled full in him*; that is, are perfect in him: ſaints are in Chriſt, and all fulneſs being in him, they are full too, of as much as they ſtand in need, and are capable of containing: for theſe words are not an exhortation to perfection, as the *Arabic* verſion reads them, *be ye compleat in him*, like thoſe in *Gen.* xvii. 1. *Matt.* v. 48. 2 *Cor.* xiii. 11. but are an affirmation, aſſerting not what the ſaints ſhall be hereafter, or in heaven, but what they now are; not in themſelves, for in themſelves none are perfect, not even thoſe who are truly ſanctified; for though all grace is ſeminally implanted in them, and they have a perfection of parts, of all the parts of the new man, or new creature, and are perfect in compariſon of what they ſometimes were, and of profane perſons and hypocrites, and with reſpect to weaker believers, yet none are abſolutely perfect; the good work of grace is not yet finiſhed in them, ſin dwells in them, they are full of wants and complaints; the beſt of them diſclaim perfection as attained to by them, and expreſs their deſires of it; but they are perfect in Chriſt their head, who has all fulneſs in him, in whom they are choſen and bleſſed: they are compleat and perfect in him as to ſanctification; he having all fulneſs of grace and holineſs for them, they have it in him; and he is made perfect ſanctification to them: and as to juſtification, he has perfectly fulfilled the law for them, he has made full atonement for ſin, has obtained eternal redemption, brought in a compleat and perfect righteouſneſs, by which they are juſtified from all things; are freed from ſin, and made perfectly comely, without ſpot or wrinkle, or any ſuch thing: and as to knowledge, though it is imperfect in them in their preſent ſtate, yet in Chriſt all the treaſures of it are, and they have no need to go elſewhere for any; they are filled with the knowledge of God and of his will, and are compleat therein in Chriſt; and what knowledge they have, is eternal life, the beginning, pledge, and earneſt of it; ſo that they have no reaſon to be beholden to angels or men, only to Chriſt: *which is the head of all principality and power*; not only of the body the church, and who is to be held unto as ſuch, from whom all light, life, grace, and ſtrength are to be derived; but of all others, though in a different ſenſe; and not only of the kings, princes, and potentates of this world, who hold their kingdoms, and receive their crowns from him, and rule by him; but alſo of the angels good and bad, often called principalities and powers; eſpecially the former is here meant, of whom Chriſt is head, being their creator, governor, and upholder; who not only maintains them in their beings, but has confirmed them in their ſtate of holineſs; ſo that they are dependant upon him, and beholden to him for all they have and are: with the *Jews*, *Metatron*, which with them is the name of the angel in *Exod.* xxiii. 20. and ſeems to be a corruption of the word mediator, and to deſign the Meſſiah, is ſaid [w] to be king over all the angels. This is mentioned, partly to ſet forth the glory and excellency of Chriſt; and partly againſt worſhipping of angels, making uſe of them as mediators, or applying to them on any account, ſince Chriſt is the head of theſe, and of every creature; therefore no creature is to be looked and applied unto, truſted and depended on: unleſs rather ſhould be meant, the *Jewiſh* rulers, *Scribes* and *Phariſees*, their doctors, wiſe men, and *Rabbins*, called the princes of this world; the *Jews* tutors, and governors, to whom Chriſt is ſuperior; he's the only maſter and father, and in whom perfection of wiſdom is, and not in them; and therefore ſhould not regard them, their vain philoſophy, worldly rudiments and traditions.

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[t] De migr. Abraham, p. 389.

[u] De Somniis, p. 574.

Ver. 11. *In whom alſo ye are circumciſed*, &c.] This is ſaid, to prevent an objection that might be made to the perfection of theſe *Gentile* believers, becauſe they were not circumciſed; for the *Jews* thought that perfection lay in circumciſion, at leaſt that there could be no perfection without it: "great is circumciſion, ſay they [x], for notwithſtanding all the commands which *Abraham* our father did, he was not called perfect until he was circumciſed; as it is written, *Gen.* xvii. 1. *walk before me, and be thou perfect*:" which objection the Apoſtle anticipates, by obſerving, that they were circumciſed in Chriſt their head, who is made unto them ſanctification; and by him as the meritorious and efficient cauſe of their regeneration and converſion, or internal circumciſion, the antitype and perfection of circumciſion in the fleſh; for the former, and not the latter, is here meant: theſe believers were circumciſed in Chriſt, or by him; not with external circumciſion, which was peculiar to the *Jews*, the natural ſeed of *Abraham*, prefigured Chriſt, and had its accompliſhment in him, the body, and ſubſtance of all the ſhadows of the ceremonial law; and ſo was now nothing, either to *Jew* or *Gentile*: as for the *Gentiles*, they never were obliged unto it; and as for the *Jews*, it was an inſupportable yoke to them, binding them to keep the whole law of *Moſes*, which they could not do, and ſo it made nothing perfect; but Chriſt the ſubſtance of that, and the end of the whole law has, the head of the body the church, in whom all the members of it are compleat, and are circumciſed: *with the circumciſion made without hands*; which is that of the heart, in the ſpirit; every man, though he may be circumciſed in the fleſh, is uncircumciſed in heart, until he is circumciſed by Chriſt and his Spirit; which is done, when he is pricked to the heart, and thoroughly convinced of ſin, and the exceeding ſinfulneſs of it; when the callouſneſs and hardneſs of his heart is taken off and removed, and the iniquity of it is laid open, the plague and corruption in it diſcerned, and all made naked and bare to the ſinner's view; and when he is in pain on account of it, is broken and groans under a ſenſe of it, and is filled with ſhame for it, and loathing and abhorrence of it: now this is effected not *by the hand of man*, as the *Ethiopic* verſion reads it, as outward circumciſion was; this is not done by any creature whatever; not by angels, who rejoice at the repentance of ſinners, but can't produce it; nor by miniſters of the Goſpel, who at moſt are but inſtruments of regeneration and converſion; nor by men themſelves; this is not by might or power of man, by the ſtrength of his free-will, but by the Spirit of God: for though men are ſometimes exhorted to circumciſe themſelves, as in *Deut.* x. 16. *Jer.* iv. 4. in order to convince them of the corruption of their nature, and the need they ſtand in of ſpiritual circumciſion; yet whereas there is an utter diſability in them to effect it, and they need the power and grace of God for that purpoſe, the Lord has graciouſly promiſed his people to do it himſelf for them, *Deut.* xxx. 6. ſo that this circumciſion is in the ſame ſenſe made without hands, as the human nature of Chriſt is ſaid to be a tabernacle not made with hands, that is of men, but of God, being what God has pitched, and not man; and it ſtands oppoſed to circumciſion in the fleſh, which was made with hands, *Eph.* ii. 11. and by ſome inſtrument, as a ſharp knife or ſtone: *in putting off the body of the ſins of the fleſh.* The *Vulgate Latin* verſion leaves out the word *ſins*, and ſo the *Alexandrian* copy and ſome others; and the *Syriac* verſion the word *body*: by *the fleſh* is meant, corrupt nature, which is born of the fleſh, and propagated in a carnal way, and is the ſource and ſpring of all ſin; by *the ſins* of it are intended, the works of the fleſh, the inward motions of ſin in the members, and the outward actions of it: theſe are ſaid to be a *body*, becauſe ſin conſiſts of various parts and members, as a body does; and theſe united together, and which receive frequent and daily additions; and which are committed and yielded to by the members of the natural body; and which body and bulk of ſins ariſing from the corruption of nature, are compared to a garment, and a very filthy one it is; in the putting off of which, lies ſpiritual circumciſion: this is done ſeveral ways; partly by Chriſt's wrapping himſelf in the ſins of his people, bearing them in his body, and becoming a ſacrifice for them, whereby the old man was crucified, and the body of ſin deſtroyed; and by an application of his blood, righteouſneſs, and ſacrifice, to the conſciences of his people, whereby their iniquities are cauſed to paſs from them, and they are cloathed with change of raiment; and by the power of his Spirit, laying ſin under the reſtraints of grace, not ſuffering it to have dominion, but cauſing grace to reign through righteouſneſs; and by the ſaints themſelves, under the influence of grace, who put off the old man with his deeds, according to the former converſation: *by the circumciſion of Chriſt*; not that with which Chriſt was circumciſed at eight days old, that he might appear to be truly man, and a ſon of *Abraham*, and under the law, and to fulfil all the righteouſneſs of it, but that which he by his Spirit is the author of, and what is before expreſſed.

Ver. 12. *Buried with him in baptiſm*, &c.] The Apoſtle goes on to obſerve, how compleat and perfect the ſaints are in Chriſt; that they are not only circumciſed in him in a ſpiritual ſenſe, and the body of the ſins of their fleſh is put off, and removed from them, in alluſion to the cutting off and caſting away of the foreſkin in circumciſion; but that they and all their ſins, were buried with Chriſt, of which their baptiſm in water, was a lively repreſentation;

[w] Zohar in Deut. fol. 120. 3.

[x] Miſn. Nedarim, c. 3. §. 11.

ſentation: Chriſt having died for their ſins, was laid in the grave, where he continued for a while, and then roſe again; and as they were crucified with him, they were alſo buried with him, as their head and repreſentative; and all their ſins too, which he left behind him in the grave, ſignified by his grave cloaths there; and baptiſm being performed by immerſion, when the perſon baptized is covered with water, and as it were buried in it, is a very ſignificant emblem of all this; 'tis a repreſentation of the burial of Chriſt, and very fitly holds him forth to the view of faith in the ſtate of the dead, in the grave, and points out the place where the Lord lay; and it is alſo a repreſentation of our burial with him, as being dead to ſin, to the law, and to the world, by him. This ſhows now, that baptiſm was performed by dipping, or covering the whole body in water, for no other form of adminiſtration of baptiſm, as ſprinkling, or pouring water on the face, can repreſent a burial, or be called one; and this is what many learned interpreters own, and obſerve on this place: *wherein alſo ye are riſen with him*; Chriſt is riſen from the dead as the head and repreſentative of his people, and they are riſen with him; and their baptiſm is alſo an emblem of his and their reſurrection, being adminiſtered by immerſion, in which way only this can be ſignified; for as the going down into the water, and being under it, repreſents Chriſt's deſcending into the ſtate of the dead, and his continuance in it, ſo the emerſion, or coming up out of the water, repreſents his riſing from the dead, and that of his people in him, in order to walk in newneſs of life; for the Apoſtle's meaning is, that in baptiſm ſaints are riſen with Chriſt, as well as in it buried with him: and this *through the faith of the operation of God*; that is, it is through faith that ſaints ſee themſelves buried and riſen with Chriſt, to which the ordinance of baptiſm is greatly aſſiſting, where there is true faith; for otherwiſe without faith, this ordinance will be of no uſe to any ſuch end and purpoſe; and it is not any faith that will avail, but that which is of God's operation; faith is not naturally in men, all men have it not; and thoſe that have it, have it not of themſelves, it is the gift of God; it is what he works in them, and by his power performs: *who hath raiſed him from the dead*; this is a periphraſis of God the Father, to whom the reſurrection of Chriſt from the dead is generally aſcribed; though not to the excluſion of Chriſt, and of the Spirit, who were alſo concerned; and is here added, partly to ſhew in what reſpect faith, which is God's work, has him for its object, as having raiſed Chriſt from the dead, who was delivered for offences, but is riſen again through the power of God for juſtification, and whoever with his heart believes this, ſhall be ſaved; and partly to ſhew, that the ſame power is exerted in working true faith in the heart, as was put forth in raiſing Chriſt from the dead.

Ver. 13. *And you being dead in your ſins,* &c.] Not corporally, though ſin had ſubjected them to a corporal death, and their bodies were really mortal, and in a little time muſt die; but morally, ſin had brought a death upon them in a moral ſenſe, they were ſeparated from God, as at death the body is from the ſoul, and ſo were alienated from the life of God, and conſequently muſt be dead; they had loſt the image of God, which conſiſted in knowledge, righteouſneſs, and holineſs; and were dead as to the underſtanding of what was good, as to their affections for it, or will and capacity to do it; and like dead men, were inſenſible of their ſtate, their ſin, and miſery; and altogether inactive and helpleſs in ſpiritual things, being deſtitute of ſpiritual life, ſtrength, and motion; and were moreover in themſelves deſerving of eternal death, and according to the law of works, under the ſentence of it, and ſo liable and expoſed unto it; and all this for, and on account of their ſins, their actual ſins and tranſgreſſions here meant; which ſeparated them from God, deformed his image in them, and hardened their hearts, that they had no true ſight and ſenſe of themſelves; as alſo on account of the corruption of their nature, ſignified in the next clauſe: *and the uncircumciſion of your fleſh*; which is to be taken not literally, for the prepuce, or foreſkin of their fleſh, which was a ſign and token of the corruption of nature, but figuratively, that itſelf; it being uſual with the *Jews*, to call the vitioſity of nature, ערל, *uncircumciſion*; which they ſay [y], is one of the ſeven names of, יצר רע, *the evil imagination*, or corrupt nature, denoting the pollution, loathſomeneſs, and abominableneſs of it: *hath he quickned together with him*; that is, with Chriſt: this may be underſtood either of the quickening of them in converſion and ſanctification; for as they were dead in ſin in a moral ſenſe, in converſion a principle of life was implanted in them, or grace as a living principle, was wrought in their ſouls by the Spirit of life from Chriſt; ſo that they could ſee their loſt ſtate, their need of Chriſt, the glory of his perſon and righteouſneſs, the fulneſs and ſuitableneſs of his grace; feel their burdens, and handle the word of life; could hear the Goſpel, ſpeak the language of *Canaan*, breathe in prayer and ſpiritual deſires, walk in Chriſt, and do all things through him; and this was God's act and not theirs, and owing to his rich mercy and great love: and this may be ſaid to be done *with Chriſt*, becauſe this is in conſequence of his being quickened, or raiſed from the dead; and by it they were made partakers of the life of Chriſt, they became one ſpirit with him; and it was not ſo much they that lived, but Chriſt lived in them; and beſides, they were quickened in order to live a life of grace and communion with him here, and of glory hereafter: or it may be interpreted of the quickning of them in juſtification; and the rather, becauſe of what is ſaid in the next clauſe; and that either openly, as when a ſinner is convinced that he is dead in a law ſenſe, and faith is wrought in him to behold pardon and righteouſneſs in Chriſt; upon which he prays for the one, and pleads the other; and the Spirit of God ſeals unto him the pardon of his ſins, brings near the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, enables him to lay hold on it as his, and pronounces him juſtified by it; and may well be called juſtification of life, for he is then alive in a law ſenſe, in his own comfortable view and apprehenſion of things: or ſecretly in Chriſt, as the head and repreſentative of all his people; who when he was quickned, they were quickned with him; when he roſe from the dead, they roſe with him; and when he was juſtified, they were juſtified in him, and this ſeems to be the true ſenſe of this paſſage: *having forgiven you all treſpaſſes*. This was a paſt act, being done and over; not only at firſt converſion, when a diſcovery of it was made, but at the death of Chriſt, whoſe blood was ſhed for the remiſſion of ſin; yea, even as early as Chriſt became a ſurety, when the ſins of his people were not imputed to them, but to him: and this was a ſingle act, and done and compleat at once; forgiveneſs of ſin is not done by piece-meals, or at different times, or by divers acts, but is done at once, and includes ſin paſt, preſent, and to come; and is univerſal, reaches to all ſin, original and actual, before and after converſion; ſins of thought, word, and action: and this is God's act, and his only; not men, nor miniſters, nor angels, can forgive ſin; this is the peculiar prerogative of God, and is owing to his abundant mercy and free grace, and which is ſignified by the word here uſed. The *Syriac* and *Arabic* verſions read, *having forgiven us all our treſpaſſes*; and ſo the *Alexandrian* copy and ſome others, read *us* inſtead of *you*.

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[y] Zohar in Exod. fol. 106. 1. Caphtor, fol. 52. 2.

Ver. 14. *Blotting out the hand-writing of ordinances*, &c.] Various are the ſenſes interpreters give of theſe words; ſome think by the hand-writing is meant, the covenant God made with *Adam*, *Gen.* ii. 17. which being broken, obliged him and all his poſterity to the penalty of death, but is cancelled and aboliſhed by Chriſt; others the agreement which the *Iſraelites* made with God at mount *Sinai*, when they ſaid, *all that the Lord hath ſaid will we do, and be obedient*, *Exod.* xxiv. 7. which was as it were ſetting their hands, and laying themſelves under obligation to obedience, and in caſe of failure, to the penalty of the law; others, God's book of remembrance of the ſins of men, out of which they are blotted when pardoned; others the book of conſcience, which bears witneſs to every debt, to every violation and tranſgreſſion of the law, which may be ſaid to be blotted out, when pacified with an application of the blood and righteouſneſs of Chriſt; rather with others it ſignifies the ceremonial law, which lay in divers ordinances and commands, and is what the Apoſtle afterwards ſpeaks of more clearly and particularly; and may be called ſo, becauſe ſubmiſſion to it was an acknowledgment, both of the filth and guilt of ſin; every waſhing was ſaying, that a man was polluted and unclean; and every ſacrifice was ſigning a man's own guilt and condemnation, and teſtifying that he deſerved to die as the creature did, which was offered in ſacrifice: or rather the whole law of *Moſes* is intended, which was the hand-writing of God, and obliged to obedience to it, and to puniſhment in caſe of diſobedience; and this the *Jews*[z] call, שטר חוב, *the writing of the debt*, and is the very phraſe the *Syriac* verſion uſes here: now this was as a debt book, which ſhewed and teſtified the debts of men; that is, their ſins, how many they are guilty of, and what puniſhment is due unto them: and may well be ſaid to be that *that was againſt us, which was contrary to us*; its nature being holy, juſt, good, and ſpiritual, is contrary to the unholy and carnal heart of man, and its commands diſagreeable to his mind and will; nor can he perform what it requires; nor can he be ſubject to it without the grace of God, any more than he can like its precepts; and beſides, it is contrary to him, and againſt him, as it charges him with debts, and proves them upon him, ſo that he has nothing to ſay in his defence; yea, it proceeds againſt him, and curſes and condemns, and kills him: but God has *blotted* it out, Chriſt having engaged as a ſurety for his people, to pay off all their debts; and this being done by him, God has croſſed the debt book of the law, has blotted it out, ſo that this book is of no force; it does not ſtand againſt theſe perſons, it can't ſhew or prove any ſtanding debt, it can't demand any, or inflict any penalty: nay, he has *took it out of the way*; it is not to be ſeen or looked into as a debt book; it is aboliſhed and done away; it is no more as adminiſtered by *Moſes*, as a covenant of works, or as to its rigorous exaction, curſe, and condemnation; this is true of the whole law of *Moſes*, as well as of the ceremonial, which is utterly aboliſhed and diſannulled in every ſenſe, becauſe of the weakneſs and unprofitableneſs of it: *nailing it to his croſs*; to the croſs of Chriſt, ſhewing that the abolition of it is owing to the croſs of Chriſt; where and when he bore the curſe and penalty of the law for his people, as well as anſwered all the types and ſhadows of it: it is thought to be an alluſion to a cuſtom in ſome countries, to cancel bonds, or antiquate edicts and decrees, by driving a nail through them, ſo that they could not be legible any more: or it may be to the writing of *Pilate*, which contained the charge and accuſation againſt Chriſt; and which was placed over his head upon the croſs, and faſtened to it with nails[a]; every nail in the croſs made a ſciſſure in this hand-writing, or bond of the law, that lay againſt us, whereby it was ſo rent and torn, as to be of no force: thus the Holy Ghoſt makes uſe of various expreſſions, to ſhew that there is nothing in the law ſtanding againſt the ſaints; it is blotted out, and can't be read; it is took away, and can't be ſeen; it is nailed to the croſs of Chriſt, and is torn to pieces thereby, that nothing can ever be produced from it to their hurt and condemnation.

Ver. 15. *And having ſpoiled principalities and powers*, &c.] Principalities of hell, the infernal powers of darkneſs, the devil that had the power of death, the accuſer of the brethren, who often objected their debts, with all his works and poſſe: theſe Chriſt has deveſted of their armour, wherein they truſted to have ruined men, as ſin, the law, and death; he has ranſomed his people from him that was ſtronger than they, and taken the prey out of the hands of the mighty; he has bruiſed the ſerpent's head, demoliſhed his works, deſtroyed him himſelf, and all his powers, and defeated all their counſels and deſigns againſt his elect: ſome render the word απεκδυσαμενος, *having put off*, or *uncloathed*; and which ſome of the ancient writers apply to the fleſh of Chriſt, and underſtand it of his putting off the fleſh by death, whereby he gave the death-blow to ſatan and his powers, *Heb.* ii. 14. to which ſenſe agrees the *Syriac* verſion, which renders the words, ובשלה פגרה, *and by the putting off of his body, he expoſed to ſhame principalities and powers:* but it may be better interpreted of uncloathing, or ſtripping principalities and powers of their armour, with which they were cloathed; as is uſually done to enemies, when they fall into the hands of their conquerors: unleſs rather this is to be underſtood, of Chriſt's taking away the power and authority of the *Jewiſh* eccleſiaſtical rulers and governors, by aboliſhing the ceremonial law, and the ordinances of it; declaring himſelf to be the alone king and law-giver in his houſe, and requiring ſubjection to his inſtitutions and appointments, which ſenſe agrees with the context: *he made a ſhew of them openly*; when being raiſed from the dead, he aſcended on high, and led captivity captive; he led ſatan and his principalities and powers captive, who had led others, as he paſſed through the air, the territories of the devil, in the ſight of God and the holy angels: *triumphing over them in it*; which ſome underſtand of the croſs, as if where and by what he got the victory, there he triumphed; the croſs where his enemies thought to make a ſhew of him, expoſe him to public ſcorn and contempt, and to triumph over him, was as it were the triumphant chariot, in which he triumphed over all the powers of hell, when he had conquered them by it: but the words may be rendered *in himſelf*, as they are by the *Vulgate Latin* and *Syriac* verſions; and the ſenſe be, that as he by himſelf got the victory, his own arm brought ſalvation to him, ſo he alone ſhared the glory and honour of the triumph: or it may be rendered *in him*, and the whole in this and the preceding verſe, be applied to God the Father, who as in ver. 12, 13. is ſaid to raiſe Chriſt from the dead, to quicken ſinners dead in ſins, and to forgive all their treſpaſſes; ſo he may be ſaid to blot out the hand-writing of ordinances, and to ſpoil principalities and powers, expoſe them to public view and ſhame, and triumph over them, *in him*, in and by his Son Jeſus Chriſt: the whole is an alluſion to the victories, ſpoils, and triumphs, of the *Roman* emperors, who when they had obtained a victory, a triumph was decreed for them by the ſenate; in which the emperor was drawn in an open chariot, and the captives being ſtript of their armour, and their hands tied behind them, were led before him and expoſed to public view and diſgrace; whilſt he was ſhouted and huzza'd thro' the city of *Rome*, and had all the marks of honour and reſpect given him [b]: now all that is ſaid in the preceding verſes, ſhew how compleat the ſaints are in and by Chriſt; and ſtand in no need of the philoſophy of the *Gentiles*, or the ceremonies of the *Jews*; nor have any thing to fear from their enemies, ſin, ſatan, and the law, for ſin is pardoned, the law is aboliſhed, and ſatan conquered.

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[z] Tzeror Hammor, fol. 87. 1, 3.

[a] Nonnus in Joh. xix. 19. Vid. Niccqueti Titulus S. Crucis, l. 1. c. 18. p. 128.

Ver. 16. *Let no man therefore judge you*, &c.] Since they were compleat in Chriſt, had every thing in him, were circumciſed in him; and particularly ſince the hand-writing of the law was blotted out, and torn to-pieces through the nails of the croſs of Chriſt, the Apoſtle's concluſion is, that they ſhould be judged by no man; they ſhould not regard or ſubmit to any man's judgment, as to the obſervance of the ceremonial law: Chriſt is the prophet who was to be raiſed up like unto *Moſes*, and who only and not *Moſes*, is to be heard; ſaints are to call no man maſter upon earth but him; they are not to be the ſervants of men, nor ſhould ſuffer any yoke of bondage to be impoſed upon them; and ſhould they be cenſured and condemned by others, as if they were tranſgreſſors of the law, and their ſtate bad, for not obſerving the rituals of the former diſpenſation, they ſhould not regard ſuch cenſures; for the *Judaizing* chriſtians were very cenſorious, they were ready to look upon and condemn a man as an immoral man, as in a ſtate of damnation, if he did not keep the law of *Moſes*; but ſuch rigid cenſures were to be diſregarded, *let no man judge*, or *condemn you*; and though they could not help or hinder the judgment and condemnation of men, yet they could deſpiſe them, and not be uneaſy with them, but ſet light by them, as they ought to do. The *Syriac* verſion renders it, נדוחכן, *let no man trouble you*, or make you uneaſy, by impoſing ceremonies on you: the ſenſe is, that the Apoſtle would not have them ſubmit to the yoke they would lay upon them, nor be terrified by their anathema's againſt them, for the non-obſervation of the things that follow: *in meat or in drink*; or on account of not obſerving the laws and rules about meats and drinks, in the law of *Moſes*; ſuch as related to the difference between clean and unclean creatures, to abſtinence in *Nazarites* from wine and ſtrong drink, and which forbid drinking out of an uncovered veſſel, and which was not clean; hence the waſhing of cups, &c. religiouſly obſerved by the *Phariſees*. There was no diſtinction of meats and drinks before the law, but all ſorts of herbs and animals without limitation, were given to be food for men; by the ceremonial law a difference was made between them, ſome were allowed, and others were forbidden; which law ſtood only in meats and drinks, and ſuch like things, but is now aboliſhed; for the kingdom of God, or the Goſpel diſpenſation, does not lie in the obſervance of ſuch outward things, but in internal ones, in righteouſneſs and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghoſt; it is not any thing that goes into the man that defiles, nor is any thing in its own nature common or unclean, but every creature of God is good, ſo be it it be uſed in moderation and with thankfulneſs: *or in reſpect of an holy-day*; or feaſt, ſuch as the feaſt of the paſſover, the feaſt of tabernacles, and the feaſt of pentecoſt; which were three grand feſtivals, at which all the *Jewiſh* males were obliged to appear before the Lord; but were never binding upon the *Gentiles*, and were what the chriſtians under the Goſpel diſpenſation had nothing to do with, and even believing *Jews* were freed from them, as having had their accompliſhment in Chriſt; and therefore were not to be impoſed upon them, or they condemned for the neglect of them. The phraſe εν μερει, which we render *in reſpect*, has greatly puzzled interpreters; ſome reading it *in part of a feaſt*, or holy-day; as if the ſenſe was, that no man ſhould judge or condemn them, for not obſerving ſome part of a feſtival, ſince they were not obliged to obſerve any at all: others *in the partition*, or *diviſion of a feaſt*; that is, in the ſeveral diſtinct feaſts, as they come in their turns: ſome [c] think the Apoſtle reſpects the *Miſna*, or oral law of the *Jews*, in which are ſeveral treatiſes concerning a good day, or an holy-day, the beginning of the new year, and the ſabbath, which treatiſes are divided into ſections or chapters; and that it is one of theſe ſections or chapters, containing rules about theſe things, that is here regarded; and then the ſenſe is, let no man judge you or condemn you, for your non-obſervance of feaſt days, new moons, and ſabbaths, by any part, chapter, or ſection of, יום טוב, or by any thing out of the treatiſe *concerning a feaſt day*; or by any part, chapter, or ſection, of, ראש השנה, the treatiſe *concerning the beginning of the year*; or by any part, chapter, or ſection of, שבת, the treatiſe *concerning the ſabbath*; and if theſe treatiſes are referred to, it proves the antiquity of the *Miſna*. The *Syriac* verſion renders it, בפולגא דעאדא, *in the diviſions of the feaſt*: frequent mention is made of, פרום החג, *the diviſion*, or *half of the feaſt*, in the *Jewiſh* writings: thus for inſtance it is ſaid [d], "three times in a year they clear the chamber "(where the half ſhekels were put) בפרום, *in the half*, or middle of the paſſover, in the middle "of *pentecoſt*, and in the middle of the feaſt:" again [e], "there are three times for tithing of beaſts, "in the middle of the paſſover, in the middle of "*pentecoſt*, and the middle of the feaſt;" that is, of tabernacles: and this the *Jewiſh* commentators ſay [f], was fifteen days before each of theſe feſtivals: now whether it was to this, פרום, middle, or half ſpace before each, and any of theſe feaſts the Apoſtle refers to, may be conſidered: *or of the new moon*; which the *Jews* were obliged to obſerve, by attending religious worſhip, and offering ſacrifices; ſee *Numb.*

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[b] Vid. Lydium de re militari, l. 6. c. 3.

[c] Vid. Caſaubon. Epiſt. ep. 24.

[d] Miſn. Shekalim, c. 3. §. 1.

[e] Miſn. Becorot, c. 9. §. 5.

[f] Maimon. & Bartenora in ib.

Numb. xxviii. 11. 2 *Kings* iv. 23. *Or of the ſabbath-days*, or *ſabbaths*; meaning the jubilee-ſabbath, which was one year in fifty; and the ſabbath of the land, which was one year in ſeven; and the ſeventh day ſabbath, and ſome copies read in the ſingular number, *or of the ſabbath*; which were all peculiar to the *Jews*, were never binding on the *Gentiles*, and to which believers in Chriſt, be they who they will, are by no means obliged; nor ought they to obſerve them, the one any more than the other; and ſhould they be impoſed upon them, they ought to reject them; and ſhould they be judged, cenſured, and condemned, for ſo doing, they ought not to mind it. It is the ſenſe of the *Jews* themſelves, that the *Gentiles* are not obliged to keep their ſabbath; no, not the proſelyte of the gate, or he that dwelt in any of their cities; for they ſay [g], that "it is lawful for a proſelyte of the gate to do work on the ſabbath-day, for himſelf as for an *Iſraelite* on a common feaſt-day; *R. Akiba* ſays, as for an *Iſraelite* on a feaſt-day; *R. Joſe* ſays, it is lawful for a proſelyte of the gate to do work on the ſabbath-day for himſelf, as for an *Iſraelite* on a common or week day:" and this laſt is the received ſenſe of the nation; nay, they aſſert that a *Gentile* that keeps a ſabbath, is guilty of death [h]; ſee the note on *Mark* ii. 27. Yea, they ſay [i], that "if a *Gentile* ſabbatizes, or keeps a ſabbath, though on any of the days of the week, if he makes or appoints it as a ſabbath for himſelf, he is guilty of the ſame." It is the general ſenſe of that people, that the ſabbath was peculiarly given to the children of *Iſrael*; and that the *Gentiles*, ſtrangers, or others, were not puniſhable for the neglect and breach of it [k]; that it is a ſpecial and an additional precept, which with ſome others, were given them at *Marah*, over and above the ſeven commands, which the ſons of *Noah* were only obliged to regard [l]; and that the bleſſing and ſanctifying of it, were by the manna provided for that day; and that the paſſage in *Gen.* ii .3. refers not to the then preſent time, but, על העתיד, *to time to come*, to the time of the manna [m].

Ver. 17. *Which are a ſhadow of things to come*, &c.] By Chriſt, and under the Goſpel diſpenſation; that is, they were types, figures, and repreſentations of ſpiritual and evangelical things: the different *meats and drinks*, clean and unclean, allowed or forbidden by the law, were emblems of the two people, the *Jews* and *Gentiles*, the one clean, the other unclean; but ſince theſe are become one in Chriſt, the diſtinction of meats is ceaſed, theſe ſhadows are gone; and alſo of the different food of regenerate and unregenerate ſouls, the latter feeding on impure food, the aſhes and huſks of ſenſual luſts, or their own works, the former on the milk and meat in the Goſpel, the wholeſome words of Chriſt; and likewiſe the clean meat was a ſhadow of Chriſt himſelf, whoſe fleſh is meat indeed, and whoſe blood is drink indeed. The *holy-days*, or *feaſts* of the *Jews*, the feaſts of tabernacles, of the paſſover and *pentecoſt*, were types of Chriſt; the feaſt of tabernacles, though it was in remembrance of the *Iſraelites* dwelling in tents and booths when they came out of *Egypt*, yet was alſo a repreſentation of the people of God dwelling in the earthly houſes of their tabernacles here on earth; and particularly of Chriſt's dwelling, or tabernacling in human nature, and who likewiſe was born at the time of this feaſt; ſee the note on *John* i. 14. The paſſover, as it was a commemoration of the deliverance of the *Iſraelites* out of *Egypt*, and of God's paſſing over their houſes when he ſmote the firſt-born of the *Egyptians*, ſo it was a type of Chriſt our paſſover ſacrificed for us, and was kept by *Moſes* in the faith of him, *Heb.* xi. 28. there is a very great reſemblance in many particulars, between Chriſt and the paſchal lamb; ſee the note on 1 *Cor.* v. 7. The feaſt of *pentecoſt*, or the feaſt of harveſt and firſt-fruits, was a ſhadow of the firſt-fruits of the Spirit, which Chriſt having received, gave to his diſciples on that day; and of the harveſt of ſouls to be gathered in under the Goſpel diſpenſation, of which the converſion of the three thouſand on the day of *pentecoſt*, was an earneſt and pledge. The *new moon* was typical of the church, which is fair as the moon, and receives all her light from Chriſt the ſun of righteouſneſs; and of the renewed ſtate of the church under the Goſpel diſpenſation, when the old things of the law are paſſed away, and all things relating to church order, ordinances, and diſcipline, are become new. The *ſabbaths* were alſo ſhadows of future things; the grand ſabbatical year, or the fiftieth year ſabbath, or jubilee, in which liberty was proclaimed throughout the land, a general releaſe of debts, and reſtoration of inheritances, prefigured the liberty we have by Chriſt, from ſin, ſatan, and the law, the payment of all our debts by Chriſt, and the right we have through him to the heavenly and incorruptible inheritance. The ſeventh year ſabbath, in which there was no tilling of the land, no plowing, ſowing, nor reaping, was an emblem of ſalvation through Chriſt by free grace, and not by the works of men; and the ſeventh day ſabbath, was a type of that ſpiritual reſt we have in Chriſt now, and of that eternal reſt we ſhall have with him in heaven hereafter: now theſe were but ſhadows, not real things; or did not contain the truth and ſubſtance of the things themſelves, of which they were ſhadows; and though they were repreſentations of divine and ſpiritual things, yet dark ones, they had not ſo much as the very image of the things; they were but ſhadows, and like them fleeting and paſſing away, and now are gone: *but the body is of Chriſt*; or as the *Syriac* verſion reads it, *the body is Chriſt*; that is, the body, or ſum and ſubſtance of theſe ſhadows is Chriſt; he gave riſe unto them, he exiſted before them, as the body is before the ſhadow; not only as God, as the Son of God, but as mediator, whom theſe ſhadows regarded as ſuch, and as ſuch he caſt them; and he is the end of them, the fulfilling end of them; they have all their accompliſhment in him: and he is the body of ſpiritual and heavenly things; the ſubſtantial things and doctrines of the Goſpel, are all of Chriſt, they all come by him; all the truths, bleſſings, and promiſes of grace, are from him and by him, and he himſelf is the ſum of them all. The alluſion ſeems to be to a way of ſpeaking among the *Jews*, who were wont to call the root, foundation, ſubſtance, and eſſence of a thing, גופא, *the body of it* [n]: ſo they ſay [o], "the conſtitutions concerning the ſanctification of the offerings and the tithes, are both the one and the other, גופי תורה, *the bodies*, or ſubſtantial

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[g] T. Bab. Ceritot, fol. 9. 1. Piſke Toſaphot Yebamot, art. 84. Maimon. Hilch. Sabbat, c. 20. §. 14. [h] T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 58. 2. [i] Maimon. Hilch. Melachim, c. 10. §. 9. [k] T. Bab. Betza, fol. 16. 1. Seder Tephillot, fol. 76. 1. Ed. Amſt. [l] T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 56. 2. Seder Olam Rabba, p. 17. & Zuta, p. 101. Ed. Meyer. [m] Jarchi & Baal Hatturim in Gen. ii. 3. Pirke Eliezer, c. 18. [n] Vid. Miſn. Abot, c. 3. §. 18. & Bartenora in ib. & Halicot Olam, par. 2. c. 1. p. 48. [o] T. Bab. Sabbat, fol 32. 1.

“ parts of the law:” and again [p]; that “ the “ conſtitutions or rules about the ſabbath, the feſti- “ vals and prevarications, they are as mountains “ that hang by an hair; for the ſcripture is ſmall, “ and the conſtitutions are many; the judgments “ and the ſervices, the purifications and unclean- “ neſſes, and the inceſts, they have, upon which they “ can ſupport themſelves, and theſe, and theſe, are “ גופי תורה, *the bodies of the law:*” they ſay [q] of a ſmall ſection, or paragraph, that *all the bodies* of the law depend upon it: once more [r], “ the ſab- “ baths, and the good days (the feaſts or holy-days) “ are, גופן, *the bodies* of the ſign;” which the phylacteries or frontlets were for; but our Apoſtle ſays, that Chriſt is the body and ſubſtance of all theſe ſhadows, in oppoſition to theſe ſayings and notions of the *Jews:* ſome connect this laſt clauſe with the former part of the following verſe, rendering it as the *Arabic* verſion thus, *becauſe of the communion of the body of Chriſt, let no man condemn you*; and the *Ethiopic* verſion thus, *and let no man account you fools, becauſe of the body of Chriſt*, but there is nothing in the text to ſupport theſe verſions.

Ver. 18. *Let no man beguile you of your reward*, &c.] Or prize; the alluſion is to the *Olympic* games, one of which was running races; in which the ſtadium, or race-plot was fixed, a mark ſet up to look and run unto, a corruptible crown propoſed to be run for, and which was held by one who ſat as judge, and determined who got the victory, and to whom the crown belonged; theſe judges ſometimes acted the unfair part, and defrauded the victors of their proper right, and to ſuch the Apoſtle compares the falſe teachers: the chriſtian's reward, or prize he is running for, is the incorruptible and never fading crown of glory, life, and righteouſneſs; the race-plot is the chriſtian life, ſpent in the exerciſe of grace, and diſcharge of duty, and in holding faſt, and holding out in a profeſſion of faith unto the end; the mark he looks at, and preſſes towards, is Jeſus Chriſt; and his great concern, the Apoſtle by this metaphor ſuggeſts ſhould be, leſt by falſe teachers he ſhould be defrauded of the prize of the high calling of God, through their removing the mark Chriſt from him, by denying his perſon and Godhead; or by intercepting his ſight of him, placing other objects before him, ſuch as angels, to be worſhipped and adored; or by darkening of it, joining *Moſes* and Chriſt, law and Goſpel, works and grace together, in the buſineſs of ſalvation; whereby he might ſeem to come ſhort, or be in danger of coming ſhort of the heavenly glory: *in a voluntary humility and worſhipping of angels*; theſe things the Apoſtle inſtances in, as in what lay their danger of being beguiled of their reward, or prize. True humility is an excellent grace; 'tis the cloathing and ornament of a chriſtian; nor is there any thing that makes a man more like Chriſt, than this grace; but in theſe men here reſpected, it was only the appearance of humility, it was not real; it was in things they deviſed and willed, not in things which God commanded, Chriſt required, or the ſcriptures pointed at; they would have been thought to have been very lowly and humble, and to have a great conſciouſneſs of their own vileneſs and unworthineſs to draw nigh to Chriſt the mediator immediately, and by him to God; wherefore in pretence of great humility, they propoſed to make uſe of angels as mediators with Chriſt; whereby Chriſt the only mediator between God and man, would be removed out of ſight and uſe; and that humble boldneſs and holy confidence with God at the throne of grace, through Chriſt, which believers are allowed to uſe, would be diſcouraged and deſtroyed, and the ſaints be in danger as to the outward view of things, and in all human appearance of loſing their reward: *worſhipping of angels*, was a practice which very early prevailed among ſome that were called chriſtians, and for a long time continued in *Phrygia* and *Piſidia*; ſome make *Simon Magus*, and others *Cerinthus*, the author of this idolatry; but it was not only a branch of the *Platonic* philoſophy, and ſo a part of that philoſophy and vain deceit before mentioned, which theſe men might have borrowed from the *Gentiles*, but was a notion and practice of the *Jews:* before the *Babyloniſh* captivity, the names of angels were not known, nor are they ever mentioned by name in ſcripture; hence they ſay [s], that “ the names of angels came up with them, or by “ their means from *Babylon:*” after this they began to talk much of them, and to have too high a veneration for them, and aſcribe too much to them; and obſerving that the law was ordained, ſpoken, and given by them, and that the adminiſtration of things under the former diſpenſation was greatly by their means, they fell to worſhipping of them [t]; and the believing *Jews* were hereby in great danger of falling into the ſame practice: hence the author of the Epiſtle to the *Hebrews* writing to the *Jewiſh* church, largely inſiſts on the proof of Chriſt being ſuperior to angels; ſhewing that he has a more excellent name than they had; that he was the Son of God in ſuch ſenſe as they were not the ſons of God; that they were worſhippers of him, yea, that they were creatures made by him, and even miniſtring ſpirits to his ſaints, the heirs of ſalvation: and very rightly is worſhipping of angels condemned here by the Apoſtle, ſince God only is the object of worſhip; ſince theſe are creatures, and ſo not to be adored; are worſhippers of God and Chriſt themſelves, and have refuſed adoration when it has been offered to them: that the *Jews* did, and do worſhip angels, and make uſe of them as mediators and interceſſors, is clear from their liturgy, or prayer-books, where they ſay [u], “ מלאכי רחמים, *O ye* “ *angels of mercies*, or ye merciful angels, miniſters “ of the moſt high, intreat now the face of God “ for good:” and elſewhere [w], “ they ſay three “ times, let *Jubach* keep us, let *Jubach* deliver us, “ and let *Jubach* help us:” now *Jubach* was the name of an angel, who they ſuppoſed had the care of men, and is taken from the final letters of thoſe words in *Pſal.* xc. 11. *for he ſhall give his angels charge over thee:* ſo they ſpeak of an angel whom they call *Sandalphon*, who they ſay is appointed over the prayers of the righteous [x]: with this notion the *Judaizing* and falſe teachers ſeem to have been tinctured, and againſt which the Apoſtle here cautions the ſaints, leſt under a ſhew of humility, they ſhould be drawn into it: and to preſerve them from it, he obſerves, that ſuch an one who ſhould ſpread and propagate ſuch a notion, was one that was *intruding into thoſe things which he hath not ſeen*; thruſting himſelf in a bold and daring manner into an enquiry and ſearch after, debate upon, and affirmation of things he could have no certain knowledge of; as of angels, whoſe nature, qualities, works, and miniſtrations, he had never ſeen with his bodily eyes; nor could ever diſcern with the eyes of his underſtanding, any ſuch things in the ſcriptures, which he aſcribed to them; but they were the birth of his own mind, the fruits of his own fancy and imagination, things deviſed in his own brain: being *vainly puft up by his fleſhly mind*; judging of things not according to the word of God, and with a ſpiritual judgment, and according to a ſpiritual ſenſe and experience, but according to his own carnal reaſon, and the vanity of his mind; being puffed and ſwelled with an high opinion of himſelf, of his great parts and abilities, of his knowledge of things above others, and of his capacity to penetrate into, and find out things which were not ſeen and known by others: this ſhows that his humility was forced, and only in outward appearance, and was not true and genuine.

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[p] Miſn. Chagiga, c. 1. §. 8. T. Bab. Chagiga, fol. 11. 2.

[q] T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 63. 1.

[r] T. Bab. Menachot, fol. 36. 2. Vid. T. Bab. Ceritot, fol. 5. 1.

[s] T. Hieroſ. Roſhhaſhanah, fol. 56. 4.

[t] Vid. Clement. Alex. Stromat. l. 6. p. 635.

[u] Seder Tephillot, Ed. Baſil. fol. 222. 2.

[w] Ib. fol. 335. 1.

[x] Zohar in Gen. fol. 97. 2. & in Exod. fol. 24. 3.

Ver. 19. *And not holding the head*, &c.] Chriſt, as ſome copies expreſs it; for by making uſe of angels as mediators and interceſſors, Chriſt the only mediator, the Lord and head of angels, and of the church, was dropped and laid aſide; which is another reaſon the Apoſtle gives, why ſuch men, and their principles and practices, ſhould be ſhunned and avoided, by all thoſe that had a regard for Chriſt the head: *from which all the body by joints and bands having nouriſhment miniſtred, and knit together, increaſeth with the increaſe of God*; by *all the body*, or the whole body, is meant the church, the myſtical body of Chriſt; which like an human body, conſiſts of various members, all in union with one another, and with Chriſt the head: and *by joints and bands* are intended, either the grace of chriſtian charity, or love, the bond of perfectneſs; which is that in Chriſt's myſtical body, as joints and bands are in an human body; for by this the members of Chriſt are joined, united, and knit together, and make increaſe: or elſe the ordinances of the Goſpel, by which the ſaints are kept together in order, and through which is ſpiritual *nouriſhment miniſtred*, from Chriſt the head to them; who hates not his own fleſh, the members of his body, but nouriſhes and cheriſhes them, with the wine of divine love, with the water of life, with himſelf the bread of life, with his fleſh which is meat indeed, and with his blood which is drink indeed; with his own wholeſome words, even the words of faith and ſound doctrine: and it is from him, that the ſaints *are knit together*; both to one another in him the corner-ſtone, and alſo to him, being made one body and one ſpirit with him; and ſo from and through him, this body *increaſeth with the increaſe of God*; that which God has appointed for his church, and which he gives; and which it will arrive unto, when all the elect are gathered in, and they are filled with all the gifts and graces of the Spirit, and theſe are brought to their proper pitch and full degree; all which is had from, and owing to Chriſt: for if Chriſt the head is not held, the body will have no nouriſhment, but ſoon become a ſkeleton; the members of it will ſoon looſen from one another and fall into pieces, and there will be no ſpiritual increaſe or edification: all which are ſo many reaſons, why the ſaints ſhould be upon their guard againſt theſe falſe teachers, and *Judaizing* chriſtians, and which argument and exhortation the Apoſtle further purſues in the following verſes.

Ver. 20. *Wherefore if ye be dead with Chriſt*, &c.] Or *ſeeing ye are dead with Chriſt*; for theſe words do not ſignify any doubt about it, but ſuppoſe it, and expreſs what is taken for granted. They were dead with Chriſt by vertue of union to him; they being one with him, and conſidered in him as their head and repreſentative, died in him, and with him; they were crucified with him, as they are ſaid to be buried with him, and riſen with him; they were dead with him, by having communion with him in his death; they partook of the benefits of it, as redemption, pardon, juſtification, and reconciliation; and they were planted together with him in the likeneſs of his death, not merely partakers of his ſufferings, or ſuffered with him, and were conformable unto his death, by undergoing ſuch like things as he did, but as he died unto ſin, and lived unto God, ſo did they; and thro' the vertue and efficacy of his death were dead to ſin, ſo as that it was not imputed to them, ſo as to be freed and diſcharged from it, that it could not damn and deſtroy them; yea, ſo as that itſelf was crucified with him, and deſtroyed by him: and alſo to the law, to the moral law; not but that they lived according to it, as in the hands of Chriſt, in their walk and converſation, but did not ſeek for life, righteouſneſs, and ſalvation by it; they were dead unto it as to juſtification by it, and even to obedience to it in a rigorous and compulſive way; and to all its terrors and threatenings, being moved to a regard to it from a principle of love to Chriſt; and to all its accuſations and charges, its curſes and condemnation, and as a miniſtration of death, fearing neither a corporal, nor an eternal one: they were dead alſo to the ceremonial law, and were free *from the rudiments*, or *elements of the world*; the ordinances of a worldly ſanctuary, the rites and ceremonies of the world, or ſtate of the *Jews*, in oppoſition to, and diſtinction from, the Goſpel-diſpenſation, or times of the Meſſiah, called, and that by them, עולם הבא, *the world to come:* theſe were like letters to a language, or like the grammar, which contains the rudiments of it; theſe were the firſt principles of the oracles of God, which led to Chriſt, and had their accompliſhment and end in him; and ſo believers were dead unto them, and delivered from them, as they were alſo to the world, the *Jewiſh* ſtate, and were entered into the world to come; and even to this preſent evil world, and to the men and things of it, being by Chriſt crucified to it, and that to them: upon all which the Apoſtle thus reaſons, *why, as though living in the world*; ſince ye are dead unto it, and from the rudiments of it, why ſhould ye be as tho' ye lived in it? his meaning is not, that they ſhould not live in the world, nor among the men of it, for then they muſt needs go out of the world; ſaints may live in the world, tho' they are not of it, and among the inhabitants of it, tho' they don't belong to them, but to another and better country: nor does he ſuggeſt, that they lived according to the courſe of the world, as they did in their unregenerate ſtate; but what he ſeems to blame them for, and reaſon with them about, was, that they acted as if they ſought for life and righteouſneſs in the rudiments of the world, or by their obedience to ceremonial rites, or human inventions: for he adds, *are ye ſubject to ordinances?* not civil and political ones, which are for the better, and more orderly government of kingdoms, ſtates, and cities, for theſe the ſaints ought to be ſubject to, both for the Lord's ſake, and conſcience ſake; nor Goſpel-ordinances, as baptiſm, and the Lord's ſupper, for ſuch all believers ought to ſubmit unto; but either legal ones, the weak and beggarly elements, the yoke of bondage, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, the hand-writing of ordinances, which ſome were deſirous of conforming to; or rather, the ordinances and appointments of the *Jewiſh* fathers, the traditions of the elders, their conſtitutions and decrees, which are collected together, and make up their *Miſna*, or oral law; and ſo the argument is from the one to the other, from the greater to the leſs, that if they were delivered by Chriſt from the burdenſome rites of the ceremonial law, which were originally appointed by God, it muſt be great weakneſs in them to be ſubject to the ordinances of men; or both the inſtitutions of the ceremonial law, and the decrees of the *Jewiſh* doctors about them, which were deviſed by them, and added to them, and impoſed as neceſſary to be obſerved, may be intended; of which the Apoſtle gives ſome particulars in the next verſe.

Ver. 21. *Touch not, taſte not, handle not.*] This the Apoſtle ſays, not of himſelf, but in the perſon of the *Jewiſh* doctors; who urging the uſe of the ceremonial law, to which they added decrees and conſtitutions of their own, ſaid, *touch not* the dead body of any man, the bone of a man, or a grave, any man or woman in their uncleanneſs; not only their fleſh, but the bed they lay on, or the ſeat they ſat on; or any creature that was by the law unclean; or a *Gentile*, or any notorious ſinner, or common man: hence the *Phariſees* uſed to waſh themſelves when they returned from market, leſt they ſhould have been by any means accidentally defiled by touching any thing unclean. There is a treatiſe in their *Miſna*, called *Oholot*, which gives many rules, and is full of decrees about things, מטמאים במגע, *that defile by touching*. And ſo they likewiſe ſaid, *taſte not*, neither the fat, nor the blood of any creature which might be eaten itſelf, nor ſwines fleſh, nor the fleſh of any creature that chewed the cud, or divided the hoof; nor might the *Nazarites* taſte wine, or ſtrong drink, or vinegar made of either, or moiſt grapes, or even the kernels and huſks; and if a man eat but the quantity of an olive of any of the above things, he was, according to the *Jewiſh* canons, to be cut off, or beaten [*]: and they alſo ſaid, *handle not*; or, as the *Syriac* and *Arabic* read, *do not come near*, or *draw not nigh*, to a *Gentile*, to one of another nation, or any unclean perſon, to whom they forbid any near approach or converſation; or *handle not* any of the above things. Some think, that theſe ſeveral rules have reſpect only to meats; as *touch not*, that is, do not eat of things forbidden ever ſo little; nay, *taſte not*, do not let any thing of them come within your lips; yea, *handle not*, do not ſo much as touch them with your fingers. Others think, that *touch not* regards abſtinence from women; ſee 1 *Cor.* vii. 1. and reſpects the prohibition of marriage by ſome in thoſe times; and *taſte not*, the forbearance of certain meats, at certain times, which God had not reſtrained any from; and *handle not*, that is, make no uſe of, or enjoy your own goods, and ſo deſigns that voluntary poverty which ſome entered into under the direction of falſe teachers.

Ver. 22. *Which all are to periſh with the uſing*, &c.] Meaning either the ordinances concerning touching, taſting, and handling, which bring deſtruction and death on them that uſe them, and comply with them, in order to obtain righteouſneſs and life; for inſtead of enjoying ſalvation thro' them, they were the cauſe of damnation to them. Or rather the meats not to be touched, taſted, or handled; theſe are in their own nature periſhing things, and periſh by being uſed; they are only of ſervice to the body, and can be of none to the ſoul; the uſing of them cannot defile the man, nor an abſtinence from them ſanctify him, or commend him to God; they only relate to this preſent life, and will ceaſe with it, and can have no manner of influence on the ſpiritual and eternal concerns of men: and beſides, the ordinances concerning them are not of God, but are *after the commandments and doctrines of men*; for ſo even the ceremonial law, being now aboliſhed, tho' originally of God, yet the impoſition of it, as neceſſary to ſalvation, was a commandment and doctrine of man's; and particularly the traditions of the elders, and the various rules and decrees, which the doctors among the *Jews* obliged men to regard, were human inventions and devices: and this is another reaſon the Apoſtle makes uſe of to diſſuade from any regard unto them; for whatever is of man, and not of God, in religious worſhip, ought to be rejected.

Ver. 23. *Which things have indeed a ſhew of wiſdom*, &c.] The authors of them ſet up for men of wiſdom, and were eſteemed ſuch, and are often ſtiled, חכמים, *wiſe men*; and their ſcholars that received their traditions, and explained and enforced them on others, תלמידי החכמים, *the diſciples of the wiſe men*; and they pretended, that theſe conſtitutions of theirs were *a hedge for the law*, and for the honour of it, and to preſerve it, and keep men from tranſgreſſing it; and this carried in it ſome appearance of wiſdom: and their pretenſions to it lay in the following things, *in will-worſhip*; being what was over and above that which was commanded by God, and ſo like the free will-offerings under the law, muſt be acceptable to him; this was one of their colours, which had ſome ſhew of wiſdom, religion, and zeal: *and humility*; in worſhipping of angels, and not coming directly, and with boldneſs, to God or Chriſt; or rather in ſubjecting themſelves to the yoke of the law, and ſubmitting to the decrees of the fathers and doctors of the church, who were more wiſe, and learned, and knowing than they, and ſo had the appearance of prudence, gentleneſs, and goodneſs: *and neglecting of the body*; by faſtings and watchings, whereby they ſeemed to be very religious and devout, holy and mortified perſons, who kept under their bodies, ſubdued their unruly appetites, and fulfilled not the luſts of the fleſh: but then this was only a ſhew of wiſdom and godlineſs; there was no truth nor reality in theſe things; they were only a mere form, an outſide ſhew, a mere pretence; there was no true devotion nor religion in them: and ſo *not in any honour*; or to be had in any eſteem; for if the rites of the ceremonial law itſelf were weak and beggarly elements, much more muſt theſe additions to it, and corruptions of it, be ſuch; and at moſt only regarded things external, that were *to the ſatisfying of the fleſh*; either the body, or the carnal mind, in which they were vainly puffed up: tho' ſome conſider this laſt clauſe as explanative of the former, *neglecting of the body*, or not ſparing it, but afflicting it with auſterities of life; depriving it of its proper right, what is neceſſary for it, not taking due care of it, ſo as to ſatisfy nature; whereby inſtead of honouring, they diſhonoured it: for tho' the body is not to be pampered, and the luſts of it indulged, or luxury and intemperance to be encouraged; yet ſince the body is the work of God's hands, is the habitation of the ſoul, and by which it performs its offices, and is the purchaſe of Chriſt, the temple of the holy Spirit, and will be raiſed a glorious body at the laſt day, it ought not to be neglected and diſhonoured; but ſhould have a ſufficiency of food and cloathing, whereby it may be comfortably and honourably nouriſhed and ſupported.

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[*] Maimon. Maacolot Aſurot, c. 7. §. 1. & c. 14. §. 2. & Nezirut, c. 5. §. 3.

CHAP. III.

THIS chapter contains exhortations to ſeveral duties, ſome more general, which relate to all chriſtians, and others more particular, which belong to ſaints in ſuch and ſuch a ſtate of life. The Apoſtle begins with an exhortation to ſeek things heavenly, and not earthly, and to ſet the affections on the one, and not on the other: the arguments uſed to enforce it are taken from the ſaints being riſen with Chriſt; from Chriſt being in heaven at the Father's right hand; from their being dead to ſin, the law, and the world; from their having life in Chriſt ſafe and ſecure; yea, from Chriſt, being their life, and their appearance with him in glory, ver. 1, 2, 3, 4. And next he proceeds to an exhortation to the mortification of ſin, and the deeds of it, which he urges from the wrath of God coming upon men for theſe things, and from the conſideration of their former ſtate and condition, expreſſed by walking and living in them, ver. 5, 6, 7. and by a metaphor taken from the putting off and on of garments, he exhorts to the putting off of the old man, with his deeds, ſeveral of which are mentioned, ver. 8, 9. and to the putting on of the new man, and to the exerciſe of various graces, as mercy, meekneſs, forbearance, forgiveneſs, charity, and peace, ver. 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15. And then he proceeds to exhort to ſuch duties as relate to the word and worſhip of God; as that the word of Chriſt ſhould have an abiding place in them, and that they ſhould teach and inſtruct one another by ſinging pſalms, hymns, and ſpiritual ſongs, and do all they did in a religious way, in the name of Chriſt, with thankfulneſs to God by him, ver. 16, 17. And cloſes the chapter with the duties of wives to their huſbands, and of huſbands to their wives, and of children to their parents, and of parents to their children, and of ſervants to their maſters, ver. 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25.

Ver. 1. *If ye then be riſen with Chriſt*, &c.] The Apoſtle having obſerved in the former chapter, that the believing *Coloſſians* were dead with Chriſt from the rudiments of the world, were buried with him in baptiſm, and were riſen with him thro' the faith of the operation of God, argues from hence, how much it became them to regard a new and ſpiritual life, and to ſeek after ſuperior and heavenly things, and treat with neglect and contempt carnal and earthly ones. For he does not here call in queſtion their being riſen with Chriſt, but takes it for granted that they were, and makes uſe of it as an argument for his preſent purpoſe. They were riſen with Chriſt as their head, and as members in union with him repreſentatively, when he roſe from the dead; and emblematically in their baptiſm, when having gone ~~done~~ down into the water, and being baptized, they emerſed from it; and ſpiritually in converſion, when they were raiſed from a death of ſin, to a life of grace, by Chriſt, as the reſurrection and the life, the efficient cauſe of it, and in vertue of his reſurrection from the dead: wherefore being thus raiſed again in every ſenſe, it highly became them to *ſeek thoſe things which are above*; the better and heavenly country, the continuing city, which is above the heavens, whoſe builder and maker is God; Chriſt who is in heaven, and ſalvation alone by him without the works of the law; all ſpiritual bleſſings, ſuch as pardon, peace, righteouſneſs, life, and glory, which are in heavenly places in him; doctrines and ordinances, which come from heaven, and are the means of ſupporting a ſpiritual and heavenly life; eſpecially that bread of life which came down from heaven, and gives life unto the world, and of which if a man eats, he ſhall never die, but live for ever; and particularly glory, honour, immortality, and eternal life, the crown of righteouſneſs laid up above, the kingdom of God, and the righteouſneſs of it; which are to be ſought for in the firſt place with all affection, earneſt deſire, care and diligence; not by or for works of righteouſneſs; but in Chriſt, and as the gifts of God's grace thro' him. *Where Chriſt ſitteth on the right hand of God*; which contains other reaſons and arguments to engage believers to look upwards, and ſeek after heavenly things; that as Chriſt, when he died and roſe again from the dead, did not ſtay long on earth, nor minded the things of the world, but aſcended up to heaven, where he now is, and will remain until his ſecond coming; ſo they, being dead and riſen with him, ſhould, in their thoughts, deſires, and affections, in the exerciſe of the graces of faith, hope, and love, aſcend heavenwards, like pillars of ſmoke perfumed with frankincenſe; and the more ſhould their hearts be where he is, and intent on things above there, from the conſideration of that great honour and dignity in which he is. He is *on the right hand of God*; in human nature, an honour which none of the angels were ever admitted to: here he *ſitteth*, as having done the work of redemption, and entered into his reſt, beholding the travail of his ſoul with ſatiſfaction, tho' he continues to be an advocate, and to make interceſſion for his people; which is another reaſon inforcing this exhortation.

Ver. 2. *Set your affections on things above*, &c.] For unleſs the affections are ſet on them, they will never be ſought after in a proper manner. The word ſignifies to mind them, and think on them, to favour and approve of them, to be affectionately deſirous of them, and concerned for them; for where the treaſure is, the heart ſhould be; and as the ſaints beſt things are above, their minds and affections ſhould be there likewiſe; their contemplation ſhould be on thoſe things, and their converſation ſhould be in heaven; nor ſhould they regard any thing but what is there, or comes from thence, for they belong not to this world, but to another and better country: their citizenſhip is in heaven, and there, in a ſhort time, they muſt have their everlaſting reſidence; and therefore ſhould ſeek after, and highly prize and value heavenly things, and ſet their affections on them, and *not on things on the earth*; not mind earth and earthly things, temporal enjoyments, riches, and honours; and tho' food and raiment, and the neceſſaries of life, are to be ſought after, and cared and provided for, yet not with anxiety and perplexity of mind, in an overthoughtful and diſtreſſing manner; nor ſhould the heart be ſet on thoſe outward things, or happineſs placed in the poſſeſſion of them. Moreover, worldly luſts, the members which are on the earth, earthly pleaſures that are ſinful, may be here meant. Worldly luſts are to be denied, the deeds of the body are to be mortified, carnal deſires are not to be gratified and indulged, proviſion is not to be made for the fleſh, to fulfil its luſts; and particularly the vain philoſophy of *Jews* and *Gentiles*, the traditions of the elders, the ceremonies of the law, which lay in earthly things, in worldly obſervances, the difference of meats and drinks, keeping of days, months, and years, new moons, feaſts, and ſabbath-days; the rudiments of the world, the commandments and doctrines which were of the earth, and lay in not touching, taſting, and handling certain things that are on earth, and which periſh with the uſing, as oppoſed to the doctrines of the Goſpel, and ordinances of Chriſt, which are from above, and come from heaven, and have a ſpiritual and heavenly uſe: and which is the ſenſe chiefly intended, tho' it is beſt to underſtand the words in their largeſt compaſs.

Ver. 3. *For ye are dead*, &c.] Not in a natural or corporal ſenſe, for they were living in the world; nor in a moral ſenſe, for tho' they had been dead in ſins, were quickened by the grace of God; nor in a law ſenſe, for all their treſpaſſes were forgiven them; ſee ch. ii. 13, 20. but they were dead to the law, moral, ceremonial, and judicial, by the body of Chriſt; and to ſin, as to its damning power, thro' his bearing it in his own body on the tree; and to the world by his croſs: and therefore, as dead men have nothing to do with the world, and the things of it, ſo believers being dead with Chriſt, ſhould have no regard to the rudiments of the world, the ceremonies of the law, and the ordinances of men; to worldly luſts, and to the things that are in the world, the luſt of the fleſh, the luſt of the eyes, and the pride of life; but ſhould be dead as to their deſires after, affections for, and ſubjection to theſe things; *and your life is hid with Chriſt in God*; which is another reaſon why they ſhould not mind things on earth, but things in heaven. The ſaint's *life* is either ſpiritual, and is a life of grace from Chriſt, a life of faith on him, and a life of communion with him, and may be diſtinguiſhed into a life of ſanctification, both internal and external, and into a life of juſtification; or eternal, which is a life free from all the ſorrows of this, both outward and inward; a life of perfection and pleaſure, of viſion and enjoyment of God and Chriſt, and of fellowſhip with Father, Son, and Spirit, angels and ſaints, and which will never end. This is *theirs*, what they have a right unto, and ſhall everlaſtingly enjoy: it is not only promiſed to them, and prepared and laid up for them, but it is given unto them in Chriſt; and who has made way for their full poſſeſſion of it, into which he himſelf will put them, having power, as mediator, ſo to do; and even now they have it, the beginning, pledge, and earneſt of it. This is ſaid to be *hid*, which denotes the ſecrecy of it, and is true both of ſpiritual and eternal life. The ſpiritual life of the ſaints is hid from the men of the world, who are alienated from the life of God, are ignorant of the Lord of life, and know nothing of the Spirit of life; they are ſtrangers to the nature of this life, and to the food on which believers live, the hidden manna; and to the doctrines of the Goſpel, by which they are nouriſhed, theſe are hid to them that are loſt; and to all the joys and pleaſures of it: and this is ſometimes hid from the ſaints themſelves, when temptations are violent, corruptions prevail, grace is low, and ſeems to be gone, and God hides his face. Eternal life is alſo an hidden one, from natural men; the things that are eternal, are things unſeen by the carnal eye, and not to be conceived of by a carnal heart; and can only be beheld, and that in a very glimmering and imperfect manner, by an eye of faith, which is the evidence of things not ſeen, the cleareſt one ſaints have in this life; for eternal glory and happineſs is in part hid from the ſaints themſelves; they ſee it but thro' a glaſs darkly; nor does it appear to themſelves, as yet, what that felicity is in its fulneſs and perfection they ſhall enjoy. Moreover, this phraſe is expreſſive of the ſafety, as well as of the value and preciouſneſs of this life, things of worth being hid for ſecurity. It is hid, and it is hid *with Chriſt*; ſpiritual life is with him, as the head, root, and fountain of it, and ſo is ſafe, and can never be loſt; becauſe he the head lives, the members ſhall live alſo; and as long as it is in him, as the fountain, the ſtreams and ſupplies of it ſhall not be wanting to his people; nor can the communication between him and them be ever cut off: eternal life is depoſited in his hands by the Father; it is bound up in the bundle of life with the Lord God, and is in him for ever ſafe: nay, it is not only with Chriſt, where it is ſecure enough, but it is with Chriſt *in God*; Chriſt is in God, the Father is in the Son, and the Son is in the Father; they are one in nature, and ſo in power and glory; and this union between them, which is natural and perfect, is the foundation of the ſecurity both of the perſons, and of the life, ſpiritual and eternal, of God's elect; ſee *John* x. 28, 29, 30. Moreover, this life itſelf is in God. Not only our natural life is in him; we live and move, and have our being in him; but our ſpiritual and eternal life: he is the ſpring of it; it ariſes originally from him; it was purpoſed in him; it was promiſed by him; the ſcheme of it, or what is called the fellowſhip of the myſtery, was hid in him; it was given by him; he is the fountain of it, and that itſelf; and therefore the ſaints can never periſh, nor need they fear any enemy.

Ver. 4. *When Chriſt, who is our life, ſhall appear*, &c.] The *Vulgate Latin* verſion, and ſome copies, read, *your life*. Chriſt is the author of ſpiritual life, the fountain from whence it ſprings, the object on which the ſaints live, yea, their very life itſelf; it is not ſo much they that live, as Chriſt that lives in them; and he is their eternal life; it is in him, and given forth by him; to know him now is the beginning of it; and its perfection hereafter will lie in the viſion of him, communion with him, and conformity to him. The *Jews* have a ſaying [r], "that lives depend upon the ſon of *Jeſſe*," all ſorts of life, natural, ſpiritual, and eternal. At preſent, Chriſt the life of his people, is, as it were, hid; when he had done the work he came into this world about, and for which he was manifeſt in the fleſh, he departed out of it, aſcended up into heaven, and went to his God and Father, where he is, and will be retained, until the time of the reſtitution of all things; and tho' he appears in the preſence of God, and on the behalf of his redeemed ones, yet he is now out of ſight, and not to be ſeen with their bodily eyes; but, e'er long, he'll be revealed from heaven, and come in the clouds of it, and be ſeen by all, to the terror and confuſion of ſome, and to the joy and ſalvation of others; when his appearance will be exceeding glorious, not only in his glorified body, or exalted human nature, and as the judge of the whole earth, clothed with majeſty, authority, and power, but as the Son of God, God equal with the Father, in all the perfections and glory of deity, which will be manifeſt and apparent to every one: *then ſhall ye alſo appear with him in glory*; the dead bodies of the ſaints will then be raiſed and united to their ſouls, which he will bring with him, when he appears; and living ſaints ſhall be changed, and be caught up together with the raiſed ones, into the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and ſo they all ſhall be with him together, where-ever he is, whether in the air, or on earth, or in heaven, and whilſt he is in either; and ſhall be for ever with him, enjoy communion with him, be made like unto him, and behold his glory: yea, they ſhall *appear in glory* too; with a glory on their bodies, which will be raiſed in glory like unto the glorious body of Chriſt; and on their ſouls, being in perfect holineſs, having on the wedding-garment, or robe of Chriſt's righteouſneſs, being clothed upon with their houſe from heaven, and appearing in the ſhining robes of immortality, incorruption, and glory; having the glory of God upon them in ſoul and body, and ſuch a glory revealed in them, as the ſufferings of this preſent life, and all the enjoyments of it, are not to be compared with. All which furniſh out ſtrong arguments and reaſons, enforcing the above exhortations to ſeek for, and ſet the affections on things in heaven, and not on earth.

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[r] Zohar in Gen. fol. 2, 3.

Ver. 5. *Mortify therefore your members*, &c.] Not *your bodies*, as the *Ethiopic* verſion reads, nor the members of the natural body, but of the body of ſin, indwelling ſin; which as a body conſiſts of various members, which are parts of it, riſe out of it, and are uſed by it, as the members are by the body; and intend the ſins of the fleſh, or ſinful actions, which are generally performed by the members of the natural body, in which the law of ſin is, and by which it operates; ſo that the mortification the ſaints are here exhorted to, in conſideration of having a ſpiritual life in them, and a hope of eternal life in Chriſt, from whence the Apoſtle argues, is not a mortification or deſtruction of the body of ſin itſelf, or of the being and principle of it in the ſoul, where it is, and lives, and dwells, and will as long as the ſaints are in this tabernacle, but of the deeds of the body, or of ſinful actions, as to the life and converſation; and ſignifies a denial of them, an abſtinence from them, and a non-performance of them; ſee the note on *Rom.* viii. 13. Theſe members, or deeds of the body, or acts of ſin, are called *your*; for as the old man is ours, the vitioſity of nature is what we bring into the world with us, and is rooted and incorporated into us; ſo the actions that flow from it, and are done by it, are not to be aſcribed to God, nor even to ſatan, but they are our own actions, and which are performed by the members of our mortal body, or by the faculties of our ſouls: and are, *which are on earth*; or earthly; are concerned about earthly things, the things of the world, worldly luſts and pleaſures, which riſe out of earthly-mindedneſs, and incline unto it, and are only what are done here on earth, and will have no place in heaven. The particulars of which follow: *fornication*; the ſin of uncleanneſs committed by ſingle perſons, or out of the ſtate of marriage, and which the *Gentiles* did not account ſinful: hence ſo much notice is taken of it, with a cenſure, and ſo often, by the Apoſtle, in almoſt all his Epiſtles, and dehorted from, as a ſin againſt the body, as what diſqualified for church-communion, and was not to be named among the ſaints, who ſhould be dead to that, and that to them, as to the commiſſion of it. *Uncleanneſs*; of every ſort, all other impure actions, as adultery, inceſt, ſodomy, and every other unnatural luſt; all which ſhould be abſtained from, and never committed by thoſe who profeſs to be alive unto God. *Inordinate affection*; which may intend the paſſions, or firſt motions of ſin, ſtirred up by the law, and which work in, and operate by the members of the body, and bring forth fruit unto death, and therefore to be oppoſed by ſuch as have a life in Chriſt; and alſo thoſe vile affections, which ſome in a judicial way are given up unto, and prevail with thoſe who are effeminate, and abuſers of themſelves with mankind, and which are to be abhorred and denied by all who are heirs of the grace of life, and expectants of an heavenly one. *Evil concupiſcence*; ſo called, to diſtinguiſh it from that natural concupiſcence, or deſire after things lawful and neceſſary, and which is implanted in nature by God himſelf; and from that ſpiritual concupiſcence or deſire after ſpiritual things, and that luſting againſt the fleſh, and carnal things, which is formed in the heart of a regenerate man by the Spirit of God. It is the ſame with, יצר רע, *the evil imagination*, or corruption of nature, ſo much ſpoken of by the *Jews*. This here is what is forbidden by that law, *thou ſhalt not covet*; and includes every fleſhly luſt, and inordinate deſire, or every deſire after that which is not lawful, or does not belong to a man; as what is another's property, his wife, or goods, or any thing that is his: and ſo very naturally follows, *covetouſneſs*; an immoderate love of money, the root of all evil, an inſatiable deſire of having more, and of having more than a man's own; and is enlarged as hell, and as death is not ſatisfied, but ſtill craves more, without making any good uſe of what is poſſeſſed: *which is idolatry*. The covetous man, and the idolater, worſhip the ſame for matter and ſubſtance, even gold and ſilver: the covetous man lays up his money, makes no uſe of it, as if it was ſomething ſacred; he looks at it, and adores it, and puts his truſt and confidence in it, and his heart is ſo much ſet upon it, that he neglects the worſhip of the true God; and indeed no man can ſerve God and mammon. Some think, that by this πλεονεξια, rendered *covetouſneſs*, is meant, that greedy deſire after the commiſſion of all uncleanneſs, and impure actions, which were perpetrated by the followers of *Simon Magus* in their religious aſſemblies, and under the notion of worſhip, and as acceptable to God, and therefore called idolatry; and which ought not to be once named, much leſs practiſed, among the living members of Chriſt. Moreover, ſuch filthy actions were performed by the *Gentiles* in the worſhip of their deities.

Ver. 6. *For which things ſake*, &c.] Thoſe ſins above-mentioned: *the wrath of God*; the effects of it in temporal judgments, and eternal ruin and deſtruction, the wrath to come, which all are deſerving of, and there is only deliverance from by Chriſt: *cometh upon the children of diſobedience*; who are diſobedient both to the law of God, and Goſpel of Chriſt; who are unbelievers in him, are rebellious and gain-ſaying, reject his calls, the perſuaſions of his miniſters, ſet at nought his counſel, and will have none of his reproof. There have been already inſtances of God's diſpleaſure at ſin, his indignation againſt it, and his judgments on account of it: his wrath is revealed from heaven, and it will come down from thence on diſobedient and rebellious ſinners, and that ſuddenly, and with great power, like a mighty torrent, that there will be no ſtanding before it. This is a reaſon why ſuch who have life in Chriſt ſhould mortify, repreſs, and abſtain from the above ſins; for tho' this regards ſinners, and ungodly perſons, yet the effects of God's wrath on ſuch ſhew, how much ſuch ſins are diſpleaſing to him, and deteſted by him, and therefore to be avoided by the ſaints.

Ver. 7. *In the which ye alſo walked ſome time*, &c.] Either in or among the children of diſobedience, or rather in the fore-mentioned ſins. Sin is a road or path, in which ſinners walk, a way of their own, of their own chuſing and approving, tho' a dark and crooked one, and which leads to deſtruction: walking herein denotes a continued ſeries of ſinning, a perſiſting in it, a progreſs therein, a proceeding from evil to evil, taking pleaſure, and going on ſecurely in it; and which is the caſe and ſtate of God's elect before converſion, which is a turning of them from darkneſs to light, from the power of ſatan to God, and out of the ways of ſin, into the paths of righteouſneſs, when the courſe of their walk, of their lives and converſations, is altered; and which is ſuggeſted here, and made uſe of as another reaſon for the mortification of the deeds of the body of ſin, taken from their former ſtate, and their deliverance out of it; and therefore the time paſt of their lives, when they walked in theſe things, ſhould ſuffice, and they ſhould now ceaſe from ſin, from a ſeries and courſe of ſinning: *when ye lived in them*; in ſins, and were dead in them; for to be dead in ſin, and to live in ſin, is the ſame thing; living in ſin is the death of ſin. To live in ſin is to live after the fleſh, after the dictates of corrupt nature, to live a ſinful courſe of life; it is for a man to give up himſelf to ſin, be wholly bent upon it, take delight in it, and make it his work and buſineſs. This had been the caſe of theſe believers, but now they were dead to ſin, and it became them to live no longer therein, but to mortify it by denying it, and abſtaining from it, and living ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly.

Ver. 8. *But now you alſo put off all theſe*, &c.] Intimating, that now ſince they were converted and delivered out of the former ſtate in which they were once, and profeſſed not to walk and live in ſin, it became them to ſeparate, remove, and put at a diſtance from them all ſins, and every vice, to lay them aſide as dead weights upon them, and put them off as filthy garments; for ſuch ſins are never to be put on, and cleaved to again as formerly; and that not only thoſe, the above-mentioned, fornication, uncleanneſs, inordinate affection, evil concupiſcence, and covetouſneſs, but the following alſo, *anger*, *wrath*, *malice*, *blaſphemy*, or *evil ſpeaking*; what vices are here intended, ſee the note on *Eph.* iv. 31. to which is added, *filthy communication*, which comes *out of the mouth*; and is to be removed and put out of it, or abſtained from; and which is to be underſtood alſo of blaſphemy, or evil ſpeaking of one another, whereby the credit and reputation of each other may be hurt. *Filthy communication* is the ſame with that which is ſaid to be *corrupt*, *Eph.* iv. 29. and which, tho' it is applicable to all ſpeech that is unſavoury, unedifying, idle, and uſeleſs, and may be properly enough ſaid of flattery, lying, curſing, and ſwearing; yet chiefly regards obſcene language, unchaſte words, and filthy talking, which tend to encourage and cheriſh the ſin of uncleanneſs in any of its branches.

Ver. 9. *Lye not one to another*, &c.] Which is another vice of the tongue, and to which mankind are very prone, and ought not to be done to any, and particularly to one another; ſince the ſaints are members one of another, and of the ſame body, which makes the ſin the more unnatural; of this vice, ſee the note on *Eph.* iv. 25. and is another ſin that is to be put off, or put away; that is, to be abſtained from, and not uſed. The arguments diſſuading from this, and the reſt, follow, *ſeeing that ye have put off the old man, with his deeds*. The *Syriac*, *Arabic*, and *Ethiopic* verſions read this as an exhortation, as they do the next verſe alſo. Who is meant by the old man, ſee the note on *Rom.* vi. 6. and what by putting him off, ſee on *Eph.* iv. 22. and as for *his deeds*, they are the ſame with the deceitful luſts there mentioned, and the works of the fleſh in *Gal.* v. 19. and with the members of the body of ſin in the context, ver. 5, 8. Some, as *Beza*, think, that here is an alluſion to the rite of baptiſm in the primitive church; which, as he truly obſerves, was performed not by aſperſion, but immerſion; and which required a putting off, and a putting on of clothes, and when the baptized perſons profeſſed to renounce the ſins of the fleſh, and their former converſation, and to live a new life.

Ver. 10. *And have put on the new man*, &c.] Concerning which, and the putting it on, ſee the note on *Eph.* iv. 24. *which is renewed in knowlegde*; this man, or principle of grace in the ſoul, is a new one, which never was there before; and there is a daily renovation of it in the ſpirit of the mind, by the Spirit of God; for as the outward man decays, the inward man, which is the ſame with this new man, is renewed day by day, increaſes in holineſs and righteouſneſs, grows in grace, and particularly in *knowledge*: light and knowledge of a man's ſelf, of his loſt ſtate and condition by nature, of his need of Chriſt, and of his ſalvation, is what appears at the firſt formation of this new man; and the daily renovation of him lies in an increaſe of a ſpiritual, experimental, and ſaving knowledge of God, and Chriſt, and divine things; and indeed, until a man becomes a new creature, he neither knows, nor is he capable of knowing, the things of the Spirit of God; ſo that this new man, or principle of grace, begins with ſpiritual knowledge, and is formed in order to it, and its increaſe lies in it: *after the image of him that created him*; the new man; for this is a creation-work, and ſo not man's, but God's; and is made not after the image of the firſt man, no not as innocent, and much leſs as fallen; but after the image of Chriſt, to which the elect of God are predeſtinated to be conformed, and which is inſtamped in regeneration; and more and more appears by every transforming view of Chriſt, and will be perfected in heaven, when they ſhall ſee him as he is, and be perfectly like him, who is not only the pattern, but the creator of it, even the author and finiſher of faith.

Ver. 11. *Where there is neither Greek nor Jew*, &c.] That is, either in Chriſt, after whoſe image the new man is created; ſee *Gal.* v. 6. and vi. 15. or in the new man, and with reſpect to regeneration; or in the whole buſineſs of ſalvation: it matters not of what nation a man is; this has no influence on his new birth, either to forward or hinder it; for he is never the more a new creature, a regenerate man, and intereſted in ſalvation, becauſe he is a *Jew*, which he may be outwardly, and not inwardly; and he may be born again, tho' he's a *Greek* or *Gentile*, as the *Syriac* verſion reads; for God of his own will, and abundant mercy, and not out of reſpect to nations and perſons, begets ſouls again to a lively hope of the heavenly inheritance: *circumciſion or uncircumciſion*; a man's being circumciſed in the fleſh ſignifies nothing; this he may be, and not a new creature; for that is not true circumciſion, but that which is of the heart, and in the ſpirit: and, on the other hand, it is no objection to a man's being born again, that he is uncircumciſed

circumciſed in the fleſh; this may be his caſe, and yet may be circumciſed with the circumciſion made without hands; neither one nor the other is of any account with God, nor makes the man either better or worſe. *Barbarian, Scythian*; all ſuch were *Barbarians* to the *Romans*, that did not ſpeak their language; and as were ſuch alſo to the *Greeks*, who were not of their nation, and therefore *Greeks* and *Barbarians* are oppoſed to each other, *Rom.* i. 14. and ſo they are here in the *Syriac* verſion, which reads *Greek* and *Barbarian.* The *Arabic* verſion, inſtead of *Barbarian*, reads *Perſian*, becauſe it may be, a *Perſian* is ſo accounted by the *Arabians*; and becauſe the *Scythians* were, of all people, the moſt barbarous and unpoliſhed [z], and were had in great diſdain by others, therefore the Apoſtle mentions them, as being within the reach of the powerful and efficacious grace of God; nor were the fierceneſs of their diſpoſitions, and the impoliteneſs of their manners, any bar unto it. Remarkable is the ſaying of *Anacharſis* the *Scythian*, who being reproached by a *Grecian*, becauſe he was a *Scythian*, replied [a], "my country is a reproach to me, but "thou art a reproach to thy country." It matters not of what nation a man is, ſo be it he is but a good man; eſpecially in chriſtianity, all diſtinctions of this kind ceaſe. It is added, *bond or free*; the grace of God in regeneration is not beſtowed upon a man becauſe he is a free man, or with-held from another becauſe he is a bond-ſervant. *Oneſimus*, a fugitive ſervant, was converted by the Apoſtle *Paul* in priſon; and whoever is called by grace, if he is a free man in a civil ſenſe, he is Chriſt's ſervant in a religious one; and if he is a ſervant of men, he is, in a ſpiritual ſenſe, the Lord's free man. It is not nation, nor outward privileges, nor the civil ſtate and condition of men, which are regarded by God, or are any motive to him, or have any influence upon the ſalvation of men: *but Chriſt is all, and in all*; he is *all* efficiently; he is the firſt cauſe of all things, the beginning of the creation of God, the author of the old, and of the new creation, of the regeneration of his people, and of their whole ſalvation: he is all comprehenſively; has all the fulneſs of the Godhead, all the perfections of deity in him; he is poſſeſſed of all ſpiritual bleſſings for his people; and has all the promiſes of the covenant of grace in his hands for them; yea, all fulneſs of grace dwells in him, in order to be communicated to them: and he is all communicatively; he is their light and life, their wiſdom, righteouſneſs, ſanctification, and redemption, their food and cloathing, their ſtrength and riches, their joy, peace, and comfort, who gives them grace here, and glory hereafter. So with the *Jews*, the *Shekinah* is called, כל, *all* [b]: and this likewiſe, with the cabbaliſts [c], is one of the names of the living God, and well agrees with Chriſt, who has all things in him; and is the reaſon they give for this divine appellation: and Chriſt is *in all*; in all places, being infinite, immenſe, and incomprehenſible, as God, and ſo is every where by his power, upholding all things by it; and in all his churches, by his gracious preſence, and in the hearts of all his regenerate ones, of whatſoever nation, ſtate, and condition they be: he is revealed in them, formed within them, and dwells in their hearts by faith; and is all in all to them, exceeding precious, altogether lovely, the chiefeſt among ten thouſands, and whom they eſteem above all creatures and things. The *Arabic* verſion reads, *Chriſt is above all, and in all.*

Ver. 12. *Put on therefore*, &c.] As the Apoſtle had argued for the putting off of the members of the body, from their having put off the old man himſelf; ſo he now argues from their having put on the new man, to their putting on of his members; that is, to the exerciſe of the various graces of the Spirit, and the diſcharge of the ſeveral duties of religion; which tho' they would not be a robe of righteouſneſs, or garments of ſalvation to them, yet would be very becoming converſation-garments, ſuch as would be adorning to themſelves, to the doctrine of Chriſt, and their profeſſion of it, without which they would be naked in their walk, and expoſed to ſhame. להתלבשא ברוח קדושה, *to be clothed with the holy Spirit*, is a phraſe uſed by the *Cabbaliſtic* doctors [d]; and is indeed a ſcripture phraſe, *the Spirit of the Lord came upon*, לבשה, *clothed Zechariah*, 2 *Chron.* xxiv. 20. and ſo *Eſther* is ſaid, by the *Jewiſh* writers [e], to be *clothed with the Holy Ghoſt.* Here the metaphor is taken from the putting off of clothes; and what is here directed to, is like *Joſeph*'s coat, a coat of many colours. The arguments made uſe of lie in the characters under which the ſaints are addreſſed, *as the elect of God, holy and beloved*; that is, *as becomes the elect of God*, as the *Arabic* verſion renders it; as ſuch who were choſen in Chriſt from eternity, according to the ſovereign will and pleaſure of God, and his free grace unto ſalvation and eternal life; which carries in it a ſtrong argument to enforce the performance of good works, ſince men are hereby choſen unto holineſs, and good works are what God has fore-ordained, that they ſhould walk in, and eſpecially to mercy, and acts of it; ſince hereby their ſalvation appears to be not of man's will and works, but of God, that ſheweth mercy; and ſuch who are the objects of this grace are veſſels of mercy. The Apoſtle calls all the members of this church by this name, tho' every individual of them might not be choſen of God; but becauſe they were all under a viſible profeſſion of faith and holineſs, and the greater part of them were truly believers, he in a judgment of charity gives them all this appellation, and upon the ſame foot, the next, *holy*; not by birth, for they were by nature unclean and filthy, conceived in ſin, and ſhapen in iniquity; nor by baptiſm, which takes away neither original nor actual ſin, but leaves men as it finds them, and who ought to be holy before they partake of that; but in Chriſt imputatively, as he was made of God unto them ſanctification; and by him efficaciouſly, in virtue of his blood, righteouſneſs, and ſacrifice, by which he ſanctifies his people; and by his Spirit inherently and internally, who is the author of the work of ſanctification in the heart; and they were likewiſe ſo externally in a profeſſional way, and therefore it highly became them to exerciſe and practiſe the following graces and duties, to which they were ſtill more obliged, inaſmuch as they were *beloved*; that is, of God, as appeared both from their election and ſanctification. God had loved them, and therefore had choſen them in his Son, and had given his Son to die for them, that he might ſanctify them; and becauſe of his great love to them, had quickened them when dead in ſin, and ſanctified them by his Spirit: wherefore, ſince God had ſo loved them, they ought to ſhew love again to him, and to one another, and put on *bowels of mercies*; a ſympathizing ſpirit with ſaints in diſtreſs, weeping with them that weep, ſuffering with them that ſuffer, being touched, as their high-prieſt is, with a feeling of their ſorrows and weakneſſes: it denotes inward pity and compaſſion to diſtreſſed objects, the moſt tender regard to perſons in miſery, and ſuch compaſſion as is free from all hypocriſy and deceit, and therefore is expreſſed by *bowels*; and what is very large, and reaches to multitudes of objects, and is diſplayed and exerted various ways, and therefore ſignified by *mercies*. Now ſuch a ſpirit is a very beautiful one; the Apoſtle begins with the innermoſt of theſe garments, adding to it *kindneſs*, which is this inward, tender, unfeigned, and abundant mercy put into act and exerciſe; this is doing good to all men, eſpecially to the houſhold of faith, diſtributing to the neceſſities of the ſaints, and a ſhewing mercy with chearfulneſs, and is very ornamental to a chriſtian profeſſor: as is alſo *humbleneſs of mind*; which lies in the ſaints entertaining mean thoughts of themſelves, looking upon themſelves as the chief of ſinners, and leſs than the leaſt of all ſaints; as inferior to others in knowledge, experience, gifts, and graces; in eſteeming others better than themſelves; in aſcribing all they have, and are, to the grace of God; in doing works of mercy and righteouſneſs without oſtentation, and boaſting of them, or depending on them; owning, that when they have done all they can, they are but unprofitable ſervants; and this is a beautiful dreſs for a believer to appear in: *be ye clothed with humility*, 1 *Pet*. v. 5. And of the like nature is *meekneſs*; which ſhews itſelf in not envying the gifts and graces, the uſefulneſs and happineſs of others, but rejoicing therein; in quietly ſubmitting to the will of God in all adverſe diſpenſations of providence, and patiently bearing what he is pleaſed to lay on them; and in enduring all the inſults, reproaches, and indignities of men with calmneſs. This ornament of a meek and quiet ſpirit, is in the ſight of God of great price, 1 *Pet*. iii. 4. And what follows is natural to it, and explanative of it, *long-ſuffering*; whereby a perſon patiently bears the evil words and actions of others, and is not eaſily provoked to wrath by them, but puts up with injuries, and ſits down contented with the ill uſage he meets with.

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[z] Vid. Juſtin. l. 2. c. 1, 2, 3. Plin. l. 4. c. 12. & 6. 17. Herodot. l. 4. c. 46.

[a] Laertius in Vita Anacharſis.

[b] Tzeror Hammor, fol. 28. 2.

[c] Shaare Ora, fol. 6. 1. & 22. 2. & 25. 3.

[d] Sepher Jetzirah, Nethib, 17. p. 136.

[e] T. Megilla, fol. 14. 2. & 15. 1. Zohar in Num. fol. 70. 3. & 76. 2. & Raya Mehimna in Zohar in Lev. fol. 38. 3.

Ver. 13. *Forbearing one another*, &c.] Not only bearing one another's burdens, and with one another's weakneſſes, but forbearing to render evil for evil, or railing for railing, or to ſeek revenge for affronts given, in whatſoever way, whether by words or deeds: *and forgiving one another*; all treſpaſſes and offences, ſo far as committed againſt themſelves, and praying to God to forgive them, as committed againſt him: *if any man have a quarrel againſt any*; let him be who he will, high or low, rich or poor, of whatſoever age, ſtate, or condition, and let his quarrel or complaint be what it will, ever ſo great, or ever ſo juſt and well-founded, yet let him put up with it, and forgive it: *even as Chriſt forgave you, ſo alſo do ye*; what God is ſaid to do for Chriſt's ſake, *Eph*. iv. 32. ſee the note there, that here Chriſt is ſaid to do: as mediator, he has procured the remiſſion of ſins by the ſhedding of his blood; and as God he forgives ſins freely, fully, forgetting the injuries done, not upbraiding with former offences, and that too without aſking, and before there is any appearance of repentance; and ſo ſhould the ſaints forgive one another, as they expect to have an application and manifeſtation of forgiveneſs to themſelves.

Ver. 14. *And above all theſe things*, &c.] Bowels of mercies, kindneſs, &c. put on *charity*, or brotherly love, for without this all is nothing; they will only be done in ſhow and appearance, in mere guiſe and hypocriſy, if love is wanting; this actuates and exerciſes all the reſt; 'tis only from this principle, that true ſympathy, real kindneſs, undiſguiſed humility, and meekneſs, patient long-ſuffering, and forbearance, and hearty forgiveneſs proceeds: this is greater, and more excellent, than all the other, and adds a glory, luſtre, and beauty to them; this is the upper garment that covers all the reſt, for ſo the words may be rendered, *upon all theſe things put on charity*; whereby a diſciple of Chriſt is viſible, and diſtinguiſhed, and is known to be what he is; this is like a ſtrait and upper garment, keeps cloſe all that is under it, and within it: and it is called, *the bond of perfectneſs*; either of the law, and the duties of religion, which it is ſaid to be the fulfilling of; or rather of the ſaints, for this is the bond of union between them, which knits and cements them together, ſo that they are perfectly joined together, and are of one mind and one heart: it is the bond of peace among them, of perfect unity and brotherly love; and a moſt beautiful and pleaſant thing it is for brethren to live and dwell together in unity; ſuch are beautiful as *Tirzah*, comely as *Jeruſalem* among themſelves, and terrible to their enemies as an army with banners, being not to be divided or broken by them. The *Claromontane* exemplar reads, *the bond of unity*.

Ver. 15. *And let the peace of God rule in your hearts*, &c.] By *the peace of God* is meant, either the peace believers have with God, which is his gift, and paſſes all underſtanding, and flows from a comfortable apprehenſion of intereſt in the blood, righteouſneſs, and atonement of Chriſt; or rather that peace which does, or ſhould ſubſiſt among the ſaints themſelves, which God is the author of, calls for, and requires, and encourages in them. The *Vulgate Latin*, *Syriac*, and *Ethiopic* verſions read, *the peace of Chriſt*; and ſo the *Alexandrian* copy, and ſome others. This may be ſaid to *reign* in their hearts, when it is the governing principle there; when it reſtrains the turbulent paſſions of anger, wrath, and revenge, allays undue heats, moderates the ſpirits, and compoſes differences. The metaphor is taken from the judge in the *Olympic* games, who was the umpire, the moderator, and who determined whoſe the victory was, and to whom the crown belonged; the Apoſtle would have no other umpire among the ſaints than the peace of God: and the arguments he uſes follow, *to the which alſo you are called in one body*; the ſaints in their effectual vocation are called to peace by God, who is the God of peace; by Chriſt, who is the prince of peace; and by the Spirit, whoſe fruit is peace; and thro' the Goſpel, which is the Goſpel of peace, and into a Goſpel-ſtate, which lies in peace, righteouſneſs, and joy in the Holy Ghoſt: and they are not only called to this, but they are called *in one body*; tho' they are many members, yet they are but one body; and therefore ought to be in peace, and that ſhould bear the ſway in them, ſeeing it is unnatural for members of the ſame body to quarrel with each other. *And be ye thankful*; which intends either gratitude to men, to fellow-creatures, for any ſervice or kindneſs done by them, eſpecially to the ſaints, the members of the ſame body, who are placed in a ſubſervience, and in order to be uſeful to each other; or elſe to God, for all ſpiritual bleſſings in Chriſt, and particularly the peace he gives, for effectual vocation, and a place in the body, the church; and *to Chriſt*, as the *Syriac* verſion reads, for all thoſe graces which come from him, and ſtrength to exerciſe them, and for himſelf, and an intereſt in him, who is all in all; and a grateful ſpirit, both for ſpiritual and temporal mercies, is a very becoming and beautiful one, and is another part of the ornament of a chriſtian: this laſt is added to make way for what follows.

Ver. 16. *Let the word of Chriſt dwell in you*, &c.] The *Alexandrian* copy, and *Arabic* verſion read, *the word of God*; by which may be meant the whole ſcripture, all the writings of the Old and New Teſtament, which are by inſpiration of God, were endited by the Spirit of Chriſt, ſpeak and teſtify of him, and were written for his ſake, and on his account, and therefore may be called his word; and are what ſhould be ſearched into, carefully attended to, diligently read, and frequently meditated upon; and which are able, under a divine bleſſing, to furniſh with all ſpiritual wiſdom, or to make men wiſe unto ſalvation: or by the word of Chriſt, may be meant more eſpecially the Goſpel, which Chriſt is the author of as God, the preacher of as man, and the ſubject-matter of as God-man and mediator: it is the word concerning him, his perſon and offices; concerning peace and pardon by his blood, juſtification by his righteouſneſs, and compleat ſalvation thro' his obedience, ſufferings, and death. The exhortation to *let* it *dwell in* them, ſuppoſes that it had entered into them, and had a place in them thro' the Spirit and power of Chriſt; and that it ſhould have a conſtant and fixed place there, and not be like a ſtranger or wayfaring man, that tarries but for a night, or like a ſojourner, that continues but for a while; but as an inhabitant that takes up its reſidence and abode, never more to depart; and intends not only a frequent reading, and hearing of, and meditating upon the word of God, but continuance in the doctrines of the Goſpel, with a ſteady faith in them, and a hearty affection for them; for ſuch an inhabitation imports a very exact knowledge of the Goſpel, and familiarity with it, and affectionate reſpect for it; as perſons that dwell in a houſe, they are well known by thoſe of the family, they are familiarly converſed with, and are treated with love and reſpect by them: and ſo the word of Chriſt, when it has a fixed and eſtabliſhed abode in a man's heart, he has an inward, ſpiritual, experimental knowledge of it; he is continually converſant with it; this word of Chriſt is his delight, and the men of his counſel, his guide, his acquaintance, with whom he takes ſweet counſel together, and eſteems it above the moſt valuable things in the world, and receives and retains it as the word of God. The manner in which the Apoſtle would have it dwell, is *richly*; that is, largely, plentifully, in an abundant manner, as this word ſignifies; ſee 1 *Tim.* vi. 17. and ſo the *Vulgate Latin* verſion renders it here, *abundantly*; and to the ſame ſenſe the *Arabic* verſion. His meaning is, that not one part of the ſcripture only ſhould be regarded and attended to, but the whole of it, every truth and doctrine in it, even the whole counſel of God; which as it is to be declared and preached in its utmoſt compaſs, ſo all and every part of it is to be received in the love of it, and to be abode in and by; there is a fulneſs in the ſcriptures, an abundance of truth in the Goſpel, a large affluence of it; it is a rich treaſure, an invaluable mine of precious truths; all which ſhould have a place to their full extent, in both preacher and hearer: and that *in all wiſdom*; or *unto all wiſdom*; in order to attain to all wiſdom; not natural wiſdom, which is not the deſign of the ſcriptures, nor of the Goſpel of Chriſt; but ſpiritual wiſdom, or wiſdom in ſpiritual things, in things relating to ſalvation; and which is, and may be arrived unto thro' attendance to the word of Chriſt, reading and hearing of it, meditating on it; and eſpecially when accompanied with the ſpirit of wiſdom and revelation in the knowledge of Chriſt, and which is to be deſired and prayed for. *Teaching and admoniſhing one another*. The *Syriac* verſion renders it, *teach and inſtruct yourſelves*; and may regard not only public *teaching* Chriſt, his Goſpel, the truths and doctrines of it, and all his commands and ordinances, for which he qualifies men, and ſends them forth in his name; but private teaching by conference, prayer, and ſinging the praiſes of God, according to the meaſure of the gift of grace beſtowed on every one: and ſo *admoniſhing* may not only reſpect that branch of the publick miniſtry, which is ſo called, and intends a putting into the mind, or putting perſons in mind both of their privilege and duty; nor only that part of church-diſcipline which lies in the admonition of a delinquent, but private reproofs, warnings, and exhortations; and as by other ways, ſo among the reſt, *in pſalms, and hymns, and ſpiritual ſongs*; referring very probably to the title of ſeveral of *David*'s *pſalms*, מַשְׂכִּיל, *Maſchil*, which ſignifies giving inſtruction, or cauſing to underſtand; theſe pſalms, and the ſinging of them, being appointed as an ordinance of God to teach, inſtruct, admoniſh, and edify the ſaints: for the meaning of theſe three words, and the difference between them, ſee the note on *Eph.* v. 19. *ſinging with grace in your hearts to the Lord*; that is, ſinging pſalms, hymns, and ſpiritual ſongs; and what is meant by ſinging of them, ſee the note on the above place: the manner in which they are to be ſung, is, *with grace*; meaning either by the aſſiſtance of the Spirit and grace of God, without which no ordinance can be performed aright, to the glory of God, and to ſpiritual profit and edification, 1 *Cor.* xiv. 15. or with grace in the heart in exerciſe, particularly faith, without which it is impoſſible to pleaſe God, *Heb.* xi. 6. or with gratitude to God, with thankfulneſs of heart for his mercies, and under a grateful ſenſe of them; or in ſuch a manner as will miniſter grace unto the hearers, be both amiable and edifying, *Col.* iv. 6. all theſe ſenſes may be taken in: that the phraſe, *in your hearts*, does not mean mental ſinging, or what is oppoſed to ſinging with the voice, ſee the note on *Eph.* v. 19. The object here, as there, is *to the Lord*; the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, to the glory of his perſon and grace: the *Alexandrian* copy, and the *Vulgate Latin*, *Syriac*, and *Ethiopic* verſions read, *to God*; and indeed God, in the three divine perſons, and in all his perfections and works, is the object of praiſe, and his glory is the end of ſinging praiſe.

Ver. 17. *And whatſoever ye do in word or deed*, &c.] Whether in preaching the word of Chriſt, in hearing the Goſpel, in ſinging pſalms, hymns, and ſpiritual ſongs, and in conference and converſation with each other; or in whatſoever action, civil or religious, throughout the whole life and converſation, in the performance of things natural, moral, and evangelical, relating to God or man, or one another, in the world or church: *do all in the name of the Lord Jeſus*; both in the ſtrength of Chriſt, without whom nothing can be well ſaid or done;

and according to the mind and will of Chriſt declared in the Goſpel, which is his name; and calling upon his name for aſſiſtance in the miniſtration of his word, adminiſtration of his ordinances, and in the performance of every duty, directing all to, and having ſolely in view his honour and glory: *giving thanks to God, and the Father by him*; this ſhows, that ſinging of pſalms, hymns, and ſpiritual ſongs, is a diſtinct thing from giving of thanks, mentioned in the preceding verſe. The things for which thanks are to be given, are *all things*; and the time when, *always*, as in *Eph.* v. 20. ſee the note there. The perſon to whom they are to be given, is God the Father, the Father of our ſpirits, and of our mercies, the Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and of us in him; and the perſon by whom they are to be given, is Chriſt, which is juſt and proper, ſince all mercies come from, and thro' him; nor is there any other way of bringing and offering the ſacrifices of praiſe and thankſgiving to God; nor are they, nor can they be acceptable to God by, and thro' any other, but by him alone.

Ver. 18. *Wives ſubmit yourſelves unto your own huſbands*, &c.] The Apoſtle proceeds from thoſe duties which related to them, as church-members one towards another, for their mutual good and edification, and the glory of God, to ſuch as concerned them in their own houſes and families, as in a natural relation to each other; as huſbands and wives, parents and children, maſters and ſervants; ſhewing hereby, that the Goſpel does not at all break in upon, but eſtabliſhes the duties of common and civil life. Concerning the duty of wives to their huſbands, here exhorted to, ſee the note on *Eph.* v. 22. The reaſon urging to a regard to it, is, *as it is fit in the Lord*; that is, Chriſt, as the *Syriac* verſion reads it. Subjection of wives to their own huſbands is *fit* and proper in its own nature, by reaſon of the original creation of man, and of the woman from him: man was made firſt, and then the woman; and the woman was made out of the man, out of one of his ribs; and ſo, tho' not to be trampled under his feet, but to be by his ſide, and an help-meet to him, yet not to be head, or to rule over him. Moreover, the woman was made for the man, and not the man for the woman; add to this, that the woman was in the tranſgreſſion, and the means of the fall of man, which gave a freſh reaſon for, and made the obligation to ſubjection to him the ſtronger: and it is alſo a *decent* and becoming thing for wives to be ſubject to their huſbands; for as it is giving honour to them, it is a real ornament to themſelves, and is one of thoſe good works which women profeſſing godlineſs, ſhould adorn themſelves with; and makes more comely and beautiful than broidered hair, gold, pearls, or coſtly array, yea, than their natural favour and beauty: it is what is fitting *in the Lord*; it is what he requires, not only what the law of God requires, 1 *Cor.* xiv. 34. and which was enjoined originally, *Gen.* iii. 16. and was charged as a duty under the legal diſpenſation; but is what is commanded by Chriſt under the Goſpel-diſpenſation, and is to be obſerved by all thoſe that are *in* him, that profeſs to be new creatures, converted perſons, that ſo the word of God be not blaſphemed, and the enemy have no occaſion to reproach, *Tit.* ii. 5. 1 *Tim.* v. 14. though this phraſe may alſo be conſidered as a reſtriction and limitation of this ſubjection; that tho' it reaches to all things, yet only to ſuch as are agreeable to the will of the Lord, and not contrary to the Goſpel of Chriſt; for in theſe they are not to be ſubject to them, but to Chriſt the Lord; but in all other things they are, even as the church is ſubject to Chriſt: and when this is the caſe, ſuch ſubjection is regarded by Chriſt as if it was done to himſelf; and indeed, his honour and glory ſhould be the governing view in it; ſee *Eph.* v. 22.

Ver. 19. *Huſbands love your wives*, &c.] See the note on *Eph.* v. 25. *and be not bitter againſt them*; turning love into hatred of their perſons; ruling with rigour, and in a tyrannical manner; behaving towards them in a moroſe, churliſh, and ill-natured way; giving them either bitter words, or blows, and denying them their affection, care, proviſion, protection, and aſſiſtance, but uſing them as ſervants, or worſe. All which is barbarous, brutiſh, and unchriſtian, and utterly unbecoming the Goſpel.

Ver. 20. *Children obey your parents*, &c.] Both father and mother; ſee the note on *Eph.* vi. 1. *in all things*; not in things ſinful, which are contrary to the law of God, and Goſpel of Chriſt; in things repugnant to the duties of religion, the ordinances of the Goſpel, and the doctrines of Chriſt, parents are to be neglected and diſobeyed. God is to be regarded, and not men; but in all things good and lawful, and in all things that are of an indifferent nature, which may, or may not be done, in theſe things the will of earthly parents is to be attended to; of which there is a conſiderable inſtance in the *Rechabites*, *Jer.* xxxv. 6—10. and even they are to be obeyed in things that are hard and difficult to be complied with, and which are diſagreeable to fleſh and blood, as the caſes of *Iſaac* and *Jephtha*'s daughter ſhew. *For this is well-pleaſing unto the Lord*; and is a reaſon ſufficient to engage to the performance of the duty; for whatever is grateful and well-pleaſing to God, ought to be done with pleaſure by us, from a principle of love to him, by faith in him, and with a view to his glory; and then ſuch an action is acceptable in his ſight thro' Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. The *Alexandrian* copy reads, *in the Lord*; and ſo the *Vulgate Latin* verſion.

Ver. 21. *Fathers, provoke not your children to anger*, &c.] See the note on *Eph.* vi. 4. *leſt they be diſcouraged*; or diſheartened and diſpirited; their ſpirits be broke thro' grief and trouble, and they become indolent, ſluggiſh, and unfit for buſineſs; or deſpairing of having any ſhare in the affections of their parents, diſregard their commands, inſtructions, and corrections, and grow obdurate, ſtubborn, and rebellious.

Ver. 22. *Servants, obey in all things your maſters*, &c.] That is, in all things relating to the body, and bodily ſervice; not to the conſcience, and religious worſhip; in things worldly, and not ſpiritual; in all things that are within a maſter's power, and it is lawful for him to command; and in all things that are fitting and proper that a ſervant ſhould do; and even in ſuch things as may be difficult, troubleſome, and diſagreeable to the fleſh unto them; ſee *Luke* xvii. 7, 8, 9. who thoſe ſervants are that are to obey, and who their maſters, ſaid to be *according to the fleſh*, to whom they are to be ſubject, ſee the note on *Eph.* vi. 5. *not with eye-ſervice, as men-pleaſers, but in ſingleneſs of heart*; ſee the note on *Eph.* vi. 5, 6. *fearing God*; who ſees and knows all things, what ſervants do when their maſters are abſent from them, and to whom they are accountable; and a ſervant that fears God will make conſcience of diſcharging his ſervice faithfully, will not miſpend his maſter's time, nor embezzle his goods, or waſte his ſubſtance; but from a principle of reverential affection for God, and fear of him, with a concern for his name, and a view to his glory, will with all diligence, uprightneſs, faithfulneſs, and ſincerity, do his duty, ſeek his maſter's good and intereſt, and chearfully obey all his lawful commands. The *Alexandrian* copy reads, *fearing the Lord*; and ſo the *Syriac* verſion, *in the fear of the Lord*.

Ver. 23. *And whatſoever ye do*, &c.] Some have thought that theſe words, and the two following verſes, regard the *Coloſſians* in general, and the performance of any, and all good works by them; but by their connexion with the preceding verſe, and with the beginning of the next chapter, they appear to concern ſervants only, and what they do under that character, and in the diſcharge of their duty: *do it heartily*; not by mere force and neceſſity, grudgingly, and with murmurings, but from the heart, and with good-will, having a true, real, and hearty affection for their maſters, having their good and intereſt at heart, and a delight in their ſervice; like the *Hebrew* ſervant, that loved his maſter, as alſo his wife and children, and therefore would not depart from him, *Exod.* xxi. 5. *as to the Lord, and not unto men*; ſee the note on *Eph.* vi. 7.

Ver. 24. *Knowing that of the Lord ye ſhall receive the reward of the inheritance*, &c.] This is ſaid for the encouragement of chriſtian ſervants, who, tho' they may receive little or nothing from their earthly and carnal maſters; yet they ſhall be uſed and treated as children by the Lord, and by whom they will be poſſeſſed of an eternal inheritance, after their work and labour is over: by *the reward of the inheritance* is meant the heavenly glory, called a *reward*, becauſe the Apoſtle is ſpeaking to ſervants, and therefore uſes language agreeable to them; and who, tho' they may have no reward in this world, yet as there is a God that judgeth in the earth, there is verily one for them in the world to come: and tho' it is not given for working, yet it is given to thoſe that do good, and continue in well-doing; whoſe works follow, tho' they do not go before them; and is enjoyed after their work is over, as the ſervant receives his wages at evening, and when he has done his work; tho' this will not be received as a reward of debt, but of grace: it cannot be of merit, as is clear from the nature of good works themſelves, which are all due to God, prior to the performance of them; and when done in the beſt manner, are no more than a man's duty, and are done not in his own ſtrength, but by the grace of God; and in many things, yea, in every thing, he comes ſhort of performing what is incumbent on him; and beſides, there's no manner of proportion between the beſt ſervices of the ſaints, and eternal glory: to which may be added, that eternal life is the free gift of their heavenly father to them, and is here called an inheritance, which never becomes the property of ſervants in a way of merit, but is the portion of children, from their father's good pleaſure. Wherefore the heavenly glory is ſuch a reward as that it is an *inheritance*; or, as the *Syriac* verſion renders it, *in an inheritance*: it lies in an inheritance, an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, that fades not away, reſerved in the heavens; and which is not got by induſtry, or obtained by the works of the law, nor bought with a price, but is a free bequeſt of God as a father to his children; for an inheritance is peculiar to children, and this to the children of God, as theſe believing ſervants were; and which comes to them by and thro' the death of the teſtator; and it may be called an inheritance, becauſe the heavenly glory is ſubſtantial, 'tis ſubſtance, a better and a more enduring ſubſtance than any inheritance in this world; and is a very plentiful poſſeſſion and eſtate, it conſiſts of all things, yea God himſelf is the portion of his people, and they that are his children, are heirs of God; there's not only a glory, but riches of glory, a plenty, a fulneſs of it in this inheritance: the way in which they come by it, is receiving it from Chriſt; *of the Lord ye ſhall receive* it. It is in a way of receiving, and ſo by gift, as a man can receive nothing but what is given him; and as all grace is in a way of receiving, and therefore boaſting in it is excluded, ſo glory is enjoyed in the ſame way, and from the ſame hands, even from Chriſt, the righteous judge, that will give it. 'Tis in him they obtain this inheritance, and are in him choſen and predeſtinated unto it; 'tis by his reſurrection from the dead, and in conſequence of it, that they thro' the power of his Spirit and grace are begotten unto it; 'tis his grace that makes them meet for it, and he has it in his hands for them; he is a feoffee in truſt on their behalf, and is able to give it to them; and will at the laſt day introduce them into the full poſſeſſion of it. Now theſe chriſtian ſervants *knowing* all this, having a lively hope of this inheritance, a full perſuaſion, and a firm faith of right unto it, and meetneſs for it, and having the Spirit of God as an earneſt and pledge of it; the conſideration of it muſt greatly tend to make them quiet and eaſy in their preſent ſervitude, and to encourage them to the diſcharge of their duty with diligence, faithfulneſs, and chearfulneſs; ſince they might aſſure themſelves of the inheritance hereafter, how ſmall ſoever their reward was now: *for ye ſerve the Lord Chriſt*; who is a good maſter, and faithful to all his engagements and promiſes, all whoſe ſervants are reſpected by him, and honoured by his Father, and ſhall be for ever where he is.

Ver. 25. *But he that doth wrong*, &c.] Which may be underſtood both of ſervants that do wrong to their maſters thro' ſloth and idleneſs, neglecting their buſineſs, embezzling their maſters goods, and defrauding them of their ſubſtance; and of maſters that injure their ſervants by with-holding from them proper food and raiment, by cheating them of their wages, either giving them none at all, or too little, or detaining them too long, and by giving them bad language, and hard blows, and ſuch like ſevere uſage: *ſhall receive for the wrong which he hath done*; either in this world, or in the other; God will avenge all ſuch injuries, ſooner or later; ſo that theſe words may be conſidered, either as ſaid with a view to deter ſervants from evil practices, or to comfort them under the male-treatment they may meet with from cruel maſters: *and there is no reſpect of perſons*. The *Vulgate Latin*, and *Arabic* verſions add, *with God*, which undoubtedly is the ſenſe; he regards not the rich more than the poor; he makes no difference between bond and free, the ſervant and the maſter; he'll not take the part of the one, becauſe he is a maſter, nor neglect the other, becauſe he is a ſervant, but will do that which is juſt and right with regard to them both; ſee the note on *Eph.* vi. 9.

CHAP. IV.

THIS chapter begins with an exhortation to maſters to behave towards their ſervants in a juſt and equitable manner, from the conſideration of their having a maſter in heaven, which ſhould have concluded the preceding one; and in it the Apoſtle gives ſome general exhortations, and ſome particular inſtructions about reading this, and another Epiſtle, and ſtirring up their miniſter to his duty; and great part of it is taken up in expreſſing his love to the *Coloſſians*, and in the ſalutations of others, and of himſelf. The general exhortations are to prayer, with watchfulneſs and thankfulneſs, not only for themſelves, but eſpecially for the miniſters of the Goſpel, ver. 2, 3, 4. and next to a wiſe behaviour towards them that were of the world, ver. 5. and alſo to a prudent converſation, particularly in language, with every one, ver. 6. And then the Apoſtle proceeds to declare his great affection for them, and care of them, which he ſhewed by ſending two proper perſons to them from him, partly to make known his affairs to them, and partly to know the ſtate and condition they were in, and comfort them, ver. 7, 8, 9. and next follow the ſalutations of various perſons to them, who are mentioned by name, and whoſe characters are given, ver. 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15. And then he orders them to read this Epiſtle in the church of *Laodicea*, and alſo that which came from that place, ver. 16. and to admoniſh *Archippus* to take heed to, and fulfil his miniſtry, ſince it was what he had received in the Lord, ver. 17. And then cloſes the Epiſtle with his own ſalutation and benediction, entreating a remembrance of him and his bonds, ver. 18.

Ver. 1. *Maſters give unto your ſervants*, &c.] This verſe properly belongs to the preceding chapter, with which it ſhould have been concluded. It is indeed ſtrange, that thoſe who made the diviſion of chapters and verſes ſhould ſeparate this from the former chapter, to which it ſo manifeſtly belongs, and begin a new one with it, when it has no connexion with what follows; for the Apoſtle having obſerved the duty of ſervants to their maſters, proceeds to direct maſters to the diſcharge of their duty to their ſervants, by giving them *that which is juſt and equal*; proper food and raiment, which is ſufficient and fitting for them; the wages due unto them by law or contract; uſing them with gentleneſs and humanity, taking care of them when under affliction, and in ſickneſs; encouraging the diligent and laborious by an addition to their ſalaries; correcting the diſobedient within juſt bounds, not with too much rigour and ſeverity; and carrying it with an even hand to all, not preferring or indulging one before another, without any reaſon: *knowing that ye alſo have a maſter in heaven*; ſee the note on *Eph.* vi. 9.

Ver. 2. *Continue in prayer*, &c.] This is not ſaid particularly to maſters, as in the foregoing verſe, but to all the members of the church in general; for the Apoſtle having taken notice of ſome ſpecial duties relating to perſons in different ſtations of life, returns to ſuch as were common to them all; as this of prayer to God is, for ſuch prayer is intended; for tho' the object is not expreſſed here, he is in the following verſe, and the mediator Chriſt is ſuppoſed, and alſo the holy Spirit, whoſe aſſiſtance is neceſſary to it. The things exhorted to, and required in prayer, are, firſt, as in this clauſe, continuance in it, which does not mean that men ſhould be always formally praying to God; nor can it be thought that ſaints are always in praying frames of ſoul, tho' ſuch are always deſirable; but it intends frequency and conſtancy in prayer, in oppoſition to an entire reſtraint and omiſſion of it, and to a performance of it but now and then, or very rarely; for tho' chriſtians are not, as the *Jews* were, bound to certain ſtated hours of prayer, ſo many times in a day, yet a day ſhould not paſs without prayer to God; for their daily caſes call for it; their lives, their health, their daily bread, and all their temporal enjoyments, which depend on his daily goodneſs, providence, and power; their ſpiritual affairs, the renewing of the inward man day by day, freſh ſupplies of grace for new ſervice; their daily trials and afflictions, their continued enemies, ſin, ſatan, and the world, all fully ſhew the neceſſity of daily prayer: beſides, God does not always immediately anſwer the prayers of his people, he will be ſought unto time after time, even for a bleſſing he intends to give; and therefore the ſaints ſhould not be diſcouraged, but continue in prayer till they receive the mercy, and their importunity is a means of enjoying it, as in the caſe of the poor widow; and which is an encouraging reaſon why men ſhould pray always, and not faint. Add to this, that conſtant prayer is a means of keeping up a ſpiritual acquaintance, intercourſe, and familiarity with God, and of the ſoul alive in the vigorous exerciſe of the graces of the Spirit, and of preſerving the ſaints from temptations and ſin; for, generally ſpeaking, reſtraining prayer before God, and caſting off his fear, go together. The next things requiſite in prayer are watchfulneſs and thankfulneſs: *and watch in the ſame with thankſgiving*. There is not only a watchfulneſs unto it, previous to a man's entrance on it, as in *Eph.* vi. 18. 1 *Pet.* iv. 7. but a watchfulneſs in it, which is oppoſed both to ſleepineſs of body, and to coldneſs and indifference of mind, to all careleſs airs and negligent manner of performing it; and deſigns an intenſeneſs of mind, an application of thought, and fervency of devotion, and affection in it. It lies in a concern, that the heart be lift up with the hands to God; in a care, that what is aſked is according to the will of God, and that the whole be performed in ſincerity, faith, and fear. This is what the *Jews* call, עיון תפלה, *the attention of prayer* [f], and כוונת הלב, *the intention of the heart*; and which, they ſay [g], is the root of prayer, the main and principal thing in it; and that every prayer which is not with intention, is no prayer [h]; and which, they obſerve, lies in this, that a man turns his heart from all (other) thoughts, and ſeems to himſelf as if he ſtood before the divine majeſty. To this *thankſgiving* muſt be added; ſee *Phil.* iv. 6. for this is well-pleaſing to God; and the contrary, an ungrateful ſpirit is highly reſented by him. Beſides, a believer has always mercies to bleſs God for, as well as favours to aſk at his hands; nor is he ever in ſuch a ſituation, either in temporals or ſpirituals, but he has ſomething to bleſs God for. Moreover, how ſhould it be expected that a perſon ſhould ſucceed in a preſent requeſt, who is not thankful for a former kindneſs?

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[f] T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 164. 2. & Sabbat, fol. 127. 1.

[g] R. Aben Ezra in Pſ. lxxviii. 37.

[h] Maimon. Hilch. Tephillah, c. 4. §. 15, 16.

Ver. 3. *Withal, praying alſo for us*, &c.] The perſons to be prayed for are next directed to; and theſe are not only themſelves, tho' their concern is very near and great, but others alſo, all the ſaints and people of God, yea, all men, and in particular the miniſters of the Goſpel. The Apoſtle deſires they would pray for him, and his fellow-miniſters, and which he ſays not in diſſimulation, under a guiſe of humility, but in true humility and lowlineſs of mind; being ſenſible of the greatneſs of the miniſterial work, which this ſhews, and of his own imperfection and weakneſs, and of what advantage the prayers, even of the meaneſt in the church, might be unto him: and this ſhows, that it is the duty of churches, and of particular believers, to pray for their miniſters, and among the reſt, as follows, *that God would open to us a door of utterance*; or *of the word*; ſo the *Vulgate Latin*, *Syriac*, *Arabic*, and *Ethiopic* verſions; meaning, either the word of the Goſpel, that the door of that might be opened, that it might have a free courſe, and be glorified; for tho' he was bound, that was not; nor does he deſire that the door of the priſon might be opened, but the door of the word, that there might be an opportunity of preaching it; in which ſenſe this phraſe is uſed, 1 *Cor.* xvi. 9. 2 *Cor.* ii. 12. that whereas he could not go abroad to preach it, the hearts of men might be inclined to come to him, and hear it from his mouth; and that the door of their hearts might be opened, that they might attend unto it; that it might have an entrance into them, and a place in them: or elſe the door of his own ſpeech and words is intended, and the ſenſe be, that God would not only ſet before him an open door for the preaching of the Goſpel, and make it effectual for the converſion of many ſouls; but that, as he would furniſh him with all abilities, and every gift for that ſervice, ſo that with enlargement of heart, and liberty of mind, he would give him elocution, a mouth and wiſdom to ſpeak, utterance and freedom of ſpeech; that the door of the Goſpel being opened, or an opportunity given to preach it, and the door of mens hearts opened to receive it, the door of his lips might be alſo opened to ſhew forth the praiſe of the grace of God. The *Alexandrian* copy adds, *with boldneſs*, or *boldly*, as in *Eph.* vi. 19. *to ſpeak the myſtery of Chriſt*; the Goſpel, of which Chriſt is the author, preacher, ſum, and ſubſtance; the whole of which is a myſtery; the wiſdom of God in a myſtery; all the doctrines of it are myſteries; and particularly thoſe, and which are here more eſpecially deſigned, which regard the perſon, offices, and grace of Chriſt, as the myſtery of his divine and eternal Sonſhip, of his incarnation, of the union of the two natures, divine and human, in his perſon, of redemption by his blood, juſtification by his righteouſneſs, and ſatiſfaction by his ſacrifice, things dear to the Apoſtle, and which his ſoul was full of, and he wanted to ſpeak out; and therefore deſires prayer to be made for him, that a door might be opened, and way made for his ſpeaking of theſe things with freedom: *for which*, ſays he, *I am alſo in bonds*; this he adds, partly to ſhew how dear the Goſpel was to him, that he was willing to ſuffer, and did ſuffer chearfully for the ſake of it; and what an honour he eſteemed it to lie in chains for it, of which, nor of that, was he in the leaſt aſhamed; and partly to ſtir them up the more to prayer for him, for his liberty in every reſpect.

Ver. 4. *That I may make it manifeſt*, &c.] It being a myſtery, a ſecret, which was hid in God from everlaſting, and during the legal diſpenſation, was wrapped up in types, and ſhadows, and ſacrifices, and is ſtill hidden unto the natural man. Wherefore the Apoſtle was deſirous of making it manifeſt in a miniſterial way; for God only, by his Spirit, makes it manifeſt in a ſpiritual, experimental, and ſaving way. *As*, ſays he, *I ought to ſpeak*. The *Arabic* verſion adds, *concerning it*, the Goſpel, the myſtery of Chriſt. The Apoſtle's meaning is, that he might deliver it with that clearneſs and evidence, and uſe that plainneſs of ſpeech which became the Goſpel, and him as a miniſter of it, and not ambiguous expreſſions, equivocal phraſes, words of double meanings, on purpoſe to hide things from men, but by manifeſtation of the truth, to commend himſelf to every man's conſcience in the ſight of God. As alſo to ſpeak it faithfully, declaring the whole counſel of God, keeping back nothing that might be profitable to the churches; and with all conſtancy and certainty, with all boldneſs and intrepidity of ſoul, and freedom of mind, not ſeeking to pleaſe men, aiming at vain-glory, and popular applauſe, or being afraid of their faces, menaces, and reproaches.

Ver. 5. *Walk in wiſdom*, &c.] Or wiſely, circumſpectly, not as fools, but as wiſe men; ſee the note on *Eph.* v. 15. *Towards them that are without*; ſo the *Jews* uſed to call the *Gentiles*, all that were out of their own land, that were not of their nation or religion, who were aliens from them, and ſtrangers to their privileges; and ſometimes the unbelieving *Jews* bear the ſame character, *Mark* iv. 11. Here it may deſign ſuch who were not members of this church; ſo the diſtinction of thoſe that are *without*, and ſuch as are *within*, is uſed by the Apoſtle in 1 *Cor.* v. 12. A church is an houſe or family, and ſuch as belong to it are called the houſhold of faith, and thoſe that do not, are they that are without; it is as a city, and thoſe that are of it are fellow-citizens with the ſaints, but others are ſtrangers and foreigners; it is a garden encloſed, they that are planted in it are thoſe that are within, and ſuch as lie in the wide open field of the world are thoſe that are without: but inaſmuch as there are ſome who are not members of churches, and yet have the grace of God, this phraſe may chiefly regard all unregenerate men, prophane ſinners, ſuch as have not faith in Chriſt, nor hope in God, who are entirely deſtitute of the grace of God. Now it becomes ſaints to walk wiſely towards them; all communication with them is not cut off, or correſpondence and converſation with them forbidden; the ſaints indeed are not to have their converſation among them as in times paſt; they are to have no fellowſhip with them in immoral actions, and ſuperſtitious practices; but they may be concerned with them in things civil, with reſpect to trade and commerce, and the common buſineſs of life; on theſe accounts they may keep company with them; otherwiſe, as the Apoſtle elſewhere ſays, they muſt needs go out of the world. But then it is incumbent upon them to behave wiſely towards them, with the ſimplicity of the dove to join the wiſdom of the ſerpent; they ſhould walk inoffenſively towards them, and do nothing to provoke them, to injure and perſecute them, but take all prudent methods to gain their affections, eſcape their reſentment and wrath, and obtain their liberty of worſhipping God without diſturbance; they ſhould give to all their due, tribute, cuſtom, fear, and honour, to whom they are due, and owe no man any thing but love; they ſhould ſubmit to every ordinance of men, and be ſubject to the higher powers, not only to eſcape wrath, but for conſcience ſake, and ſhould give to *Cæſar* the things that are *Cæſar's*; they ſhould pray for kings, and all in authority, for the proſperity of the nation, city, and place where they are, for their carnal relations and neighbours, and even their very enemies, and do them all the good, both for ſoul and body, that lies in their power, and as they have opportunity; and by ſo doing, they'll heap up coals of fire on their heads. Such a prudent walk, and wiſe conduct, is neceſſary on account of the Goſpel, that the public miniſtration of it may be continued, that it may ſpread and get ground, and that it may not be reproached and blaſphemed; and on the account of them that are without, that they may not have any ſtumbling-blocks laid in their way, and they be hardened in their impiety and irreligion, and be more ſet againſt the truths of the Goſpel; and alſo on account of believers themſelves, who ought ſo to converſe with the men of the world, that they are not partakers with them in their ſins, and have their manners corrupted by them, or the vital heat of religion damped, and they become dead, liſeleſs, luke-warm, and indifferent to divine things, which is often the caſe thro' an indiſcreet and imprudent walk with ſuch men: the Apoſtle adds, *redeeming the time*; as an inſtance of prudent walking towards them that are without; ſee the note on *Eph.* v. 16.

Ver. 6. *Let your ſpeech be alway with grace*, &c.] *In grace*, or *concerning grace*; let grace be the ſubject-matter of ſpeech and converſation. When ſaints meet together they ſhould converſe with each other about the work of grace upon their ſouls, how it was begun, and how it has been carried on, and in what caſe it now is; they ſhould talk of the great things and wonders of grace, which God has done for them, which would be both comfortable and edifying to them, and make for the glory of the grace of God; and alſo, they ſhould confer together about the doctrines of grace, and ſo inſtruct, eſtabliſh, and build up one another in them; and at leaſt their converſation ſhould always turn on things graceful and acceptable, ſuch as may miniſter grace unto the hearer, and be uſeful and edifying; wherefore all obſcene words, unchaſte expreſſions, filthineſs, fooliſh talking, and jeſting, ought not to be uſed. Or this may regard the manner of the ſpeech, and language of the ſaints; it ſhould be in the exercife of grace; it ſhould be in truth, faithfulneſs, and ſincerity, without lying, diſſimulation, and flattery; it ſhould be in conſiſtence with the grace of love, therefore evil ſhould not be ſpoken one of another; nor ſhould there be whiſperings, backbitings, or any thing ſaid that is injurious to the character, credit, and reputation of another; for this is contrary to love, and ſo not with grace: and whatever is ſaid ſhould be ſpoken in the fear of God; the reaſon why ſo many evil things proceed out of the mouths of men, is, becauſe the fear of God is not before their eyes. Moreover, the ſpeech of the ſaints ought to be in a graceful way, with a chearful and pleaſant countenance, in an affable and courteous manner, and not after a moroſe, churliſh, and ill-natured faſhion: and this ſhould be *alway* the caſe; not that they ſhould be always talking, for there's a time to keep ſilence, as well as a time to ſpeak; but the ſenſe is, that when they do ſpeak, it ſhould be both graceful things, and in a graceful manner; ſo that there is never any room and place for vain diſcourſe, unprofitable talk, and idle words, which muſt all be accounted for in the day of judgment. *Seaſoned with ſalt.* The *Syriac* verſion adds, איך, *as*, and reads it, *as if it was ſeaſoned with ſalt*: grace being that to ſpeech, as ſalt is to meat; as ſalt makes meat ſavoury and agreeable to the palate, ſo grace, prudence, and holineſs, which may be meant by ſalt, ſee *Mark* ix. 50. make diſcourſe ſavoury, pleaſant, and acceptable to a ſpiritual man, who ſavours the things that be of God, as all ſuch things are that relate to the grace of God, the work or doctrines of it; and as ſalt preſerves fleſh from putrefaction and corruption, ſo when grace goes along with ſpeech, it makes it pure and incorrupt, ſound ſpeech which cannot be condemned: and the Apoſtle's view is, in this exhortation, that nothing unſavoury and corrupt proceed out of the mouths of believers; ſee *Eph.* iv. 29. *that ye may know how ye ought to anſwer every man.* The *Syriac* and *Arabic* verſions render it, *and know ye how*, &c. and make it to be a freſh exhortation to the ſaints to be concerned for ſuch a ſhare of ſpiritual knowledge, that they may be able to give a proper and pertinent anſwer, with meekneſs and fear, to ſuch as ſhall aſk a reaſon of the hope that is in them; and to make ſuitable returns to perſons according to their age, ſex, capacities, and circumſtances; for every one is not to be anſwered alike, nor the ſame man under different circumſtances; a fool is ſometimes to be anſwered according to his folly, and ſometimes not; and this ſeems to be a better reading than ours, which makes this to be the end of gracious, ſavoury, and incorrupt ſpeech; whereas knowledge is not acquired by ſpeaking, but ought to go before it; tho' indeed a perſon that uſes himſelf to ſpeaking with prudence, purity, and grace, is at all times ready to give an agreeable anſwer, in a graceful and acceptable manner, to every one.

Ver. 7. *All my ſtate ſhall Tychicus declare unto you*, &c.] This *Tychicus* was an *Aſian* by birth; ſee *Acts* xx. 4. His name ſignifies *fortunate*, and is the ſame with Fortunatus in *Latin*, which name is mentioned in 1 *Cor.* xvi. 17. whether he is the ſame perſon may be enquired. It is ſaid that this *Tychicus* was one of the ſeventy diſciples, and was afterwards biſhop of *Chalcedon*. However, he was employed by the Apoſtle as a meſſenger to *Coloſſe*, as he alſo was to *Epheſus*, ſee *Eph.* vi. 21. 2 *Tim.* iv. 12. to inform the members of the church of his ſtate and condition, how it was with him; as that he was in priſon at *Rome*, for the ſake of the Goſpel, which he continued to abide by, and held faſt the profeſſion of, not being in the leaſt moved and intimidated by what he ſuffered, being ſupported by the preſence of Chriſt, and the diſcoveries of his love; and therefore, though his outward ſtate was very mean and uncomfortable, yet the inward ſtate of his ſoul was right and good; the inward man was renewed day by day. He might alſo ſend word by him what his thoughts were about his deliverance, or his diſſolution, and what expectation he had of either of theſe: and that they might give the greater credit to what *Tychicus* ſhould relate from him, he gives him the following character, *who is a beloved brother, and a faithful miniſter*: the ſame character is given of him in *Eph.* vi. 21. ſee the note there: to which is here added, *and fellow-ſervant in the Lord*; he was a *brother* in Chriſt, being a partaker of the ſame grace, and in the ſame ſpiritual relation; and *beloved* of God, and Chriſt, of all the churches and ſaints that knew him, and eſpecially by the Apoſtle; and was alſo a *miniſter* of the Goſpel, a preacher of Jeſus Chriſt, and a *faithful* one to Chriſt, to his Goſpel, and the ſouls of men; than which a greater character can't well be given: and tho' the Apoſtle was endued with ſuch ſuperior gifts, grace, and uſefulneſs; yet he calls this miniſtring brother a *fellow-ſervant in the Lord*; he having a commiſſion to preach from the ſame Lord, and having the ſame Goſpel entruſted with him, and being engaged in the ſame good work, and having the ſame ends in view, the glory of Chriſt, and the good of ſouls; tho' he had not equal abilities and qualifications, and was not in the ſame high poſt and office as an Apoſtle of Jeſus Chriſt.

Ver. 8. *Whom I have ſent unto you for the ſame purpoſe*, &c.] That is, to relate to them his affairs both temporal and ſpiritual; and alſo, *that he might know your eſtate*. The *Arabic* verſion renders it, *that I may know your eſtate*; by him when he returned again; as whether they continued ſtedfaſt in the Goſpel, and obſerved the order, ordinances, and diſcipline of it; how it proſpered, and was ſucceeded among them, to their comfort and edification, and to the converſion of others; and what reception the falſe teachers had among them; and what love, concord, and harmony were among themſelves; or what were their afflictions and diſtreſſes from their enemies. The *Ethiopic* verſion renders it, *that ye may know the hiſtory of me*; which agrees with a manuſcript mentioned by *Grotius*, which reads, *that ye may know the things concerning us*, as does the *Alexandrian* copy; and with *Eph.* vi. 22. where 'tis added, as here, and *comfort your hearts*; who might be greatly caſt down upon hearing of the ſufferings of the Apoſtle, and alſo with thoſe they themſelves endured both from within and from without, from ſin, ſatan, and the world; ſee the note on *Eph.* vi. 22.

Ver. 9. *With Oneſimus*, &c.] Who had been *Philemon*'s ſervant, ran away from him, and was met with and converted by the Apoſtle *Paul*, of whom he ſays many things in his epiſtle to his maſter. According to the Apoſtolic Conſtitutions, he was afterwards biſhop of *Berrhœa*; and ſome ſay he ſuffered martyrdom under *Domitian*; a ſervant of this name is mentioned by *Suetonius* [i]. *Ignatius* [k] ſpeaks of one *Oneſimus* as biſhop of *Epheſus*, but not the ſame with this, *a faithful and beloved brother*, *who is one of you*; either one of their miniſters, as *Epaphras* was, ver. 12. or one of their city, who was originally a native of that place; and which the Apoſtle mentions, the more to recommend him; though this is the leaſt part of his commendation: he calls him a *brother*, being both a converted man, and in the miniſtry; and being *faithful* in his work to Chriſt, and greatly *beloved* by the ſaints; and particularly highly in the eſteem and affections of the Apoſtle: *they ſhall make known unto you all things which* are done *here*; at *Rome*, either to him in priſon, or in the church; and being two of them, were a proper number to bear a teſtimony, and which ought to be received.

Ver. 10. *Ariſtarchus my fellow-priſoner ſaluteth you*, &c.] This man was a man of *Macedonia*, and a *Theſſalonian*, *Acts* xix. 29. and xx. 4. which hinders not but that he might be of the circumciſion, or a *Jew*, as is ſuggeſted in the following verſe; for he might be born at *Theſſalonica*, and yet be of *Jewiſh* parents; nor is his *Greek* name any objection to it, for the *Jews* themſelves ſay, that the greateſt part of the *Iſraelites* that were out of the land, their names are as the names of ſtrangers [l]: he was a conſtant companion of the Apoſtle, and one of his fellow-labourers, as in *Philem.* ver. 24. and now a priſoner with him at *Rome*; and who having ſome knowledge of the members of the church at *Coloſſe*, takes this opportunity of ſending his chriſtian ſalutation to them: *and Marcus ſiſters ſon to Barnabas*; the ſame with *John Mark*, whoſe mother's name was *Mary*, ſaid here to be ſiſter to *Barnabas*, *Acts* xii. 12, 24. concerning whom there was a difference between *Paul* and *Barnabas*, *Acts* xv. 37, 38, 39. and is the ſame *Mark* that wrote the Goſpel, and was converted by the Apoſtle *Peter*, 1 *Pet.* v. 13. and who is ſaid to have received his Goſpel from him; he is alſo mentioned 2 *Tim.* iv. 11. *Philem.* ver. 24. The *Arabic* verſion calls him here, the *brother's ſon of Barnabas*; and the *Syriac* verſion, בר דדה, *his uncle's ſon*; however, *Barnabas* being ſo great a man as he was, and ſo well known, it added ſome credit to *Mark*, that he was a relation of his: *touching whom ye received commandments*; not concerning *Barnabas* but *Mark*, concerning whom they had had letters of commendation, either from *Barnabas* or from *Paul*, to this purpoſe: *if he come unto you, receive him*; for this was either the ſubſtance of thoſe letters, or what the Apoſtle now adds of his own, for the further confirmation of them; and that they might more readily and honourably receive him, when he ſhould come unto them.

Ver. 11. *And Jeſus which is called Juſtus*, &c.] The former of theſe names is the ſame with *Joſhua*, and was very frequent with the *Jews*, and the latter a ſirname that was ſometimes given to men remarkable for holineſs and righteouſneſs: ſo *Joſeph* called *Barſabas*, is ſurnamed *Juſtus*, *Acts* i. 23. and *James* the brother of our Lord, was called by the *Jews*, *James* the *Juſt* [m]: whether this man was not the ſame with *Juſtus* of *Corinth*, whoſe houſe joined to the ſynagogue, and into which *Paul* entered, *Acts* xviii. 7. is not certain, but is likely: *who are of the circumciſion*; were *Jews*, were circumciſed perſons, though not now ſticklers for circumciſion, and the reſt of the ceremonies, as appears by what follows: this is to be underſtood of all the above perſons, that ſent their ſalutations to this church; though ſome confine it to *Marcus*, *Barnabas*'s ſiſter's ſon, and to *Jeſus*, called *Juſtus*: *theſe only are my fellow-workers unto the kingdom of God*; who aſſiſted him in preaching the Goſpel of the kingdom of God, and in promoting the honour and intereſt of Chriſt. Theſe were the only perſons of the *Jewiſh* nation that were then at *Rome* under that character; from whence it appears that *Peter* was not there at that time: the Apoſtle adds, *which have been a comfort unto me*; under his afflictions and ſufferings, by viſiting him, conferring with him, praying for him, communicating to him, and labouring in the Goſpel in his room and ſtead.

Ver. 12. *Epaphras who is one of you*, &c.] A native of *Coloſſe*, and one of their faithful miniſters; ſee ch. i. 7. *A ſervant of Chriſt*; not merely in the ſame ſenſe as every believer is, but as he was a preacher of the Goſpel, in which he faithfully ſerved his Lord and maſter, Chriſt: *ſaluteth you*; ſends his chriſtian reſpects to you, for whom he bore a ſincere love and hearty affection, as appears by what follows: *always labouring fervently for you in prayers*; in all his prayers, which were many and frequent, he never forgot his dear flock at *Coloſſe* of which he was paſtor, but ſtrove with God for them, even to an agony, as the word ſignifies; he wreſtled with the Lord as *Jacob* did, nor as he, would he let him go without a bleſſing for this church; he was inceſſant, importunate, and fervent in prayer for them: and what he prayed in particular for them was, *that ye may ſtand perfect*; in Chriſt Jeſus their head, and in his ſpotleſs righteouſneſs; ſee ch. i. 28. and ii. 10. and continue believing in him, and looking to him for righteouſneſs and ſtrength, in whom all the fulneſs, the perfection of grace dwells; and where the ſaints only are, and can continue to be perfect: *and compleat in all the will of God*; or *be filled* in it, have a perfect knowledge of the revealed will of God, both as to doctrine and practice, and be enabled to act according to it.

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[i] In vit. Galbæ, c. 13.

[k] Ep. ad Epheſ. p. 17. & ad Antioch. aſcript. p. 89.

[l] T. Bab. Gittin, fol. 11. 2.

[m] Euſeb. Eccl. Hiſt. l. 2. c. 1.

Ver. 13. *For I bear him record*, &c.] The Apoſtle was an eye and ear-witneſs of his fervent prayers, his labour of love, and zealous affection for theſe ſaints and others; and therefore as he judged he ought, he bears a teſtimony for him, *that he hath a great zeal for you*; for their ſpiritual welfare, that the Goſpel might continue with them, and they in that, againſt falſe teachers, and their attempts to ſubvert them; that they might grow in the grace of the Goſpel, and walk worthy of it, and be at peace among themſelves: *and them that are in Laodicea, and them in Hierapolis*; cities in *Phrygia*, which lay near to *Coloſſe*, the one being ſituated by the river *Lycus*, and the other by the *Mæander*; here were many believers, for whom *Epaphras* had a like zeal and affection as for the *Coloſſians*, and to whom very likely he had been uſeful, either in converſion or edification, or both. The Apoſtle takes no notice to the *Coloſſians* of *Epaphras* being his fellow-priſoner, as he does in his Epiſtle to *Philemon*, ver. 23. it may be for this reaſon, leſt they ſhould be overmuch diſtreſſed and caſt down with it.

Ver. 14. *Luke the beloved phyſician*, &c.] *Luke* the Evangeliſt, though ſome doubt it, is here intended, who was a conſtant companion of the Apoſtle in his troubles, and went with him to *Rome*, as the *Acts* of the *Apoſtles* wrote by him ſhew, and as from 2 *Tim.* iv. 11. it appears; ſo *Jerom*[n] calls the Evangeliſt *Luke*, the phyſician of *Antioch*, for from thence he was; and being converted by the Apoſtle *Paul*, as is very probable, though ſome make him to be one of the ſeventy diſciples, he became of a phyſician of bodies, a phyſician of ſouls: ſome ſay[o] he was a ſcholar of *Galen* the famous phyſician, and others that he was his ſiſter's ſon; who having heard of Chriſt's miracles, ſet out with his maſter *Galen* for *Judea*, to know the truth of them, of which they doubted; *Galen* died by the way, *Luke* came to Chriſt, and being taught by him, became one of the ſeventy diſciples. The Apoſtle calls him *beloved*, not on account of his profeſſion, in which he might be uſeful to many, but as he was a brother in Chriſt, a miniſter of the Goſpel, and a fellow-labourer of his. This is the ſame perſon with *Lucas*, mentioned along with *Demas*, and others, as here, in *Philem.* ver. 24. The name perhaps is *Roman*, but was however well known among the *Jews*; for they ſay[p], the "witneſſes that ſign a divorce, and "their names are as the names of ſtrangers, what "is to be done with it? there's none comes into "our hands (is received) but, לוקום, *Lukus* and "*Lus*, and we allow it to be right:" upon which the *Gloſs* ſays, becauſe theſe were famous names: *and Demas greet you*; the ſame who through the love of the preſent world, forſook the Apoſtle, 2 *Tim.* iv. 10. which he did either after the writing of this epiſtle, or if before it, he was now returned again to him: his name ſeems to be the ſame with the *Roman Dama*, unleſs it ſhould be a contraction of *Demetrius*, or rather of *Demarchos*; though the *Jews* make frequent mention of *R.* דימי, *Dimi*, or *Demi*, in their writings[q], which perhaps is the ſame name with this.

Ver. 15. *Salute the brethren which are in Laodicea*, &c.] Where there was a church mentioned in the following verſe, of which ſee the note on *Rev.* ii. 10. *And Nymphas*; which ſome unſkilful in the *Greek* language, have took for a woman; whereas it is the name of a man, as the following words ſhew; and is a contraction of *Nymphios*, or *Nymphidios*, or *Nymphodoros*: *and the church which is in his houſe*. This man ſeems to have been an inhabitant of *Laodicea*, and that the church there met at his houſe to worſhip God, to pray unto him, ſing his praiſe, hear his word, and attend on all ordinances; or his own family was brought up ſo ſtrictly to the obſervance of theſe things, that they looked like a little church of themſelves.

Ver. 16. *And when this epiſtle is read amongſt you*, &c.] Which the Apoſtle was now writing, and ſent unto them; and which was to be read publickly, before the whole church; being ſent not to any particular perſon, or perſons, but to the whole body, and for their general good and inſtruction: *cauſe that it be read alſo in the church of the Laodiceans*; his will was, that after it had been read to the church at *Coloſſe*, it ſhould be ſent, or at leaſt a copy of it, to the church of the *Laodiceans*, in order to be read there: his reaſon might be, not only becauſe this church was near them, but becauſe it was in much the ſame ſituation, being infeſted with the ſame ſort of falſe teachers; and therefore what was ſaid to the one, was pertinent to the other: *and that ye likewiſe read the epiſtle from Laodicea*; which was not an epiſtle of the Apoſtle to the *Laodiceans*, as ſome have thought, but one that was *written from* thence, as the *Syriac* verſion renders it. *Marcion* the heretick, called the epiſtle to the *Epheſians*, the epiſtle to the *Laodiceans*, but without any reaſon; and others have forged an epiſtle which bears this name, and appears to be a collection out of others, and chiefly from the epiſtle to the *Philippians*; and which being ſhort, and may gratify the curious who can't otherwiſe come at it, I ſhall tranſcribe it, and is as follows. "*Paul* an Apoſtle, not of men, neither "by man, but by Jeſus Chriſt; to the brethren "which are of *Laodicea*, grace be unto you, and "peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jeſus "Chriſt. I give thanks to Chriſt in every prayer "of mine, that ye continue and perſevere in good "works, expecting the promiſe in the day of "judgment: neither let the vain ſpeeches of ſome "that pretend to truth diſturb you, ſo as to turn "you from the truth of the Goſpel which is "preached by me; and now the Lord cauſe that "thoſe who belong to me, may be ſerviceable for "the furtherance of the truth of the Goſpel, and "doing kind actions, which are of ſalvation unto "eternal life: and now my bonds are manifeſt which "I ſuffer in Chriſt, in which I am glad and rejoice; "and this is to my perpetual ſalvation which is "done by your prayers, the Holy Ghoſt ſupplying, whether by life or by death; for me to live "is life in Chriſt, and to die is joy; and he will "do his own mercy in you, that ye may have the "ſame love, and be unanimous: therefore moſt

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[n] Catalog. Script. Eccleſ. p. 91. Vid. Nicephor. Hiſt. l. 2. c. 43.

[o] Vid. Caſtell. Lex. Polyglott. col. 1894.

[p] T. Bab. Gittin, fol. 11. 2.

[q] T. Bab. Gittin, fol. 19. 2. Nazir, fol. 36. 1. Sota, fol. 43. 2. Bava Kama, fol. 43. 2. Juchaſin, fol. 87. 2. & 117. 1.

“beloved, as ye have heard of the preſence of the Lord, ſo think ye, and do in fear, and you ſhall have life for ever; for it is God that worketh in you; and whatſoever ye do, do without ſin; and what is beſt, moſt beloved, rejoice in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and take heed of all filth in all gain; let your petitions be openly with God, be ye ſtedfaſt in the ſenſe of Chriſt: and whatſoever things are ſound and true, and chaſte and juſt, and lovely, do; and what ye have heard and received retain in the heart, and peace ſhall be with you. Salute all the brethren with an holy kiſs; all the ſaints ſalute you; the grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt be with your ſpirit. Amen. Cauſe this to be read to the *Coloſſians*, and that which is of the *Coloſſians* to you.” Every one on reading it will eaſily ſee that it is a ſpurious piece, a collection out of other epiſtles, and very ill put together: however, the Apoſtle here does not ſpeak of any epiſtle written to the church of *Laodicea*, but of one that was written from thence; which ſome think was written by himſelf, and that he means his firſt epiſtle to *Timothy*, which is ſaid to be written from *Laodicea*; and the rather, becauſe in that the qualifications of the miniſters of the Goſpel are given; and alſo ſuitable inſtructions for the diſcharge of their work, and ſo very proper to be read in the preſence of *Archippus*; who from the following verſe, ſeems to have been remiſs and negligent, and needed ſtirring up to the performance of his office: but from ch. ii. 1. it appears, that the Apoſtle had not been at *Laodicea* when he wrote this, and had not ſo much as ſeen any of the faces of the brethren there in the fleſh; it therefore ſeems rather to be an epiſtle which was ſent from *Laodicea* to him, or to the *Coloſſians*; which having ſomething in it very inſtructive and uſeful, the Apoſtle deſires it might be publickly read.

Ver. 17. *And ſay to Archippus*, &c.] A name common among the *Grecians*. This perſon the Apoſtle calls his fellow-ſoldier, in *Philem.* ver. 2. and who was now the miniſter of the Goſpel at *Coloſſe*, his fellow-miniſter, or co-paſtor *Epaphras*, being at *Rome*, and a priſoner there; though by ſome he is ſaid to be the firſt biſhop of the *Laodiceans*, but it ſeems moſt likely that he now reſided at *Coloſſe*, and was their miniſter: who being negligent in his office, they are called upon to ſay unto him, *take heed to the miniſtry which thou haſt received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it*. The *miniſtry* he had, was not that of the office of a deacon, as ſome have thought, but of a preacher of the word; and this he had *received* gifts for, and was called unto it, and inſtalled in it; and that *in*, and *by the Lord* himſelf, and to whom he was accountable for it: and therefore it was incumbent on him to *fulfil* it; by conſtantly preaching the word, and faithfully adminiſtring the ordinances; by defending truth, detecting error, reproving vice, viſiting the ſick, and comforting the feeble minded; taking heed in all things to himſelf and doctrine, that he feed the whole flock of God with wholeſome food; and as a wiſe and faithful ſteward, give to every one their portion of meat in due ſeaſon: hence it appears, that when miniſters are negligent in the diſcharge of their duty, the church has a power to admoniſh and exhort them to a diligent performance of it.

Ver. 18. *The ſalutation by the hand of me Paul*, &c.] After his *Amanuenſis* had finiſhed the epiſtle, he added his uſual ſalutation to it with his own hand, to prevent all counterfeits and impoſitions; and that the churches to whom he wrote, might be ſure of the genuineneſs of his epiſtles; but before he added it to it, he either wrote with his own hand, or ordered to be written the following words, *remember my bonds*; this he ſays, partly that they might be animated to abide by the Goſpel, for which, as he had told them before, ver. 3. that he was in bonds; and partly to encourage them by his example, patiently to endure what afflictions and perſecutions ſoever they ſhould meet with, for the ſake of it; as alſo that they might be moved hereby, to remember him in their prayers, that if it was the will of God, he might be releaſed, and be yet further uſeful in preaching the Goſpel; or however, that he might be ſupported in his bonds, and chearfully bear them, and remain ſtedfaſt in his faith in Chriſt unto the end: and then follows the ſalutation, *grace be with you*, *Amen*; which is common to all his epiſtles, and well ſuits them; in which he ſo much diſplays the grace of God, as it is expreſſed in the Goſpel; and which his heart was full of, and earneſtly deſired might be more largely manifeſted to, and beſtowed upon the ſaints. This epiſtle is ſaid to be *written from Rome to the Coloſſians, by Tychicus and Oneſimus*; and though the ſubſcriptions of the epiſtles are not always to be depended on, yet this ſeems to be right; that it was inſcribed to the *Coloſſians*, there is no doubt; and that it was written from *Rome* is clear enough, ſince by ſeveral expreſſions it is plain, that he was now a priſoner and in bonds; and that it was ſent by *Tychicus* and *Oneſimus* is more than probable, from ver. 7, 8, 9.

AN
EXPOSITION, &c.

The Firſt Epiſtle of PAUL the Apoſtle to the *THESSALONIANS*.

THESSALONICA was a very large populous and flouriſhing city, it was *liberæ conditionis*, as *Pliny* ſays[a], a free city, and the metropolis of *Macedonia*; it was formerly called *Halis*[b], and had the name of *Theſſalonica* given it by *Philip* king of *Macedon*, on account of his conqueſt of *Theſſalia*, which this name ſignifies; and ſome ſay he gave this name to a daughter of his on that occaſion, who was afterwards the wife of *Caſſander*; who others ſay, called this place by his wife's name[c], which before was *Therme*: its name with the *Italians* is *Salonichi*, and is now in the hands of the *Turks*, as all *Greece* is: here the Apoſtle *Paul* came after he had been at *Philippi*, and ſtayed about three weeks, and preached every ſabbath-day, and his miniſtry was bleſſed to the converſion of ſome *Jews*, a multitude of devout *Greeks*, and many of the chief women of the place, which laid the foundation of a Goſpel-church; to which the Apoſtle wrote this epiſtle, and is the firſt of all the epiſtles he wrote: the occaſion of it was this; the unbelieving *Jews* vexed to ſee the Apoſtle's ſucceſs, raiſed a mob of the baſer ſort of people, and aſſaulted the houſe of *Jaſon* where the Apoſtle and his companions were; but *Paul* and *Silas* were ſent away by night to *Berea*, which the rabble underſtanding followed them thither; when *Paul* was ſent as if he was going to the ſea, but was conducted by the brethren to *Athens*, who gave orders that *Silas* and *Timothy* ſhould come to him with all ſpeed, as they did; and *Timothy* was ſent back to *Theſſalonica* to eſtabliſh and comfort the young converts there; and returning with good news of their faith, and charity, to the Apoſtle at *Corinth*, he ſent them from thence this epiſtle, and not from *Athens*, as ſome have thought: the deſign of which is to encourage them under their afflictions and ſufferings; to exhort them to ſtand faſt in the Lord, to abide by his truths and ordinances, and to live an holy life and converſation; and to regard the ſeveral duties of religion, towards God and one another, and thoſe that were ſet over them; and in it he inſtructs them concerning the reſurrection of the dead, and the coming of Chriſt, articles of very great importance and concern: the writing of this epiſtle is placed by Dr. *Lightfoot*, in the 51ſt year of Chriſt, and in the 11th of *Claudius Cæſar*.

CHAP. I.

THIS chapter contains the inſcription of the epiſtle; the Apoſtle's ſalutation of the perſons it is wrote unto; his thankſgiving for bleſſings received by them; an account of the manner in which the Goſpel came to them, how they behaved when it was preached to them, and of the ſucceſs of it in their converſion. The inſcription which expreſſes the names of the perſons concerned in the epiſtle, and deſcribes thoſe to whom it is written, and alſo the ſalutation, which is the ſame as in other epiſtles, are in ver. 1. and then follows a thankſgiving to God, made in prayer to him for the ſpecial graces of the Spirit beſtowed on them, as faith, hope, and love, and the lively exerciſe of them in which they were; the ſource and ſpring of which was the electing love of God, ver. 2, 3, 4. and the evidence of their election of God to the Apoſtle, was the manner in which the Goſpel came to them; not merely in the external miniſtry of it, but in the internal efficacy of it, thro' the power of the Holy Ghoſt, ver. 5. and the effects of it upon them; it found an hearty reception among them, in much affliction, and with joy of the Holy Ghoſt; ſo that they not only profeſſed it, and became the followers of Chriſt and his Apoſtles, but were examples unto others, ver. 6, 7. for the fame of the Goſpel being preached unto them, and of their faith, were ſpread every where, ſo that the Apoſtle had no need to ſay any thing about it, ver. 8. the manner of their entrance among them, and the iſſue of it, their converſion, were ſo manifeſt to all; which is deſcribed by what they were turned from, idols; and by what they were turned to, the living God; and by the ends of it, which were to ſerve God, and wait for Jeſus Chriſt; the arguments engaging to which are, his relation to God as his Son, his being raiſed from the dead by him; his being in heaven, exalted at his right hand there, from whence he is expected; and his having by his ſufferings and death, delivered his people from wrath to come, ver. 9, 10.

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[a] Nat. Hiſt. l. 4. c. 10.

[b] Ptolom. l. 3. c. 13.

[c] Strabo, l. 7.

Ver. 1. *Paul, and Sylvanus, and Timotheus,* &c.] Theſe are the perſons concerned in this epiſtle, and who ſend their greetings and ſalutations to this church; *Paul* was the inſpired writer of it, and who is called by his bare name, without any additional epithet to it, as elſewhere in his other epiſtles; where he is either ſtiled the ſervant, or Apoſtle, or priſoner of Chriſt, but here only *Paul:* the reaſon for it is variouſly conjectured; either becauſe he was well known by this church, having been lately with them; or leſt theſe young converts ſhould be offended and ſtumble at any pompous title, which they might imagine carried an appearance of arrogance and pride; or becauſe there were as yet no falſe Apoſtles among them, who had inſinuated any thing to the diſadvantage of *Paul*, as in other places, which obliged him to aſſert his character and magnify his office; or rather becauſe this was the firſt epiſtle he wrote, and he being conſcious to himſelf of his own meanneſs, and that he was the leaſt of the Apoſtles, and unworthy to be called one, choſe not to uſe the title. *Sylvanus* is the ſame with *Silas*, who was with the Apoſtle at *Theſſalonica* and at *Corinth*, when he wrote this epiſtle; he was originally a member of the church at *Jeruſalem*, and was one of the chief of the brethren there, and a prophet; ſee *Acts* xvii. 4. and xviii. 5. and xv. 22, 23. *Timotheus* was alſo with the Apoſtle at the ſame place, and was ſent back by him from *Athens* to know their ſtate, and returned to *Corinth* to him with *Silas*; he ſtands laſt as being the younger, and perhaps was the Apoſtle's *Amanuenſis*, and therefore in modeſty writes his name laſt: the reaſon of their being mentioned, was becauſe having been with the Apoſtle at this place they were well known by the church, who would be glad to hear of their welfare; as alſo to ſhew their continued harmony and conſent in the doctrines of the Goſpel; they ſtand in the ſame order in 2 *Cor.* i. 19. *unto the church of the Theſſalonians*; which conſiſted of ſeveral of the inhabitants of *Theſſalonica*, both *Jews* and *Gentiles*; ſee the note on *Acts* xvii. 4. who were called under the miniſtry of the word by the grace of God, out of darkneſs into marvellous light, and were ſeparated from the reſt of the world, and incorporated into a Goſpel-church-ſtate. This was a particular congregated church of Chriſt. Some have thought it was not as yet organized, or had proper officers in it; ſince no mention is made of paſtors and deacons, but the contrary is evident from chap. v. 12, 13. where they are exhorted to know, own and acknowledge them that laboured among them, and were over them in the Lord, and eſteem them highly for their work ſake. This church is ſaid to be *in God the Father*; were intereſted in his love and free favour, as appears by their election of God, ver. 4. and they were in the faith of God the Father, as the Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and in the profeſſion of it, and ſo were diſtinguiſhed from an aſſembly of heathens that were in the faith of idols, and not of the one true and living God, and eſpecially as the Father of Chriſt; they were in fellowſhip with God the Father, and they were drawn by the efficacy of his grace to himſelf and to his Son, and were gathered together and embodied in a church-ſtate under his direction and influence; he was the author of them as a church, and they were plants of Chriſt's heavenly Father's planting not to be plucked up; and they were as the *Arabic* verſion renders it, *addicted* to God the Father; they were devoted to his ſervice; they had his word among them, which they had received not as the word of men, but as the word of God; and his ordinances were duly and faithfully adminiſtered among them, and attended on by them: *and in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt*; they were choſen in him before the foundation of the world; they were in him as their head and repreſentative; they were in him as members of his body, and as branches in the vine; they were openly in him by effectual vocation and converſion, were in the faith of him, and in the obſervance of his commands, and in communion with him; and ſo were diſtinguiſhed from a *Jewiſh* ſynagogue or congregation: all this being true, at leaſt of the far greater part of them is ſaid of them all, in a judgment of charity, they being under a profeſſion of the chriſtian religion: *grace be unto you, and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* This is the Apoſtle's uſual ſalutation and wiſh in all his epiſtles to the churches; ſee the note on *Rom.* i. 7. the words *from God our Father and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt* are left out in the *Vulgate Latin* and *Syriac* verſions; and the *Arabic* verſion omits the laſt clauſe, *and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt*; and the *Ethiopic* verſion only reads, *peace be unto you and his grace.*

Ver. 2. *We give thanks to God always for you all,* &c.] For all the members of this church, *Jew* or *Gentile*, rich or poor, greater or leſſer believers, officers or private chriſtians; for their being a church, for the gifts beſtowed on them, for the graces hereafter mentioned that were wrought in them and exerciſed by them; the glory of all which is given to God, and thanks for the ſame, which ſhews them to be gifts of his, and not in the leaſt owing to any merits of men: the Apoſtle aſcribes nothing to their free will, previous diſpoſitions and qualifications, diligence and induſtry; nor does he attribute any thing to himſelf and to his companions, who were only miniſters by whom theſe believed; but he refers all to God, to his grace and goodneſs: and he returned thanks to him for it, and that *always*; whenever he thought of it, made mention of it, or was at the throne of grace as follows, *making mention of you in our prayers*; to God, daily, both in private and in public, at which times thankſgivings to God were made on their account; for thankſgiving is a part of prayer, and requeſts are always to be made known unto God with thankſgiving. The *Ethiopic* verſion renders this clauſe in the ſingular number, *and I am mindful of you always in my prayer*; and leaves out the word *all* in the former clauſe.

Ver. 3. *Remembering without ceaſing,* &c.] The phraſe *without ceaſing*, is by the *Vulgate Latin*, *Syriac*, and *Ethiopic* verſions, joined to the laſt clauſe of the preceeding verſe; and the remembrance the Apoſtle ſpeaks of is either a diſtinct thing from the mention made of them in prayer, and ſuggeſts that they bore them on their minds at other times alſo; or it is the ſame with it; or rather a reaſon of their mentioning of them then, becauſe they remembered them, and the following things of theirs: as *your work of faith*; by which is meant not the principle of faith, for as ſuch that is God's work, the produce of his grace, and the effect of his almighty power; but the operative virtue and exerciſe of it under the influence of the grace of God: the *Vulgate Latin*, *Arabic*, and *Ethiopic* verſions render it, *the work of your faith*;

and ſo ſome copies, and the *Syriac* verſion, *the works of your faith*. The *Targumiſt* in *Hab.* i. 12. repreſents God as holy בעובדי הימנותא, *in works of faith:* faith is a working grace, it has a deal of work to do, it has its hands always full, and is employed about many things; it is the grace by which a ſoul goes to God, as its covenant God, lays hold on him as ſuch, pleads his promiſes with him, aſks favours of him, and is very importunate, and will have no denial; and by which it goes to Chriſt as at firſt converſion, afterwards for freſh ſupplies of grace, out of that fulneſs of grace that is in him; it receives him and all from him, and thro' him pardon, righteouſneſs, adoption of children, and an eternal inheritance; and it is that grace which carries back all the glory to God and Chriſt, and to free grace; it glorifies God, exalts Chriſt, humbles the creature, and magnifies the grace of God, it has much work to do this way; and it works by love, by acts of love to God, to Chriſt, and to the ſaints; and it puts the ſoul upon a chearful obedience to every ordinance and command, and hence obedience is ſtiled the obedience of faith; and indeed all good works that are properly ſo, are done in faith, and faith without works is dead; it is greatly engaged againſt the world and the devil; it is that grace by which ſatan is oppoſed and overcome, and by which the believer gets the victory over the world; ſo that he is not diſcouraged by its frowns, and caſt down by the trials and afflictions he meets with in it, nor drawn aſide by its ſnares and allurements; ſomething of this kind the Apoſtle had obſerved and remembered in theſe believers: he adds, *and labour of love*; love is a laborious grace when in lively exerciſe; love to God and Chriſt will conſtrain a believer to engage in, and go thro' great hardſhips, difficulties, toil, and labour for their ſakes; and love to the ſaints will exert itſelf, by ſerving them in things temporal and ſpiritual, miniſtring chearfully and largely to their outward wants, for which reaſon the ſame epithet is given to love in *Heb.* vi. 10. as here; regarding and aſſiſting them in their ſpiritual concerns; praying for them and with them; building them up in their moſt holy faith; communicating their experiences, and ſpeaking comfortable words unto them; reproving them for ſin in love, and with tenderneſs; reſtoring them when fallen in a ſpirit of meekneſs; and ſtirring them up to love and good works: love has much toil and labour, not only in performing the ſeveral duties of religion, both towards God and man; but in bearing all things, the burdens of fellow-chriſtians, the infirmities of weak believers, forbearing them in love, forgiving their offences, and covering their ſins: *and patience of hope in our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, or *of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*. Theſe perſons had a good hope thro' grace given unto them, and which was founded in Chriſt Jeſus, in his perſon, blood, and righteouſneſs, and ſo was as an anchor ſure and ſtedfaſt; and it had him for its object, it was an hope of intereſt in him, of being for ever with him, of his ſecond coming and glorious appearance, and of eternal life and happineſs thro' him; and this was attended with patience, with a patient bearing of reproaches, afflictions, and perſecutions for the ſake of Chriſt, and a patient waiting for his coming, his kingdom and glory; and this as well as the others were remembered by the Apoſtle, and his fellow-miniſters, with great pleaſure: and that *in the ſight of God and our Father*, or *before God and our Father*; which may be read in connection either with the above graces, which were exerciſed, not only before men, but before God, and in his ſight, who ſees not as man ſeeth, and who cannnot be deceived and impoſed upon; and ſo ſhews that theſe graces were true and genuine, faith was unfeigned, love was without diſſimulation, and hope without hypocriſy: or with the word *remembering*, as it is in the *Syriac* verſion, which reads, *remembering before God and our Father*; that is, as often as we appear before God, and lift up our hands and our hearts unto him in prayer, we bear you upon our minds before God; and particularly remember your operative faith, laborious love, and patient hope of Chriſt.

Ver. 4. *Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God.*] Which intends not an election to an office, for this epiſtle is written not to the officers of the church only, but to the whole church; nor to the Goſpel, the outward means of grace, ſince this was common to them with others, and might be known without the evidence after given; nor does it deſign effectual vocation ſometimes ſo called, for this is expreſſed in the following verſe as a fruit, effect and evidence of the election here ſpoken of, which is no other than the eternal choice of them to everlaſting life and happineſs: this is of God, an act of God the Father, made in Chriſt Jeſus before the world began, and which ſprings from his ſovereign will, and is the effect of his pure love and free favour; and therefore theſe perſons who are the objects of it, are ſaid to be *beloved of God*; for ſo the *Vulgate Latin*, *Syriac*, *Arabic*, and *Ethiopic* verſions read the words, and which agree with 2 *Theſſ.* ii. 13. for this choice does not ariſe from the merits of men, or any conditions in them, or from the foreſight of their faith, holineſs, and good works, but from the free grace and good pleaſure of God; and is the ſource and ſpring of all grace, and the bleſſings of it, and even of good works; and is a ſure immutable and irreverſible act of God, being founded on his own will, and not on the works of men: the knowledge they had of this was not what the *Theſſalonians* themſelves had, tho' they might have, and doubtleſs had the knowledge of this grace, and which may be concluded with certainty from effectual vocation; and is a priviledge which many particular believers may, and do arrive unto the knowledge of, without any extraordinary revelation made unto them: but here it intends the knowledge which the Apoſtle and his companions had of the election of the members of this church; not by inſpiration of the Spirit of God, but by the manner of the Goſpel's coming unto them, and the effects it had upon them, as expreſſed in the following verſes; and from their faith, hope, and love mentioned in the preceding verſe; and which was the ground and foundation of their thankſgiving for them; ſee 2 *Theſſ.* ii. 13.

Ver. 5. *For our Goſpel came not unto you*, &c.] The Apoſtle calls the Goſpel *our Goſpel*, not becauſe he and his fellow-miniſters were the authors of it; for in this reſpect it is ſolely of God, being the produce of his wiſdom and grace, and by the revelation of Jeſus Chriſt, hence he calls it the Goſpel of God in chap. ii. 2, 8, 9. nor becauſe they were the ſubject of it, for they preached not themſelves, but a crucified Chriſt and him only, tho' it was a ſtumbling-block to ſome, and fooliſhneſs to others; but becauſe it was committed to their truſt, and they were the preachers of it; and agreed in the miniſtration of it; and it is oppoſed to, and is diſtinct from that which was preached by the falſe teachers; and here intends not barely the

Goſpel itſelf, but chiefly their preaching of it: and this *came unto* them being ſent of God, for whereever the Goſpel comes, it comes with a miſſion and commiſſion from God; and being brought unto them by the Apoſtles, who were bringers and publiſhers of the good tidings of good things, it came unthought of, unſought and unaſked for by them; and that not only externally, which to have is a great bleſſing, but internally, εις υμας, *into you*; it came not barely into their ears vocally, and into their heads notionally; but into their hearts, and worked effectually there; it was mixed with faith, and was profitable; it became the engrafted word, and dwelt richly in them: for it came to them not *in word only*; it did come in word, it could not come without words, there is no interpreting of ſcripture, no preaching of the Goſpel, nor hearing of it without words, without articulate ſounds; but not only with theſe, nor with wiſdom of words, with enticing words of man's wiſdom, with words which man's wiſdom teacheth; as alſo not in the mere notion and letter of the Goſpel, which when it comes in that manner is a dead letter, and the ſavour of death unto death: *but in power*; not merely preached in a powerful way, or attended with miraculous operations, tho' doubtleſs both were true; for the Apoſtle was a powerful preacher, and his miniſtry was confirmed by ſigns and wonders and mighty deeds; but from neither of theſe could he conclude the election of theſe people: but the preaching of the Goſpel was accompanied with the powerful efficacy of the grace of God, working by it upon them; ſo that it became the power of God unto ſalvation to them; it came to them in the demonſtration of the Spirit of God, and of power, quickening them who were dead in treſpaſſes and ſin, enlightening their dark underſtandings, unſtopping their deaf ears, ſoftening their hard hearts, and delivering them from the ſlavery of ſin and ſatan; from whence it clearly appeared that they were the choſen of God, and precious: *and in the Holy Ghoſt*; the Goſpel was not only preached under the influence, and by the aſſiſtance of the holy Spirit, and attended with his extraordinary gifts for the confirmation of it, which it might be, and be no proof of the election of theſe perſons to eternal life; but it came by the power of the holy Spirit to their ſouls, working and implanting his graces in them, as faith, hope, and love, and every other; and he himſelf was received along with it, as a Spirit of illumination and conviction, of regeneration, converſion and ſanctification, and of faith and adoption; all which gave full evidence of their election: *and in much aſſurance*; not on the preacher's ſide, as if the Goſpel was preached by him with great aſſurance, boldneſs, and confidence; or with great ſtrength of evidence, giving clear and full proof of what was delivered ſufficient to aſcertain it, and perſuade any one to the belief of it; or *with much fulneſs*, as ſome render the words, that is of the Goſpel of Chriſt, and of the gifts of the Spirit, and to a multitude of perſons; all which might be, and yet be no proof of the choice of theſe perſons in Chriſt to eternal ſalvation; but the Goſpel preached to them was bleſſed to produce in them much aſſurance, or a large aſſurance, if not a full one, of the grace of faith in Chriſt, and of hope of eternal life by him, and of underſtanding of the doctrines of the Goſpel, and of intereſt in the bleſſings of grace held forth in them; and this being a fruit, was an evidence of electing grace: *as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your ſake*. The Apoſtle appeals to themſelves for the truth of what he had ſaid; who muſt have obſerved, and could not but remember, with what meanneſs they appeared, with what fear and trembling, with what plainneſs and ſimplicity, without the enticing words of man's wiſdom; what a contemptible figure they made, how they wrought with their own hands, and endured reproach and perſecution for their ſakes, that they might obtain ſalvation by Chriſt with eternal glory; and had nothing to recommend them to them, to win upon them, and engage their attention, and ſtrike their affection; or perſuade them to receive their perſons, and believe their doctrines; wherefore the effects their miniſtry had upon them were not owing to the charms of words, the force of language, and power of oratory; or to any external thing in them, or done by them; but muſt be aſcribed to the Spirit of God, and to the power and efficacy of his grace.

Ver. 6. *And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord*, &c.] So far followers of them as they were of Chriſt, in embracing the Goſpel, ſubmitting to the ordinaces of it, profeſſing the name of Chriſt, and ſuffering for his ſake; the *Alexandrian* copy reads, *of God*, and others, *of Chriſt*: *having received the word*; the Goſpel, the word of truth, peace, and righteouſneſs, and of ſalvation by Chriſt; which they received not as the word of man, but of God; and that *in much affliction*; referring to the uproar made by the baſer ſort of people, inſtigated by the unbelieving *Jews*, and the trouble they gave to *Jaſon* and other brethren, mentioned in *Acts* xvii. 1, 5—9. and this is a conſiderable commendation of them, that at a time when others were offended and fell off from hearing the word, and a profeſſion of the Goſpel they ſhould receive it, and that *with much joy of the Holy Ghoſt*; not with a carnal joy, or with a mere flaſh of natural affection, as in the ſtony ground hearers, and in the *Jews*, who rejoiced for a while in *John*'s miniſtry, and in *Herod* who ſometimes heard him gladly; but with a ſpiritual joy of the Holy Ghoſt's producing in them, applying the word with power to them, giving them a ſpiritual guſt of it, and pleaſure in it, raiſing in their ſouls a joy upon the moſt ſolid foundation.

Ver. 7. *So that ye were enſamples to all that believe*, &c.] They were not only followers of Chriſt and his Apoſtles, whom they took for examples of faith, holineſs, courage, meekneſs, and patience; but they were patterns of good works, and of ſuffering afflictions to other believers, even to all that knew them, or heard of them, particularly, *in Macedonia*; as at *Philippi* and other places: tho' the Goſpel was firſt preached there, and they had received it, and a Goſpel-churchſtate was formed there; yet theſe were more forward in the exerciſe of grace and diſcharge of duty, and were even enſamples to them to copy after; ſo the firſt are ſometimes laſt, and the laſt firſt: *and Achaia*; another part of *Greece*, the metropolis of which was *Corinth*, where there alſo was a very conſiderable church; but theſe ſaints at *Theſſalonica* ſet them an example in many things, and particularly in acts of beneficence and liberality, being one of the churches of *Macedonia* ſpoken of in 2 *Cor.* viii. 1.

Ver. 8. *For from you ſounded out the word of the Lord*, &c.] By which is meant the Goſpel, and is ſo called becauſe it is from the Lord, as the author of it; and it is of the Lord, as the ſubject of it; and it is by the Lord, as the miniſter or diſpenſer of it; and it is owing to the efficacy of his grace, that it is uſeful and ſucceſsful, and ought to be attended to, received, and obeyed, not as the word of man, but as the word of the Lord. This is ſaid to have *ſounded out*, alluding to the blowing of a trumpet, to which the Goſpel is ſometimes compared, as to the ſilver trumpet under the law, for the gathering of the people of *Iſrael*; or to the trumpet blown in the years of *Jubilee*, which proclaimed liberty, releaſe of debts, and reſtoration of inheritances, as the Goſpel in a ſpiritual ſenſe does; or to the trumpet uſed in war to prepare for the battle, and therefore ſhould not give an uncertain ſound; or as uſed muſically, the Goſpel being a joyful ſound; and this ſounding of it may denote the clear publication and open declaration, and large ſpread of it far and near: tho' when it is ſaid to ſound forth from the *Theſſalonians*, it is not to be underſtood as if the Goſpel firſt began to be preached among them, and from thence went to other places; it was preached at *Philippi* before it came to them, and at many other places before it was there; the word of the Lord according to the prophecy of *Iſ.* ii. 2. came from *Jeruſalem*; Chriſt and his Apoſtles firſt preached there, and from thence their words and ſound went to the ends of the earth; but not ſo much the preaching of the Goſpel, as the fame and report of its being preached in this place is here meant: and ſo the *Latin* tranſlation of the *Syriac* verſion renders it, *for from you went the report of the word of our Lord*; the fame of its being preached and received at *Theſſalonica*, in the manner it was, ſpread itſelf, *not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but alſo in every place*; not only at *Philippi*, *Beræa*, *Athens*, and *Corinth*, and other cities and towns in thoſe countries, but alſo in other parts of the world; and what greatly contributed to it, were the uproar that was made at *Theſſalonica*, and continued at *Beræa* upon the firſt preaching of the Goſpel in thoſe parts by the unbelieving *Jews*; as alſo the large numbers both of *Greeks* and *Jews*, and of devout women of conſiderable families that were converted: to which may be added, that *Theſſalonica* was the *metropolis* of *Macedonia*, and a city of great trade, and much frequented from all parts both by ſea and land; and by this means it came to paſs, that not only the fame of the preaching of the word among them went abroad every where; but as the Apoſtle adds, *your faith to God-ward is ſpread abroad*; meaning the grace of faith beſtowed on them, by which they received the Goſpel in the love of it, aſſented to it, and profeſſed it, and which has God for its object, and is very valuable, ſince ſuch publick notice is taken of it; and which ſhews that it was not kept to themſelves, and lay hid in their own breaſts; but they declared it both by words and by deeds, by making a profeſſion of it, and by walking agreeable to it: *ſo that we had no need to ſpeak any thing*; the *Syriac* verſion adds, *concerning you*; concerning the preaching of the Goſpel among them, their faith in it and profeſſion of it, all being ſo well known in the ſeveral places where they came; for it ſeems it was uſual with the Apoſtles when they came to any place, to ſpeak of their ſucceſs in others, and of the faith, and hope, and joy of other chriſtians, for the encouragement of, and as enſamples to thoſe to whom they miniſter; but with relation to the *Theſſalonians* this was unneceſſary.

Ver. 9. *For they themſelves ſhew of us*, &c.] Either the above reports of the preaching of the Goſpel to the *Theſſalonians*, and of their faith in God; or rather the perſons to whom theſe reports were brought, openly and publickly, and largely declared concerning the Apoſtles, *what manner of entering in we had unto you*; under what difficulties they laboured, what contention they had with the unbelieving *Jews*, what reproaches were caſt upon them, and what perſecutions they endured when they firſt entred their city and ſynagogue, and preached the Goſpel to them; and in what manner they did preach it, with what boldneſs, ſincerity, uprightneſs and affection, and without flattery, covetouſneſs, and vain glory; and with what power it came to them, and what ſucceſs attended it, and how readily, chearfully, and reverently both they and that were received by them: *and how ye turned to God from idols*; immediately and at once, upon the preaching of the Goſpel to them, being firſt turned by the powerful and efficacious grace of God; for the firſt work of converſion is God's work; then they themſelves under the influence of the ſame grace, turned to the one God, from their internal idols, their ſins and luſts, and from their external idols, their many falſe and fictitious deities: for the *Theſſalonians* before the Goſpel came among them were idolaters; here the *Dii Cabiri*, the great and chief gods of the *Gentiles* were worſhipped; as *Jupiter* and *Bacchus*, *Ceres* and *Proſerpina*, *Pluto* and *Mercury*, *Caſtor* and *Pollux*, and *Eſculapius*; theſe the *Macedonians*, and particularly the *Theſſalonians*, worſhipped with great devotion and reverence[d]: but now they turned from them and forſook them, *to ſerve the living and true God*; who is called the *living* God, becauſe he has life in and of himſelf, and is the fountain of life to others; from whom all living creatures have their life, and are ſupported in it by him; and in oppoſition to the above idols, which were inanimate things made of wood or metal, and were images of men that had been dead long ago: and the *true* God, becauſe he is truth itſelf and cannot lye, who faithfully performs all his promiſes, and is to be worſhipped in ſpirit and in truth; and in oppoſition to the nominal and fictitious deities of the *Gentiles*, which were only in name, not in truth and reality, or by nature Gods: now tho' theſe *Theſſalonians* had before done ſervice to theſe idols, they now turned from them to ſerve the one living and true God; not only externally, by embracing and profeſſing his Goſpel, ſubmitting to his ordinances, and walking according to the rules preſcribed by him; but alſo internally, in the exerciſe of faith, hope, love, and every other grace.

Ver. 10. *And to wait for his Son from heaven*, &c.] The Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who is the natural, eſſential, and eternal Son of God; and whoever is truly converted, is not only turned to God the Father, and believes in him; but alſo believes in, receives, embraces, and profeſſes his Son Jeſus Chriſt; who became incarnate, and in the human nature he aſſumed, obeyed, ſuffered, and died and roſe again, and aſcended into heaven, where he now is, and will be till the time of the reſtitution of all things; when he will deſcend from thence, and come and judge the world in righteouſneſs; and from thence the ſaints expect him, and look and wait by faith for eternal glory and happineſs by him, and with him at his appearance and kingdom; ſo that many articles of faith are contained in this expreſſion, which theſe *Theſſalonians* were acquainted with, believed, and acted upon: and Chriſt the Son of God is further deſcribed as that perſon *whom he raiſed from the dead*; that is,

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[d] Gutberlethus de myſteriis Deor. Cabirorum, c. 15, p. 94, 95. Jul. Firmicus de errore prof. relig. p. 18.

whom God the Father raiſed from the dead, and whereby he was declared to be the Son of God; and which ſuppoſes his dying for the ſins of his people, as it expreſſes his riſing again for their juſtification; things which the faith of theſe believers was led unto, and in which light they viewed him: even *Jeſus which delivered us from wrath to come*; which is revealed from heaven againſt ſin, and comes upon the children of diſobedience; which all men are deſerving of, even God's elect themſelves, but ſhall not partake of, becauſe they are not appointed to it, but to ſalvation; and becauſe they are juſtified by the blood and righteouſneſs of Chriſt, and ſo are ſaved from it; not from all fears about it, and apprehenſions of it, which they are filled with, eſpecially under firſt awakenings, and ſometimes afterwards when under afflictive providences; but they are delivered from the thing itſelf, by which is meant vindictive puniſhment, even from all puniſhment in this life, for there is no wrath mixed with any of their mercies or their chaſtiſements; and from all puniſhment in the world to come, which will fall heavy on others; and that becauſe Chriſt has bore their ſins, and the wrath of God and curſe of the law, due unto them in their room and ſtead.

CHAP. II.

THE Apoſtle in this chapter gives a further account of his miniſtry among the *Theſſalonians*, of the nature, manner, and ſucceſs of it, and of his regard to them, and conduct and converſation when with them; and commends their readineſs in receiving the Goſpel, and excuſes his preſent abſence from them. He appeals to them themſelves for the truth of it, that his entrance to them, or preaching among them, was not in vain and without ſucceſs, ver. 1. that it was with all boldneſs and intrepidity of mind, notwithſtanding what he had ſuffered before for it, ver. 2. and with all integrity and faithfulneſs to the truſt repoſed in him by the Lord, without deceit and guile, or ſeeking to pleaſe men, but God the ſearcher of hearts, who had committed this truſt unto him, ver. 3, 4. and that neither then, nor at any other time, he had uſed flattery, or ſhewed covetouſneſs; which he calls God to witneſs, ver. 5. nor of them or others ſought glory and honour, even that which was due unto him by virtue of his office, ver. 6. but had ſhewed all gentleneſs, humanity, and affection; which he illuſtrates by the ſimile of a nurſe cheriſhing her children, ver. 7. and by the willingneſs he ſhewed not only to preach the Goſpel to them, but to lay down his life for them, had it been neceſſary; ſo great was his affection for them, ver. 8. and as a proof of this he puts them in mind of his labours, both in preaching the word, and in working with his own hands; becauſe he would not be burdenſome and chargeable to them, ver. 9. and as for his converſation among them, he appeals both to God and them, how holy, juſt, and unblemiſhed it was, ver. 10. and reminds them of his tenderneſs, diligence, and faithfulneſs, in exhorting, comforting, and charging them, particularly to walk worthy of God; ſince he had called them to his kingdom and glory, ver. 11, 12. and then he expreſſes his thankfulneſs to God for their reception of the word of the Goſpel; not as an human invention, but as of God, which wrought effectually in them, ver. 13. the evidence of which were partly their imitation of the churches of Chriſt in *Judea*, in doctrine and practice; and partly their ſuffering the ſame things they did of the *Jews*, ver. 14. who are deſcribed by their ill uſage of and cruelty to Chriſt, their own prophets, and his Apoſtles, by their not pleaſing God, and by their contradiction to men; an inſtance of which is given in prohibiting the Apoſtles to preach to the *Gentiles*, whoſe end in ſo doing with reſpect to the *Gentiles*, was that they might not be ſaved; but God's end in ſuffering them ſo to do, was with reſpect to them that they might fill up their iniquity, and ſo entire wrath and ruine come upon them, as had been foretold, ver. 15, 16. and then the Apoſtle concludes the chapter, by expreſſing his affectionate concern in parting with them, which was not in heart but in body; by declaring his earneſt deſire and endeavour to ſee them again; and by obſerving to them the reaſon he had not and could not come unto them, becauſe ſatan hindered him, ver. 17, 18. the cauſe of his being ſo deſirous to ſee them, was their being his hope, joy, glory, and crown of rejoicing, both now and hereafter, ver. 19, 20.

Ver. 1. *For yourſelves, brethren, know our entrance in unto you*, &c.] The Apoſtle having obſerved in chap. i. 9. that thoſe perſons to whom the report of the Goſpel being preached at *Theſſalonica*, and the ſucceſs of it there was made, ſhewed every where both what manner of entrance he and his fellow-miniſters had in that place, and the converſion of many ſouls there; he enlarges upon the latter, and here re-aſſumes the former, and appeals to the *Theſſalonians* themſelves, who muſt know full well, and better than others, what an entrance it was; and which is to be underſtood not merely of a corporal entrance into their city and ſynagogue, but of their coming among them, by the preaching of the Goſpel, as the miniſters of the word and ambaſſadors of Chriſt: *that it was not in vain*; it was not a vain ſhew, with outward pomp and ſplendor, as the public entrances of ambaſſadors into cities uſually are; but with great meanneſs, poverty, reproach, and perſecution, having been lately beaten and ill uſed at *Philippi*; nor was it with great ſwelling words of vanity, with the enticing words of man's wiſdom, to tickle the ear, pleaſe the fancy, and work upon the paſſions of natural men, in which manner the falſe teachers came: but the Apoſtle came not with deceit and guile, with flattering words or a cloak of covetouſneſs, or with a view to vain glory and worldly advantage; nor was the meſſage they came with from the king of kings, a vain light, empty and trifling one; but ſolid and ſubſtantial, and of the greateſt importance; the doctrine they taught was not comparable to chaff and wind; it was not corrupt philoſophy and vain deceit, the traditions and commandments of men, but ſound doctrine, the wholeſome words of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt: nor was it fruitleſs and without effect; the word did not return void and empty; but was powerful and efficacious to the converſion of many ſouls. Chriſt was with them both to aſſiſt them in their miniſtry, and to bleſs it to the ſalvation of men; nor was their coming to *Theſſalonica*, an human ſcheme, a raſh enterprize, engaged in on their own heads, on a ſlight and empty foundation; but upon good and ſolid grounds, by divine direction and counſel; ſee *Acts* xvi. 9, 10.

Ver. 2. *But even after that we had ſuffered before*, &c.] Before they came to *Theſſalonica*, which they would not have done, had their miniſtry been a light and empty one in itſelf, and unprofitable to others; and eſpecially had this been the caſe, they would never have raſhly engaged in it again, and expoſed themſelves to freſh ſufferings and dangers, as they did: *and were ſhamefully entreated, as ye know, at Philippi*; being beaten with many ſtripes, and put into priſon, and their feet made faſt in the ſtocks, at the inſtigation of the maſters of the damſel that had a ſpirit of divination, by whom they got much gain, and which *Paul* diſpoſſeſſed; ſee *Acts* xvi. 16—24. *we were bold in our God to ſpeak unto you the Goſpel of God with much contention*; and which ſtill made it more manifeſtly appear, that the errand they came upon was a matter of importance, and that they did not proceed on a ſlight foundation: what they ſpoke was *the Goſpel*, ſalvation by Chriſt, and not by the works of the law; the pure Goſpel, and not a mixed one, free from the mixture of all human doctrines and inventions of men, without any adulteration and inconſiſtence; the whole of the Goſpel, and not a part of it only; they declared the whole counſel of God, and kept back nothing that might be profitable: and this is ſtiled, *the Goſpel of God*, to diſtinguiſh it from the Goſpel of men, or that which the falſe teachers taught, and which was called the Goſpel, tho' it was not ſo; and to expreſs the excellency of it, from the author of it, who is God, it being the produce of his wiſdom and grace; and from the matter of it, it containing the good will of God to men, ſetting forth the grace of God in election, redemption, juſtification, pardon, adoption, regeneration, and glorification, and expreſſing things relating to the kingdom of God, a meetneſs for it, and a right unto it; and it being ſo called ſhews it to be ſomething divine, a meſſage ſent from God to ſinful men; and gives a reaſon why the Apoſtles were ſo bold to ſpeak it, becauſe it was not of men, but God. The *Syriac* verſion renders it the *Goſpel of Chriſt*; ſee *Rom*. i. 16. and it being ſo, they *were bold to ſpeak* it; or they ſpoke it both with liberty of mind, the Spirit of God being with them, and with freedom of ſpeech, a door of utterance being opened for them; as alſo with great courage and intrepidity, notwithſtanding what they had ſuffered before, and the ill treatment they had met with at *Philippi*; and tho' they knew that the Goſpel they ſpoke was contrary to the *Jews*, was a ſtumbling-block to them, and they had an inveterate prejudice againſt it; and was fooliſhneſs to the *Greeks*, and was derided by them, and they were ſure to meet with reproach and perſecution on account of it; yet they boldly and faithfully preached it, fearing not the face of men, nor their revilings: tho' it was *with much contention*; referring to the tumult raiſed by the baſer ſort, who inſtigated by others aſſaulted *Jaſon* and the brethren, where the Apoſtles were, *Acts* xvii. 5, 6. or to the diſputes which they had with the unbelieving *Jews*, who contradicted and blaſphemed what they ſaid; or to the diviſion the Goſpel made, as thro' the corruption of nature it makes wherever it comes, between the neareſt relations and friends, ſome being for it, and others againſt it; or this may be expreſſive of the zeal with which the Apoſtles preached, who earneſtly contended for it, as perſons in a combat or agony; they fought the good fight of faith valiantly, they endured hardneſs as good ſoldiers of Chriſt, and gave not way to the enemy, no not for an hour: and all this was *in our God*; or *by the confidence of our God*, as the *Syriac* verſion renders it; truſting in him and relying upon him, being aſſiſted by his grace, and ſtrengthened by his power, and receiving much encouragement from a view of him as a covenant God; faith in God as a covenant God, will make a man bold in his cauſe; ſee *Dan*. iii. 17.

Ver. 3. *For our exhortation*, &c.] Or *conſolation*; for the miniſtry of the Goſpel which is here meant, conſiſts of doctrines full of comfort to diſtreſſed minds, ſuch as free juſtification by the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, full pardon by his blood, and compleat ſatisfaction by his ſacrifice; as well as of exhortations to the exerciſe of grace and diſcharge of duty: and this was *not of deceit*; or *error*, was not *fallacious*, as the *Ethiopic* verſion renders it; it conſiſted of nothing but truth, it was the word of truth, and the truth as it is in *Jeſus*; nor did it proceed from any intention to deceive and impoſe on perſons; it was no impoſture: *nor of uncleanneſs*; it did not ſpring from any impure affection for any ſin, for popular applauſe, or worldly intereſt; nor did the miniſters of it connive at uncleanneſs in others, or practiſe it themſelves, as did the falſe teachers; but bore their teſtimony againſt it, both by word and example, and taught no doctrine that encouraged to it; but on the contrary, the doctrine which is according to godlineſs, and which teaches men to deny ungodlineſs and worldly luſts: *nor in guile*; as there was no deceitful deſign in the miniſtry of the word, nor any thing impure and immoral in the matter of it; ſo there was no artifice uſed in the diſpenſing of it; it was plain and ſimple without any colour and guile, without the hidden things of diſhoneſty, without craftineſs and handling the word deceitfully; and this is a reaſon why the Apoſtles preached it with ſo much freedom and boldneſs, becauſe there was nothing falſe, impure, or artful in it.

Ver. 4. *But as we were allowed of God*, &c.] Or *approved of God*; not that there were any previous fitneſs and worthineſs in them to be miniſters of the word; but ſuch was the good will and pleaſure of God, that he from all eternity choſe and appointed them to this work; and in his own time by his grace called them to it, and by his gifts qualified them for it, who otherwiſe were unworthy of it, and inſufficient for it: *to be put in truſt with the Goſpel*; which is of great worth and value, a rich treaſure, and of the laſt importance; which to be truſted with is a very great honour; and the diſcharge of ſuch a truſt requires great faithfulneſs, and which the Apoſtles had: *even ſo we ſpeak*; the Goſpel as delivered to them both as to matter and manner; neither taking from it nor adding to it, nor mixing it with any thing of their own, nor diſguiſing it with any artifice: *not as pleaſing men*; to gain favour and affection, eſteem, applauſe, and honour from them; to eſcape reproach and perſecution, and obtain worldly advantages by dropping, concealing, or blending of truths to make them more agreeable to the taſte of natural men: *but God which trieth our hearts*; ſtudying to approve themſelves to God, whoſe Goſpel was committed to them, from whom they received gifts to preach it, and to whom they were accountable for all; and who being the ſearcher of the hearts, and the trier of the reins of the children of men, knows the intentions, and deſigns of men and the ſprings of all actions; and ſees thro' all artifices, and from whom nothing can be hidden, and who will in his own time bring to light the hidden things of darkneſs; under a ſenſe of which faithful miniſters act, as of ſincerity, and as in the ſight of an omniſcient God.

Ver. 5. *For neither at any time uſed we flattering words*, &c.] To introduce them into the affections, and gain the eſteem and good will of men; they did not in their miniſtry deliver ſuch things as flattered men with a good opinion of themſelves: they did not preach up the purity of human nature, but on the contrary the doctrine of original ſin, the imputation of *Adam*'s tranſgreſſion to his poſterity, and the corruption of all human nature; they aſſerted the univerſal pollution of it, of all men, and of all the powers and faculties of their ſouls, that they are all under the power and dominion of ſin, are involved in the guilt of it, and are all guilty before God, and liable to everlaſting wrath and puniſhment; and that unleſs they repented of their ſins and belived in Chriſt, they would periſh eternally; thus they dealt roundly and freely with mens conſciences, and plainly, openly, and faithfully told them their caſe as it was: nor did they cry up the power of man's free will, which would have been grateful to *Jews* and *Gentiles*; but they declared the reverſe, they aſſerted the weakneſs and impotency of man, to any thing that is ſpiritually good; and repreſented him as a weak and ſtrengthleſs creature, and unable to do any thing, even to think a good thought of himſelf; and aſcribed all that a man is, or has, or does, that is good, to the grace and power of God, who works in him both to will and to do: nor did they plead for the ſufficiency of man's righteouſneſs to juſtify him before God, a doctrine very pleaſing to human nature; but on the contrary, they gave out that there was none righteous, no not one of the ſons of *Adam* in and of themſelves, or by virtue of any righteouſneſs of their own; ſo far from it that they were full of all unrighteouſneſs, and were not capable of working out a righteouſneſs, or of attaining to the righteouſneſs of the law; that what they did pretend to was not a juſtifying righteouſneſs, and would give no right and title to eternal glory; and that the righteouſneſs of Chriſt was the only righteouſneſs, by which a man could be juſtified from all things, and in which he could be found ſafe. They did not blend and mix their doctrine to ſuit with the taſtes of different men, but with all ſincerity and plainneſs preached the truth, as it is in Jeſus; they did not connive at the ſins of men, cry peace, peace, when there was none, or ſow pillows under their arm-holes, or promiſe them life, tho' they ſhould not return from their wicked way; but they with great freedom inveighed againſt the ſins of men, and exhorted them to repentance and reformation, as well as to faith in Chriſt for pardon and righteouſneſs; nor did they wink at the ſins of profeſſors, or of one another, the Apoſtle *Paul* withſtood *Peter* to the face becauſe he was to be blamed; and when they praiſed men for their gifts and graces, and the exerciſe of them, they took care to aſcribe them to the grace of God, and give him the glory, and prevent men from boaſting in themſelves; in ſhort, they acted the reverſe of the falſe teachers, who had mens perſons in admiration becauſe of advantage, and by good words and fair ſpeeches deceived the hearts of the ſimple; but ſo did not the Apoſtles of Chriſt, no never, not *at any time*; when they firſt came to *Theſſalonica* during their ſtay there, either in publick or in private: and tho' this was true of any other time and place, yet here muſt be confined to this, ſince the Apoſtle appeals to this church for the truth of what he ſaid, *as ye know*; for flattering words may be diſcerned; a flatterer is known by his words; tho' in general ſuch is the weakneſs of human nature, that men love to be flattered, tho' they know they are: *nor a cloak of covetouſneſs*; or an *occaſion* of it, they did not take the opportunity or advantage by the miniſtry of the word, to indulge a covetous diſpoſition, or to amaſs wealth and riches to themſelves; or an *excuſe* for covetouſneſs, which covetous men are never at a loſs to make, always pretending one thing or another to hide and cover their evil; but the Apoſtles made no excuſes, nor uſed any cloak, nor needed any to cover their covetouſneſs, becauſe they had not the thing; they did not pretend one thing and mean another, they did not as the falſe Apoſtles did, pretend to ſerve Chriſt, preach his Goſpel, ſeek the glory of God and the good of ſouls, and mean themſelves, and deſign their own worldly advantage; they did not make theſe a *pretence* for covetouſneſs, they ſincerely ſerved Chriſt, faithfully preached his Goſpel, truly ſought the glory of God, and were heartily concerned for the good of ſouls without any mercenary and ſelfiſh views; for the truth of which they could appeal to the heart-ſearching and rein-trying God, as the Apoſtle here does, ſaying, *God is witneſs*; which is properly an oath, a ſolemn appeal to God; for ſince covetouſneſs is an internal and ſecret ſin, and may be ſo coloured and diſguiſed as not eaſily to be diſcerned, as flattering words may, the Apoſtle therefore calls God to witneſs the truth of what he had ſaid.

Ver. 6. *Nor of men ſought we glory*, &c.] Honour, eſteem, and popular applauſe; for tho' there is an honour that is due to the faithful miniſters of the word, who are highly to be eſteemed for their works ſake, and as miniſters of Chriſt, and ſtewards of the myſteries of God; and eſpecially there was an honour and glory that belonged to the Apoſtles of Chriſt as ſuch, who were ſet in the higheſt office and place in the church; yet they did not ſeek after it as the *Phariſees* and falſe teachers did, who received honour one of another, and ſought not that which comes from God only: but ſo did not the Apoſtles; they took no ſteps this way to procure glory and eſteem among men, but all the reverſe; they preached doctrines which were not of men, nor according to men, nor agreeable to them; and theſe they delivered in a diſagreeable way, not with enticing words of mens wiſdom, they did not ſeek to pleaſe men, but ſpoke and did every thing that rendered them mean and deſpicable in their eyes; ſo that they looked upon them as the filth of the world, and the off-ſcouring of all things: nor was this any diſappointment to them, for to gain the favour of men was not their end and view; they did not ſeek for glory neither of the men of the world, *neither of you*; the church at *Theſſalonica*, and the inhabitants of that place: *nor yet of others*; of other men, and churches elſewhere: *when we might have been burdenſome, as the Apoſtles of Chriſt*; or *have uſed authority* which was given them, tho' not for deſtruction, but for edification; put on a magiſterial air, and made uſe of the apoſtolic rod; appeared with ſome ſeverity and rigour, and ſo have commanded awe, reſpect, and reverence: or *have been in honour*; inſiſted upon being treated in an honourable way, as the Apoſtles of Chriſt, his ambaſſadors, who were ſent and came in his name, and repreſented his perſon; and therefore to be received as he himſelf; tho' the phraſe may rather have regard to an honourable maintenance, as in 2 *Cor*. xi. 9. which as the Apoſtles of Chriſt they might have required as their due, but they choſe rather to relinquiſh their right, and labour with their own hands, that they might not be chargeable: and ſo *glory* in the former clauſe may mean the ſame, even great and glorious things for themſelves, a maintenance anſwerable to their high character and office, which they did not ſeek; but were content with a poor pittance, and ſuch as they could get with their own hand-labour; in which ſenſe the phraſe, *double honour*, ſeems to be uſed in 1 *Tim.* v. 17. as appears by the reaſon given in the next verſe.

Ver. 7. *But we were gentle among you*, &c.] Meek and humble, mild and moderate; not uſing ſeverity, or carring it in a haughty and imperious manner; aſſuming power and dominion, lording it over God's heritage, and commanding perſons to do homage and honour to them, and forcing themſelves upon them, and obliging them to maintain them. The *Vulgate Latin* and *Ethiopic* verſions, inſtead of *gentle*, read, *little children*; as the word ſignifies by adding a letter to it, and expreſſes much the ſame as the other, that they were harmleſs and modeſt, and diſintereſted; and ſought not themſelves neither honour nor wealth, but the real good of others, and were kind and tender, and affectionate to them: *even as a nurſe cheriſheth her children*; or *the children of her own ſelf*; her own children, and ſo deſigns a nurſing mother, one whoſe the children are, has bore them as well as nurſes them, and therefore has the moſt tender concern for them; ſhe lays them in her boſom, and hugs them in her arms, and ſo warms and cheriſhes them; gives them the breaſt, bears with their frowardneſs, condeſcends to do the meaneſt things for them; and that without any ſelf-intereſt, from a pure parental affection for them: and ſuch were the Apoſtles to theſe *Theſſalonians*; they were their ſpiritual parents, of whom they travailed in birth, till Chriſt was formed in them; they uſed them with the greateſt fondneſs and tenderneſs; they fed them with the ſincere milk of the word; they bore patiently all the ſlighting and ill treatment they met with; and condeſcended to men of low eſtates, and did them all the good offices they could, without any ſelfiſh views or ſiniſter ends: a like ſimile is uſed by the *Jews*[*], who ſay, "he "that riſes in the night to ſtudy in the law, the "law makes known to him his offences; and not "in a way of judgment, but כאמא, as a mother "makes known to her ſon *with gentle words*:" but the miniſtration of the Goſpel is much more gentle.

Ver. 8. *So being affectionately deſirous of you*, &c.] Not of theirs but them; not of glory from them, nor a maintenance by them, but of their ſpiritual and eternal welfare; were as fond of them as a nurſing mother is of her children, who when abſent from them but ever ſo little a while, longs to ſee them; ſee ver. 17. and chap. iii. 1, 5, 6, 7, 8. *we were willing*; took the utmoſt pleaſure, delight and complacency: *to have imparted unto you, not the Goſpel of God only*; the ſincere milk of the word, which they did freely, fully, and for their ſpiritual good and profit, without any regard to any advantage of their own: *but alſo our own ſouls*, or *lives*; which is the higheſt expreſſion and ſtrongeſt proof of love that can be given; and reſpect is ſtill had to the ſimilitude of the nurſing mother, who may be ſaid to impart her blood, for ſuch is her milk diverſified, for the nouriſhment of her children: and ſuch was the great concern of the Apoſtles for the intereſt of Chriſt, the ſpread of the Goſpel, and the good of ſouls, that their lives were not dear unto them, ſo that theſe ends might be anſwered: *becauſe ye were dear unto us*; both becauſe they were loved by God, redeemed by Chriſt, regenerated by the Spirit of Chriſt, and had the image of Chriſt enſtamped upon them; and alſo becauſe that they were their ſpiritual children; and as children are dear to their parents, ſo were theſe to them, even to ſuch a degree, as that were there a neceſſity for it, they could freely have laid down their lives for them.

Ver. 9. *For ye remember brethren our labour and travel*, &c.] The great pains they took, even to wearineſs. The *Vulgate Latin* verſion renders the laſt word, *wearineſs*; and the *Arabic* verſion, *anxiety*; and the *Ethiopic* verſion, *affliction*; it is to be underſtood both of corporal and ſpiritual labour, working with their hands and preaching the Goſpel; this could not but be remembered by them, ſince it was not a year ago they were with them: *for labouring night and day*; at our handicraft, or *at the work of our hands*, as the *Syriac* verſion renders it; which they continually attended to, even night and day when they were not preaching the Goſpel, or diſputing with the *Jews*, or praying and converſing with thoſe that believed, or refreſhing themſelves with food and reſt. The Apoſtle's buſineſs was making of tents, ſee the note on *Acts* xviii. 3. *becauſe we would not be chargeable to any of you*; neither to the whole body, nor to any ſingle perſon; which ſhews that they did not ſeek their own eaſe and worldly intereſt; and proves what is before aſſerted, that they did not uſe a cloak of covetouſneſs, but choſe to forego, and not inſiſt on what they had a right to, leſt the Goſpel ſhould be hindred or reproached: *we preached unto you the Goſpel of God*; freely and with great application and diligence; for this is the other part of their labour and travel; for the miniſtry of the word is a work, and a laborious one, when cloſely attended to; a preparation for it by prayer, reading, meditation, and much ſtudy are weariſome and fatiguing; and to preach the word in ſeaſon and out of ſeaſon, with all long-ſuffering and doctrine is very laborious; to which no man is ſufficient of himſelf, and is a work which requires great faithfulneſs, application and induſtry; and is oftentimes made the more heavy thro' the malice and oppoſition of enemies, and the weakneſs of friends.

Ver. 10. *Ye are witneſſes and God alſo*, &c.] Not ſo much to what goes before as to what follows after, relating to their holy walk and converſation among them, the more open part of which they were witneſs of; and for the more ſecret part God is appealed to, who is acquainted with the ſprings of actions, as well as with actions themſelves: *how holily, and juſtly, and unblameably we behaved ourſelves among you that believe.* The *Syriac* verſion joins the laſt clauſe of the preceding verſe with this, and reads the whole thus, *ye are witneſſes and God alſo how purely and juſtly we preached unto you the Goſpel of God, and how unblameable we were among all that believed*; referring the former part to the purity and integrity in which they preached the Goſpel, and the latter to their unblemiſhed conduct among the ſaints; but the whole of it refers to their converſation which was holy, externally holy, ariſing from internal principles of holineſs in their hearts, and free from that impurity and filthineſs with which the falſe teachers were polluted; and confirms what is before ſaid, that their exhortation was not of uncleanneſs: and it was likewiſe juſt,

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[*] Zohar in Lev. fol. 10. 2.

juſt, they were righteous in the ſight of God thro' the juſtifying righteouſneſs of Chriſt, and in conſequence of this lived righteouſly before men, and were injurious to no man's perſon nor property: and their converſation was alſo *unblameable*; not that they were without ſin, and ſo without blame in themſelves, or without the commiſſion of ſin by them, or that they paſſed without cenſure in the world, for they went through honour and diſhonour, through good report and bad report, and had all manner of evil ſpoken of them falſly for Chriſt's name's ſake; but by the grace of God, they had their converſation among them that believed ſo, that there was nothing material to be alledged againſt them, or any juſt cauſe of blame to be laid either on their perſons or their miniſtry; and which is mentioned for imitation.

Ver. 11. *As you know*, &c.] This is added to the end of the laſt verſe in the *Arabic* verſion, and which begins this verſe thus, *as one of you, and as a father comforting his ſons, ſo we*, &c. but for what is ſaid in the former verſe, an appeal is made both to God and to the *Theſſalonians*, ſo that there is no need of adding ſuch a clauſe there: it properly ſtands here in connexion with what follows, *how we exhorted*; to flee from wrath to come, and to Chriſt for refuge; to look to, and believe in him as the only ſaviour of loſt ſinners; to perform the duties of religion, and to continue in the faith; to cleave to Chriſt, and walk on in him as they had received him, and to abide by the truths and ordinances of the Goſpel they had embraced: *and comforted*; under a ſenſe of ſin, with the ſoul comforting doctrines of free juſtification by the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, of full pardon by his blood, and of a plenary ſatisfaction and atonement by his ſacrifice; and under all their afflictions and perſecutions for the ſake of Chriſt, with exceeding great and precious promiſes, of the preſence, grace, and ſtrength of Chriſt here, and glory hereafter: *and charged every one of you*; not only publickly, but privately, going from houſe to houſe; not in an auſtere and domineering way, but with the greateſt tenderneſs, and yet faithfulneſs: even *as a father doth his children*; not only in an authoritative, but in an affectionate way, and alſo with ſolid wiſdom and judgment: for in ſuch a relation in a ſpiritual ſenſe, did the Apoſtle and his fellow-miniſters ſtand in to them; ſee 1 *Cor.* iv. 15. and the ſubſtance of the charge is as follows:

Ver. 12. *That ye would walk worthy of God*, &c.] In imitation of him; not of his perfections, which are inimitable, but of his works; and theſe not of his power and wiſdom, but thoſe of kindneſs and beneficence, and of righteouſneſs and holineſs; and in conformity to his revealed will, which is good, perfect, and acceptable; and agreeably to his Goſpel, that that may be adorned, and not blaſphemed; and particularly, in a manner worthy of the vocation wherewith ſaints are called by him: ſince it follows, *who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory*; which inſtance of the grace of God carries in it many arguments, and lays many obligations on the perſons intereſted in it, to walk in their lives and converſations worthy of God: which may be taken from the nature of this call, which is not a mere external one by the outward miniſtry of the word, but an internal and effectual one, by the powerful and efficacious grace of God; it is a call of perſons out of darkneſs into light, and therefore it becomes them to walk as children of the light, and honeſtly, as in the day-time; and from a ſtate of bondage to ſin and ſatan, unto liberty, and therefore ought not to walk after the dictates of corrupt nature, nor the ſuggeſtions of ſatan, but after the Spirit of God, who is a Spirit of liberty; and from fellowſhip with the world, and the men of it, to communion with Chriſt, and therefore ſhould not walk as other *Gentiles* do, nor run with them into the ſame exceſs of riot; in ſhort, ſuch are called with an holy calling, and to holineſs, and have in their effectual vocation principles of holineſs implanted in them, and therefore ſhould be holy in all manner of converſation: moreover, arguments may be taken from the conſideration of him that calls, God, who is a holy being, and therefore as he that hath called them is holy, ſo ſhould they be likewiſe; he is the God of all grace that has called them, and he has called them by his grace, and to ſpecial bleſſings of grace, and that according to his ſovereign will and pleaſure; and has called them the moſt unworthy, baſe, mean, and deſpicable, and not others, which greatly enhances the obligation to walk worthy of him: to which add, that he that calls is God that dwells on high in heaven, and changes not, and ſuch is his call; hence it is ſtiled the high calling of God, and the heavenly calling, and ſaid to be without repentance; and therefore the ſaints ſhould live and walk as pilgrims and ſtrangers here, and be ſtedfaſt and immoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord: likewiſe the conſideration of what they are called to, ſhould engage them to a becoming walk, being called *to his kingdom*; to the kingdom of grace, which lies in righteouſneſs and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghoſt, and which cannot be moved, and where they are kings and prieſts unto God; and unto a Goſpel church-ſtate, and to all the privileges and immunities of it; and unto the kingdom of heaven, prepared by God for them from the foundation of the world, their Father's free gift to them, of which they are born heirs apparent in regeneration, and have both a meetneſs for it, and a right unto it; and therefore ought to behave ſuitable to this high honour and dignity which belong unto them: and this latter ſenſe is the rather to be choſe, ſince it follows, *and glory*; or *to his glory*, as the *Syriac*, *Arabic*, and *Ethiopic* verſions read; to the glory of God, to the beholding of the glory of God through Chriſt, and the glory of Chriſt himſelf; and to a participation of that glory which God has provided, and is in the hands of Chriſt for them, where it is hid, who when he ſhall appear, they'll appear with him in glory; which will be both upon their ſouls and bodies; and this will be an eternal glory, a glory that fades not away, and not like the glory of this world, which is tranſient, and ſoon paſſes away, but this will abide for ever; and therefore ſince the ſaints are called to the obtaining of this, it is a reaſon why their converſation ſhould be in heaven now, and as becomes God and his Goſpel.

Ver. 13. *For this cauſe alſo thank we God without ceaſing*, &c.] As for their election of God, ch. i. 4. ſo for their effectual vocation by his grace, to his kingdom and glory, juſt now mentioned; as well as for their reception of the word of God as ſuch, hereafter expreſſed; ſince their having it and receiving it, and the effectual operation of it in them, were owing to the goodneſs and grace of God, and therefore required a conſtant ſenſe of the favour, and thankfulneſs without ceaſing, for it. The Apoſtle having at large conſidered the manner of his and his fellow-miniſters entrance among them without guile, flattery, covetouſneſs, or any ſiniſter view, and with all ſimplicity, integrity, labour, diligence, affection, and tenderneſs, returns to obſerve the reception their miniſtry met with, and the influence and effect it had upon them: *becauſe when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us*; or *the word of hearing of God*, as the *Vulgate Latin* verſion from the *Greek* text literally renders it; that is, the Goſpel which was preached by the Apoſtles, and was heard and received by theſe *Theſſalonians*: and it is called the word of God, becauſe God is the author of it; it comes from him, and is miniſtred by his authority, and is a part of that written word which is given by his inſpiration; and becauſe his grace in chuſing, redeeming, juſtifying, pardoning, adopting, regenerating, and giving eternal life to men, and the declaration of his will concerning ſaving them by his Son Jeſus Chriſt, are the ſubject-matter of it; and becauſe he owns and bleſſes it, for the converſion and comfort of his people: and it may be called the word of hearing of God, becauſe coming from him, and containing his will, and preached by his order, and ſucceeded by his power, hearing comes by it; it is divinely breathed by him; he ſpeaks in it by his miniſters, and he is heard of in it by his people; as he was by theſe believers, who heard his word both externally and internally; and received it into their underſtandings, ſo as to know it ſpiritually and experimentally; into their minds, not merely notionally, and ſo as to aſſent to the truth of it, and give credit to it, but ſo as to believe in Chriſt revealed in it; and into their affections, in the love of it, and with joy in the Holy Ghoſt; they received it gladly, and with meekneſs and readineſs, ſo that it became the engrafted word, and brought forth fruit in them: the manner in which they received it follows, *ye received it not as the word of men*; which is often fallacious and deceitful, at leaſt dubious and uncertain, and not to be depended on; nor did they receive it as the words of wiſe men are received, and becauſe it was cloathed with the wiſdom, eloquence, and oratory of men, for it was deſtitute of theſe; nor upon the credit and authority of men, no, not of the Apoſtles themſelves: *but as it is in truth the word of God*; it appearing to be agreeable to the perfections of his nature, and to the ſcriptures of truth, and it bearing his impreſs and divine authority, they received it with much aſſurance and certainty, as infallible truth; and which was inviolably to be adhered to, without any alteration, without adding to it or taking from it; and to be had and retained in the greateſt eſteem and reverence, and never to be departed from: and that they received it in this manner, appears from its operation in them, *which effectually worketh alſo in you that believe*; the *Vulgate Latin* verſion reads, *who worketh*; referring it to God, as indeed it may be referred to him, as well as to his word; but the ſenſe is much the ſame, for God works by and with his word, and his word only effectually works when it comes in power; or is the power of God unto ſalvation to them that believe, and when it does come with a divine commiſſion and power, it effectually works to the quickning of dead ſinners, the enlightning of dark minds, the unſtopping of deaf ears, the ſoftning of hard hearts, producing faith which works by love, encouraging hope, delivering from the bondage of ſin, ſatan, and the law, and comforting and eſtabliſhing the hearts of the ſaints under all afflictions, trials, and perſecutions.

Ver. 14. *For ye brethren became followers of the churches of God*, &c.] As of the Lord and of the Apoſtle, ch. i. 6. ſo of the churches of God that were before them, who were gathered out of the world by the grace of God; and who were united in the fear of God, and aſſembled together for his worſhip, to bear a teſtimony to his truth and ordinances, and for the glory of his name: theſe they followed in the faith and order of the Goſpel, and *became like* them, as the *Syriac* and *Ethiopic* verſions render the word; or *equal* to them, were upon an equal foot with them, as the *Arabic*; that is, in ſuffering reproach and perſecution for the Goſpel, as the latter part of the verſe ſhews; and their bearing theſe with patience, courage, and conſtancy, were a proof that the word of God had a place, and wrought effectually in them; otherwiſe they would never have endured ſuch things as they did, and as other churches did: *which in Judea are in Chriſt Jeſus*; for beſides the church at *Jeruſalem*, there were many churches in *Judea* and *Galilee*; ſee *Acts* ix. 31. *Gal.* i. 22. which ſhows that the primitive churches were not national, but congregational: and theſe were in Chriſt Jeſus; *in the faith* of Jeſus Chriſt, as the *Arabic* verſion renders it; which diſtinguiſhes them from the ſynagogues, or congregations of the *Jews*, which did not believe in Chriſt; ſee the note on ch. i. 1. *For ye alſo have ſuffered like things of your own countrymen*; the inhabitants of *Theſſalonica*, the baſer ſort of them, who were ſtirred up by the unbelieving *Jews* of that place, to make an uproar in the city, and aſſault the houſe of *Jaſon*, in order to ſeize upon the Apoſtles; ſee *Acts* xvii. 6. *Even as they* have *of the Jews*; in like manner as the churches of *Judea* ſuffered by the *Jews* their countrymen; ſee *Acts* viii. 1, 3. *Heb.* x. 32, 33, 34.

Ver. 15. *Who both killed the Lord Jeſus*, &c.] For though *Pilate* condemned him to death, and the *Roman* ſoldiers executed the ſentence, yet it was through the malice and envy of the *Jews* that he was delivered to him, who brought charges againſt him, and inſiſted upon the crucifixion of him; and who are therefore ſaid to have taken him with wicked hands, and crucified and ſlain him; and to have killed the prince of life, and to have been the betrayers and murderers of him; and therefore it is no wonder that ſuch perſons ſhould perſecute the followers of Chriſt, whether in *Judea* or elſewhere: *and their own prophets*; whom God ſent unto them; theſe they not only mocked and miſuſed, and perſecuted, but many of them they put to death, as *Iſaiah* and others; and though this was done by their fathers, yet the preſent generation were the children of them that killed the prophets; and ſhewed themſelves to be of the ſame principles, and by their practices approved of what they had done: hence our Lord addreſſes the city of *Jeruſalem* thus, *O Jeruſalem, Jeruſalem, that killeſt the prophets*, *Matt.* xxiii. 31, 34, 37. The *Vulgate Latin* and *Ethiopic* verſions, leave out the phraſe *their own*, and ſo does the *Alexandrian* copy; but it ſtands in the *Syriac* and *Arabic* verſions, and is rightly retained, it having an emphaſis in it; theſe prophets being of their own nation, born among them, and raiſed up in the midſt of them, and ſent unto them particularly, and yet were ſo uſed; and therefore it need not ſeem ſtrange that they ſhould treat in an ill manner perſons of a lower character, that did not agree with them; the conſideration of which ſerves to ſupport under reproach and perſecution; ſee *Matt.* v. 12. *And have perſecuted us*; the Apoſtles of Chriſt; have drove us out of our own country, and purſued us from place to place, and cauſed us to flee from one city to another: *and they pleaſe not God*; though they reckoned themſelves his choſen people, the favourites of heaven, and whom God

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God delighted in; but neither their perſons nor their actions were pleaſing to him, their carnal minds being enmity to him, to his law and to his Goſpel; and they in the fleſh, or in an unregenerate eſtate, and without faith in Chriſt, without which it is impoſſible to pleaſe God, and their actions ſuch as before deſcribed: *and are contrary to all men*; not only chriſtians, but heathens; to all the *Gentiles*, who are called all men, the nations of the world, the world, and the whole world; they were contrary to theſe, both in their religious and civil principles, and had an averſion to them, of which the following is a full inſtance.

Ver. 16. *Forbidding us to ſpeak to the Gentiles, that they might be ſaved*, &c.] Speaking or preaching the Goſpel, is the ordinary means of ſaving ſouls, or of acquainting them with the way of ſalvation, the neceſſity of it, and of the application of it to them, and with this end and view it is preached: now though the *Jews* diſbelieved the Goſpel, and deſpiſed the miniſtry of it, and diſavowed any ſuch uſe and end of it, yet ſuch was their envy at the *Gentiles*, and their hatred of them, that could they have believed it to be the means of ſalvation, they would have forbidden the preaching of it to them, as they now did; and it is certain, that even the believing *Jews* through ignorance, did at firſt diſapprove of the miniſtry of the word to the *Gentiles*; ſee *Acts* xi. 1, 2, 3. ſuch was the averſion of that nation to all others, and which perfectly agrees with their general ſentiments, which forbid the explanation of the law to the *Gentiles*; and therefore it need not be wondered at, that they ſhould do all that in them lay, to hinder the entrance and ſpread of the Goſpel among them, of which take the following proof[f]: "whoever has not the holy name ſealed and bound in his fleſh (*i. e.* is not circumciſed) אסיר לאודעא ליה מלה דאוריתא, *it is forbidden to make known to him a word of the law*, and much leſs to ſtudy in it——and whoever is not circumciſed, and they give to him, את זעיר דאוריתא, *the leaſt thing in the law*, 'tis as if he deſtroyed the world, and dealt falſly with the name of God——*Hillell* and *Shammai* did not make known to *Onkelos* a word of the law, until he was circumciſed——and the traditions are, that even though a man is circumciſed, yet if he does not do the commands of the law, lo, he is as a *Gentile* in all things, and *it is forbidden to teach him the words of the law*:" nay, it is a rule with the *Jews*[g], that "if a *Gentile* ſtudies in the law, he is guilty of death:" and thus were they left in providence, to judicial blindneſs and hardneſs of heart, *to fill up their ſins alway*; the meaſure of their own and their fathers iniquities; ſee *Matt.* xxiii. 32. a phraſe expreſſive of the abounding of their ſins, and of their being under a divine appointment, and of their being limited and reſtrained by a divine power, and over-ruled by infinite wiſdom, to anſwer ſome ends and purpoſes of God's glory: *for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermoſt*; which is to be underſtood, not of their wrath and fury being come to its higheſt degree and pitch againſt the followers of Chriſt, but of *the wrath of God*, as the *Vulgate Latin* verſion and *Beza*'s ancient copy expreſs it; and deſigns not ſo much *eternal puniſhment*, as the *Ethiopic* verſion renders the phraſe, or everlaſting wrath and damnation on the reprobate part of that people, as temporal ruin and deſtruction, which was now near at hand, and hung over their heads; and therefore is ſaid to be come to them, and which in a little time fell upon their nation and city, and temple, even to the uttermoſt, to the laſt degree; and was, as the *Arabic* verſion renders it, *wrath conſuming*; or *the conſummation, and that determined poured upon the deſolate*, ſpoken of in *Dan.* ix. 27. and which as it is come upon them, will remain *unto the end*, as the phraſe may alſo be rendered; unto the end of the world, till the fulneſs of the *Gentiles* is brought in, and then God's elect among the *Jews* ſhall obtain mercy, and be called, and ſo all *Iſrael* ſhall be ſaved, *Rom.* xi. 25, 26.

Ver. 17. *But we brethren, being taken from you*, &c.] Here more properly ſhould begin the *third* chapter, in which the Apoſtle having before obſerved the manner of his entrance among theſe people, the nature of his miniſtry, the reception the word of God met with among them, and the powerful effect it had upon them, inſomuch that they patiently and chearfully bore perſecution for the ſake of it; he excuſes his not having been with them again as yet, which he knew was proper and neceſſary, as he was their Apoſtle and ſpiritual father; and expreſſes an affectionate concern at his parting with them in the manner he did, which was not his own choice and voluntary act, but was obliged to it, being hurried away at once, at an unawares in the night, by reaſon of the uproar made in the city by the baſer ſort of people, inſtigated by the unbelieving *Jews*; ſo that he and his fellow-miniſters had not the opportunity of taking their leave of them, as they would have done: hence he ſays, *we being taken from you*; they were as it were paſſive in it; they were forced away on a ſudden, they did not go of themſelves; the word uſed is very uncommon and emphatical, and may be literally rendered, *we being orphanized from you*; which repreſents this parting to be like the ſeparation made by death, between parents and children; when either parents are deprived of their children, or children of their parents, and are left orphans or fatherleſs; and juſt in ſuch a deſtitute and deſolate condition were the Apoſtle and his companions in, in their account; nor need it to be wondered at, when they are before compared to a nurſing mother and a tender father, as they were to theſe their ſpiritual children: and he further obſerves, that this removal from them, was *for a ſhort time*, or *for the time of an hour*; which may either denote the ſuddenneſs of it, being as it were at an hour's warning, having no more notice of it than for the ſpace of an hour; or it may expreſs the great affection he and his fellow-miniſters had for them, inſomuch that they could not bear an abſence from them, though but for an hour; or it may be ſaid by way of comfort, that this parting was but for a ſhort time, and that in a little while they might hope to ſee them again; and if not in this life, yet in the future ſtate, when they ſhould meet and never part more, and which would be but in a ſhort time at longeſt: moreover, this ſeparation was only *in preſence*; in perſon, in face, in ſight, in body, it was but a corporal one: *not in heart*; the Apoſtle's heart was with them, as much as if preſent; they were always in his mind, and remembered by him at the throne; he had as it were the images of them continually before him, as parents have of their children when at a diſtance from them; his heart was after them, and his affections moved ſtrongly towards them: and the effect this diſtance had on him, and thoſe that were with him was this, that they *endeavoured the more abundantly*, he obſerves, *to ſee your face with great deſire*; it made them but the more deſirous of ſeeing them face to face again, and put them upon attempting with more abundant earneſtneſs and diligence, to come and ſee them.

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[f] Zohar in Lev. fol. 30. 2, 3.

[g] T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 59. 1. Maimon. Hilchot Melachim, c. 10. §. 9.

Ver. 18. *Wherefore we would have come unto you,* &c.] They not only had a will, and purpoſed in themſelves, and entered into ſome reſolutions to come unto them, but endeavoured to put them into execution: *even I Paul*; as well as *Silas* and *Timotheus*; the latter of which had been with them, and the others had as good a will, and eſpecially *Paul*: and that *once and again*; or *once and twice*; ſo the *Jews* uſed [h] to ſpeak, פעם ראשונה ושנייה, *one time and a ſecond*; that is, ſeveral times: *but ſatan hindered us.* The *Syriac* and *Ethiopic* verſions read, *hindred me*; by moving the mob which roſe at *Theſſalonica*, to go to *Beræa*, and diſturb the Apoſtle there; which obliged him, contrary to his will, to go to *Athens* inſtead of returning to *Theſſalonica*, as he intended; and when at *Athens*, from whence alſo he might purpoſe to return thither, he was hindered, by the diſputes the *Jews* and the *Stoicks*, and *Epicurean* philoſophers had with him; and, after that, might be prevented by the lying in wait of the *Jews* for him, of which he might be informed; or by diſturbances raiſed in the church, or churches, where he was, by the falſe teachers; which required his ſtay with them, to oppoſe and refute error and hereſy, and to make up differences that aroſe among true chriſtians, fomented by ſatan and his emiſſaries; ſee *Rom.* i. 13. Satan does all he can to hinder the preaching of the Goſpel, the hearing of the word, the profeſſion of religion, and the ſaints coming together, and having ſpiritual converſation with each other; being as his name *ſatan* ſignifies, an enemy to Chriſt and his intereſt, and to the ſouls of men: indeed he can do nothing but by divine permiſſion, nor can he hinder the will of God, and the execution of that, though he often hinders the will of man, or man from doing his will; he hindered the Apoſtle from doing what he willed and purpoſed, but he did not hinder the will of God, which was that *Paul* ſhould be employed in other work elſewhere.

Ver. 19. *For what is our hope, or joy,* &c.] The Apoſtle here gives a reaſon why they were ſo concerned at parting with the *Theſſalonians*, and were ſo deſirous of ſeeing them again, and attempted it ſo often, becauſe they were their *hope*; not the foundation of it, which was Chriſt; nor the thing hoped for, which was eternal life; nor the ground of their hope, which was the blood, righteouſneſs, and ſacrifice of Chriſt; but they were perſons whom they hoped well of, and of whom their hope was ſtedfaſt; as of their election of God, of their redemption by Chriſt, of their effectual calling, of their perſeverance in faith and holineſs, notwithſtanding all reproach and perſecution; and of meeting the Lord, and being together with him for ever: and they were alſo their *joy*; their converſion was matter of joy to them, becauſe of the glory of God, Father, Son, and Spirit, diſplayed therein; becauſe of the abundant grace beſtowed on theſe perſons; and becauſe that hereby the kingdom of ſatan was weakened, and the kingdom of Chriſt enlarged, and his churches increaſed and beautified; and their own miniſtry was bleſſed and confirmed, and their hearts and hands ſtrengthened, and they encouraged to go on in it: and they continued to be their joy, inaſmuch as they ſtood faſt in the Lord, walked on in the truth, and had their converſations as became the Goſpel of Chriſt; and they were perſuaded would be their joy hereafter, at the ſecond coming of Chriſt; when they ſhould give up their account of them with joy, and not with grief: and 'tis added, *or crown of rejoicing*; or *of glorying*, or *boaſting*; not that they gloried in them, for they gloried not in men, but in the Lord, in his righteouſneſs, riches, wiſdom, ſtrength, and grace, in the perſon, blood, and croſs of Chriſt; but they gloried of them, as trophies of divine grace, as a prey taken out of the hand of the mighty, and as lawful captives delivered from the power of ſatan, and of darkneſs, and tranſlated into the kingdom of Chriſt. The *Alexandrian* copy reads, as we render it, *crown of rejoicing*; which is but a ſtronger phraſe, to expreſs the joy they had in their converſion and perſeverance, in alluſion to crowns wore at times of rejoicing, as at marriage-feaſts, and the like: hence we read [i] of the crowns of the bridegrooms, and of the brides, which were forbidden the uſe of in the war of *Veſpaſian*; the latter were made of gold, in the form of the city of *Jeruſalem*, and from thence called golden cities [k]; and the former, ſome ſay, were made of ſalt and ſulphur, to put them in mind of the deſtruction of the *Sodomites*, for their unnatural luſts [l]; others of a ſalt-ſtone as clear as chryſtal, or of the ſtone *Bdellium*, painted in the colour of ſulphur [m]; and ſome were made of myrtles and roſes, but in the war of *Veſpaſian* only thoſe made of reeds were uſed [n]: theſe crowns at weddings, ſeem to be the *beautiful crowns* in *Ezek.* xxiii. 42. where the *Septuagint* uſe the ſame phraſe as here, ϛεφανον καυχησεως, *a crown of rejoicing*, or *glorying*: the *Hebrew* phraſe, עטרת תפארת, may be rendered *a crown of glory*, as the phraſe here is by the *Vulgate Latin* and *Arabic* verſions; but does not mean the crown of glory, life, righteouſneſs, and immortality, the Apoſtle expected at the hands of Chriſt another day; nor that his being an inſtrument of the converſion of theſe perſons, was the ground of ſuch an expectation, or was what entitled him to ſuch a crown; ſince he knew that converſion work was owing to the powerful grace of God, and the crown of eternal life was his free gift; but that it would be an honour to him, and give him abundant joy and pleaſure at the coming of Chriſt, to be encircled with ſuch a number of ſouls he had been uſeful to, and who were his ſpiritual children; juſt as *children's children are the crown of old men*, *Prov.* xvii. 6. all this is put by way of queſtion, which ſtrongly affirms, *are not even ye*; or *ye alſo*, as well as others, as the *Corinthians* and *Philippians*; ſee 2 *Cor.* i. 7. *Phil.* i. 6, 7. and iv. 1. *In the preſence of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt at his coming?* to judge the quick and dead, when both they and theſe ſhould meet him, and ſtand before him with confidence, being cloathed with his righteouſneſs, and clad with robes of immortality and glory.

Ver. 20. *For ye are our glory and joy.*] Or *our joy*, as the *Syriac*, *Arabic*, and *Ethiopic* verſions read; this is a repetition, and a confirmation of what is before ſaid; and ſignifies that theſe ſaints were then, the glory of the Apoſtles, being the ſeals of their miniſtry; and whom they gloried of and rejoiced in, and hoped and believed they would be ſuch, as would be their joy and crown in time to come, and for ever.

CHAP.

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[h] Maimon. Hilch. Chobel, c. 5. §. 10.

[i] Miſna Sota, c. 9. §. 14.

[k] Maimon. in ib. & in Sabbat, c. 6. §. 1.

[l] Ex Hechaim M. S. apud Wagenſeil in Sota ib.

[m] Bartenora in ib.

[n] T. Bab. Sota, fol. 49. 2.

CHAP. III.

IN this chapter the Apoſtle expreſſes his great love to the *Theſſalonians*, by ſending *Timothy* to them, to eſtabliſh and comfort them; and declares his ſatisfaction with the tidings he brought of them, and concludes the chapter with fervent prayers for them: ſuch was his affection for them, that he choſe rather to be left alone at *Athens*, and ſend *Timothy* to them, though ſo very dear and uſeful to him, as his characters ſhew, to the end that they might be eſtabliſhed and comforted, ver. 1, 2. and not be ſhaken with the afflictions the Apoſtles met with, ſeeing theſe were no other than what God had appointed them to; and beſides, they had been apprized of them beforehand by the Apoſtle, ver. 3, 4. but however, leſt ſatan ſhould get an advantage of them, the Apoſtle could not be eaſy without ſending to know how things ſtood with them, ver. 5. next he proceeds to give an account of the ſucceſs of this miſſion, and the ſatisfaction it gave him and his fellow-miniſters, to hear of their faith and charity, their remembrance of them, and deſire to ſee them, ver. 6. which comforted them under their afflictions, made them lively and chearful, filled them with joy and thankfulneſs, and put them upon praying to God to ſee their face, and perfect what was lacking in their faith, ver. 7, 8, 9, 10. and then follow the petitions themſelves, which are made both to God the Father, and our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, that their way might be directed to them, that they might increaſe and abound in love to one another, and to all men, as they did to them, and that God would eſtabliſh them in holineſs in his ſight, at the coming of Chriſt, ver. 11, 12, 13.

Ver. 1. *Wherefore when we could no longer forbear*, &c.] Or *bear*, as the word properly ſignifies; or *bear that*, as the *Ethiopic* verſion reads; that is, *that deſire*, as the *Arabic* verſion renders it; that ardent and longing deſire of ſeeing them again, expreſſed in the latter part of the preceding chapter; which was as fire in their bones, and was retained with great pain and uneaſineſs; but now they could hold it no longer, and like *Jeremy*, ch. xx. 9. were weary with forbearing, and could not ſtay; or it was like a burden, which they ſtood up under as long as they could, even *Paul*, *Silas*, and *Timotheus*, but now it became inſupportable: *we thought it good to be left at Athens alone*; that is, *Paul* and *Silas*, or *Paul* only, ſpeaking of himſelf in the plural number; for he ſeems to have been alone at *Athens*, at leaſt at laſt; he conſidering every thing, thought it moſt fit and adviſeable when at *Athens*, where he waited for *Silas* and *Timotheus*, having ordered them to come thither to him from *Berea*, *Acts* xvii. 14, 15. either to ſend orders to *Berea* for *Timothy* to go from thence to *Theſſalonica*, to know the ſtate of affairs there, and *Silas* elſewhere; or if they came to him to *Athens*, of which *Luke* gives no account, he immediately diſpatched *Timothy* to *Theſſalonica*, and *Silas* to ſome other part of *Macedonia*, for from thence they came to him at *Corinth*, *Acts* xviii. 5. ſuch was his deſire of knowing how things were at *Theſſalonica*, that he choſe rather to be left alone at *Athens*, diſputing with the unbelieving *Jews*, and heathen philoſophers of the *Epicurean* and *Stoic* ſects, ſuſtaining all their ſcoffs and jeers alone; and was content to be without his uſeful companions, *Silas* and *Timothy*, who might have been aſſiſting to him at *Athens*, in hope of hearing of his dear friends at *Theſſalonica*.

Ver. 2. *And ſent Timotheus our brother*, &c.] In a ſpiritual relation, having the ſame heavenly Father, and belonging to the ſame *Jeruſalem*, which is free, and the mother of us all; of the ſame houſhold and family, and in the ſame relation to Chriſt, the firſt-born among many brethren; or their brother in the miniſtry, who was employed in the ſame buſineſs, and did the ſame work they did; or he is ſo called, on account of that ſtrict and intimate friendſhip which ſubſiſted between them, by virtue of which they ſtuck as cloſe as brethren, or cloſer to one another than brethren uſually do: *and miniſter of God*; of his making, and not man's; of his calling and ſending, and of his bleſſing and ſucceeding; and who was a miniſter of the things of God, of the myſteries of God, of the truths of his Goſpel; and who miniſtred according to the ability God gave him, and was faithful to him: *and our fellow-labourer in the Goſpel of Chriſt*; he was a labourer, and not a loiterer in the Lord's vineyard; one that laboured in the word and doctrine, that ſtudied to ſhew himſelf a workman, that gave himſelf wholly to meditation, reading, exhortation, and doctrine, and preached the word in ſeaſon and out of ſeaſon; and was a fellow-labourer with him, who laboured more abundantly than any of the Apoſtles; and not in the law, but in the Goſpel, even in the Goſpel of Chriſt, of which he is the ſum and ſubſtance, author and preacher. The *Vulgate Latin* and *Ethiopic* verſions leave out theſe words, and ſo do *Beza*'s ancient copy and the *Alexandrian* manuſcript, *and our fellow-labourer*; reading the latter part of the clauſe in connexion with the former thus, *a miniſter of God in the Goſpel of Chriſt*, as the former of theſe verſions, *in the doctrine of Chriſt*, as the latter. Theſe characters are given of *Timothy*, partly to ſhow what honour was done the *Theſſalonians*, in ſending ſuch a meſſenger to them; and partly that they might receive him with the greater reſpect, and treat him according to his character, office, and dignity; and chiefly to obſerve to them the Apoſtle's great affection for them, in parting with ſo dear and uſeful a miniſter for their good and advantage, as follows: *to eſtabliſh you*; which though the work of God, it is uſually done by the miniſtry of the word; and then is the end of the Goſpel miniſtration anſwered to the churches, when they are eſtabliſhed by it; for notwithſtanding the ſaints are in a ſtable condition, as in the arms of love, and in the hands of Chriſt, and in the covenant of grace, and upon the rock of ages, and in a ſtate of regeneration, juſtification, and adoption, from whence they can never fall totally and finally; yet they are often very unſtable in their hearts and frames, in the exerciſe of grace, and diſcharge of duty, and in their adherence to the cauſe and intereſt, Goſpel and ordinances of Chriſt, through the prevalence of corruption, the temptations of ſatan, and the reproaches and perſecutions of men: and theſe *Theſſalonians* were young converts, and juſt planted together as a church; and at their firſt ſetting out, ſuſtained a conſiderable ſhock of afflictions, which made the Apoſtle concerned for their eſtabliſhment in the faith which they had received: *and to comfort you concerning your faith*. This is another end of the Goſpel miniſtry, to comfort afflicted minds, and diſtreſſed conſciences; it is the will of God that his people ſhould be ſpoke comfortably to; the doctrines of the Goſpel are calculated for that purpoſe, and the miniſters of it ſhould be *Barnabaſes*, ſons of conſolation. Theſe ſaints might be in ſome doubt about the grace of faith, whether it was right or no, or about the doctrine of faith they had received; and therefore *Timothy* is ſent to comfort them under their afflictions, which might have created theſe doubts, and to remove them, by ſhewing them that their faith was like precious faith with the Apoſtles; and that the doctrine of faith they embraced was the faith once delivered to the ſaints, and was the true faith of Chriſt: the words will bear to be rendered, *to exhort you concerning your faith*, as the *Vulgate Latin* verſion renders them; that is, to exhort you to continue in the faith, to ſtand faſt in it, in the exerciſe of the grace of faith, and in the doctrine of faith, and in the profeſſion of both. The *Syriac* verſion renders it, *to aſk*, or enquire *of you concerning your faith*, being willing to know how it ſtood, ſince they left them, as in ver. 5.

Ver. 3. *That no man ſhould be moved by theſe afflictions*, &c.] Which the Apoſtle endured for the ſake of preaching the Goſpel among them, and which he feared might be a means of troubling their minds, of ſhaking their faith, and moving them from the hope of the Goſpel; for tho' none of theſe things moved him, who was an old ſoldier of Chriſt, and uſed to hardneſs, and an Apoſtle of Chriſt; yet theſe were young converts, and not uſed to ſuch things, and therefore might be ſtaggered at them, and be offended, as ſtony-ground hearers are; and tho' the Apoſtle hoped better things of them, yet was concerned for them, that no one among them might be unhinged by them, or ſuccumb under them: *for yourſelves know that we are appointed thereunto*; by the immutable decree of God: afflictions, as to their nature, meaſure, and duration, are appointed for the people of God, and they are appointed for them; this is the caſe of all that will live godly in Chriſt Jeſus, and eſpecially of Goſpel-miniſters; of which theſe ſaints had been apprized by the Apoſtle, and therefore was nothing new, unheard-of, and unexpected, or to be looked upon as a ſtrange thing; and ſeeing this was the appointment of heaven, and the will of God, they ſhould be patiently endured, and quietly ſubmitted to.

Ver. 4. *For verily when we were with you*, &c.] In preſence, in perſon, as they then were in heart and affection; when they were firſt among them, and preached the Goſpel to them: *we told you before*; before it came to paſs; *that we ſhould ſuffer tribulation*; which they might ſay by virtue of Chriſt's prediction to all his diſciples, that they ſhould have tribulation in the world; and upon its being the common caſe of God's people, and the uſual way thro' which they enter the kingdom; and the Apoſtle *Paul* might foretel this, upon the diſcovery that was made to him how many things he ſhould ſuffer for the ſake of Chriſt, and which therefore he always, and in every place expected; and he might have a particular revelation of the diſturbance and oppoſition he was to meet with at *Theſſalonica*: *even as it came to paſs, and ye know*; referring to the tumult and uproar in *Acts* xvii. 5—10. and which ſhould be conſidered ſo far from being a diſcouragement, that it was a great confirmation of the truth of their miſſion and miniſtry; nor could it be ſo ſurprizing to them, as it might have been, had they had no previous notice of it.

Ver. 5. *For this cauſe, when I could no longer forbear*, &c.] Or *bear* the above vehement deſire of ſeeing them, or of hearing from them. Here the Apoſtle ſpeaks in the ſingular number, and ſeems to intimate, as if what was ſaid before of the like kind, is to be underſtood ſingly of him; for theſe words are a repetition and ſummary of the foregoing, with ſome diverſity: *I ſent to know your faith*; how it ſtood, whether it was ſtaggering thro' theſe afflictions, or firm; whether it was weak or ſtrong, what was wanting in it; and whether it grew and increaſed. The *Arabic* verſion adds, *and charity*; for of this, as well as of faith, *Timothy* brought an account, as appears from the following verſe. *Leſt by ſome means the tempter*; ſatan, ſo called from his common and conſtant employ in tempting men to ſin; ſee *Matt*. iv. 3. *have tempted you*; with ſucceſs, and got an advantage over them, improving theſe afflictions to ſuch a purpoſe as to move them from the hope of the Goſpel, and relinquiſh the profeſſion of it; for otherwiſe there was no queſtion to be made but he had tempted them, or ſolicited them to it; for none of the ſaints are free from his temptations; the Apoſtle himſelf was not, nor indeed our Lord Jeſus Chriſt: but the Apoſtle's fears were, leſt he ſhould ſo have tempted them as to have gained upon them, and have perſuaded them to have turned their backs upon the Goſpel, and not expoſe their name and credit, and hazard the loſs of worldly ſubſtance, and even life itſelf, for the ſake of it. *And our labour be in vain*; in preaching the Goſpel among them; not with reſpect to God, to whom the word never returns void and empty; nor with regard to the Apoſtles, whoſe judgment was with the Lord, and their work with their God, who will of his own grace reward them; but with reſpect to the *Theſſalonians*, to whom, ſhould ſatan gain his point, it would be of no uſe and ſervice, for which the concern was. The *Ethiopic* verſion reads, *and your labour be in vain*; in receiving the Apoſtles, embracing and profeſſing the Goſpel, and ſuffering for it; ſee *Gal*. iii. 4. but the common reading is beſt, and agrees with what the Apoſtle elſewhere ſays, *Gal*. iv. 11. *Phil*. ii. 16.

Ver. 6. *But now when Timotheus came from you unto us*, &c.] At *Corinth*, as appears from *Acts* xviii. 5. which ſhows that this Epiſtle was not written from *Athens*, as the ſubſcription to it aſſerts, but from *Corinth*; for as ſoon as ever *Timothy* came from *Theſſalonica*, to the Apoſtle at *Corinth*, and made the report to him, he immediately ſent them this Epiſtle which is here ſuggeſted: *but now*, &c. juſt now; *lately*, as the *Syriac* verſion renders it, a very little while ago, *Timothy* was juſt come: *and brought us good tidings of your faith and charity*; of their *faith*, the grace of faith, that it was of the right kind; as far as could be judged, it was the faith of God's elect, like precious faith with theirs; an unfeigned one, ſtrong and lively, operative and growing: or of the doctrine of faith as received and embraced by them; as that they were greatly led, and had much light into it, and had, for the time, made conſiderable proficiency in it; that they held it faſt, and ſtood faſt in it, and contended for it, notwithſtanding all the afflictions, reproaches, and perſecutions which they either ſaw in the Apoſtles, or endured themſelves for the ſake of it; and likewiſe of the profeſſion of both the grace and doctrine of faith, which they held faſt, and without wavering, and that in a pure conſcience, which was good news indeed. *Timothy* alſo brought an account of their *charity*, or love, which faith works by; theſe two graces, are always found together; they are wrought in the ſoul by one, and the ſame hand, and at the ſame time; where the one is, the other is; and as the one flouriſhes and increaſes, ſo does the other. And by this grace is meant love to God, to Chriſt, to his truths, ordinances, ways, and worſhip, and to one another, and even to all men; and which was without diſſimulation, in ſincerity, in deed, and in truth, and was conſtant and fervent: and this was not the whole of the report, for it follows, *and that ye have a good remembrance of us always*; they bore in memory the perſons of the Apoſtles; and when they made mention of their names, it was with the greateſt reſpect and reverence; nor were they forgetful hearers of the word, but remembred with great affection and pleaſure the truths, the doctrines, and exhortations they delivered to them, ſo as to put them in practice, and longed for another viſit from them, to have their memories refreſhed by them: *deſiring greatly to ſee us, as we alſo* to ſee *you*; they had an equal deſire to ſee their ſpiritual fathers, as they had to ſee their ſpiritual children. Now ſuch a report as this concerning their ſteady faith in Chriſt, their fervent love to one another, and their affectionate regard to the miniſters of the word, was a ſort of a Goſpel, as the word uſed ſignifies; or it was good news and glad tidings to the Apoſtle, and thoſe that were with him.

Ver. 7. *Therefore, brethren, we were comforted over you*, &c.] Or *in you*, as the *Vulgate Latin* verſion; or *from you*, as the *Arabic*; or *by you*, as the *Syriac*; or *for you*, as the *Ethiopic*; that is, on account of them, either by what they had heard was in them, or had heard from them. This gave abundant conſolation *in all our affliction and diſtreſs*; which they met with at *Corinth*, where the Apoſtle laboured with his own hands, and miniſtred to his own, and the neceſſities of others, and was greatly oppoſed, reproached, and perſecuted; ſee *Acts* xviii. 3, 6, 9, 10, 12. but the news of the good eſtate and condition the *Theſſalonians* were in, was a great relief and comfort to him, particularly their faith: *by your faith*; by the report of it, that it grew exceedingly, and that they walked in the truth; ſee 3 *John* iii. 4. The *Alexandrian* copy reads, *in all your diſtreſs and affliction, and by your faith*.

Ver. 8. *For now we live*, &c.] Before they were as dead men, lifeleſs, diſconſolate, diſpirited, carrying about with them the dying of the Lord Jeſus, and death working in them, and they, as it were, under the ſentence of that, being killed all the day long for Chriſt's ſake; but now, upon this news, in the midſt of all their ſore trials and troubles, their ſpirits revived, and they became alive and chearful; ſee *Pſ.* xxii. 26. *Iſ.* lv. 3. it was like life from the dead unto them: *if ye ſtand faſt in the Lord*; or *our Lord*, as the *Syriac* and *Ethiopic* verſions read; that is, *in the faith of the Lord*, as the *Arabic* verſion renders it: they were in the Lord ſecretly by electing grace, and openly by regenerating grace, and they abode in him; and by perſevering grace, they were rooted and built up in Chriſt, and eſtabliſhed in the faith of him, of his perſon, office, and grace; they were ſteady in the exerciſe of grace upon him, and ſtood faſt in the liberty wherewith he had made them free, and continued ſtedfaſtly in the doctrines and ordinances of the Goſpel; for the *if* here is not expreſſive of doubting, but of reaſoning, *ſeeing ye ſtand faſt in the Lord*; of which they were aſſured by *Timothy*; and this gave them freſh ſpirit and life amidſt the deaths in which they often were.

Ver. 9. *For what thanks can we render to God again for you*, &c.] They had given thanks to God for them before, for their faith, love, and patience; ſee ch. i. 2, 3. and now having received a further account of them, they looked upon themſelves bound to give freſh thanks to God for them, for the increaſe of their faith and love, and for their perſeverance, as they did; ſee 2 *Ep.* i. 3. and ii. 13. ſince theſe are gifts of God's grace; but they knew not where to begin, what to render, and when to end: the phraſe is much like that in *Pſ.* cxvi. 12. *what ſhall I render unto the Lord*, &c. *for all the joy wherewith we joy for your ſakes before our God*; the joy they had was *all joy*, perfect and compleat in its kind; ſee *Jam.* i. 2. and it was not for themſelves, on their own account, becauſe of any worldly intereſt or advantage they had therein, but for the ſake of theſe *Theſſalonians*, whoſe ſpiritual welfare they rejoiced at: nor was their joy of a carnal nature, but ſpiritual; it was a joy in the Holy Ghoſt, and which was hearty and ſincere; it was *before God*; *our* God, their covenant God and Father; it was in his ſight and preſence, who ſees and knows all things, all actions, and the principles of them. Tho' this laſt clauſe, *before our God*, is, in the *Syriac* verſion, placed at the beginning of the next verſe, according to which, it refers, not to thanks or joy before God, but to prayer before him.

Ver. 10. *Night and day praying exceedingly*, &c.] This good news not only comforted their hearts, and revived their ſpirits, and filled them with joy and thankfulneſs, but alſo ſent them to the throne of grace to pray without ceaſing, continually night and day, and as often as they went thither, and that with great fervency and earneſtneſs, in a multitude of petitions; or, as the *Arabic* verſion renders it, *with prayers exceeding a multitude*; with innumerable requeſts: *that we might ſee your face*; once more, and converſe face to face: *and might perfect that which is lacking in your faith?* in the grace of faith; for tho' they remembred their work of faith with pleaſure, and had had good tidings of it very lately, and were thankful that it grew exceedingly as it did, yet they knew it was not perfect, there was unbelief attending them: and tho' it is God's work to increaſe faith, as well as to produce it, yet, as the miniſtry of the word is the means of the firſt planting of it, ſo it alſo is of the increaſe of it. This may likewiſe be underſtood of the doctrine of faith, which tho' they had received in the love of it, and had made conſiderable progreſs in their knowledge of it; yet they knew but in part, and needed to be taught the way of God, and truths of the Goſpel more perfectly; and the miniſtry of the word is for the perfecting of the ſaints in the knowledge of the Son of God, and of other truths; wherefore the Apoſtle deſired greatly to ſee them, that he might be an inſtrument of inſtructing them more perfectly in the knowledge of divine things; and in this, and in the following Epiſtle, he does particularly inſtruct them about the riſe and fall of antichriſt, the coming of Chriſt, and the reſurrection of the dead, articles of faith in which they ſeemed to have been deficient: but now, tho' theſe ſaints had deficiencies in their faith, yet they were not what the *Jews* call [*] מחוסרי אמנה, *ſuch as are deficient in faith*, or want faith entirely, a phraſe ſomewhat like this, which is here uſed.

Ver. 11. *Now God himſelf, and our father*, &c.] The *Oriental* verſions leave out the copulative *and*, and read, *God himſelf*, *our Father*; the firſt perſon in the Trinity, who is God himſelf, truly and properly ſo; and who is a God that hears prayer; and who is omnipotent and able to do more than the ſaints can aſk or think; and is omniſcient, and knows their perſons, and caſes, and what is proper for them, and how, and when to help and ſupply them; and he is alſo the God of all grace, the author and giver of it, and who is able to make it abound, and increaſe it, and ſo a very proper object of prayer: and who is likewiſe the Father of Chriſt, and of all the ſaints, not only by creation, in which ſenſe he is the father of all men, but by adopting grace; and which is mentioned to encourage freedom and boldneſs in prayer, which children may uſe with a father, and to raiſe an expectation of ſucceeding and receiving an anſwer; for if earthly parents hear their children, and give good things to them, how much more will not our heavenly Father give his holy Spirit, and all other good gifts, unto his children? And this ſhows that the Apoſtle prayed to God in the manner Chriſt directed, *Matt.* vi. 9. *and our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*; who is equally the object of prayer with God, his Father and ours; who is ſometimes diſtinctly prayed unto, as in *Acts* vii. 59. and often in conjunction with his Father, as in all thoſe places in the Epiſtles, where grace and peace are wiſhed for from them both; ſee *Rom.* i. 7. and ſometimes he is ſet before the Father, as in 2 *Theſſ.* ii. 16. to ſhew the entire equality between them, and that he is equally addreſſed as he, being truly and properly God, who knows all things, and is the almighty, and whoſe grace is ſufficient for us, and therefore rightly applied unto, as here: the petition put up to them both is, that they would *direct our way unto you*: a journey is not to be taken without the will of God, without ſeeking to know it, without ſubmiſſion to it, and dependance on it; nor is there any proſperous one, but by it; ſee *Jam.* iv. 13, 14, 15. *Rom.* i. 10. Men may deviſe their own ways, but God directs their goings; eſpecially a good man's ſteps are ordered by the Lord, and particularly miniſters; who, as they are often directed to ſubjects and matter, in a very providential way, ſo to places, and are ordered both where and when to go; ſee *Acts* xvi. 6, 7, 9, 10. The Apoſtle was aware, that there were obſtacles in his way of coming to *Theſſalonica*, for he had attempted it once and again, but ſatan, and his emiſſaries, hindered; and therefore he deſires that God and Chriſt would remove them out of the way, and make his way ſtraight and plain, as the word ſignifies, that he might once more ſee their faces.

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[*] Maimon. Hilch. Mechira, c. 7. §. 8, 9.

Ver. 12. *And the Lord make you to increaſe*, &c.] That is, the Lord the Spirit; ſo that the object of prayer, addreſſed by the Apoſtle, is Father, Son, and Spirit, as in *Rev.* i. 4, 5. The *Alexandrian* copy reads *God*. The Spirit is God, equally with the Father and the Son, and ſo a fit object of prayer with them, which otherwiſe he would not be. The requeſt is, that he would cauſe theſe ſaints to *increaſe* in number, as the firſt churches greatly did; and in the gifts of the Spirit, which he divides to men ſeverally as he will; and in his graces, as in faith, in hope, in holineſs, in humility, in knowledge, in ſpiritual joy and ſtrength, an increaſe in all which is from him: *and abound in love one towards another*; for tho' they were taught of God to love one another, and did do ſo, and the Apoſtle had had good tidings of their love; yet it was not perfect, there was room for a further exerciſe of it, by ſerving each other by it, in things ſpiritual and temporal; and he had his requeſt, for it did abound in every one of them towards each other, 2 *Ep.* i. 3. *and towards all men*; the men of the world, who were without, were not members of the church, nor profeſſors of the chriſtian religion, but enemies to that, and to Chriſt, and to them; and yet they were to love them as men, and pray for them, and do them all the good that lay in their power: *even as we do towards you*; for the love of the Apoſtle, and thoſe with him, abounded more and more towards theſe ſaints, and was ſo far from being weakened, that it was increaſed by their abſence from them; and they were more abundantly deſirous of ſeeing them, and were even quite impatient until they ſent to them, and heard of them.

Ver. 13. *To the end he may ſtabliſh your hearts*, &c.] Which are very unſtable and inconſtant in their frames, and in the exerciſe of grace, and have need to be eſtabliſhed in the love of God, againſt the fears of men, the frowns of the world, the temptations of ſatan, and in, and with the doctrines of grace; ſee the note on ver. 2. *unblameable in holineſs before God, even our father.* There is no holineſs in men naturally; what is in them without the grace of God is only a ſhew; true holineſs is from the Spirit of God; and this is a ſtable thing in itſelf, and can never be removed or taken away; but the acts of it, thro' the prevalence of corruption, the force of ſatan's temptations, and the ſnares of the world, are fickle and inconſtant; and the ſaints need to be eſtabliſhed in the diſcharge of duty, as well as in the exerciſe of grace: and whereas the Apoſtle prays, that they might be *unblameable in holineſs*, the *Alexandrian* copy reads, *in righteouſneſs*, ſo one of *Stephens*'s; it muſt be obſerved, that no man is perfectly holy in this life; no man is without ſin in himſelf, or lives without the commiſſion of it; holineſs in the beſt is imperfect; no man, as yet, is in himſelf ſanctified wholly; there's no unblameable holineſs but in Chriſt; and in him the ſaints are without ſpot and blemiſh, who is their ſanctification and their righteouſneſs; but in themſelves they are full of ſpots and ſtains; yet thro' the grace of God their hearts may be ſo eſtabliſhed with principles of holineſs, and they may be ſo aſſiſted in the acts of it daily, as to give no juſt cauſe of blame to men, and ſo to behave as to approve themſelves *before God*, who ſees the heart, and knows from what principles all actions flow: and this the Apoſtle deſires may be *at the coming of our Lord Jeſus*; or *unto the coming* of him, as in ch. v. 23. Either at death, when he comes into his garden, and gathers his lilies, and takes his to himſelf to be for ever with him; or at the day of judgment, when he comes to judge the quick and dead; and which coming of his is certain, and will be quickly and ſuddenly, and with great glory and power: and, as it is here added, *with all his ſaints*; meaning either his holy angels, or rather the ſouls of his people, whom he'll bring with him, and will raiſe their dead bodies, and reunite them to their ſouls, when they ſhall be for ever with him; and then ſhall they be unblameable in holineſs, both in ſoul and body, and ſhall be preſented by him, firſt to himſelf, and then to his Father, faultleſs, and without ſpot, or wrinkle, or any ſuch thing. The *Vulgate Latin*, *Arabic*, and *Ethiopic* verſions add, *Amen*; and ſo does *Beza*'s ancient copy, and the *Alexandrian* manuſcript.

CHAP. IV.

IN this chapter the Apoſtle proceeds to exhort in general to the performance of good works, particularly to purity of life, to brotherly love, to quietneſs, diligence, and induſtry in the ſeveral callings of life, and not to mourn in an exceſſive and immoderate manner, for deceaſed friends; which leads him to ſay ſome things concerning the ſecond coming of Chriſt, and the reſurrection of the dead. The general exhortation to holineſs is in ver. 1, 2, 3. which is preſſed in a way of intreaty for the ſake of Chriſt; and the duties urged to were the commandments of Chriſt, and which the Apoſtles had given them, and they had received, and were well acquainted with; and beſides, a walk according to theſe commands, was well-pleaſing to God, and ſanctification in general was his will: and in particular the Apoſtle exhorts to abſtain from fornication, and all uncleanneſs; ſince it is a diſhonouring the body of man; acting the part of the ignorant *Gentiles* that know not God; a defrauding another man, as is uncleanneſs with another man's wife; the vengeance of God will light on ſuch; it is contrary to that vocation with which the ſaints are called, that being to holineſs, and not uncleanneſs; and to deſpiſe this exhortation, is caſting contempt, not upon man, but God himſelf, ver. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8. Brotherly love is the next thing exhorted to, which ſeemed needleſs to write about, ſince, in regeneration, theſe ſaints were taught to exerciſe it, and had exerciſed it towards all the brethren throughout *Macedonia*, tho' it was neceſſary to exhort them to abound more and more in it, ver. 9, 10. and to ſtudy peace and quietneſs, and be induſtrious in their buſineſs, that ſo they might live an honeſt life among their carnal neighbours, and not be in want of any thing from them, ver. 11, 12. and whereas ſome of them had loſt ſome of their dear friends and relations by death, and were ready to exceed due bounds in their ſorrow for them, he dehorts from ſuch immoderate ſorrow, as being like that of thoſe that had no hope of a reſurrection from the dead; whereas, ſeeing it was an article of their faith, that Chriſt was riſen from the dead, they might aſſure themſelves that thoſe that ſleep in him ſhall be brought along with him when he ſhall appear a ſecond time, ver. 13, 14. which will not be prevented by thoſe that are alive when Chriſt comes; for as they will be changed, the dead in Chriſt will be raiſed at his coming; which coming of his will be in perſon, from heaven, with a ſhout, the voice of the arch-angel, and trump of God; and then both ſhall be caught up together to meet him in the air, and be for ever with him; and therefore they had no need to ſorrow as others, ſince they ſhould meet again, and never part more, and with which words they ſhould comfort one another under their preſent loſs, ver. 15, 16, 17, 18.

Ver. 1. *Furthermore then we beſeech you, brethren,* &c.] Or requeſt of you in the moſt kind and tender manner, from real and hearty love and affection for you, and with a view to your good, and the glory of God: *and exhort you*; or beſeech and intreat you. The Apoſtle does not lay his commands upon them as he might have done, and ſometimes does, but endeavours to work upon them by way of intreaty, and which he doubtleſs thought the moſt effectual method to win upon them, and gain them; for ſome minds are more eaſily wrought upon by entreaty than by authority: and this he does in the moſt moving and powerful manner, even *by the Lord Jeſus*; or *in the Lord Jeſus*; in his name and ſtead, as perſonating him, and as tho' he did beſeech and intreat them by him, and his fellow-miniſters; or for his ſake, intimating, that if they had any regard to him, any value for his name, if that had any weight with them, or they had any concern for his honour and intereſt, then he begs their attention to the following exhortation; or by the Lord Jeſus, by all that is in him, or done for them by him; in whom they were choſen, by whom they were redeemed, in whom they were made new creatures, to whoſe image they were to be conformed, whoſe followers they profeſſed to be, whoſe Goſpel they embraced, and by whoſe name they were called. *That as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk, and to pleaſe God.* The walk of believers is two-fold, either internal or external. Their internal walk is by faith, which is the going out of the ſoul by faith to Chriſt for every ſupply of grace. Their external walk is not as it was before converſion, according to the courſe of this world, or as other *Gentiles* walk, but in a holy, religious life and converſation; and this requires ſpiritual life, ſtrength, and direction from Chriſt; for neither dead men, nor, if alive, yet weak, can walk; nor is it in a ſpiritual man, that walketh to direct his ſteps; and ſuch a walk alſo denotes continuance in well-doing, and a progreſſion or going on in it, and ſuppoſes ways to walk in. Chriſt, he is the chief and principal way, and there are other paths which regard him, or relate and lead unto him; as the way of truth, the path of ordinances, and of religious worſhip, both public and private, and the ways of righteouſneſs, holineſs, and good works: the manner in which ſaints are to walk, is as Chriſt himſelf walked, after the Spirit, and not after the fleſh, according to the rule of the word, which is the ſtandard of faith and practice, with prudence, wiſdom, circumſpection, and worthy of God, and of that vocation wherein they are called: and of ſuch a walk there is a neceſſity; it *ought*, it muſt be both on the account of God, it being his will, and for his glory, and the contrary would ſhew great ingratitude to him; and on the account of the ſaints themſelves, to adorn them, and their profeſſion, and preſerve them from ſhame and diſgrace, to ſhew their faith, and demonſtrate their calling and election to others; and likewiſe on account of others, partly for the winning of ſome, by recommending in this way the Goſpel to them, and partly for the bringing of others to ſhame and ſilence, who falſly accuſe their good converſation. Now when the Apoſtle, and thoſe that were with him were at *Theſſalonica*, they gave theſe ſaints directions and inſtructions about their walk and converſation, to order it in ſuch a manner as might *pleaſe God*; which is not to be underſtood of rendering their perſons acceptable to God hereby, for the ſaints acceptance with God is only in Chriſt the beloved; nor of their gaining the love and favour of God by ſuch means, for the love of God is from everlaſting, and is free, and ſovereign, and does not ariſe from, or depend upon the holineſs and obedience of men; or of making peace with God by ſuch a walk, for peace is only made by the blood of Chriſt; but of doing thoſe things, and in ſuch a way God approves of: unregenerate men cannot pleaſe God, nor any thing they do, becauſe they are deſtitute of the Spirit of God, and are without Chriſt, and his grace, and have not faith in him, without which it is impoſſible to pleaſe God; but what a believer does in faith, from a principle of love, in the name and ſtrength of Chriſt, and to the glory of God, is approved of by God, and is acceptable to him thro' Chriſt, and for his ſake; and there are many things of this kind, as prayer, praiſe, acts of beneficence to the poor, and indeed every good work and holy action: and inaſmuch as they had been thus taught and inſtructed how to behave and conduct in their outward walk and converſation, they are entreated and exhorted to go on and abound in the work of the Lord, *ſo ye would abound more and more*; that is, be more and more in the exerciſe of every grace, and in the diſcharge of every duty, making advances in holineſs of life, and perfecting it in the fear of God. *Beza*'s ancient copy, and another manuſcript, as alſo the *Alexandrian* copy, and ſome others, add between the preceding, and this laſt clauſe, *as ye alſo walk*; and ſo the *Vulgate Latin* and *Ethiopic* verſions ſeem to have read; commending them for their preſent and paſt walk and converſation, in order to perſuade and encourage them to go forward.

Ver. 2. *For ye know what commandments we gave you*, &c.] When among them; ſuch as thoſe of faith and love, the ordinances of the Goſpel, baptiſm, and the Lord's ſupper, and all ſuch as relate to the worſhip and ſervice of God, to the diſcipline of Chriſt's houſe, to their behaviour one towards another, and their conduct in the world: and which were delivered to them, not as from themſelves, and by their own authority, but *by the Lord Jeſus*; in his name, and by his authority, and as ordered by him; for their commiſſion ran to teach men all things, whatſoever Chriſt commanded: now ſince they knew what theſe commandments were, and whoſe they were, and the obligation they lay under to regard them, the Apoſtle makes uſe of it as a reaſon or argument to engage them to obedience to them; for he that knows his Lord's will, and does it not, ſhall be beaten with many ſtripes, *Luke* xii. 47.

Ver. 3. *For this is the will of God*, even *your ſanctification*, &c.] Which is another reaſon to enforce the above exhortation. *Sanctification* is internal or external. Internal ſanctification is the work of the Spirit of God, and is a principle of ſpiritual life in the ſoul, a divine and ſpiritual light in the underſtanding, a flexion of the will to the will of God, and a ſettlement of the affections on divine things, and is an implantation of every grace in the heart. External ſanctification ariſes from this, and lies in holineſs of life and converſation; and is what is chiefly deſigned, as appears both by what goes before, and follows after: and this is *the will of God*; the will of his purpoſe and decree; for in the ſame decree that he wills the ſalvation of any by Jeſus Chriſt, he alſo wills their ſanctification in heart and life, and here and hereafter: and this is his approving will, or what is well-pleaſing in his ſight, being agreeable to his nature, and divine perfections, particularly his holineſs, in which he is glorious; and it is his will of command, and what he requires in his law, which is holy, juſt, and good, and perfectly agrees with the ſound doctrine of the Goſpel, and the revelation of his will in both. *That ye ſhould abſtain from fornication*; which is particularly mentioned, abſtinence from it being a branch of external holineſs; and becauſe that this ſin was common among the *Gentiles*, and not eſteemed a ſin by them; as alſo to obſerve to theſe chriſtians, that as ſimple fornication was not to be allowed of, much leſs other acts of uncleanneſs, as adultery, inceſt, ſodomy, and the like, which were iniquities that greatly prevailed among the heathens. The *Syriac* verſion renders it, *from all fornication*; on this ſubject the Apoſtle enlarges in ſome following verſes.

Ver. 4. *That every one of you ſhould know how to poſſeſs his veſſel*, &c.] By which may be meant, either a man's wife, or his body, and it is not very eaſy to determine which, for the *Jews* call both by this name. Sometimes they call [p] a woman, גולם, which the *Gloſs* ſays is a *veſſel* unfiniſhed. It is reported [q], that when *R. Eleazar* died, *Rabbenu Hakkadoſh* would have married his widow, and ſhe would not, becauſe ſhe was, כלי של קדושה, *a veſſel of holineſs*, greater than he. Moreover, it is ſaid [r], that "he that forces (a young woman) muſt "drink, בעציצו, *in his own veſſel*——how drink in "his own veſſel? tho' ſhe be lame, tho' ſhe be "blind, and tho' ſhe is ſtricken with ulcers." The commentators [s] on the paſſage add, "in the *veſſel* "which he has choſen; that is to ſay, whether he "will or no, he muſt marry her;" ſee *Prov.* v. 15. And again, they ſometimes call a man's wife his tent: hence that ſaying [t], "אין אהלו אלא אשתו, "*there's no tent but his wife*, as it is ſaid, *Deut.* v. "30. *go, ſay to them, get you into your tents again.*" And certain it is, that the woman is called the *weaker veſſel* in 1 *Pet.* iii. 7. between which paſſage, and this, there ſeems to be ſome agreement. The ſame metaphor of a *veſſel* is made uſe of in both; and as there, honour is to be given to the weaker veſſel, ſo here, a man's veſſel is to be poſſeſſed in honour; and as there, huſbands are to dwell with their wives according to knowledge, ſo here, knowledge is required to a man's poſſeſſing his veſſel aright. Now for a man to poſſeſs his veſſel in this ſenſe, is to enjoy his wife, and to uſe that power he has over her in a becoming manner; ſee 1 *Cor.* vii. 4. and which is here directed to *in ſanctification and honour*; that is, in a chaſte and honourable way; for marriage is honourable when the bed is kept undefiled; and which may be defiled, not only by taking another into it, and which is not poſſeſſing the wife in ſanctification and honour, it is the reverſe, for it is a breaking thro' the rules of chaſtity and honour; but it may even be defiled with a man's own wife, by uſing her in an unnatural way, or by any unlawful copulation with her; for ſo to do is to uſe her in an unholy, unchaſte, wicked, and diſhonourable manner; whereas poſſeſſing of her according to the order and courſe of nature, is by the *Jews*, in agreement with the Apoſtle, called [u], מקדש עצמו, *a man's ſanctifying himſelf*, and is chaſte, and honourable. And it may be obſerved, that the *Jews* uſe the ſame phraſe concerning conjugal embraces, as the Apoſtle does here. One of their canons runs thus [w]: "though "a man's wife is free for him at all times, it is "fit and proper for a diſciple of a wiſe man to uſe "himſelf, בקדושה, *in*, or *to ſanctification*." When theſe things are obſerved, this ſenſe of the words will not appear ſo deſpicable as it is thought by ſome. The body is indeed called a *veſſel*; ſee 2 *Cor.* iv. 7. becauſe in it the ſoul is contained, and the ſoul makes uſe of it, and its members, as inſtruments, for the performance of various actions; and, with *Jewiſh* writers, we read of, כלי גופו, *the veſſel of his body*[x]; ſo then, for a man to poſſeſs his veſſel in ſanctification and honour, is to keep under his body, and bring it into ſubjection, and preſerve it in purity and chaſtity; as the eyes from unchaſte looks, the tongue from unchaſte words, and the other members from unchaſte actions; and to uſe it in an honourable way, not in fornication, adultery, and ſodomy; for by fornication a man ſins againſt his own body; and by adultery he gets a wound, and a diſhonour, and a reproach that will not be wiped away; and by ſodomy, and ſuch like unnatural luſts, men diſhonour their own bodies between themſelves: particularly by *his veſſel*, as *Gataker* thinks, may be meant the *membrum virile*, or the genital parts, which, by an *Euphemiſm*, may be ſo called; ſee 1 *Sam.* xxi. 5.

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[p] T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol 22. 2.

[q] Juchaſin, fol. 48. 2. Shalſheleth Hakkabala, fol. 23. 1.

[r] Miſna Cetubot, c. 3. §. 4, 5.

[s] Jarchi & Bartenora in ib.

[t] T. Bab. Moed Katon, fol. 7. 2. & 15. 2.

[u] Maimon. in Miſn. Sanhedrin, c. 7. §. 4.

[w] Maimon. Hilch. Deyot, c. 5. §. 4.

Ver. 5. *Not in the luſt of concupiſcence*, &c.] Or *paſſion of luſt*; for the mere gratifying and indulging of that; for, for a man ſo to poſſeſs his veſſel, is to cheriſh the ſin of concupiſcence, the firſt motions of ſin in the heart, by which a man is drawn away, and inticed; to blow up the flame of luſt, and to make proviſion for the fleſh to fulfil the luſts thereof: *even as the Gentiles which know not God*; for tho' they knew him, or might know him with a natural knowledge, by the light and works of nature, yet they knew him not ſavingly and ſpiritually, as he is revealed in the word, of which they were deſtitute; or as the God of all grace, and the God and Father of Chriſt, or as he is in Chriſt: and tho' by the light of nature they might know there was a God, yet they knew not who that God was; nor did they act up to that light and knowledge they had; they did not glorify him as God, by aſcribing to him what was his due; nor were they thankful for the mercies they received from him; nor did they fear, love, worſhip, and ſerve him; nor did they like to retain him in their knowledge, and therefore were given up to judicial blindneſs and hardneſs, to a reprobate mind, and to vile affections, and ſo did things very inconvenient, unnatural, and diſhonourable. Wherefore, for a man to uſe either his wife or his body in any unchaſte and diſhonourable manner, for the gratifying of his luſts, is to act an heatheniſh part; a like argument, diſſuading from things unlawful, is uſed in *Matt.* vi. 32. and xx. 25, 26. *Gal.* iv. 8, 9.

Ver. 6. *That no man go beyond, and defraud his brother in* any *matter*, &c.] Or *in this matter*, as the *Syriac* verſion. This is commonly underſtood of tranſgreſſing the bounds of juſtice and equity between men and men; and of cheating and defrauding in trade and buſineſs, by increaſing or leſſening the value and prices of goods by the buyer and ſeller, by not keeping to the bargain, contract, covenant, or ſample, by falſe weights and meaſures, and by taking the advantage of the weakneſs and ignorance of men; all which is aggravated by dealing thus with a brother; ſee 1 *Cor.* vi. 8. and this hint is thought the rather neceſſary, ſince *Theſſalonica* was a place of great trade and buſineſs. But the matter, or buſineſs referr'd to, is not trade, but the ſubject of chaſtity or uncleanneſs the Apoſtle is ſpeaking of, both before and after; and the phraſes uſed either deſign the act of adultery, a coveting a brother's wife, and lying with her, and ſo a defrauding and wronging of him by defiling his bed; or rather ſodomitical practices, an unnatural luſt and deſire in men after men, and copulation with them; for υπερβαινειν, rendered, *go beyond*, anſwers to בא על, to *go upon*, or *lie with*, ſo often uſed in *Jewiſh* writings for lying with women, men, and beaſts in an unlawful way. Thus, for inſtance[y], "theſe are to be burned, הבא על אשה, *he that* "*lies with a woman*, and her daughter, *&c.*" And again[z], "theſe are to be beaten, הבא על, *he that* "*lies with* his ſiſter, or his father's ſiſter, *&c.*" And the word πλεονεκτειν, tranſlated *defraud*, ſignifies a greedy, inſatiable, and unnatural luſt and deſire after a man, a brother, or the committing of ſodomitical practices with greedineſs; ſee *Eph.* iv. 19. which abominable iniquities are diſſuaded from by the following reaſons, *becauſe that the Lord is the avenger of all ſuch*; or *with reſpect to all theſe things*, as the *Vulgate Latin* and *Syriac* verſions render it; or *for all theſe things*, as the *Arabic* and *Ethiopic* verſions; as fornication, adultery, laſciviouſneſs, and all ſorts of abominable uncleanneſs. The perſon that commits theſe things the Lord avenges, either in this life, by the hand of the civil magiſtrate, who is the miniſter of God, a revenger to execute wrath on him that does evil; or by a violent death, as in the caſe of *Zimri* and *Cozbi*, and twenty-four thouſand more at the ſame time; or by ſome awful judgment from heaven, as in the caſe of *Sodom* and *Gomorrha*; or in the world to come; for the law of God is made and lies againſt ſuch perſons; theſe living and dying in ſuch ſins God will judge, to whom vengeance belongs; theſe ſhall not inherit the kingdom of God, but have their part and portion in the lake which burns with fire and brimſtone. *As we have alſo forewarned you and teſtified*; not by a former Epiſtle, as if this was the ſecond to them, and what follows the firſt, as *Grotius* thought; but they did this when they were in perſon with them, knowing that theſe abominable vices greatly prevailed in their city; therefore they bore their teſtimony againſt them, and expoſed the evil of them, and warned them of the danger by them, ſo that they could not now plead ignorance. The *Ethiopic* verſion reads in the firſt perſon ſingular, *as I have before ſaid unto you, and teſtified to you*.

Ver. 7. *For God hath not called us*, &c.] The *Syriac* verſion reads *you*. This is another reaſon to enforce the above exhortations, and to caution them againſt the above unclean practices, taken from the end of effectual vocation by the efficacious grace of God, which is not *unto uncleanneſs* of any ſort, as before ſpecified. This they had lived in before their calling, and were now called from it into communion with Chriſt, who loves righteouſneſs, and hates iniquity; and by the Goſpel, which teaches to deny ungodlineſs, and worldly luſts, and to forſake all impurity, both of fleſh and ſpirit: *but* this call is *unto holineſs* of life and converſation in general, and to chaſtity in thought, look, word, and actions in particular; for God that calls is holy, and therefore thoſe who are called ought to be ſo; the calling with which they are called is an holy calling, principles of grace and holineſs are wrought in their ſouls, when they are called; and the end of their vocation is to live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly; and then, and then only do they walk worthy of that vocation wherewith they are called, and of God who has, by his grace, called them to his kingdom and glory.

Ver. 8. *He therefore that deſpiſeth*, &c.] The *Vulgate Latin* adds, *theſe things*; theſe exhortations now delivered, the commandments given by the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and the will of God above de-

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[x] Caphtor, fol. 57. 2.

[y] Miſna Sanhedrin, c. 9. § 1.

[z] Miſna Maccot, c. 3. § 1.

clared: he that rejects theſe things with contempt, takes no notice of them, and acts not according to them, *deſpiſeth not man*; not men only, the Apoſtles of Chriſt, and miniſters of the Goſpel; for by deſpiſing theſe exhortations, they themſelves were deſpiſed, tho' not alone: *but God*; Father, Son, and Spirit; God the Father, whoſe will was their ſanctification, even to abſtain from fornication, and every act of uncleanneſs, which, if not attended to, was a deſpiſing of him; and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, by whom, and for whoſe ſake they were intreated and exhorted, and in whoſe name, and by whoſe authority the Apoſtle gave them theſe commandments; wherefore to ſlight them, was to ſlight Jeſus Chriſt himſelf; and, by the way, this is a proof of the true and proper deity of Chriſt. Moreover, ſuch deſpiſers alſo, in ſome ſenſe, do deſpight unto the Spirit of grace, by whom the Apoſtles ſpake, or who ſpoke in them theſe things, as follows, *who hath alſo given unto us his holy Spirit*; as he did to the prophets of the Old Teſtament, and therefore what they ſaid was equally by divine inſpiration of God; and hence deſpiſing them, was deſpiſing the Spirit of God that ſpake by them. The *Syriac* and *Arabic* verſions read, *who hath given unto you his holy Spirit*; and ſo all *Stephens*'s copies; which furniſhes out a freſh reaſon or argument, diſſuading from uncleanneſs, ſince God had given them his *Spirit* to convince them of ſin, of righteouſneſs, and of judgment, ſo that they were not ignorant of the things warned againſt; and he had given them his Spirit as an *holy* Spirit, as a Spirit of ſanctification, to begin and carry on that work in them, to which uncleanneſs was very oppoſite; and he had given his Spirit unto, or *into* them, to dwell in them, as in his temple, and therefore ſhould be careful not to defile it; and to cauſe them to walk in his ſtatutes, and to aſſiſt them to keep his judgments, and do them, and as an earneſt of their inheritance, and a ſealer of them up unto the day of redemption; wherefore it became them not to grieve him by an impure life; and they were laid under obligations to live in the Spirit, and to walk after him, and not after the fleſh.

Ver. 9. *But as touching brotherly love*, &c.] Another branch of ſanctification; which is diſtinct from love to God and Chriſt, tho' it always accompanies it, and from love to all mankind; and is what is peculiar to brethren in a ſpiritual relation, and ought to be univerſal, fervent, and ſincere, and as Chriſt has loved them: concerning which the following things are ſaid, *ye need not that I write unto you*. The *Vulgate Latin* verſion reads, *we have no need to write unto you*; and ſo ſome copies. It ſeems that it was needful to write unto them about other things, as to refreſh their memories with the inſtructions they had given them, when with them, how they ſhould walk and pleaſe God; and to put them in mind of the commandments given them by Chriſt, and that their ſanctification was the will of God; and particularly it was neceſſary to write unto them about chaſtity, and purity of life, whether in or out of the conjugal ſtate; but as for brotherly love, there was no immediate, abſolute neceſſity to write about that, either about the nature of it, or to deſcribe the objects of it, or point out inſtances of it, or to exhort to it in a preſſing manner: the reaſon is, *for ye yourſelves are taught of God to love one another*; not merely by the light of nature, which teaches men to be kind, courteous, affable, and beneficent; nor by the law of *Moſes*, which obliges men to love their neighbours as themſelves; nor only doctrinally by the miniſtry of the Goſpel, which frequently inculcates the exerciſe of this grace as a matter of great importance and conſequence; nor only by the new commandment, and example of Chriſt; but by the Spirit of God internally in regeneration, who, according to the tenour of the new covenant, writes this law of love, and of Chriſt, upon the heart; and this being written upon the hearts of the *Theſſalonians*, by the finger of the Spirit of God, whereby they were clearly directed, and powerfully taught to exerciſe this grace, and diſcharge this duty, and under the influence of the ſame Spirit did exerciſe it; it was unneceſſary for the Apoſtle to write about it, and preſs them to it.

Ver. 10. *And indeed ye do it towards all the brethren*, &c.] Whether high or low, rich or poor, bond or free, greater or leſſer believers, and whether related in the bonds of nature or not; they exerciſed this grace of love without reſpect of perſons to all, and not only to all the brethren in the particular community at *Theſſalonica*, but *which are in all Macedonia*; throughout the whole country, particularly at *Philippi* and *Berea*, and other places: *but we beſeech you brethren*. The *Alexandrian* copy reads, *beloved brethren*; and the *Syriac* verſion, *I beſeech you my brethren*: *that ye increaſe more and more*; in ſhewing love to the brethren; which may be done both by adminiſtring to them in things temporal, by aſſiſting them in diſtreſs, by ſympathizing with them, and by giving them counſel and advice; and in things ſpiritual, by bearing their burdens, forbearing with them, and forgiving them; by admoniſhing them in love, by ſtirring them up to love and good works, by praying with them and for them, and by inſtructing and building them up in their moſt holy faith: and this increaſe, and abounding in the exerciſe of this grace, may reſpect not only the more frequent and fervent uſe of it, but alſo the larger extent of it to other objects; as not only to all the brethren in their own church, and to all that were in *Macedonia*, to which it did extend, but likewiſe to all the brethren in other parts of the world, and which are more diſtant and remote; and even to the poor ſaints at *Jeruſalem* in particular; and accordingly we find that their love did abound unto them; ſee *Rom.* xv. 25, 26, 27. 2 *Cor.* viii. 1, 2. this ſhows, that though brotherly love was much practiſed by theſe ſaints, yet it was not perfect; nor is any grace perfect as to degrees; nor is any ſaint perfect in the diſcharge of duty in this life.

Ver. 11. *And that ye ſtudy to be quiet*, &c.] To live peaceably in their own families, and to give no diſturbance to other families, by tale-bearing, whiſpering, and backbiting; to behave with quietneſs in the neighbourhood, town, or city, they dwell in, and to ſeek the peace thereof; and to lead a quiet and peaceable life, in all godlineſs and honeſty, in the commonwealth, and under the government to which they belong; and not to create and incourage factions, diviſions, animoſities, and contentions, in their own church, or in any of the churches of Chriſt; and it becomes ſaints to make this their ſtudy, to be very ſolicitous for it, to ſtrive for it, and purſue after it: the word uſed, ſignifies to be ambitious of it, as what is a man's glory and honour, to emulate and ſtrive to outdo each other, as who ſhall have the honour of being the quieteſt perſon, and the moſt peaceable member in the community: *and to do your own buſineſs*; or private buſineſs, or what is proper and peculiar to a man's ſelf; to abide every man in his own calling wherein he is called, and attend the buſineſs of it, and not thruſt himſelf into other families, and officiouſly take upon him, under a pretence of zeal, affection, and friendſhip, to inſpect, direct, or manage the buſineſs of others: in ſhort, he ſhould not meddle with other people's buſineſs, but mind his own: and this is what the *Jews* call, דרך ארץ, *the way of the earth*, or the buſineſs of life: "there are four things, they ſay[*], in which a man ſhould employ himſelf continually, with all his might, and theſe are they, the law and good works, and prayer, and the buſineſs of life;" upon which the *Gloſs* has this note by way of explanation, "if a man is an artificer (let him attend) to his art; if a merchant to his merchandize, and if he is a ſoldier to war;" and which may ſerve to illuſtrate the Apoſtle's ſenſe: *and to work with your own hands*; the reaſon of this is, becauſe there were ſome among them, who would not work at all; ſee 2 *Theſſ*. iii. 11. and by this inſtruction it appears, that the members of this church in common, were ſuch as were brought up to handicraft trades and buſineſſes, and were poor and mean; and this was the general caſe of the primitive churches: it pleaſed God to chuſe and call the poor of this world, to whom the Goſpel was preached, and they received it; few of the rulers among the *Jews* believed in Chriſt, and not many mighty, rich, or noble among the *Gentiles* were called; ſome there were, and in this church there were ſome of the chief women of the city, *Acts* xvii. 4. and though theſe and others of the better ſort, as well as miniſters of the Goſpel among them, who laboured in the word and doctrine, were not obliged by this to perform manual work and labour, yet were not exempted from all concern in the exhortation; it being proper and neceſſary, that all ſorts of perſons be employed in one ſort of buſineſs or another, and to uſe diligence and application in it; the Apoſtle's view being chiefly to inveigh againſt ſloth and idleneſs, and to exhort to labour and induſtry, as the moſt effectual method to preſerve peace and quietneſs, and to keep perſons from being troubleſome and hurtful, in families, churches, and commonwealths: the reaſons enforcing this follow in this and the next verſe, *as we commanded you*; and the command of an Apoſtle carries weight and authority with it, and ought to be obeyed; yea, they not only ſtrictly enjoined a diligent application to buſineſs, but ſet them an example themſelves; ſee 1 *Theſſ*. ii. 9. 2 *Theſſ*. iii. 7, 8.

Ver. 12. *That ye may walk honeſtly*, &c.] Decently, in good credit and reputation, providing things honeſt in the ſight of all men, for themſelves and families, and honeſtly paying every man his own; on which account it became them to mind their own buſineſs, and work at their trades; otherwiſe their walk and converſation would be ſcandalous, and not honeſt and honourable: *toward them that are without*; the men of the world, who were without the church; ſee 1 *Cor*. v. 12. profane ſinners, unconverted *Gentiles*, that were without Chriſt and hope, and God in the world, and were aliens and ſtrangers; and yet care ſhould be taken that no occaſion be given to ſuch, to reproach the name of God, the ways of Chriſt, and the doctrines of the Goſpel: *and that ye may have lack of nothing*; but have wherewith to ſupply the neceſſaries of life, and give to them alſo that ſtand in need, which is more bleſſed and honourable than to receive; or might not need any ſuch inſtruction and exhortation, or any reproof for ſloth and idleneſs; or not ſtand in need of *any man*, as the *Syriac* verſion renders it; of the help and aſſiſtance of any, of any of thoſe that are without, which would be diſhonourable; or of them that are within, of the church, which might be burdenſome. The *Vulgate Latin* verſion renders it, *that ye may not deſire any thing of any one*; as the ſlothful man covets greedily all the day long what is another's, and this deſire kills him, *Prov*. xxi. 25, 26. he covets an evil covetouſneſs, and craves in a ſcandalous way the bread of others; when it would be more honourable for him to work with quietneſs, and eat his own bread got by honeſt labour, and not be beholden to another.

Ver. 13. *But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren*, &c.] As they ſeem to have been, about the ſtate of the pious dead, the rule and meaſure of mourning for them, the doctrine of the reſurrection of the dead, the ſecond coming of Chriſt, and the future happineſs of the ſaints; wherefore the Apoſtle judged it neceſſary, to write to them upon theſe ſubjects: the *Alexandrian* copy and others, the *Complutenſian* edition, the *Vulgate Latin*, *Arabic*, and *Ethiopic* verſions read, *we would not have you to be ignorant*, &c. *concerning them which are aſleep*; that is, dead: it was in common uſe among the *Eaſtern* nations, when they ſpoke of their dead, to ſay they were aſleep. This way of ſpeaking is uſed frequently, both in the Old and the New Teſtament; ſee 1 *Kings* ii. 10. and xi. 43. *Dan*. xii. 2. *John* xi. 11. 1 *Cor*. xv. 20. and very often with the *Targumiſts*; ſo the *Targum* on *Eccl*. iii. 4. *a time to weep*, paraphraſes it, "a time to weep, על שכיבא, *over them that are aſleep*:" and in ch. iv. 2. "I praiſed, ית שכיבא, *thoſe that are aſleep*," the dead: the reaſon of this way of ſpeaking was, becauſe there is a likeneſs between ſleep and death; in both there's no exerciſe of the ſenſes, and perſons are at reſt, and both riſe again; and they are common to all men, and proper and peculiar to the body only. The Apoſtle deſigns ſuch perſons among the *Theſſalonians*, who either died a natural death, or were removed by violence, through the rage and fury of their perſecutors, for whom their ſurviving friends were preſſed with over-much ſorrow, which is here cautioned againſt: *that ye ſorrow not, even as others that have no hope*; the Apoſtle's view is not to encourage and eſtabliſh a ſtoical apathy, a ſtupid indolence, and a brutal inſenſibility, which are contrary to the make of human nature, to the practice of the ſaints, and even of Chriſt and his Apoſtles, and our Apoſtle himſelf; but to forbid exceſſive and immoderate ſorrow, and all the extravagant forms of it the *Gentiles* ran into; who having no notion of the doctrine of the reſurrection of the dead, had no hope of ever ſeeing their friends more, but looked upon them as entirely loſt, as no longer in being, and never more to be met with, ſeen, and enjoyed; this drove them to extravagant actions, furious tranſports, and downright madneſs; as to throw off their cloaths, pluck off their hair, tear their fleſh, cut themſelves, and make baldneſs between their eyes for the dead; ſee *Deut*. xiv. 1. practices forbidden the *Jews*, and which very ill become chriſtians, that believe the doctrine of the reſurrection of the dead: the words are to be underſtood not of other chriſtians, who have no hope of the eternal welfare of their deceaſed friends; not but that the ſorrow of thoſe who have a good hope of the future well being of their dear relatives, muſt and ought to be greatly different from that of others, who have no hope at all: it is obſerved by the *Jews* [b] on thoſe words in *Gen.* xxiii. 2. and *Abraham came to mourn for Sarah,* &c. that "it is not ſaid to weep for *Sarah*, but to mourn for her; for *for ſuch a woman as this, it is not fit to weep,* after her ſoul is joined in the bundle of life, but to mourn for her, and do her great honour at her funeral; tho' becauſe it is not poſſible that a man ſhould not weep for his dead, it is ſaid at the end, *and to weep for her:*" but here the words are to be underſtood of the other *Gentiles* that were in a ſtate of nature and unregeneracy, who had no knowledge of the reſurrection of the dead, or any hope of a future ſtate, and of enjoying their friends again in it: they are called οι λοιποι, *the reſt*; and the *Syriac* verſion renders it, *other men.*

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[*] T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 32. 2.

Ver. 14. *For if we believe that Jeſus died, and roſe again,* &c.] As every chriſtian does, for both the death and reſurrection of Chriſt, are fundamental articles of faith; nothing is more certain or more comfortable, and more firmly to be believed, than that Chriſt died for the ſins of his people, and roſe again for their juſtification; on theſe depend the preſent peace, joy, and comfort of the ſaints, and their everlaſting ſalvation and happineſs: and no leſs certain and comfortable, and as ſurely to be believed, is what follows, *even ſo them alſo which ſleep in Jeſus will God bring with him.* The ſaints that are dead, are not only repreſented as aſleep, as before, but as *aſleep in Jeſus*; to diſtinguiſh them from the other dead, the wicked; for the phraſe of ſleeping in death, is promiſcuouſly uſed of good and bad, though moſt commonly applied to good men: and ſo ſay the *Jews* [c], "we uſe to ſpeak of juſt men, not as dead, but as ſleeping; ſaying, afterwards ſuch an one fell aſleep, ſignifying that the death of the righteous, is nothing elſe than a ſleep. To repreſent death as a ſleep, makes it very eaſy and familiar; but it is more ſo, when it is conſidered as ſleeping in Jeſus, in the arms of Jeſus; and ſuch as are aſleep in him muſt needs be at reſt, and in ſafety: ſome join the phraſe *in,* or *by Jeſus,* with the word *bring,* and read the paſſage thus, *them that are aſleep, by Jeſus will God bring with him*; intimating, that God will raiſe up the dead bodies of the ſaints by Chriſt, as God-man and mediator; and through him will bring them to eternal glory, and ſave them by him, as he has determined; others render the words, *them which ſleep through,* or *by Jeſus*, or die for his ſake, and ſo reſtrain them to the martyrs; who they ſuppoſe only will have part in the firſt reſurrection, and whom God will bring with Jeſus at his ſecond coming; but the coming of Chriſt will be *with all his ſaints*; ſee ch. iii. 13. wherefore they are beſt rendered, *them that ſleep in Jeſus*; that is, *in the faith of Jeſus,* as the *Arabic* verſion renders it: not in the lively exerciſe of faith on Chriſt, for this is not the caſe of all the ſaints at death; ſome of them are in the dark, and go from hence under a cloud, and yet go ſafe, and may be ſaid to die, or ſleep in Jeſus, and will be brought with him; but who have the principle, and hold the doctrine of faith, are, and live and die true believers; who die intereſted in Chriſt, in union with him, being choſen and bleſſed, and preſerved in him from everlaſting, and effectually called by his grace in time, and brought to believe in him; theſe both their ſouls and bodies, are united to Chriſt, and are his care and charge; and which union remains in death, and by virtue of it the bodies of the ſaints will be raiſed at the laſt day: ſo that there may be the ſtrongeſt aſſurance, that ſuch will God bring with him; either God the Father will bring them with his Son, or Jehovah the Son will bring them with himſelf; he'll raiſe them from the dead, and unite them to their ſouls, or ſpirits, he will bring with him; the conſideration of which, may ſerve greatly to mitigate and abate ſorrow for deceaſed friends.

Ver. 15. *For this we ſay unto you by the word of the Lord,* &c.] The Apoſtle having ſomething new and extraordinary to deliver, concerning the coming of Chriſt, the firſt reſurrection, or the reſurrection of the ſaints, the change of the living ſaints, and the rapture both of the raiſed and living in the clouds to meet Chriſt in the air, expreſſes himſelf in this manner; either in alluſion to the prophets of old, to whom the word of the Lord is ſaid to come, and who uſually introduced their prophecies with a thus ſaith the Lord; or in diſtinction from his own private ſenſe, ſentiment, and opinion of things; ſignifying, that what he was about to ſay, was not a fancy and conjecture of his own, the fruit and produce of his own brain, but what he could aſſert upon a ſure foundation, upon the beſt and greateſt authority, even the word of the Lord; and has reſpect either to ſome particular word of Chriſt, as ſome think, ſuch as *Matt.* xxiv. 30, 31. *John* v. 28, 29. or rather to a particular and peculiar revelation, and ſpecial inſtruction in theſe things, he had immediately from Chriſt; and it may be when he was caught up into the third heaven himſelf, and had an experience in himſelf of ſomewhat of that which both the living and raiſed ſaints ſhall feel, when they are caught up together in the clouds; ſince the change of the living ſaints at the time of the reſurrection of the dead, is a myſtery which ſeems to have been firſt made known unto, and diſcovered by the Apoſtle *Paul*; ſee 1 *Cor.* xv. 51, 52. *That we which are alive, and remain unto the coming of the Lord*; not that the Apoſtle thought that he and the ſaints then in the fleſh, ſhould live and continue till the ſecond coming of Chriſt; for he did not imagine that the coming of Chriſt was ſo near, as is manifeſt from 2 *Theſſ.* ii. 1, 2, 3. though the *Theſſalonians* might take him in this ſenſe, which he there corrects; but he ſpeaks of himſelf and others in the firſt perſon plural, by way of inſtance and example, for illuſtration ſake; that ſuppoſing he and others ſhould be then in being, the following would be the caſe: and moreover, he might uſe ſuch a way of ſpeaking with great propriety of other ſaints, and even of thoſe unborn, and that will be on the ſpot when Chriſt ſhall come a ſecond time; ſince all the ſaints make up one body, one family, one church and general aſſembly; ſo that the Apoſtle might truly and juſtly ſay, *we which are alive*; that is, as many of our body, of our family, of our church or ſociety, that ſhall be living at the coming of Chriſt; and he might chuſe the rather to ſpeak in this form, perſon, and tenſe, to awaken the care, circumſpection, diligence, and watchfulneſs of the ſaints, ſince it could not be known how ſoon the Lord would come: however, from hence it appears, that there will be ſaints alive at Chriſt's ſecond coming; he'll have a ſeed to ſerve him till he comes again; he always had in the worſt of times, and will have, and that even in the laſt days, in the days of the Son of man, which are ſaid to be like thoſe of *Noah* and of *Lot*; and theſe

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[b] Tzeror Hammor, fol. 23. 4.

[c] Shebet Juda, p. 294. Ed. Gent.

are ſaid to *remain*, or to be *left*; theſe will be a remnant, the reſidue and remainder of the election of grace, and will be ſuch as have eſcaped the fury of antichriſt and his followers, or of the perſecutors of the ſaints: now theſe *ſhall not prevent them that are aſleep*; that is, that are dead, ſo the *Ethiopic* verſion; the reaſon why the dead are ſo called, ſee in the note on the preceding verſes: the ſenſe is, either they *ſhall not come up to them that are aſleep*, or *dead*, as the *Syriac*, *Arabic*, and *Ethiopic* verſions render the words; they ſhall not come into the ſtate of the dead, they ſhall undergo a change equivalent to death, but not death itſelf; ſee 1 *Cor.* xv. 51, 52. or rather they *ſhall not go before* them; they ſhall not get the ſtart of them, and be in the arms of Jeſus, and enjoy his preſence when he comes, before the dead in Chriſt, which might be thought, but this will not be the caſe; for the dead ſaints will riſe before the living ones are changed, and both will be caught up together to meet the Lord, as is ſaid in the following verſes; ſo that the one ſhall not prevent or go before the other, or come at, or into the enjoyment of Chriſt firſt, but both together.

Ver. 16. *For the Lord himſelf ſhall deſcend from heaven*, &c.] Not by proxy, or by repreſentatives; not by the miniſtry of angels, as on mount *Sinai*; nor by the miniſters of the word, as under the Goſpel diſpenſation; nor by his Spirit, and the diſcovery of his love and grace, in which ſenſe he deſcends in a ſpiritual manner, and viſits his people; but in perſon, in his human nature, in ſoul and body; in like manner as he went up to heaven, will he deſcend from thence, ſo as to be viſible, to be ſeen and heard of all: he'll come down from the third heaven, whither he was carried up, into which he was received, and where he is retained until the time of the reſtitution of all things, and from whence the ſaints expect him: and this deſcent will be *with a ſhout*; the word here uſed is obſerved by many, to ſignify ſuch a noiſe or ſhout, as is made either by mariners, when they pull and row together, and ſhout to direct and encourage one another; or to an army with the general at the head of it, when about to undertake ſome conſiderable action, to enter on a battle, and make the onſet; Chriſt will now appear as the king of kings, and Lord of Lords, as the judge of the whole earth, attended with the hoſt, or armies of heaven, and the ſhout of a king will be among them: perhaps the ſame is intended, as by the voice of a great multitude, as the voice of many waters, and of mighty thundrings upon the coming of Chriſt, the deſtruction of antichriſt, and the marriage of the Lamb, in *Rev.* xix. 1, 6, 7, 14, 15. The *Vulgate Latin*, *Syriac*, and *Ethiopic* verſions render it, *in*, or *with command*; and the *Arabic* verſion, *with his own government*, or *authority*; that is, he ſhall deſcend, either by the command of his Father, as man and mediator, having authority from him as the Son of man, to execute judgment; or with his commanding power and authority over the mighty angels, that ſhall deſcend with him: it follows, *with the voice of the archangel*; ſo *Michael* is called, in *Jude*, ver. 9. with which compare *Rev.* xii. 7. and who perhaps is no other than Chriſt himſelf, who is the head of all principality and power; and the ſenſe be, that Chriſt ſhall deſcend from heaven with a voice, or ſhall then utter ſuch a voice, as will ſhew him to be the archangel; or as the *Syriac* verſion renders it, *the head*, or *prince of angels*; and which whether it will be an articulate voice, ſuch as was expreſſed at the grave of *Lazarus*; or a violent clap of thunder; which is the voice of God; or the exertion of the power of Chriſt, is not certain: 'tis added, *and with the trump of God*; call'd *the laſt trump*, 1 *Cor.* xv. 52. becauſe none will be blown after it, and may be the ſame with the ſeventh trumpet, *Rev.* xi. 15. and here the trump of God, becauſe blown by his order; or by Chriſt himſelf, who is God, and ſo be the ſame with the voice of the archangel; and theſe figurative expreſſions are uſed, to ſet forth the grandeur and magnificence in which Chriſt will come; not in that low, mean, and humble form in which he firſt came, but with great glory, and marks of honour and reſpect; with angels ſhouting, trumpets blowing, and ſaints rejoicing. This is ſaid in alluſion to the trumpet, which was heard on mount *Sinai* at the giving of the law, and of which the *Jews* ſay [d], that it, מאחא מיתיא, *quickned the dead*; for they have a notion, that when the *Iſraelites* firſt heard the voice of the Lord, they died; but upon hearing it the ſecond time, they returned to life [e]; and they ſuppoſe alſo in the time to come, at the reſurrection of the dead, a trumpet will be blown, which will quicken the dead [f], and at the day of judgment [g]; and this is reckoned by them, as one of the ſigns of the Meſſiah's coming [h]; “ *Michael* ſhall ſhout with a great ſhout, and the “ graves of the dead ſhall be opened at *Jeruſalem*, “ and the holy bleſſed God will reſtore the dead to “ life, and *Meſſiah* the Son of *David* ſhall come, “ *&c.*” And the dead in *Chriſt ſhall riſe firſt*; the ſame with thoſe that are *aſleep in Jeſus*, ver. 14. not only the martyrs that died for the ſake of Chriſt, and his Goſpel; nor merely thoſe who die in the lively exerciſe of faith in Chriſt; but all that die intereſted in him, and in union with him: and theſe ſhall *riſe*, in conſequence of their being his; being given to him, made his care and charge, and engaged for by him, and in virtue of their union to him; and ſhall riſe to an entire conformity to his glorious body, and in order to enjoy eternal life and glory with him: and theſe will riſe *firſt*, before the wicked, which is the firſt reſurrection, *Rev.* xx. 5, 6. even a thouſand years before them; the righteous will riſe in the morning of the reſurrection, and ſo will have the dominion in the morning, *Pſ.* xlix. 14. even at the beginning of the thouſand years, as ſoon as Chriſt will come; but the wicked will not riſe till the evening of that day, or till the cloſe of the thouſand years: and this agrees with the notions of the *Jews*, who thought that ſome will riſe before others; ſee 2 *Eſdras* ii. 23. Having mentioned thoſe words in *Pſal.* cxvi. 9. *I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living*, 'tis aſked [i], “ is there no land of the living but *Tyre* and its “ neighbours, and *Ceſarea* and its neighbours, “ where is cheapneſs and fulneſs? ſays *R. Simeon* “ *ben Lekiſh*, in the name of *Bar Kaphra*, the land “ in which the dead live, תחילה, *firſt*, in the days “ of the *Meſſiah*:” and on the ſame place elſewhere [k] they obſerve, that “ our *Rabbins* ſay two “ things, or give two reaſons, why the fathers “ loved to be buried in the land of *Iſrael*, becauſe “ the dead in the land of *Iſrael*, חיים תחילה, *live*, “ or *riſe firſt*, in the days of the Meſſiah, and “ ſhall enjoy the years of the Meſſiah:” and in another place [l] they take notice of what is written in *Iſa.* xxvi. 19. *and the earth ſhall caſt out the dead*; ſays *R. Jochanan*, "the dead which are in the "land (*i. e.* of *Iſrael*) they ſhall *live firſt*; as it is "ſaid, *thy dead men ſhall live, together with my* "*dead body ſhall they ariſe*; theſe are they that are "without the land; *awake and ſing ye that* "*dwell in the duſt*, theſe are they that die in the "wilderneſs:" and again [m], "as it is ſaid, *Iſa.* "xl. 26. *that bringeth out their hoſt by numbers*, "come ſee, it is ſaid, all that die in the land of "*Iſrael*, יקומין בקדמיתא, *ſhall riſe firſt*, becauſe "the holy bleſſed God ſhall awake them, and "raiſe them, according to *Iſa.* xxvi. 19." Once more they ſay [n], "they that ſtudy in the law as "they ought, theſe are they that ſhall *riſe firſt* "to everlaſting life, as it is ſaid *Dan.* xii. 2. *and* "*many of them that ſleep in the duſt of the earth* "*ſhall awake, ſome to everlaſting life*, &c. and theſe "are for everlaſting life, becauſe they ſtudy in "everlaſting life, which is the law:" to which may be added the following paſſage [o], "they that "are worthy to be buried in the land of *Iſrael*, "ſhall be *raiſed firſt*——and they ſhall be raiſed "and quickned before the reſt of the children of "the world, who draw the waters of the law; and "they draw, becauſe they ſtudy to draw out of "the waters of the law; and they are ſtrengthned "by the tree of life, and they ſhall go out *firſt*, "becauſe the tree of life is the cauſe why they "ſhall *riſe firſt*:" they ſometimes endeavour to fix the time, how long they will riſe before the reſt [p]; "*many of thoſe that ſleep*, &c. theſe are "the righteous that ſhall *go before* others in life, "and how many years ſhall they go before them? "*R. Judah* ſays, two hundred and ten years; *R.* "*Iſaac* ſays, two hundred and fourteen; according "to others, the righteous ſhall go (or be raiſed) a "year before the reſt of men; ſays *R. Nachman*, it "will be according to the computation (of time) that "the carkaſs has been in the duſt; *R. Joſe* replies, if "ſo, there will be many reſurrections." Theſe inſtances may ſuffice to ſhow, that the *Jews* had a notion of ſome perſons riſing before others, to which the Apoſtle may have ſome reference; though his ſenſe is not only this, but alſo that the dead in Chriſt, ſhall riſe before the living ſaints are changed, and taken up to be with Chriſt, and ſo ſhall not go before to him; which illuſtrates and proves what he had before aſſerted.

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[d] Targum Jon. in Exod. xx. 18.

[e] Kettoreth Haſſammim in ib.

[f] Mechilta in ib. & Abarbinel, Maſhmia Jeſhua, fol. 11. 4.

[g] Zohar in Lev. fol. 42. 2. 4

[h] Abkath Rocel, p. 138. Ed. Hulſ.

[i] T. Hieroſ. Kilaim, fol 32. 3. & Cetubot, fol. 35. 2. Bereſhit Rabba, §. 74. fol. 65. 1.

[k] Bereſhit Rabba, §. 96. fol. 83. 4. & 84. 1. & Shemot Rabba, §. 32. fol. 135. 2.

[l] Zohar in Gen. fol. 68. 4.

Ver. 17. *Then we which are alive and remain*, &c.] See the note on ver. 15. *ſhall be caught up*; ſuddenly, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, and with force and power; by the power of Chriſt, and by the miniſtry and means of the holy angels; and to which rapture will contribute, the agility which the bodies both of the raiſed and changed ſaints will have: and this rapture of the living ſaints, will be *together with them*; with the dead in Chriſt, that will then be raiſed; ſo that the one will not prevent the other, or the one be ſooner with Chriſt than the other; but the one being raiſed and the other changed, they'll be joined in one company and general aſſembly, and be rapt up together: *in the clouds*; the ſame clouds perhaps in which Chriſt will come, will be let down to take them up; theſe will be the chariots, in which they'll be carried up to him; and thus, as at our Lord's aſcenſion a cloud received him, and in it he was carried up out of the ſight of men, ſo at this time will all the ſaints ride up in the clouds of heaven: *to meet the Lord in the air*; whither he'll deſcend, and will then clear the regions of the air, of ſatan, and his poſſe of devils, which now rove about there, watching all opportunities, and taking all advantages to do miſchief on earth; theſe ſhall then fall like lightening from heaven, and be bound and ſhut up in the bottomleſs pit, till the thouſand years are ended: here Chriſt will ſtop, and will be viſible to all, and as eaſily diſcerned by all, good and bad, as the body of the ſun at noon-day: as yet he will not deſcend on earth, becauſe not fit to receive him; but when that and its works are burnt up, and it is purged and purified by fire, and become a new earth, he'll deſcend upon it, and dwell with his ſaints in it: and this ſuggeſts another reaſon why he'll ſtay in the air, and his ſaints ſhall meet him there, and whom he'll take up with him into the third heaven, till the general conflagration and burning of the world is over, and to preſerve them from it; and then ſhall all the elect of God deſcend from heaven as a bride adorned for her huſband, and he with them, and the tabernacle of God ſhall be with men; ſee *Rev.* xxi. 1, 2, 3. The reſurrection by the *Mahometans* is called, לקא אללה [q], *a meeting of God*, or a going to meet God: *and ſo ſhall we ever be with the Lord*; now the ſaints are with him at times, and have communion with him, but not always; but then they ſhall be ever with him, wherever he is; firſt in the air, where they ſhall meet him; then in the third heaven, where they ſhall go up with him; then on earth, where they ſhall deſcend and reign with him a thouſand years; and then in the ultimate glory to all eternity: and this will be the iſſue and accompliſhment of the counſel and covenant of grace, of the ſufferings and death of Chriſt, and of his preparations and prayers.

Ver. 18. *Wherefore comfort one another with theſe words.*] Or doctrines; as that the ſaints when they die, don't ceaſe to be, but are aſleep, and aſleep in Jeſus; that their ſouls are with him, and their bodies ſleep in his arms, and are his care; that theſe will be as ſoon with Chriſt, as the ſaints that will be alive when he comes; that the coming of Chriſt will be with great power and glory; that the righteous will riſe firſt in the morning of the reſurrection, and before the living ſaints are changed, and are with Chriſt; that they will both be taken up together to meet him; and that they ſhall all be with him, and that for ever, and never part more; than which, nothing can yield more true and ſolid comfort, under all the trials and troubles of this life, under all diſeaſes and diſtempers of body, under all afflictions and perſecutions for Chriſt's ſake, under the loſs of near and dear relations, and in a view of death and eternity: ſome copies read, *with theſe words of the Spirit*; and ſo the *Arabic* verſion, *with theſe ſpiritual words*; for ſuch they are, being the word of God, as in ver. 15.

CHAP.

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[m] Zohar in Gen. fol. 79. 3.

[n] Ib. fol. 100. 5.

[o] Ib. fol. 103. 1.

[p] Ib. fol. 83. 1.

[q] Alkoran, Surat. 6. v. 31. p. 113. Ed. Hinckelman.

CHAP. V.

IN this chapter the Apoſtle diſcourſes concerning the ſuddenneſs of Chriſt's coming, and the neceſſity of ſobriety and watchfulneſs, and being on our guard with reſpect unto it, and then proceeds to exhort to ſeveral duties of religion, and cloſes the Epiſtle with prayers for the ſaints, ſalutations of them, advice unto them, and with his uſual benediction. Having ſpoken of the coming of Chriſt in the preceding chapter, the Apoſtle ſignifies he had no need to write of the time and ſeaſon of it; ſince it was a well known thing that it would be ſudden, and at an unawares, like the coming of a thief in the night, and the travail of a woman with child, though certain and inevitable; and would bring ſure deſtruction on wicked men, unthought of by them, ver. 1, 2, 3. but ſuch was the ſtate and condition of the ſaints, being not in the night of nature's darkneſs and unregeneracy, but enlightened by the Spirit of God, that they were not ignorant of theſe things, nor liable to be ſurprized unawares hereby, ver. 4, 5. however, in conſideration of their being in the light, and not in darkneſs, it became them to behave accordingly, and not indulge themſelves in ſleep and ſloth, but be watchful and ſober, and on their guard, having on their ſpiritual armour, ver. 6, 7, 8. and the rather, ſince they were not appointed to wrath they deſerved, but to ſalvation by Chriſt; whoſe end in dying for them was, that they might live together with him, and therefore ſhould exhort and comfort, and edify one another, ver. 9, 10, 11. and then follow various exhortations, ſome, which reſpect their miniſters, their knowledge of them, love to them, and eſteem for them, on account of their dignity, office, work, and uſefulneſs, ver. 12, 13. others, which concern themſelves and one another, as church members, ver. 13, 14. others, which regard alſo them that are without, ver. 14, 15. and others which relate to joy and thankſgiving, to prayer and praiſe; to the gifts of the Spirit, and the miniſtry of the word; and to a trial and examination of what is good, and an abiding by it, and an abſtinence from all evil, and every appearance of it, ver. 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22. and the whole is concluded with prayers for them, for their perfect ſanctification, and entire preſervation to the coming of Chriſt; which were put up in faith, grounded upon the faithfulneſs of God who had called them to grace and glory, ver. 23, 24. and with a requeſt to them to pray for him, and other miniſters of the Goſpel, and to ſalute all the brethren, ver. 25, 26. and with a charge to read this letter to them all, ver. 27. and with his uſual benediction, ver. 28.

Ver. 1. *But of the times and the ſeaſons, brethren,* &c.] Of the coming of Chriſt, his *appointed time* and *his day*, as the *Ethiopic* verſion renders it; of the reſurrection of the dead in Chriſt firſt, and of the rapture of all the ſaints in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, things treated of in the preceding chapter: and which might excite a curioſity to know the times and ſeaſons of them; as in what year they would come to paſs; in what ſeaſon of the year, whether winter or ſummer; in what month, and on what day of the month; and whether in the night ſeaſon, or in the day-time; and in what hour, whether at midnight, cock-crowing, morning, or noon-day: to repreſs which the Apoſtle obſerves, *ye have no need that I write unto you*; to write to them concerning the things themſelves, was neceſſary and uſeful, to ſtir up and encourage their faith, hope, and expectation of them; to allay their grief for departed friends, and to comfort one another under the various trials and exerciſes of life; but to write to them about the time of theſe things, would be trifling and unneceſſary, would be an idle ſpeculation, and an indulging a vain curioſity; and beſides, was impracticable: for of that day and hour knows no man; the times and ſeaſons the Father hath put in his own power; for theſe things are equally true of Chriſt's ſecond coming, as of the kingdom of Chriſt coming with power and glory, and of the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, *Matt.* xxiv. 36. *Acts* i. 6, 7. The *Vulgate Latin* and *Arabic* verſions read, *ye have no need that we write unto you*; the reaſon follows;

Ver. 2. *For yourſelves know perfectly*, &c.] With great exactneſs and accuracy, with great clearneſs and perſpicuity, as a certain truth, which was made plain and evident to them, and about which there could be no queſtion; and which perfect knowledge they had, either from the words of Chriſt, *Matt.* xxiv. 42, 43, 44. or from the miniſtration of the Apoſtle and his fellow-labourers, when among them: *that the day of the Lord*; of the Lord Jeſus, when he will ſhew himſelf to be king of kings, and Lord of Lords, and the judge of the whole earth; and which is ſometimes ſtiled the day of the Son of man, and the day of God, for Chriſt will appear then moſt glorioully, both in his divine and human nature; the day of redemption, that is, of the body from the grave, and from corruption and mortality; and the laſt day, in which will be the reſurrection of the dead, and the day of judgment, in which Chriſt will come to judge the quick and dead: and which *ſo cometh as a thief in the night*; at an unawares, and the Lord himſelf in that day will ſo come, *Rev.* iii. 3. and xvi. 15. reſpect is had not to the character of the thief, nor to the end of his coming; but to the manner of it, in the dark, indiſcernibly, ſuddenly, and when not thought of and looked for; and ſuch will be the coming of Chriſt, it will be ſudden and unknown beforehand, and when leaſt thought of and expected: and ſince the *Theſſalonians* knew this full well, it was needleſs for the Apoſtle to write about the time and ſeaſon of it; which they were ſenſible of, could no more be known and fixed, than the coming of a thief into any one of their houſes.

Ver. 3. *For when they ſhall ſay*, &c.] Or men ſhall ſay, that is, wicked and ungodly men, perſons in a ſtate of unregeneracy: *peace and ſafety*; when they ſhall ſing a requiem to themſelves, promiſe themſelves much eaſe and peace for years to come, and imagine their perſons and property to be very ſecure from enemies and oppreſſors, and ſhall flatter themſelves with much and long temporal happineſs: *then ſudden deſtruction cometh upon them*; as on the men of the old world in the times of *Noah*, and on the inhabitants of *Sodom* and *Gomorrha* in the days of *Lot*; for as theſe, will be the days of the Son of man, as at the time of the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, ſo at the laſt day; ſee *Luke* xvii. 26—30. and as was the deſtruction of literal *Babylon*, ſo of *Babylon* in a myſtical ſenſe, or antichriſt and his followers: and which will be *as* *travail upon a woman with child*; whoſe anguiſh and pains are very ſharp, the cauſe of which is within herſelf, and which come ſuddenly upon her, and are unavoidable; and ſo the metaphor expreſſes the ſharpneſs and ſeverity of the deſtruction of the wicked, thus the calamities on the *Jewiſh* nation, are expreſſed by a word which ſignifies the ſorrows, pangs, and birth-throws of a woman in travail, *Matt.* xxiv. 8. and likewiſe that the cauſe of it is from themſelves, their own ſins and tranſgreſſions; and alſo the ſuddenneſs of it, which will come upon them in the midſt of all their mirth, jollity, and ſecurity; and moreover, the inevitableneſs of it, it will certainly come at the full and appointed time, though that is not known: *and they ſhall not eſcape*; the righteous judgment of God, the wrath of the Lamb, or falling into his hands; to eſcape is impoſſible, rocks, hills, and mountains will not cover and hide them; before the judgment-ſeat of Chriſt they muſt ſtand, and into everlaſting puniſhment muſt they go.

Ver. 4. *But ye, brethren, are not in darkneſs*, &c.] In a ſtate of unregeneracy, which is a ſtate of darkneſs, blindneſs, and ignorance, and which is the condition of all men by nature; they are born in darkneſs, and are brought up in it, and willingly walk in it; they are covered with it, as the earth was covered with darkneſs in its firſt creation; and dwell in it, as the *Egyptians* did for ſome days, in thick darkneſs, darkneſs which might be felt; their underſtandings are darkened with reſpect to the true knowledge of God, the nature of ſin, the way of ſalvation by Chriſt, the work of the Spirit of God upon the ſoul, and the neceſſity of it, the ſcriptures of truth, and the myſteries of the Goſpel; and which is the caſe of God's elect themſelves, whilſt unregenerate: but now theſe perſons were called out of darkneſs, turned from it, and delivered from the power of it; and therefore knew that the day of the Lord comes as above deſcribed, by the metaphors of a thief in the night, and a woman with child, and needed not to be informed about that matter: or *that that day ſhould overtake you as a thief*; or ſeize and lay hold upon you as a thief who comes in the dark, and lays hold upon a perſon ſuddenly; but theſe ſaints were not in the dark, but in the light, and ſo could ſee when the day of the Lord came; and would not be ſurprized with it, as a man is ſeized with terror and fright, when laid hold on by a thief; ſince they would be, or at leaſt ſhould be on their watch, and be looking out for, and haſting to the coming of the day of God.

Ver. 5. *Ye are all children of light*, &c.] Or enlightened perſons, whoſe underſtandings were enlightened by the Spirit of God, to ſee their loſt ſtate by nature, the exceeding ſinfulneſs of ſin, the inſufficiency of their righteouſneſs to juſtify them before God, the fulneſs, ſuitableneſs, and excellency of Chriſt's righteouſneſs, the way of ſalvation by Chriſt, and that it is all of grace from firſt to laſt; to underſtand in ſome meaſure the ſcriptures of truth, and the myſteries of the Goſpel; to have knowledge of ſome things that are yet to be done on earth, as the bringing in of the fulneſs of the *Gentiles*, the converſion of the *Jews*, the deſtruction of antichriſt, the ſecond coming of Chriſt, the reſurrection of the dead, the change of living ſaints, and the rapture of both up into the air to meet Chriſt, the burning of the world, and the new heavens and new earth, where Chriſt and his ſaints will dwell; as alſo to have ſome glimpſe of the heavenly glory, of the unſeen joys, and inviſible realities of the other world: and this the Apoſtle ſays of them *all*, in a judgment of charity, as being under a profeſſion of the grace of God, and in a church ſtate, and nothing appearing againſt them why ſuch a character did not belong to them: *and the children of the day*; of the Goſpel day, in diſtinction from the night of *Jewiſh* darkneſs; and of the day of grace which was come upon their ſouls, in oppoſition to the night of ignorance and infidelity which was paſt; and of the everlaſting day of glory, being heirs of, and having a right unto, and a meetneſs for the inheritance of the ſaints in light: *we are not of the night, nor of darkneſs*; that is, not children of the night, nor children of darkneſs, as the *Syriac* and *Arabic* verſions read; and the former changes the perſon and reads, *ye are not the children of the night*, &c. of the night of the legal diſpenſation, or of *Gentile* ignorance; or of a ſtate of natural darkneſs, in unregeneracy and unbelief: all which ſtrengthens the reaſon, why there was no need to write unto them concerning the time and ſeaſon of Chriſt's coming, and lays a foundation for the following exhortations.

Ver. 6. *Therefore let us not ſleep as do others*, &c.] As the reſt of the *Gentiles*, as unconverted perſons, who are in a ſtate of darkneſs, and are children of the night; let us not act that part they do, or be like them; which profeſſors of religion too much are, when they indulge themſelves in carnal luſts and pleaſures, and are careleſs and thoughtleſs about the coming of the day of the Lord; and get into a ſtupid, drowſy, and ſlumbering frame of ſpirit; when grace lies dormant as if it was not, and they grow backward to, and ſlothful in the diſcharge of duty, and content themſelves with the bare externals of religion; and become lukewarm and indifferent with reſpect to the truths and ordinances of the Goſpel, the cauſe of God, the intereſt of religion, and glory of Chriſt; and are unconcerned about ſins of omiſſion or commiſſion; and are willing to continue in ſuch a poſition, being diſpleaſed at every admonition and exhortation given them to awake; but this is very unbecoming children of the light, and of the day: *but let us watch*; over ourſelves, our hearts, thoughts, affections, words, and actions; and over others, our fellow-chriſtians, that they give not into bad principles and evil practices; and againſt ſin, and all appearance of it; againſt the temptations of ſatan, the ſnares of the world, and the errors of wicked men, who lie in wait to deceive; and in the word and ordinances, and particularly in prayer, both unto it, in it, and after it; and for the ſecond coming of Chriſt, with faith, affection, and patience; and the rather, becauſe of the uncertainty of the time of it: *and be ſober*; not only in body, abſtaining from exceſſive eating and drinking, uſing this world, and the good things of it, ſo as not to abuſe them, or ourſelves with them; but alſo in mind, that the heart be not overcharged with the cares of this world; for men may be inebriated with the world, as well as with wine; and the one is as prejudicial to the ſoul, as the other is to the body; for an immoderate care for, and purſuit after the world, choaks the word, makes it unfruitful, and runs perſons into divers ſnares and temptations, and hurtful luſts. The *Arabic* verſion renders it, *let us repent*; and the *Ethiopic* verſion, *let us underſtand*; as intending the ſobriety of the mind, repentance being an after thought of the mind, a ſerious reflection on paſt actions with ſorrow and concern; and thinking ſoberly, and not more highly than a man ought to think of himſelf, his gifts, his attainments, and abilities, in oppoſition to pride, vanity, and ſelf-conceit, is very becoming; and ſhows a true and well informed underſtanding and judgment, and that a man is really ſober and himſelf.

Ver. 7. *For they that ſleep, ſleep in the night*, &c.] The night is the uſual ſeaſon for ſleep, and ſleep is only for ſuch who are in darkneſs, and are children of the night; and not proper to be indulged by ſuch who are children of the day, and of the light: *and they that be drunken, are drunken in the night*; drunkenneſs is a work of darkneſs, and therefore men given to exceſſive drinking, love darkneſs rather than light, and chuſe the night for their purpoſe. To be drunk at noon is ſo ſhameful and ſcandalous, that men who love the ſin, and indulge themſelves in it, take the night-ſeaſon for it; and equally ſhameful it is, that enlightened perſons ſhould be inebriated, either with the cares of this life, or with an over-weaning opinion of themſelves.

Ver. 8. *But let us who are of the day, be ſober*, &c.] As in body, ſo in mind; let us caſt off the works of darkneſs, and have no fellowſhip with them; ſince the day of grace has paſſed upon us, the darkneſs is gone, and the true light ſhines, let us walk as children of the light, living ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly: *putting on the breaſt-plate of faith and love*; this is the coat of mail, 1 *Sam.* xvii. 5, 38. which was made of iron or braſs; and the *Ethiopic* verſion here calls it, *the iron coat*. The alluſion ſeems to be to the high-prieſt's breaſt-plate of judgment, in which were put the *Thummim* and *Urim*, which ſignify perfections and lights; faith may anſwer to the former, and love to the latter: theſe two graces go together, faith works by love, and love always accompanies faith; as there can be no true faith where there is no love, ſo there is no true love where faith is wanting: *faith* is a conſiderable part of the chriſtian ſoldier's breaſt-plate, and anſwers the end of a breaſt-plate, it being that grace which preſerves the vitals of religion, and keeps all warm and comfortable within; and ſecures the peace and joy of the ſaints, as it has to do with Chriſt and his righteouſneſs; wherefore this breaſt-plate is called, *the breaſt-plate of righteouſneſs*, *Eph.* vi. 14. it fortifies the ſoul, and preſerves it from ſatan's temptations, from his fiery darts entering, and doing the miſchief they would; it defends the heart againſt the errors of the wicked, for a man that believes has a witneſs in himſelf to the truths of the Goſpel, and therefore can't be eaſily moved from them; and ſtrengthens a man againſt the carnal reaſonings of the mind, for faith in the promiſes of God, ſurmounts all the difficulties that reaſon objects to the fulfilling of them; and ſecures from the fears of death, the terrors of the law, and dread of the wrath of God: and *love* is the other part of the breaſt-plate; love to God and Chriſt, is a means of keeping the believer ſound both in faith and practice; for a ſoul that truly loves God and Chriſt, can't give in to principles that depreciate the grace of God, and derogate from the glory and dignity, of the perſon and office of Chriſt, or the work of the Spirit; and ſuch love the ordinances and commands of Chriſt, and hate every falſe way of worſhip, or invention of men; and love to the ſaints is the bond of perfectneſs, knits them together, preſerves unity and peace, and fortifies againſt the common enemy: *and for an helmet, the hope of ſalvation*; the helmet is that part of armour which covers the head, and was made of braſs, 1 *Sam.* xvii. 5, 38. and uſed to be anointed with oil, that it might ſhine the brighter, laſt the longer, and more eaſily repel blows; to which this grace of the Spirit, hope of ſalvation by Chriſt, is fitly compared: for by *ſalvation* is meant, ſalvation by Chriſt, ſpiritual ſalvation, and that as compleat in heaven; and hope is a grace wrought in the ſoul by the Spirit of God, which has for its foundation Chriſt and his righteouſneſs, and for its object the heavenly glory; it covers the head in the day of battle, and preſerves from being overcome by ſin and ſatan, when one that is deſtitute of it ſays there is no hope, and we will walk every man after the imagination of his own evil heart; it erects the head in time of difficulty, amidſt tribulation and afflictions; it defends it from fears of divine wrath which is revealed from heaven, and ſometimes in appearance ſeems to hang over it; and it preſerves from ſatan's temptations, and being carried away with the error of the wicked, from the hope of the Goſpel: and thus a chriſtian clothed and armed with theſe graces, faith, hope, and love, ſhould be ſo far from indulging himſelf in ſin and ſloth, that he ought always to be ſober and watchful, and prepared to meet the enemy in the gate; and be ready, always waiting for his Lord's coming.

Ver. 9. *For God hath not appointed us to wrath*, &c.] To deſtruction and ruin, the effect of wrath; though there are ſome that are veſſels of wrath, fitted for deſtruction, of old ordained to condemnation, and who are reſerved for the day of evil; but there are others who are equally children of wrath, as deſerving of the wrath of God in themſelves as others, who are not appointed to it; which is an inſtance of wonderful and diſtinguiſhing grace to them: *but to obtain ſalvation by our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*; ſalvation is alone by Chriſt, he alone has wrought it out; it is in him, and in no other; he was appointed to this work, was called and ſent, and came to do it, and has done it; and God's elect, who were choſen in him, are appointed in the counſel and purpoſe of God, to obtain, poſſeſs, and enjoy this ſalvation; and which, as this appointment, may be known, as it was by theſe *Theſſalonians*; the Goſpel having come to them, not in word only, but in power, and in the Holy Ghoſt, and in much aſſurance; as it is an encouragement to faith and hope, ſo it excites to ſobriety and watchfulneſs, and the diſcharge of every duty. The doctrine of predeſtination does not lead to deſpair, but encourages the hope of ſalvation; and it is no licentious doctrine, for election to ſalvation by Chriſt, is through ſanctification of the Spirit, and unto holineſs; and good works are the fruits of it, and are what God has foreordained his people ſhould walk in.

Ver. 10. *Who died for us*, &c.] The elect of God, who are not appointed to wrath, but to ſalvation by Chriſt, on which account he died for them; not merely as a martyr to confirm his doctrine, or only by way of example, but as a ſurety, in the room and ſtead of his people; as a ſacrifice for their ſins, to make atonement for them, and ſave them from them; ſo that his death lays a ſolid foundation for hope of ſalvation by him: *that whether we wake or ſleep*; which phraſes are to be underſtood, not in the ſame ſenſe in which they are uſed in the context; as if the ſenſe was, whether a man indulges himſelf in ſin, and gives way to ſleep and ſloth, and carnal ſecurity, or whether he is awake and on his watch and guard, he ſhall through the death of Chriſt have eternal life ſecured to him; not but that there is a truth in this, that eternal life and ſalvation by Chriſt, as it does not depend on our watchfulneſs, ſo it ſhall not be hindered by the ſleepy, drowſy frame of ſpirit, the children of God ſometimes fall into: but rather natural ſleep and waking are intended; and the meaning is, that thoſe for whom Chriſt died, are always ſafe, ſleeping or waking, whatever they are about and employed in, and in whatſoever ſituation and condition they are in this world; though it may be beſt of all to interpret the words, of life and death; and they may have a particular regard to the ſtate of the ſaints at Chriſt's ſecond coming, when ſome will be awake, or alive, and others will be aſleep in Chriſt, or dead; and it matters not which they are, whether living or dead; ſee *Rom.* xiv. 7, 8, 9. for the end of Chriſt's dying for them, and which will be anſwered in one as well as in another is, that *we ſhould live together with him*; Chriſt died for his people, who were dead in treſpaſſes and ſins, that they might live ſpiritually a life of ſanctification from him, and a life of juſtification on him, and by him; and that they might live a life of communion with him; and that they might live eternally with him, in ſoul and body in heaven, and reign with him there, and partake of his glory; and this all the ſaints will, whether they be found dead or alive at his coming; for the dead will immediately ariſe, thoſe that ſleep in the duſt will awake at once, and they that are alive will be changed, and both will be caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, and be for ever with him: now the conſideration of the death of Chriſt, and this end of it, which will certainly be anſwered, ſerves greatly to encourage hope of ſalvation by him, and faith in him, and an earneſt expectation of his ſecond coming.

Ver. 11. *Wherefore comfort yourſelves together*, &c.] Either with the doctrine of the reſurrection of the dead, the ſecond coming of Chriſt, and the thoughts of being for ever with him, and one another, and ſo may be a repetition of the advice in ch. iv. 18. or with this conſideration, that they were not in a ſtate of darkneſs, ignorance, and infidelity, but were children of the light, and of the day, being called out of darkneſs into marvellous light, and ſhould enjoy the light of life; and with the doctrine of predeſtination, they being appointed not to wrath they were deſerving of, but to be poſſeſſed of ſalvation by Jeſus Chriſt, of which they could never fail, ſince the purpoſe of God according to election, always ſtands ſure, not upon the foot of works, but upon his own ſovereign and unchangeable grace; or with the doctrine of Chriſt's ſufferings and death, in their room and ſtead, whereby the law was fulfilled, juſtice ſatisfied, their ſins atoned for, pardon procured, an everlaſting righteouſneſs brought in, and their ſalvation fully accompliſhed, things the Apoſtle had ſpoken of in the context: the words will bear to be rendered, *exhort one another*; that is, not to ſleep, as do others, or indulge themſelves in ſin and ſloth; but to be ſober, and upon their watch and guard, and in a poſture of defence againſt the enemy; to put on the whole armour of God, and particularly the breaſt-plate of faith and love, and for an helmet the hope of ſalvation: *and edify one another*; by praying together, converſing with each other about the doctrines of the Goſpel, and the dealings of God with their ſouls; abſtaining from all corrupt communication, which has a tendency to hurt each others principles or practices, or to ſtir up wrath and contention; attending only to thoſe things which are for the uſe of edifying, whereby their ſouls might be more and more built upon Chriſt, and their moſt holy faith; and be a riſing edifice, and grow up unto an holy temple in the Lord, and for an habitation of God through the Spirit: *even as alſo ye do*; which is ſaid in their commendation, and not through flattery, but to encourage them to go on in this way; and from whence it may be obſerved, that mutual conſolation, exhortation, and edification, are things the ſaints ſhould be ſtirred up to frequently, even though they are regarded by them, and much more then ſhould theſe be preſſed upon them, who are careleſs and negligent of them.

Ver. 12. *And we beſeech you brethren*, &c.] Not in a natural or civil, but ſpiritual relation; and what follows relating to the miniſters of the word, the Apoſtle addreſſes this church on their behalf, not in an imperious and authoritative manner, but by way of intreaty, with great humility and ſtrong affection: *know them that labour among you*; who were not non-reſidents, but were upon the ſpot with them; and where indeed ſhould paſtors be, but with their flocks? and huſbandmen and vine-dreſſers, but in their fields and vineyards? and ſtewards, but in the families where they are placed? and parents, but with their children? nor were they loiterers in the vineyard, or ſlothful ſervants, and idle ſhepherds, but labourers; who laboured in the word and doctrine; gave up themſelves to meditation, reading, and prayer; laboured hard in private, to find out the meaning of the word of God; and ſtudied to ſhew themſelves workmen, that need not be aſhamed; and preached the word in ſeaſon and out of ſeaſon; faithfully diſpenſed all ordinances, and diligently performed the duties of their office; and were willing to ſpend and be ſpent, for the glory of Chriſt, and the good of ſouls, and earneſtly contended for the faith of the Goſpel; and all this they did, as among them, ſo for them, for their ſpiritual good and welfare: ſome render the words, *in you*; they laboured in teaching, inſtructing, and admoniſhing them; they laboured to enlighten their underſtandings, to inform their judgments, to raiſe their affections, and to bring their wills to a reſignation to the will of God; to refreſh their memories with Goſpel truths; to ſtrengthen their faith, encourage their hope, and draw out their love to God and Chriſt, and the brethren: and what the Apoſtle directs them to, as their duty towards theſe perſons, is to *know* them; that is, not to learn their names, and know their perſons, who they were; for they could not but know them in this ſenſe, ſince they dwelt and laboured among them, and were continually employed in inſtructing them; but that they would make themſelves known to them, and converſe freely and familiarly with them, that ſo they might know the ſtate of their ſouls, and be better able to ſpeak a word in ſeaſon to them; and that they would take notice of them, ſhew reſpect to them, and an affection for them; acknowledge them as their paſtors, and account of them as ſtewards of the myſteries of God, and own them as miniſters of Chriſt; and reckon them as bleſſings to them, and acknowledge the ſame with thankfulneſs; and obey them, and ſubmit unto them in the miniſtry of the word and ordinances, and to their counſel and advice, ſo far as is agreeable to the word of God: the *Arabic* verſion renders it, *that ye may know the dignity of them that labour among you*; and ſo conduct and behave towards them accordingly: *and are over you in the Lord*; are ſet in the higheſt place in the church, and bear the higheſt office there; have the preſidence and government in it, and go before the ſaints, and guide and direct them in matters both of doctrine and practice, being enſamples to the flock; the *Syriac* verſion renders it, *and ſtand before you*; miniſtring unto you in holy things, being ſervants to you for Jeſus ſake: and this *in the Lord*; or by the Lord; for they did not take this honour to themſelves, nor were they appointed by men, but they were made able miniſters of the word by God; received their gifts qualifying them for this work from Chriſt, and were placed as overſeers of the church by the Holy Ghoſt: and it was only in things pertaining to the Lord, that they were over them; not in things civil, which diſtinguiſhes them from civil magiſtrates; nor in things ſecular and worldly, they had nothing to do in their families, to preſide there, or with their worldly concerns, only in the church of Chriſt, and in things pertaining to their ſpiritual welfare; and though they were over them, yet under Chriſt, and in ſubjection to him, as their Lord and king; governing not in an arbitrary and tyrannical way, lording it over God's heritage, uſurping a dominion over the faith of men, coining new doctrines, and making new laws; but according to the word of God, and laws of Chriſt, in the fear of the Lord, and with a view to the glory of God, and in love to ſouls: hence the *Arabic* verſion renders it, *in the love of the Lord*; the phraſe *in the Lord*, is omitted in the *Syriac* verſion: *and admoniſh you*; or inſtruct you, put into your minds good and wholeſome things, and put you in mind of the doctrines of the Goſpel, of the duties of religion, of former experiences; and give warning of ſin and danger, and reprove and rebuke with faithfulneſs; and as the caſe requires, either in public or private, and with ſharpneſs or tenderneſs.

Ver. 13. *And to eſteem them very highly*, &c.] Or as the *Ethiopic* verſion renders it, *honour them abundantly*; for ſuch are worthy of double honour, and to be had in reputation; they ſhould be honourably thought of, and be high in the affections of the ſaints; and ſhould eſteem them better than themſelves, or others in the community; and ſhould be ſpoke well of, and their characters vindicated, from the reproach and obloquy of others; and ſhould be ſpoke reſpectfully to, and be honourably done by; ſhould be provided for with an honourable maintenance, which is part of the double honour due to them in 1 *Tim.* v. 17, 18. and this ſhould be *in love*; not in fear, nor in hypocriſy and diſſimulation; not in word and in tongue only, but from the heart and real affection: the *Syriac* verſion renders it, *that they be eſteemed by you with more abundant love*; with an increaſing love, or with greater love than is ſhewn to the brethren in common, or to private members: *and that for their works ſake*; for the ſake of the work of the miniſtry, which is a good work as well as honourable; is beneficial to the ſouls of men, and is for the glory of God, being diligently and faithfully performed by them; on which account they are to be valued, and not for an empty title without labour. And *be at peace among yourſelves*. The *Vulgate Latin* verſion reads, *with them*; and ſo the *Syriac* verſion, connecting the former clauſe with this, *for their works ſake have peace with them*; that is, with the miniſters of the word; don't diſagree with them upon every trivial occaſion, or make them offenders for a word; keep up a good underſtanding, and cultivate love and friendſhip with them; *embrace them with brotherly love*, as the *Ethiopic* verſion renders the words, underſtanding them alſo as relating to miniſters; a difference with them is of bad conſequence, and muſt render their miniſtry greatly uſeleſs and unprofitable to thoſe who differ with them, as well as render them very uncomfortable and unfit for it. The *Arabic* verſion renders it, *in yourſelves*; as referring to internal peace in their own ſouls, which they ſhould be concerned for; and which only is attained to, enjoyed, and preſerved, by looking to the blood, righteouſneſs, and ſacrifice of Chriſt: or elſe it may regard peace among themſelves, and with one another as brethren, and as members of the ſame church; which as it is for their credit and reputation without doors, and for their comfort, delight, and pleaſure within, in their church-ſtate and fellowſhip, ſo it tends to make the miniſters of the Goſpel more eaſy and comfortable in their work: thus the words conſidered in this ſenſe, have ſtill a relation to them.

Ver. 14. *Now we exhort you, brethren*, &c.] This is ſaid either to the miniſters of the word that laboured among them, preſided over them, and admoniſhed them; and the rather, becauſe ſome of theſe things here directed to are preſſed upon the members of the church in ver. 11. and which otherwiſe muſt make a repetition here; or to the members in conjunction with their paſtors: *warn them that are unruly*; or diſorderly, idle perſons, working not all, buſying themſelves with other mens matters, and living upon the churches ſtock, reprove them for their ſloth, exhort them to work with their own hands, to do their own buſineſs, and with quietneſs eat their own bread; or ſuch who keep not their places in the church, but are like ſoldiers that go out of their rank, deſert their companies, and fly from their colours, or ſtart aſide, rebuke theſe, and exhort them to fill up their places, to abide by the church, and the ordinances of Chriſt; or ſuch who are contentious and quarrelſome, turbulent, headſtrong, and unruly, that cauſe and foment animoſities and diviſions, check them, admoniſh them, lay them under cenſure, for ſuch a cuſtom and practice is not to be allowed of in the churches of Chriſt. *Comfort the feeble minded*; ſuch as are not able to bear the loſs of near and dear relations; are ready to ſtagger under the croſs, and at the reproaches and perſecutions of the world; and are almoſt over-ſet with the temptations of ſatan; and are born down and diſcouraged with the corruptions of their hearts, ſpeak a comfortable word to them, encourage them with the doctrines of grace, and the promiſes of the Goſpel. *Support the weak*; who are weak in faith and knowledge, ſtrengthen them, hold them up; or, as the *Syriac* verſion renders it, *take the burden of the weak*, and carry it, bear their infirmities, as is directed in *Rom.* xv. 1. *be patient towards all men*; towards the unruly, the feeble-minded, and the weak, as well as to other chriſtians, that know more, and behave better, and alſo to the men of this world, as well as to believers; give place to wrath, and leave vengeance to him to whom it belongs; exerciſe long-ſuffering and forbearance with fellow-creatures and fellow-chriſtians.

Ver. 15. *See that none render evil for evil unto any man*, &c.] Not an ill word for an ill word, railing for railing, nor an ill action for an ill action; no, not to any man whatever, not to an enemy, a perſecutor, a prophane perſon, as well as not to a brother, a believer in Chriſt; and this the ſaints ſhould not only be careful of, and guard againſt in themſelves, but ſhould watch over one another, and ſee to it, that no ſuch practice is found in each other. *But ever follow that which is good*; honeſtly, morally, pleaſantly, and profitably good; even every good work, which is according to the will of God, is done in faith, from love, and to the glory of God; and particularly acts of beneficence and liberality to the poor; and which are not to be once, or now and then done, but to be followed and purſued after, and that always: *both among yourſelves, and to all men*; not only to the houſhold of faith, tho' to them eſpecially, and in the firſt place, but to all other men, as opportunity offers, even to our enemies, and them that perſecute us, and deſpitefully uſe us; do good to their bodies, and to their ſouls, as much as in you lies, by feeding and clothing the one, and by praying for, adviſing and inſtructing the other.

Ver. 16. *Rejoice evermore.*] Not in a carnal, but in a ſpiritual way, with joy in the Holy Ghoſt; and which ariſes from a view of pardon by the blood of Chriſt, of juſtification by his righteouſneſs, and atonement by his ſacrifice; not in themſelves, as the wicked man rejoices in his wickedneſs, and the hypocrite and formaliſt in his profeſſion of religion, and the reputation he gains by it; and the *Phariſee* and legaliſt in his morality, civility, negative holineſs, and obedience to the rituals of the law; for ſuch rejoice in their boaſtings, and all ſuch rejoicing is evil; but in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, in the greatneſs, fitneſs, fulneſs, and glory of his perſon, in his blood, righteouſneſs, and ſacrifice, in what he is in himſelf, and is made unto his people, and in what he has done, and is ſtill doing for them, and particularly in the ſalvation he has wrought out; and not in the things of this life, and the attainments of it, either of body, or of mind, or of eſtate, as in ſtrength, wiſdom, or riches; but in things ſpiritual, that our names are written in heaven, and we are redeemed by the blood of Chriſt, and called by his grace, and ſhall be glorified together with him; and not only in proſperity, but in adverſity, ſince all things work together for good, and afflictions ſerve for the exerciſe of grace; and eſpecially, ſince to ſuffer reproach and perſecution for the ſake of Chriſt, and his Goſpel, is a great honour, and the Spirit of God, and of glory, reſts on ſuch, and great will be their reward in heaven: and there is always reaſon, and ever a firm ground and foundation for rejoicing with believers, let their circumſtances or their frames be what they will; ſince God, their covenant God, is unchangeable, and his love to them is from everlaſting to everlaſting invariably the ſame; the covenant of grace, which is ordered in all things, and ſure, is firm and immoveable; and Jeſus, the mediator of it, is the ſame to-day, yeſterday, and for ever.

Ver. 17. *Pray without ceaſing.*] Not that ſaints ſhould be always on their knees, or ever lifting up their hands, and vocally calling upon God; this is not required of them, and would claſh with, and break in upon other parts of religious worſhip, and the duties of civil life, which are to be attended to, as well as this, and beſides would be impracticable; for however willing a ſpiritual man might be to be engaged in this work always, yet the fleſh is weak, and would not be able to bear it; and it requires food and drink, ſleep and reſt, for its refreſhment and ſupport; for all which there muſt be time allowed, as well as for other actions of animal life, and the buſineſs of a man's calling. But the meaning is, that believers ſhould be daily, and often found in the performance of this duty; for as their wants daily return upon them, and they are called to freſh ſervice, and further trials and exerciſes, they have need of more grace, ſtrength, and aſſiſtance, and therefore ſhould daily pray for it; and beſides certain times both in the cloſet, and in the family, in which they ſhould attend the throne of grace, there is ſuch a thing as mental prayer, praying in the heart, private ejaculations of the ſoul, which may be ſent up to heaven, whilſt a man is engaged in the affairs of life. The *Ethiopic* verſion renders the words, *pray frequently*; don't leave off praying, or ceaſe from it thro' the prevalence of ſin, the temptations of ſatan, or thro' diſcouragement, becauſe an anſwer is not immediately had, or through careleſſneſs and negligence, but continue in it, and be often at it; ſee *Luke* xviii. 1—8. Theſe words are oppoſed to the practice of ſuch, who either pray not at all, or having uſed it, have left it off, or who only pray in a time of trouble and diſtreſs, and bear hard on thoſe who think they ſhould not pray but when under the influences of the Spirit, and when his graces are in a lively exerciſe: the reaſon for this rule of praying with frequency and conſtancy, is, becauſe the ſaints are always needy, they are always in want of mercies of one kind or another, and therefore ſhould continually go to the throne of grace, and there aſk for grace and mercy to help them in time of need.

Ver. 18. *In every thing give thanks*, &c.] That is, to God the Father, in the name of Chriſt; ſee *Eph.* v. 20. thanks are to be given to him *for all things*, as the *Ethiopic* verſion renders it; for all temporal good things; for our beings, the preſervation of them; for food and raiment, and all the mercies of life; for the means of grace, the word and ordinances, and the miniſters of the Goſpel; for ſpiritual bleſſings, for electing, redeeming, regenerating, adopting, pardoning, juſtifying, and perſevering grace; for a meetneſs for heaven, a right unto it, and a good hope of it; and eſpecially for Jeſus Chriſt, for ſuch an huſband, ſuch an head, ſuch a ſurety and ſaviour, and advocate with the Father, as he is; and for life, peace, joy, comfort, righteouſneſs, and ſalvation in him: and thanks ſhould be given to God in every circumſtance of life; in adverſity, as *Job* did; when not in ſo comfortable and agreeable a frame of ſoul as to be wiſhed for, ſince it might be worſe, and is not black deſpair; even under the temptations of ſatan, ſince they might be greater and heavier, and ſince the grace of God is ſufficient to bear up under them, and deliver out of them, and ſince there is ſuch a ſympathizing high-prieſt and ſaviour; and in afflictions of every kind, ſince they are all for good, temporal, or ſpiritual, or eternal. *For this is the will of God*; which may refer either to all that is ſaid from ver. 11. to this paſſage, or particularly to this of giving thanks; which is the revealed and declared will of God, is a part of that good, perfect, and acceptable will of his, and what is well-pleaſing in his ſight, and grateful to him; ſee *Pſ.* lxix. 30, 31. and is *in Chriſt Jeſus concerning you*; either declared in and by him, who has made known the whole of the will of God, and ſo the *Arabic* verſion, *which he wills of you by Jeſus Chriſt*; or which is exemplied in Chriſt, who for, and in all things, gave thanks to God, and had his will reſigned to his in every circumſtance of life; or, which being done, is acceptable to God thro' Chriſt. The *Alexandrian* copy reads, *for this is the will of God towards you in Chriſt Jeſus*; that is, with reſpect to you who are in Chriſt ſecretly by election, and openly by effectual vocation; and who, of all men in the world, have reaſon to be thankful for every thing, and in every circumſtance.

Ver. 19. *Quench not the Spirit.*] By which is meant, not the perſon of the Spirit, but either the graces of the Spirit, which may be compared to light, and fire, and heat, to which the alluſion is in the text; ſuch as faith, which is a light in the ſoul, a ſeeing of the Son, and an evidence of things not ſeen; and love, which gives a vehement flame, which many waters cannot quench; and zeal, which is the boiling up of love, the effervency of it; and ſpiritual knowledge, which is alſo light, and of an increaſing nature, and are all graces of the Spirit: and tho' theſe can't be totally extinguiſhed, and utterly put out and loſt, yet they may be greatly damped; the light of faith may become dim; and the flame of love be abated, and that wax cold; the heat of zeal may paſs into lukewarmneſs, and an indifference of ſpirit; and the light of knowledge ſeem to decline inſtead of increaſing; and all thro' indulging ſome ſin or ſins, by keeping ill company, and by neglecting the ordinances of God, prayer, preaching, and other inſtitutions of the Goſpel; wherefore ſuch an exhortation is neceſſary to quicken ſaints, and ſtir them up to the uſe of thoſe means, whereby thoſe graces are cheriſhed and preſerved in their lively exerciſe; though rather the gifts of the Spirit are intended. The extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, beſtowed on the Apoſtles at the day of Pentecoſt, are repreſented under the ſymbol of fire, to which perhaps the Apoſtle may here have reſpect; and the more ordinary gifts of the Spirit are ſuch as are to be ſtirred up, as coals of fire are ſtirred up, in order that they may burn, and ſhine the brighter, and give both light and heat, 2 *Tim.* i. 6. and which may be ſaid to be quenched, when they are neglected, and lie by as uſeleſs; when they are wrapp'd up in a napkin, or hid in the earth; or when men are reſtrained from the uſe of them; or when the uſe of them is not attended to, or brought into contempt, and the exerciſe of them rendered uſeleſs and unprofitable, as much as in them lies. And even private perſons may quench the Spirit of God, his gifts of light and knowledge, when they hold the truth in unrighteouſneſs, impriſon it, and conceal it, and don't publickly profeſs it as they ought.

Ver. 20. *Deſpiſe not propheſyings.*] Or *prophecies*; the prophecies of the Old Teſtament concerning the firſt coming of Chriſt, concerning his perſon, office, and work, his obedience, ſufferings, and death, his reſurrection from the dead, aſcenſion and ſeſſion at God's right hand; for tho' all theſe are fulfilled, yet they have ſtill their uſefulneſs; for by comparing theſe with facts, the perfections of God, his omniſcience, truth, faithfulneſs, wiſdom, *&c.* are demonſtrated, the authority of the ſcriptures eſtabliſhed, the truths of the Goſpel illuſtrated and confirmed, and faith ſtrengthened; and beſides, there are many prophecies which regard things to be done, and yet to be done under the Goſpel-diſpenſation, and therefore ſhould not be ſet at nought, but highly valued and eſteemed: alſo the predictions of Chriſt concerning his own ſufferings, and death, and reſurrection from the dead, and what would befal his diſciples afterwards, with many things relating to the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, his ſecond coming, and the end of the world, theſe ſhould be had in great eſteem; nor ſhould what the Apoſtles foretold concerning the riſe of antichriſt, the man of ſin, and the apoſtacy of the latter days, and the whole book of the *Revelations*, which is no other than a prophecy of the ſtate of the church, from the times of the Apoſtles to the end of the world, be treated with neglect and contempt, but ſhould be ſeriouſly conſidered, and diligently ſearched and enquired into. Yea, the prophecies of private men, ſuch as *Agabus*, and others, in the Apoſtle's time, and in later ages, are not to be ſlighted; tho' inſtances of this kind are rare in our times, and things of this nature ſhould not be precipitantly, and without care, given into: but rather propheſyings here intend the explanation of ſcripture, and the preaching of the word, and particularly by perſons who had not the gift of tongues, and therefore men were apt to deſpiſe them; ſee 1 *Cor.* xiii. 2. and xiv. 1, 3, 4, 5, 24, 31. Juſt as in our days, if perſons have not had a liberal education, and do not underſtand *Latin*, *Greek*, and *Hebrew*, tho' they have miniſterial gifts, and are capable of explaining the word to edification and comfort, yet are ſet at nought and rejected, which ſhould not be.

Ver. 21. *Prove all things*, &c.] That are ſaid by the prophets, all the doctrines which they deliver; hear them, tho' they have not the gift of tongues, and all deſirable advantages; don't reject them on that account, and refuſe to hear them, for ſo, many uſeful men may be laid aſide, and the Spirit of God in them be quenched; try their gifts, and attend to their doctrines, yet don't implicitly believe every thing they ſay, but examine them according to the word of God, the teſt and ſtandard of truth; ſearch the ſcriptures, whether the things they ſay are true or no. Not openly erroneous perſons, and known hereticks, are to be heard and attended on, but the miniſters of the word, or ſuch who are ſaid to have a gift of propheſying; theſe ſhould make uſe of it, and the church ſhould try and judge their gift, and accordingly encourage or diſcourage; and alſo their doctrines, and if falſe reject them, and if true receive them. *Hold faſt that which is good*; honeſt, pleaſant, profitable, and agreeable to ſound doctrine, to the analogy of faith, and the ſcriptures of truth, and is uſeful and edifying, inſtructive both as to principle and practice; ſuch ſhould be held faſt, that no man take it away; and be retained, tho' a majority may be againſt it, for the multitude is not always on the ſide of truth; and though it may be rejected by men of learning and wealth, as Chriſt and his doctrines were rejected by the *Scribes* and *Phariſees*, and rulers of the people; and tho' it may be reproached as a novel, upſtart notion, or a licentious one, ſince theſe were charges againſt the doctrine of Chriſt, and his Apoſtles; and tho' it may be attended with affliction and perſecution, yet none of theſe things ſhould move from it, or cauſe to let it go.

Ver. 22. *Abſtain from all appearance of evil.*] Of doctrinal evil. Not only open error and hereſy are to be avoided, but what has any ſhew of it, or looks like it, or carries in it a ſuſpicion of it, or may be an occaſion thereof, or lead unto it; wherefore all new words and phraſes of this kind ſhould be ſhunned, and the form of ſound words held faſt: and ſo of all practical evil, not only from ſin itſelf, and all ſorts of ſin, leſſer or greater, as the [w] *Jews* have a ſaying, "take care of a light as of a heavy "commandment," that is, take care of committing a leſſer, as a greater ſin, and from the firſt motions of ſin; but from every occaſion of it, and what leads unto it, and has the appearance of it, or may be ſuſpected of others to be ſin, and ſo give offence, and be a matter of ſcandal. The *Jews* have a ſaying very agreeable to this [x], "remove "thyſelf afar off (or abſtain) from filthineſs, and "from every thing, הדומה לו, *that is like unto it.*"

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[w] Pirke Abot, c. 2. §. 1.

[x] Apud Druſium in loc.

Ver. 23. *And the very God of peace*, &c.] Or *the God of peace himſelf.* The Apoſtle follows his exhortations with prayer to God, knowing the weakneſs and impotency of the ſaints to receive them, and act according to them, and his own inſufficiency to impreſs their minds with them; and that unleſs the Lord opened their ears to diſcipline, and ſealed inſtruction to them, they would be uſeleſs and in vain: wherefore he applies to the throne of grace, and addreſſes God as *the God of peace*; ſo called, becauſe of the concern he has in peace and reconciliation made by the blood of Chriſt, and becauſe he is the giver of peace of conſcience, and the author of peace, concord, and unity among the ſaints, and of all happineſs and proſperity, both in this world, and in that which is to come; ſee the note on *Rom.* xv. 33. And the Apoſtle might chuſe to addreſs God under this character, partly to encourage boldneſs, freedom, and intrepidity at the throne of grace, and partly to raiſe hope, expectation, and faith of having his requeſts anſwered, ſince God is not an angry God, nor is fury in him, but the God of peace: and the petitions he puts up for the *Theſſalonians* are as follow; and firſt, that God would *ſanctify you wholly*; or *all of you*, as the *Arabic* verſion; or *all of you perfectly*, as the *Syriac* verſion. Theſe perſons were ſanctified by the Spirit of God, but not perfectly; the Goſpel was come to them in power, and had wrought effectually in them, and they were turned from idols to ſerve the living God, and had true faith, hope, and love implanted in them, and which they were enabled to exerciſe in a very comfortable and commendable manner; but yet this work of grace and ſanctification begun in them was far from being perfect, nor is it in the beſt of ſaints. There is ſomething lacking in the faith of the greateſt believer, love often waxes cold; and hope is not lively at all times, and knowledge is but in part; ſin dwells in all; the ſaints are poor and needy, their wants continually return upon them, and they need daily ſupplies; the moſt holy and knowing among them diſclaim perfection in themſelves, though deſirous of it. Their ſanctification in Chriſt is perfect, but not in themſelves; there is indeed a perfection of parts in internal ſanctification, every grace is implanted, there is not one wanting; the new creature, or new man, has all its parts, tho' theſe are not come to their full growth; there is not a perfection of degrees, and this is what the Apoſtle prays for; for ſanctification is a progreſſive, gradual work, it is like ſeed caſt into the earth, which ſprings up, firſt the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear, and is as light, which ſhines more and more to the perfect day. Sanctified perſons are firſt as new-born babes, and then they grow up to be young men, and at laſt become fathers in Chriſt; and this work being begun, is carried on, and will be performed, fulfilled, and made perfect: and it is God's work to do it; he begins, and he carries it on, and he will finiſh it; and therefore the Apoſtle prays to him to do it; this is his firſt petition: the ſecond follows, *and* I pray God *your whole ſpirit, ſoul and body, be preſerved blameleſs unto the coming of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* A like diviſion of man is made by the *Jews*: ſays one of their writers [y], "a man cannot know God, unleſs he "knows, נפשו ונשמתו וגופו, *his ſoul, his breath*, "or *his ſpirit, and his body.*" Says [z] *R. Iſaac*, "worthy are the righteous in this world, and in "the world to come, for lo, they are all holy; "their *body* is holy, their *ſoul* is holy, their *ſpirit*, "and their *breath* is holy." See the note on *Heb.* iv. 12. Some by *ſpirit* underſtand the graces and gifts of the Spirit in a regenerate man; and by *the ſoul*, the ſoul as regenerated, and as it is the ſeat and ſubject of theſe graces; and by *the body*, the habitation of the ſoul, which is influenced by the grace that is in it; and this is a ſenſe not to be deſpiſed. Others by *the ſpirit* underſtand the rational and immortal ſoul of man, often called a ſpirit, as in *Eccl.* xii. 7. and by *the ſoul*, the animal and ſenſitive ſoul, which man has in common with brutes; ſee *Eccl.* iii. 21. and by *the body*, the outward frame of fleſh and blood, and bones; but rather *ſpirit* and *ſoul* deſign the ſame immaterial, immortal, and rational ſoul of man, conſidered in its different powers and faculties. The *ſpirit* may intend the underſtanding, *Job* xxxii. 8. which is the principal, leading, and governing faculty of the ſoul; and which being enlightened by the Spirit of God, a man knows himſelf, Chriſt Jeſus, and the things of the Spirit, the truths of the Goſpel, and receives and values them. The *ſoul* may include the will and affections, which are influenced by the underſtanding; and in a regenerate man the will is brought to a reſignation to the will of God, and the affections are ſet upon divine things, and the body is the inſtrument of performing religious and ſpiritual exerciſes: and theſe, the Apoſtle prays may be *preſerved blameleſs*; not that he thought they could be kept from ſinning entirely in thought, word, or deed; but that they might be preſerved in purity and chaſtity from the groſs enormities of life, and be kept from a total and final falling away, the work of grace be at laſt compleated on the ſoul and ſpirit, and the body be raiſed in incorruption, and glory; and both at the coming of Chriſt be preſented faultleſs, and without blame, without ſpot or wrinkle, or any ſuch thing, firſt to himſelf, and then to his Father.

Ver. 24. *Faithful is he that calleth you*, &c.] Into the fellowſhip of his Son, and to his kingdom and glory, and who continues to do ſo, not only externally by his word, but internally by his ſpirit and grace. *Who alſo will do* it. Two things the Apoſtle mentions, as the ground of confidence, that the above petitions would be heard and anſwered; that is, that God would wholly ſanctify them, and preſerve the whole of them blameleſs to the coming of Chriſt; and they are the faithfulneſs of God, and the effectual calling of his ſaints. God is faithful to his word, his covenant and promiſes; he has promiſed to ſanctify and cleanſe his people from all their ſins, and to preſerve them ſafe to his kingdom and glory; agreeably the *Arabic* verſion renders this laſt clauſe, *and will execute his promiſe:* and effectual vocation, is a ſure pledge of glorification; whom God calls he juſtifies and glorifies; as ſure as he gives grace, he will give glory; and whom he calls to his eternal glory, he will make perfect, ſtabliſh, ſtrengthen, and ſettle. The *Complutenſian* edition reads, *who alſo will make your hope firm*; that is, with reſpect to the above things.

Ver. 25. *Brethren, pray for us.*] Which is added with great beauty and propriety, after the Apoſtle had ſo earneſtly and affectionately prayed for them; and this is directed, not to the paſtors of the church only, but to all the members of it, whom the Apoſtle ſtiles *brethren* in a ſpiritual relation, as he often does; and of whom he requeſts, that they would pray for him, and the reſt of his fellow-miniſters and labourers in the word, that God would more and more qualify and fit them for their work, aſſiſt in private ſtudies and meditations, give them freedom of thought, liberty of expreſſion, and a door of utterance, and follow their miniſtrations with a divine bleſſing and ſucceſs, and deliver them out of the hands of unreaſonable men; ſee the note on *Heb.* xiii. 18.

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[y] Aben Ezra in Exod. xxxi. 18.

[z] Zohar in Lev. fol. 29. 2.

Ver. 26. *Greet all the brethren with an holy kiſs.*] In oppoſition to an unchaſte and hypocritical one. His meaning is, that they would ſalute the members of the church in his name, and give his chriſtian love and affections to them. And his view is, to recommend to them brotherly love to each other, and to ſtir them up to the mutual exerciſe of it more and more.

Ver. 27. *I charge you by the Lord,* &c.] Or *I adjure by the Lord*; by the Lord Jeſus: it is in the form of an oath, and a very ſolemn one; and ſhows that oaths may be uſed on certain and ſolemn occaſions: *that this Epiſtle be read unto all the holy brethren*; to all the members of the church, who are called *holy*, becauſe they were ſanctified or ſet a-part by God the Father in election; and were ſanctified by the blood of Chriſt, or their ſins were expiated, or atoned for by the ſacrifice of Chriſt in redemption; and were ſanctified or made holy by the Spirit of God in regeneration; and were enabled by the grace of God to live holy lives and converſations. Now this Epiſtle being directed only to ſome of the principal members of the church, it may be to one or more of their elders; leſt he or they ſhould be tempted on any account to conceal it, the Apoſtle in a very ſolemn manner adjures, that it be read publickly to the whole church whom it concerned, that all might hear, and learn, and receive ſome advantage from it; from whence we may learn, as is obſerved by many interpreters, that the ſacred ſcriptures, neither one part nor another, nor the whole of them, are to be kept from private chriſtians, but may be read, and heard, and uſed by all.

Ver. 28. *The grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt be with you, Amen.*] This is the Apoſtle's uſual ſalutation in all his Epiſtles, and the token of the genuineneſs of them, 2 *Theſſ.* iii. 17, 18. ſee the notes on *Rom.* xvi. 20. 1 *Cor.* xv. 23. and 2 *Cor.* xiii. 14.

The ſubſcription to this Epiſtle is not genuine, which runs thus, *The firſt* Epiſtle *unto the Theſſalonians was written from Athens*; whereas it appears from ch. iii. 1, 6. compared with *Acts* xviii. 1, 5. that it was written from *Corinth*, and not from *Athens*; nor are theſe laſt words, *from Athens*, in *Beza*'s *Claromontane* copy; though they ſtand in the *Syriac* and *Arabic* verſions of the *London Polyglot* bible, which add, *and ſent by Timothy*, and in the *Alexandrian* copy, and *Complutenſian* edition.

AN EXPOSITION, &c.

The Second Epiſtle of PAUL the Apoſtle to the *THESSALONIANS*.

THIS ſecond Epiſtle was written, not from *Athens*, as the ſubſcription teſtifies, nor from *Rome*, as *Athanaſius*[a] ſuppoſes; but from *Corinth*, from whence was ſent the former, and where the Apoſtle and *Timothy*, and *Sylvanus* met; and which was ſent about half a year after the other. The deſign of which is to comfort and ſupport the *Theſſalonians* under the afflictions and perſecutions they endured for the ſake of the Goſpel; and to rectify a miſtake they had gone into, and which might be occaſioned by what the Apoſtle had ſaid in his former Epiſtle, concerning the ſecond coming of Chriſt, as though it was juſt at hand; which might lead them to neglect their worldly buſineſs, and duties of civil life, and give the enemies of the Goſpel an advantage againſt the whole of it as falſe, ſhould not this prove true; as alſo to exhort this church to take notice of diſorderly perſons, ſuch as were idle and buſy bodies, and withdraw from them, and remove them from their communion, as being not only burdenſome to them, but a reproach to their profeſſion.

CHAP. I.

THIS chapter, beſides the inſcription and ſalutation, contains a thankſgiving for the flouriſhing condition in which the graces of the Spirit were in theſe ſaints, and conſolation for them under their ſuffering circumſtances. The inſcription and ſalutation are in ver. 1, 2. and are as uſual: the thankſgiving is in ver. 3. for the growth of their faith, the abounding of their love, and their conſtant patience under perſecutions and afflictions, inſomuch that the Apoſtle alſo gloried of them for theſe things among other churches, ver. 4. and as an encouragement to them to continue patient under ſufferings, he obſerves that this was a token of the righteous judgment of God, and that they were reckoned worthy of his kingdom for which they ſuffered, ver. 5. and of which righteous judgment they might be aſſured, from the nature of God himſelf, whoſe juſtice required a retribution of vengeance to their perſecutors, and reſt to them with the Apoſtles, ver. 6, 7. the time of which reſt and eaſe is pointed at, as that it will be at the coming of Chriſt; which is deſcribed by the place from whence he comes, heaven; by his retinue, his mighty angels; by the manner in which he ſhall come, in flaming fire; and by the vengeance he will execute: the objects of which are alſo deſcribed, by their ignorance of God, and by their diſobedience to the Goſpel of Chriſt; and by the nature of the puniſhment inflicted on them, which will lie in an expulſion from the preſence, power, and glory of God, and in an everlaſting deſtruction of ſoul and body, ver. 7, 8, 9. but as for them, the perſecuted ſaints, and which is mentioned for their comfort, Chriſt ſhall at this day be glorified and admired in them, and by them, ver. 10. wherefore the Apoſtle prays for the perſeverance of them, that the good work of faith might be performed in them, and they enjoy the glory they were called unto; and that Chriſt might be glorified in them, and they in him; not according to their works, but according to the grace of God through him, ver. 11, 12.

Ver. 1. *Paul, and Sylvanus, and Timotheus*, &c.] See the note on 1 *Theſſ.* i. 1.

Ver. 2. *Grace* be *unto you, and peace*, &c.] See the note on *Rom.* i. 7.

Ver. 3. *We are bound to thank God*, &c.] Since all bleſſings temporal and ſpiritual, come from him: and that *always*; ſeeing he is ever giving out freſh favours, or continuing former ones; and becauſe thoſe, eſpecially which are of a ſpiritual nature, always abide, ſuch as faith and love; which the Apoſtle particularly takes notice of, the members of this church had, and were increaſing in them: for it is not for himſelf, but for them he gives thanks, *for you brethren*; who were ſo, not in a natural or civil relation, but in a ſpiritual one, being the children of God, and brethren of Chriſt; and to do this for them, he looked upon himſelf with others under an obligation: *as it is meet*; juſt, proper, and fitting; it not only becomes the perſons who have received mercies from God to be thankful for them; but it is very right for others to join with them in it, and eſpecially the miniſters of the Goſpel, who are bound, and whom it becomes: 'tis agreeable to their office and profeſſion to give God the praiſe and glory of all the grace, and the increaſe of it, which thoſe, who attend their labours, are favoured with, ſince this is not of them, but of God; and it was for an increaſe of grace the Apoſtle here gives thanks, as he judged he was obliged to do, and it was fit he ſhould. *Becauſe that your faith groweth exceedingly.* Their faith was not a faith of miracles, nor a mere hiſtorical faith, or a counterfeit and temporary one, but the faith of God's elect; which is the evidence of things not ſeen, of an unſeen Chriſt, and the glories of another world; that grace by which a man goes out of himſelf to Chriſt for righteouſneſs, life, and ſalvation; by which he is juſtified, and by which he lives on Chriſt, and walks on in him as he has received him. This was theirs; it was not of themſelves, the produce of nature, or the fruit of their natural power and free-will; but it was the gift of God, and of his operation; a fruit of the Spirit of God, and of which Chriſt was the author and finiſher; and was only theirs, as being given unto them, implanted in them, and exerciſed by them under the influence of the Spirit of God, and for their uſe, comfort, and advantage. This was at firſt, but like a grain of muſtard-ſeed very ſmall, but gradually increaſed, and grew exceedingly; and from ſeeing of Chriſt, and looking at him, and which at firſt might be very dim and obſcure, it proceeded to going or coming to him; and which might be in a very feeble manner, and was not without being drawn and led, and great encouragements, many invitations, and large aſſurances; and from thence to a laying hold upon him, tho' it may be but in a trembling way, and not without being called to ſtretch forth the hand of faith, and be no more faithleſs, but believing; and from thence to a leaning and relying on him, truſting in him with all, and for all; and from thence to claiming an intereſt in him, ſaying, my Lord, and my God, which is the full aſſurance of faith; and when it is come to this, it is grown exceedingly, which might be the caſe of theſe *Theſſalonians*; which the Apoſtle knew by the aboundings of their love, for faith works by love; and by their patience, firmneſs, and reſolution in ſuffering for Chriſt; all which are in proportion to faith, and the growth of it; and for this he gives thanks to God, for faith is a precious thing; and as that itſelf, ſo the increaſe of it is from God, and therefore to him the praiſe belongs: *and the charity of every one of you towards each other aboundeth*; as their faith in Chriſt, ſo their love to one another was increaſing, and ſhowed itſelf in ſerving one another both in temporals and ſpirituals; and this was not the caſe of a few only, or of the greater part, but of every one of them; which made their communion with one another very comfortable and delightful. For what is more pleaſant than for brethren to dwell together in unity?

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[a] Synopſis Sacr. Script. Tom. II. p. 129.

Ver. 4. *So that we ourſelves glory in you*, &c.] Or *of you*; for tho' they were the ſubject, concerning which, yet not the object in which they gloried; the Apoſtle elſewhere adviſes not to glory in men, but only in the Lord; nor was this his practice contrary to his advice, for he did not boaſt of theſe perſons with reſpect to their carnal things; he did not glory in their fleſh, nor in their riches, nor wiſdom, nor ſtrength, nor any external gift; he gloried indeed of their graces, and of the exerciſe and increaſe of them; but of theſe not as of themſelves, or as owing to him, and his fellow-miniſters, but as inſtances of the grace of God, and for which he gives thanks to him: and beſides, he did not glory of theſe in the preſence of God, in whoſe preſence none ſhould glory, but *in the churches of God*; the other churches in *Macedonia* and *Achaia*, as *Philippi*, *Beræa*, *Corinth*, &c. he gave thanks to God for them, and gloried of them before men, or among the ſaints, to the glory of the grace of God in them, and in order to ſtir up other churches to an emulation and imitation of them. And the particulars he gloried of them for, were as follow, *for your patience and faith in all your perſecutions and tribulations that ye endure*; many and ſore were the reproaches, the afflictions, and perſecutions that befel them for the ſake of Chriſt, and their profeſſion of him, and his Goſpel; and which is more or leſs the caſe of every one that will live godly in Chriſt Jeſus: and theſe they endured, they bore and ſtood up under, they were not ſhocked, and ſtaggered, and moved from the hope of the Goſpel by them; which ſhows that the truth of grace was in them; for where there is not the root of the matter, when tribulation and affliction ariſe becauſe of the profeſſion of the word, ſuch are offended, ſtumbled, and quickly gone; but theſe ſaints endured their afflictions, and with great patience, without murmuring and repining, and with great conſtancy, firmneſs, and reſolution of mind. They ſtood faſt in the grace and doctrine of faith, and in the profeſſion of both, which they held without wavering, and none of the things they met with could move them from it. The Apoſtle had mentioned their faith before, and he takes notice of it again, becauſe their patience, conſtancy, and perſeverance in ſufferings aroſe from it; for the trying of faith works patience, *Jam.* i. 3. The *Ethiopic* verſion leaves out the word *faith*, but very wrongly.

Ver. 5. Which is *a manifeſt token of the righteous judgment of God*, &c.] That is, according as ſome think, that God ſhould glorify thoſe that are perſecuted, and puniſh their perſecutors: this ſenſe indeed may ſeem to agree with what follows; but the Apoſtle is ſpeaking not of ſomething future, but of ſomething preſent; not of what God will do hereafter, but of the preſent ſufferings of the ſaints. According to others the ſenſe is, that God's ſuffering affliction and perſecution to befal his own people, as a chaſtiſement of them, that they may not be condemned with the world, is an evidence of his ſtrict juſtice, that he will not ſuffer ſin in any to go unobſerved by him; and is a manifeſt token how ſeverely and righteouſly he will puniſh the wicked hereafter, ſee 1 *Pet.* iv. 17, 18. But rather the meaning of the words is this, that whereas good men are afflicted and perſecuted in this life, they have now their evil things, and bad men proſper and flouriſh, and have their good things, ſo that juſtice does not ſeem to take place; which ſeeming inequality in providence has been ſometimes the hardening of wicked men, and the ſtaggering of the righteous, which ſhould not be; this is now a manifeſt token, and a clear caſe, that there will be a righteous judgment, in which things will be ſet aright, and juſtice will take place; for God is neither unrighteous nor careleſs, or negligent; and this is obſerved to ſupport the ſaints under their ſufferings, and to animate them to bear them patiently: *that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye alſo ſuffer*; either of the Goſpel, which is ſometimes ſo called, and for which they ſuffered, and ſo judged themſelves worthy of it; as thoſe that put it away from them, and care not to ſuffer the leaſt reproach for it, ſhew themſelves to be unworthy of it, and of eternal life alſo: or of a Goſpel church-ſtate, and a name, and a place in it, for which the people of God likewiſe ſuffer; and thoſe who ſhun reproach and ſufferings for it, are not worthy to have a place, or their names there: or rather of the heavenly glory; for the hope of which ſaints ſuffer much here, whereby their graces are tried, and ſo they are counted worthy, not by way of merit of it, but meetneſs for it; many tribulations are the way, or at leaſt lie in the way to this kingdom. In the ſchool of afflictions the ſaints are trained up for it; and tho' theſe are not worthy to be compared with their future happineſs, yet they work for them an eternal weight of glory; by the means of theſe the graces of the Spirit of God are exerciſed and increaſed, their hearts are weaned from the world; and coming up out of great tribulations, they waſh their garments, and make them white in the blood of the lamb, and are made meet to be partakers of the inheritance with the ſaints in light.

Ver. 6. *Seeing it is a righteous thing with God*, &c.] That which is righteous in itſelf, is righteous in the ſight of God, but it is not always ſo with men; men may think it a righteous thing that they ſhould be rewarded for perſecuting the followers of Chriſt, ſuppoſing they hereby do God good ſervice; but on the contrary with God, and in his ſight and account, 'tis a righteous thing, or a point of juſtice, *to recompenſe tribulation to them that trouble you:* perſecution is an affliction, or a trouble to the ſaints; perſecutors trouble them in their minds and bodies, in their perſons and property; they trouble their minds by caſting reflections and reproaches upon them, by ſevere revilings, and cruel mockings, which all are not alike able to bear; and they trouble and afflict their bodies by impriſonment and bonds, by ſcourging and beating, and various cruel and torturing deaths; and they diſturb them in the poſſeſſion of their eſtates, by ſpoiling their goods, and confiſcating them to their own uſe; and it is but according to *lex talionis*, the law of retaliation, to render tribulation to ſuch troublers of God's *Iſrael*; and to them it is recompenſed, either in this world, or in the world to come: ſometimes in this world perſecutors are manifeſt inſtances of God's judgments and wrath upon them, as *Herod*, who ſtretched out his hands to vex certain of the church, killed *James* the brother of *John*, and impriſoned *Peter*, and was ſmitten by the angel of the Lord, and was eaten of worms; and the *Jews*, who were now the only and the implacable perſecutors of the ſaints, in a ſhort time had the wrath of God come upon them to the uttermoſt, even upon their nation, city, and temple, upon their perſons and property. And if not in this life, 'tis a certain thing that hereafter ſuch ſhall have indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguiſh; they ſhall be caſt into outward darkneſs, into the lake of fire; and the hotteſt place in hell will be their portion, even devouring flames, and everlaſting burnings; and are what is deſigned by tribulations here.

Ver. 7. *And to you who are troubled, reſt with us*, &c.] This is another branch of the juſtice of God, in rendering to them who are afflicted and perſecuted for righteouſneſs ſake, *reſt*; a relaxation or reſt from perſecutions, for a while at leaſt; as the churches of *Judea*, *Galilee*, and *Samaria* had, from that perſecution raiſed at the death of *Stephen*, *Acts* ix. 31. and as the chriſtians had at the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*; which tho' it was a day of vengeance to the unbelieving *Jews*, were times of refreſhing to the ſaints, who were now delivered from their perſecutors: or rather this deſigns a reſt which remains for the ſaints after death in the grave, and at the coming of the Lord, and to all eternity; when they ſhall reſt from all their toil and labour, and be freed from ſin, and all diſquietude by it, and from the temptations of ſatan, and likewiſe from the perſecutions of men; ſee *Job* iii. 17. And this will be enjoyed in company with the Apoſtles, and other believers; and as it is ſome alleviation to the ſufferings and afflictions of ſaints now, that the ſame are accompliſhed in others, ſo it will enhance the heavenly glory, reſt, and felicity, that they will be partners and ſharers in it with the Apoſtles of Chriſt Jeſus, and have the ſame crown of glory they have; and indeed their company and converſation will be a part of their happineſs. *When the Lord Jeſus ſhall be revealed from heaven*; then will the juſtice of God take place in both the above branches and inſtances of it, rendering tribulation to perſecutors, and reſt to the perſecuted. Chriſt, ever ſince a cloud received him out of the ſight of the Apoſtles up to heaven, has been, as it were, hid, and has not been ſeen with corporeal eyes by men on earth ever ſince, but by a very few, as *Stephen*, and the Apoſtle *Paul*; he has only been ſeen by an eye of faith; at his ſecond coming there will be a revelation of him, and every eye ſhall ſee him: and this revelation of him will be *from heaven*; thither he was received at his aſcenſion, and there he now is; and here he is received, and will be retained until the end of all things; and from hence the ſaints expect him, and from hence will he deſcend in perſon, and then he'll be revealed, and appear to the view of every one: and that *with his mighty angels*; which will add to the glory, majeſty, and ſolemnity of that appearance: theſe are called *his* angels, becauſe he is the creator of them, and the object of their worſhip and adoration, and he is the Lord and head of them, and they are miniſtring ſpirits to him and his; and *mighty* angels, becauſe they excel all other creatures in ſtrength; a remarkable inſtance of the might and ſtrength of angels is in 2 *Kings* xix. 35. The words from the original text may be rendered, *with the angels of his power*; as they are by the *Vulgate Latin*, *Arabic*, and *Ethiopic* verſions; for they will be the miniſters of the power of Chriſt in gathering the elect from the four winds, and all nations, before Chriſt; and in taking out of his kingdom all that offend, and do iniquity; and in ſevering the righteous from the wicked; and in caſting the latter into the furnace of fire. The *Syriac* verſion reads the words, *with the power of his angels*.

Ver. 8. *In flaming fire*, &c.] Which may either refer to Chriſt, who will be revealed from heaven in ſuch a manner; and whoſe coming will be as the lightning, not only ſudden, but glorious, illuſtrious, and viſible; he will be ſeen and eaſily diſcerned; there will be ſuch a light and flaming fire about him, which as it will ſerve to make him viſible, will greatly add to the majeſty of his appearance, and ſtrike terror to his enemies, and burn them up round about; ſee *Dan.* vii. 7, 9, 10. *Pſ.* xcvii. 3, 4. or elſe it may refer to the angels, who ſhall deſcend in fiery forms, which is agreeable to their nature, *Pſ.* civ. 4. and ſo they appeared in the forms of horſes of fire, and chariots of fire, when *Elijah* was carried up to heaven. And it is a tradition of the *Jews* [z], that the angel *Gabriel* deſcended, בשלהובא דאשא, *in a flame of fire* to burn *Moſes*, as he was in the inn, when upon his journey from *Midian* to *Egypt*: or this clauſe may be read in conſtruction with the following, as it is in the *Vulgate Latin* and *Syriac* verſions, *in flaming fire taking vengeance*; and ſo expreſſes the manner in which vengeance will be taken on the wicked by Chriſt, the judge of all, to whom it belongs: and the puniſhment of ungodly men is often ſignified by fire, and flames of fire, by the fire of hell, and a lake which burns with fire and brimſtone, by a furnace of fire, everlaſting fire, and fire that cannot be quenched, to ſet forth the endleſs torture, and inconceivable miſery of the damned; and it may be, ſome regard is had to the general conflagration, which will be at the coming of Chriſt, when the heavens, being on fire, ſhall be diſſolved, the elements ſhall melt with fervent heat, and the earth, and all that is in it, ſhall be burnt up, when the bodies of the wicked, then living, will be conſumed in flames of fire, and their ſouls feel the wrath of the Almighty. The perſons who will then be puniſhed, and on whom vengeance will be taken, are deſcribed as follows, *on them that know not God*; which is a periphraſis, or common character of the *Gentiles*, 1 *Ep.* iv. 5. who know not the one, true, and living God; or know him not ſo as to glorify him as God, and be thankful to him for the mercies they receive from him, and ſtill leſs know him in Chriſt Jeſus; which ignorance of theirs is not without ſin, nor will it excuſe from puniſhment; for tho' vengeance will not be taken on them, becauſe they have not a ſpiritual, ſaving knowledge of God, in the mediator Jeſus Chriſt, who never was revealed to them; yet foraſmuch as they had the light and law of nature, by which the being of God, and the inviſible perfections of his nature might be ſeen and underſtood, and much of his will, with reſpect to moral good and evil, be known, againſt both which they have rebelled, and having ſinned, will periſh without law: tho' it may alſo include all ſuch perſons, who having been favoured with an external revelation, have profeſſed to know God, and yet in works have denied him: *and that obey not the Goſpel of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*; of which Chriſt is the author, was the preacher, and is the ſum and ſubſtance; which is good news and glad tidings of the grace of God, of peace, pardon, righteouſneſs, life, and ſalvation by Chriſt; which may be ſaid to be obeyed, when it is received and embraced by faith, with and from the heart, and confeſſion is made of it with the mouth, and the ordinances of it are ſubmitted to; and which is called the obedience of faith, becauſe faith without obedience is not right, and obedience without faith is of no avail: but all that hear the Goſpel do not obey it; there are ſome that diſbelieve and reject the doctrines and ordinances of it, and others that do profeſs it, and do not yield a cordial and chearful obedience to it; both may be reckoned among the diſobeyers of it: and tho' the unbelieving *Jews* may be chiefly deſigned here, yet deiſts of every age and place, where the Goſpel-revelation has come, and carnal profeſſors, and prophane deſpiſers every where, may be included; whoſe condemnation will be aggravated by the external light which has ſhone around them, and they have hated; the ſevereſt puniſhment will be inflicted on them; it will be more tolerable for *Tyre* and *Sidon*, *Sodom* and *Gomorrha*, than for ſuch perſons; ſee 1 *Pet*. iv. 17.

Ver. 9. *Who ſhall be puniſhed with everlaſting deſtruction*, &c.] With deſtruction both of ſoul and body, though not with the annihilation of either; their gnawing worm of conſcience will never die, and the fire of divine wrath will never be quenched; the ſmoke of their torment will aſcend for ever. Sin being committed againſt an infinite and eternal being, will be infinite in its duration; nor will it ceaſe to be in the perſons puniſhed, who will not be in the leaſt reformed or purged from ſin by puniſhment; which will make the continuance of it juſt and neceſſary. And theſe will be driven *from the preſence of the Lord*; as the former clauſe may expreſs the puniſhment of ſenſe the wicked will feel in their own breaſts, this may intend the puniſhment of loſs; or what they will be deprived of, the preſence of the Lord, in which the happineſs of angels, and of glorified ſaints lies; and may alſo ſignify how ſudden and terrible their deſtruction will be. As ſoon as the Lord appears, they'll periſh at his preſence like wax before the fire; and ſo awful will be his appearance, they'll flee from it with the utmoſt terror, and call to the rocks and mountains to hide them from the face of the Lord, and to ſkreen them from his wrath: *and from the glory of his power*; or his glorious power, in which he ſhall come, and which will be exerted, and ſhewn in raiſing the dead, and gathering all nations before him, in paſſing ſentence on them, and in executing it. For he has power, as to ſave, ſo to deſtroy, as to glorify the bodies and ſouls of his ſaints, ſo to deſtroy the wicked, both body and ſoul, in hell; and the glory of his power will be ſeen in the one, as well as in the other. And now it will be, that tribulation will be rendered to the troublers of the Lord's people.

Ver. 10. *When he ſhall come to be glorified in his ſaints*, &c.] Or by them who are ſet apart for holineſs and happineſs by God the Father; whoſe ſins are expiated by the blood and ſacrifice of Chriſt; to whom he is made ſanctification; and who are ſanctified by the Spirit and grace of God; and in whom Chriſt has a peculiar intereſt, thro' his Father's gift, his own purchaſe, and the power of his grace: and when he comes a ſecond time he'll be glorified in theſe perſons; he'll appear glorious to them; he'll come in his own glory both as God and man; and in his Father's glory, authority, and majeſty, conferred on him as the judge of the whole earth; and with the glory of his angels, who will accompany him. And he will alſo beſtow a glory on them; their ſouls will be endowed with perfect knowledge and holineſs; and their bodies will be made like to his glorious body; and both will ſhine like the ſun in the kingdom of their Father; and this glory on the members of Chriſt will redound to the glory of him their head. And as he will then, in the moſt full and clear manner, diſplay the glory of his perſon and perfections, of his wiſdom, power, faithfulneſs, and goodneſs, ſet off the glory of his offices, and the adminiſtration of them, and open the riches both of his grace and glory to them; ſo they will in return aſcribe honour, praiſe, and glory to him, and give him the glory of their ſalvation to all eternity: *and to be admired in all them that believe*; who are the ſame with the ſaints; theſe are convertible terms; for no man can be a ſaint, unleſs he is a believer in Chriſt, let him make what pretenſions to holineſs he will; and no man can be a true believer in Chriſt, unleſs he is a ſaint; for true faith works by love, and in a way of holineſs; and in thoſe, or by thoſe that are ſanctified by faith in him, will he be admired when he appears a ſecond time. He is admired by them now; he is with them the chiefeſt among ten thouſands, and altogether lovely: they wonder at the glory and beauty of his perſon, and the fulneſs of his grace; and are amazed that ſuch as they are, ſhould be admitted to communion with him; and how much more will they wonder, when they ſhall ſee him as he is? and he'll be admired by others on the account of them, when they ſhall ſee thoſe that they have deſpiſed, and perſecuted, and accounted as the filth of the world, and the offſcouring of all things, received into the arms of Jeſus with all the expreſſions of tenderneſs and love; placed at his right hand, and ſet down with him on his throne, clothed with white robes, and crowns on their head, and palms in their hands: and he himſelf will be admired with them, when they ſhall ſee him whom they took to be a mere man, and who was a man of ſorrows, and acquainted with griefs, and was loaded with reproach and ignominy, and at laſt ſuffered a ſhameful death, coming in the clouds of heaven in power and great glory as the judge of quick and dead; thus will he be admired by them, in them, and with them. (*Becauſe our teſtimony among you was believed) in that day*; the phraſe, *in that day*, belongs to all that goes before, as that Chriſt ſhall take vengeance on wicked men, and they ſhall be puniſhed by him, and he ſhall be glorified and admired in and by his people in that day, when he ſhall be revealed from heaven, and come to judge both quick and dead. Though ſome verſions read it in conſtruction with the clauſe immediately preceding, *becauſe our teſtimony among you was believed in that day*; or concerning that day; that is, you gave credit to the teſtimony we bore, when among you, concerning this illuſtrious day of the Lord; or our teſtimony, the miniſtry of the word by us, in which we bore a teſtimony to the perſon and grace of Chriſt, to his firſt, and to his ſecond coming, was received and embraced by you with a view to this day, and to the enjoyment of the glory of it. The *Arabic* verſion renders it, *for our teſtimony will be true in that day*; that is, it will appear to be ſo, every thing we have ſaid will be accompliſhed then. The *Syriac* verſion is very remote, *that our teſtimony concerning you may be believed in that day*: but it is beſt to read this clauſe in a parentheſis, as in our verſion; which is an application of what is ſaid to the *Theſſalonians*, who might conclude, that ſince they had embraced the teſtimony of the Lord Jeſus, born unto him by his Apoſtles, they would be found among the number of the ſaints and believers, in whom Chriſt would be glorified and admired; the conſideration of which might animate and encourage them to endure afflictions and perſecutions with patience, and to hold out to the end, and at laſt enjoy the heavenly glory, for which the Apoſtle next prays.

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[z] Zohar in Gen. fol. 63. 2.

Ver. 11. *Wherefore alſo we pray always for you*, &c.] Not only obſerve the above things to your comfort, to ſupport you under ſufferings, but we add our prayers, and not only now, but always, that you may be among them in whom Chriſt will be glorified and admired; in order to which we moſt ſincerely pray, *that our God would count you worthy of* this *calling*. The *Syriac* verſion reads, *your calling*, as in 1 *Cor*. i. 26. The *Vulgate Latin* reads, *his own calling*, meaning their effectual calling. This is indeed of God, and not of man; and is owing, not to any previous worthineſs in man, as appears from the inſtances of *Matthew* the publican, *Zaccheus*, the Apoſtle *Paul*, the *Corinthians*, and others, but entirely to the free grace of God, who counts them worthy, not for any worthineſs there is in them; but *vouchſafes*, as the word may be rendered, this bleſſing of grace, their effectual vocation, of his own good-will and pleaſure: but this cannot be meant here, becauſe theſe perſons were partakers of that grace, God had called them to his kingdom and glory; unleſs the ſenſe of the petition is, that God would cauſe them to walk worthy of the vocation with which they were called, which becoming walk is owing to the grace of God: or elſe the meaning may be, that God would grant unto them perſeverance in the grace, by and to which they were called, that ſo they might enjoy eternal glory; which tho' certain, ſhould be prayed for by ſaints, both for themſelves and others: the words may be rendered, *that our God would count you worthy of the call*; of the call of Chriſt when he ſhall be revealed from heaven, and come a ſecond time; for then will he firſt call the ſaints out of their graves, as he did *Lazarus*, and they ſhall hear his all-powerful voice, and come forth to the reſurrection of life, the firſt and better reſurrection, which thoſe that have part in will be ſecure from the ſecond death; this the Apoſtle was deſirous of attaining to himſelf, and prays that God would vouchſafe it to others; of this *Job* ſpeaks in ch. xiv. 15. And next Chriſt will call the righteous, when raiſed and ſet at his right hand, to inherit the kingdom and glory prepared by his Father for them; and happy are thoſe who by the grace of God will be counted worthy of this call! or rather by calling here is meant, the ultimate glory itſelf, which the ſaints are called unto; this God gives a right unto in the juſtifying righteouſneſs of his Son, and makes meet for by his own grace; and the thing itſelf is a free-grace gift of his thro' Jeſus Chriſt. In this ſenſe calling ſeems to be uſed in *Eph*. iv. 4. and to this agrees the *Ethiopic* verſion here, *that God may impart unto you that to which he hath called you*; and that is eternal glory, which tho' certainly and inſeparably connected with effectual vocation, may, and ſhould be prayed for: *and fulfil all the good pleaſure of his goodneſs*; not providential, but ſpecial goodneſs; not the good pleaſure of his ſtrict juſtice in the condemning of the wicked, denying his grace to them, and hiding from them the myſteries of the kingdom of heaven, which is a part of his good pleaſure, even of the good pleaſure of his righteouſneſs; but this is the good pleaſure of his grace and kindneſs in Chriſt Jeſus, and intends the whole of his gracious deſigns towards his people: and to expreſs the free, rich, ſovereign grace of God in them, the Apoſtle uſes a variety of words, calling them *his pleaſure*, his *good pleaſure*; and, as if this was not enough, *the good pleaſure of his goodneſs*; and deſires that all of it might be fulfilled; it conſiſting of many things, ſome of which were fulfilled, and others remained to be fulfilled. It conſiſts of the choice of perſons in Chriſt, and the predeſtination of them to the adoption of children, which is according to the good pleaſure of the will of God; the redemption of them by Chriſt, in which are diſplayed the exceeding riches of his grace; the free juſtification of them by the righteouſneſs of Chriſt; the full pardon of all their ſins, and their adoption into the houſhold of God, and their regeneration, of rich grace, and abundant mercy; all theſe inſtances of the good pleaſure of divine goodneſs were fulfilled in theſe perſons; what remained were the carrying on and finiſhing the work of grace upon their ſouls, and their enjoyment of the heavenly glory: and for the former in order to the latter, the Apoſtle prays in the next clauſe, *and the work of faith with power*; faith is not only an operative grace, ſee the note on 1 *Ep*. i. 3. and is attended with good works; but it is a work itſelf, not of man's, for he cannot produce it in himſelf, nor exerciſe it of himſelf; but it is the work of God, of his operation which he works in his people; it has not only God for its object, and therefore the *Arabic* verſion reads, *the work of faith on him*; but it has God for its author: and this now, tho' it had growed exceedingly in theſe believers, was not as yet fulfilled or perfect; ſomething was ſtill lacking in it; wherefore the Apoſtle prays that he who was the author would be the finiſher of it: and this will be done *with power*; not of man's, for this work is neither begun, nor carried on, nor will it be finiſhed by the might and power of men; but the ſame hands which laid the foundation of it, raiſe it up, carry it on, and give the finiſhing ſtroke to it: it is done by the power of God, and ſo the *Arabic* and *Ethiopic* verſions read, *by his own power*; which is greatly diſplayed in the production of faith at firſt; for a poor ſenſible ſinner in a view of all his ſins, and the juſt deſerts of them to venture his ſoul on Chriſt alone for ſalvation; for a man to go out of himſelf and renounce his own righteouſneſs, and truſt to the righteouſneſs of Chriſt for his juſtification before God, and acceptance with him, is owing to the exceeding greatneſs of God's power to them that believe; and the ſame power is ſeen in enabling faith to do the things it does; ſee *Heb*. xi. and in encouraging, ſupporting, and maintaining it under the moſt difficult circumſtances, as in the caſe of *Abraham*; and to make it ſtand faſt under the ſevereſt perſecutions, and at the hour of death, and in the view of an awful eternity, when it receives its full completion.

Ver. 12. *That the name of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt may be glorified in you*, &c.] This is the end of the Apoſtle's prayer, and which is anſwered by the fulfilment of the things prayed for; as the name of Chriſt and his Goſpel are diſhonoured, by the unbelief, cowardice, and the unworthy walk of profeſſors; ſo they are glorified in and by the ſaints, by their faith, patience, and good works in this world; which not only themſelves adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour, but cauſe others to glorify him likewiſe; and Chriſt will be glorified in them hereafter, by the glory which will be conferred upon them, and which will reflect glory upon him; when all the gracious deſigns of God are accompliſhed on them, and the work of faith is finiſhed in them; for ſhould not theſe be compleated, Chriſt would loſe the glory of redemption and ſalvation, which by means of theſe will be given by the ſaints to him to all eternity: *and ye in him*; that is, that ye may be glorified; the ſaints are now glorified in him as their head and repreſentative, being raiſed together and made to ſit together in heavenly places in him; and when the work of grace is finiſhed upon their ſouls, they will be glorified together with him and by him; and in the reſurrection morn ſhall appear in glory with him both in ſoul and body, and ſhall be made like him, and everlaſtingly enjoy him and ſee him as he is; the *Alexandrian* copy reads, *and us in him*: and all this will be as it is wiſhed for, *according to the grace of our God, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt*; according to the grace and free favour of God in election, and of Jeſus Chriſt in redemption, and of the bleſſed Spirit in ſanctification; for election, redemption, vocation, juſtification, pardon, adoption, and the whole of ſalvation from firſt to laſt are of grace and not of works; and according to this, all theſe things muſt be prayed for the application of, and muſt be expected only on ſuch a foot; and to this muſt all be aſcribed, the glory of which is the ultimate end of God, in all he has done, does, or will do for his people.

CHAP. II.

IN this chapter the Apoſtle guards againſt a notion, as if the ſecond coming of Chriſt was at hand; declares, that previous to it, there muſt be a great apoſtacy, and a revelation of anti-chriſt; comforts the ſaints againſt fears of being included in this defection; exhorts them to ſtand faſt in the faith, and cloſes this chapter with petitions for them. He intreats them in a moſt tender and ſolemn manner, not to imagine that the day of Chriſt was at hand, and that they would not be diſturbed and moved at it; and points unto the ſeveral ways and cautions againſt them, they might be impoſed upon and deceived by men with reſpect to it, ver. 1, 2. and aſſigns his reaſons why it could not be yet, becauſe before this time there was to be a general apoſtacy, and antichriſt muſt appear; whom from his character, he calls the man of ſin, and from his end, the ſon of perdition; and deſcribes him as an oppoſer of God, an exalter of himſelf above all that is called God, as ſitting in the temple of God and declaring himſelf to be God, ver. 3, 4. of which things he had told them before, ver. 5. nor were they ignorant of what at preſent hindered the revelation of the man of ſin, who was then in being, and was working and growing up apace; only there was ſomething (the *Roman* empire) which hindred, and would continue to do ſo, until the fixed time of his revelation was up, ver. 6, 7. when he ſhould be manifeſt; tho' he ſhould not always continue, being to be conſumed and deſtroyed by the breath of Chriſt's mouth, and the ſplendor of his coming, ver. 8. and the appearance of antichriſt in the world, being a matter of conſiderable importance, it is deſcribed by being after the working of ſatan, and as attended with lying and falſe miracles, and with all deceitful and unrighteous doctrines and practices; which reprobate men would be left to give into, as a puniſhment of their not receiving cordially the truth of the Goſpel; upon which account God would give them to ſuch judicial blindneſs, as to give credit to a lye, which would bring on their final damnation, they not believing the truth, but taking pleaſure in unrighteouſneſs, ver. 9, 10, 11, 12. but leſt this account of things ſhould be diſcouraging to the ſaints at *Theſſalonica*, the Apoſtle ſtiles them brethren; aſſerts them to be the beloved of the Lord; gives an inſtance of it, for which he gives thanks, namely, their election of God; the date of which was from everlaſting; the means ſanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth; the end ſalvation by Jeſus Chriſt; and the evidence of which was their effectual vocation by the Goſpel, to the obtaining of the glory of Chriſt, ver. 13, 14. and then he exhorts them to ſtand faſt in the doctrines that had been taught them, either in an epiſtolary way, or by the miniſtry of the word, ver. 15. and concludes the chapter with petitions for them made to God the Father, and to Chriſt who had loved and comforted them, and given them good hope of everlaſting things; that they might be comforted more and more, and be eſtabliſhed in every good doctrine and practice, ver. 16, 17.

Ver. 1. *Now we beſeech you, brethren,* &c.] The Apoſtle having finiſhed his firſt deſign in this epiſtle, which was to encourage the ſaints to patience under ſufferings, proceeds to another view he had in writing it, and that is to ſet the doctrine of Chriſt's coming, as to the time of it, in its proper light; and this is occaſioned by what he had ſaid concerning it in the former epiſtle, which was either miſunderſtood or miſrepreſented; and as he addreſſes the ſaints with a very affectionate appellation as his *brethren*, ſo by way of intreaty *beſeeching*, and yet in a very ſolemn manner: *by the coming of our Lord Jeſus*; which is to be underſtood not of the coming of Chriſt in the fleſh, to procure the ſalvation of his people; nor of his coming in his kingdom and power to take vengeance on the *Jewiſh* nation, for their rejection of him as the Meſſiah; but of his coming to judge the quick and dead, than which nothing is more ſure and certain, being affirmed by angels and men, by prophets and Apoſtles, and by Chriſt himſelf, or more deſirable by the ſaints; wherefore the Apoſtle intreats them by it, that whereas they believed it, expected it, and wiſhed for it, they would regard what he was about to ſay: ſo that the words tho' an intreaty, are in the form of an adjuration; unleſs they ſhould be rendered as in the *Ethiopic* verſion, as they may, *concerning the coming of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*; and ſo expreſs the ſubject matter of the diſcourſe now entring upon, with what follows: *and by our gathering together unto him*; which regards not the great gatherings of the people to Chriſt the true *Shiloh* upon his firſt coming, and the preaching of the Goſpel to both *Jews* and *Gentiles*, when there were not only great flockings to hear it, but multitudes were converted by it; nor the greater gatherings there will be in the latter day, at the time of the converſion of the *Jews*, and when the fulneſs of the *Gentiles* ſhall be brought in; nor the converſion of particular perſons, who are gathered in to Chriſt and received by him one by one; nor the aſſembling of the ſaints together for publick worſhip, in which ſenſe the word is uſed in *Heb.* x. 25. but the gathering together of all the ſaints at the laſt day, at the ſecond coming of Chriſt; for he will come with ten thouſand of his ſaints, yea, with all his ſaints, when their dead bodies ſhall be raiſed and re-united to their ſouls, and they with the living ſaints will be caught up into the air, to meet the Lord there and be ever with him; when they will make up, compleat and perfect, the general aſſembly and church of the firſt-born, whoſe names are written in heaven: this will be the gathering together of all the elect of God; and ſo the *Arabic* verſion reads, *the gathering of us all*; and which as it is certain, is greatly to be deſired; it will be a happy meeting and a glorious ſight; by this the Apoſtle intreats and adjures them to regard what follows,

Ver. 2. *That ye be not ſoon ſhaken in mind,* &c.] Or *from your mind* or *ſenſe*, as the *Vulgate Latin* verſion; or *from the ſolidity of ſenſe*, as the *Arabic* verſion; that is, from what they had received in their minds, and was their ſenſe and judgment, and which they had embraced as articles of faith; that they would not be like a wave of the ſea toſſed to and fro with every wind of doctrine; or be moved from the hope of the Goſpel, from any fundamental article of it, and from that which reſpects the ſecond coming of Chriſt particularly; and eſpecially, that they would not be quickly and eaſily moved from it; ſee *Gal.* i. 6. *or be troubled*; thrown into conſternation and ſurprize, for tho' the coming of Chriſt will not be terrible to ſaints, as it will be to ſinners; yet there is ſomething in it that is awful and ſolemn, and fills with concern; and to be told of it as at that inſtant might be ſurprizing and ſhocking: the ſeveral ways in which their minds might be troubled and diſtreſſed with ſuch an account, are enumerated by the Apoſtle that they might guard againſt them, and not be impoſed upon by them: *neither by ſpirit*; by a prophetic ſpirit, by pretenſions to a revelation from the Spirit, fixing the preciſe time of Chriſt's coming, which ſhould not be heeded or attended to; ſince his coming will be as a thief in the night: *nor by word*; by reaſon and a ſhew of it, by arguments drawn from it, which may carry in them a ſhew of probability; by enticing words of man's wiſdom; by arithmetical or aſtronomical calculations; or by pretenſions to a word, a tradition of Chriſt or his Apoſtles, as if they had received it *viva voce*, by word of mouth from any of them: *nor by letter, as from us*; by forging a letter and counterfeiting their hands, for ſuch practices began to be uſed very early; ſpurious epiſtles of the Apoſtle *Paul* were carried about, which obliged him to take a method whereby his genuine letters might be known; ſee chap. iii. 17, 18. or he may have reſpect in this clauſe to his former epiſtle, wherein he had ſaid ſome things concerning the coming of Chriſt, which had been either wrongly repreſented, or not underſtood; and as if his ſenſe was, that it would be whilſt he and others then living were alive and on the ſpot: wherefore he would not have them, neither give heed to any enthuſiaſtic ſpirits, nor to any plauſible reaſonings of men, or unwritten traditions; nor to any letters in his name, or in the name of any of the Apoſtles; nor even to his former letter to them, as tho' it contained any ſuch thing in it, *as that the day of Chriſt is at hand*; or is at this inſtant juſt now coming on; as if it would be within that year, in ſome certain month, and on ſome certain day in it; which notion the Apoſtle would have them by no means give into, for theſe reaſons, becauſe ſhould Chriſt not come, as there was no reaſon to believe he would in ſo ſhort a time, they would be tempted to diſbelieve his coming at all, at leaſt, be very indifferent about it; and ſince if it did not prove true, they might be led to conclude there was nothing true in the chriſtian doctrine and religion; and beſides, ſuch a notion of the ſpeedy coming of Chriſt, would tend to indulge the idle and diſorderly perſons among them in their ſloth and negligence: and now for theſe, and for the weighty reaſons he gives in the next verſe, he diſſuades them from imbibing ſuch a tenet; for tho' the coming of Chriſt is ſometimes ſaid to be drawing nigh, and to be quickly, yet ſo it might be, and not at that inſtant; beſides, ſuch expreſſions are uſed with reſpect to God, with whom a thouſand years are as one day, and one day as a thouſand years; and becauſe the Goſpel-times or times of the Meſſiah, are the laſt days, there will be no other diſpenſation of things until the ſecond coming of Chriſt; and chiefly they are uſed to keep up the faith, and awaken the hope and expectation of the ſaints with reſpect to it. The *Alexandrian* copy and ſome others, read, *the day of the Lord*; and ſo the *Vulgate Latin* verſion; and accordingly the *Syriac* and *Ethiopic* verſions, *the day of our Lord*.

Ver. 3. *Let no man deceive you by any means*, &c.] By any of the above means; by pretending to a revelation from the ſpirit; or to have had it from the mouth of any one of the Apoſtles; or to have a letter as from them, declaring the day of Chriſt to be inſtant; or by any other means whatever; don't be impoſed upon by them for the following reaſons, for there were things to be done before the coming of Chriſt, which were not then done, and which required time: for that day ſhall not come, *except there come a falling away firſt*; either in a political ſenſe, of the nations from the *Roman* empire, which was divided into the eaſtern and weſtern empire; for which, way was made by tranſlating the ſeat of empire from *Rome* to *Byzantium* or *Conſtantinople*; the former of theſe empires was ſeized by *Mahomet*, and ſtill poſſeſſed by the *Turks*; and the latter was over-run by the *Goths*, *Huns*, and *Vandals*, and torn to pieces; *Italy* particularly was ravaged by them, and *Rome* itſelf was ſacked and taken: or rather in a religious ſenſe, of the falling of men from the faith of the Goſpel, from the purity of Goſpel-doctrines, diſcipline, worſhip, and ordinances; and this not of ſome *Jews* who profeſſed faith in Chriſt, and departed from it, or of ſome chriſtians who went off to the *Gnoſticks*; but is to be underſtood of a more general defection in the times of the papacy; when not only the eaſtern churches were perverted and corrupted by *Mahomet*, and drawn off to his religion, but the weſtern churches were moſt ſadly depraved by the man of ſin, by bringing in errors of all ſorts in doctrine, making innovations in every ordinance, and appointing new ones, and introducing both judaiſm and paganiſm into the churches; which general defection continued until the times of the reformation, and is what the Apoſtle has reſpect to in 1 *Tim.* iv. 1, 2, 3. where he manifeſtly points out ſome of the popiſh tenets, as forbidding marriage to prieſts, and ordering abſtinence from meats on certain days, and at certain times of the year: this was one thing that was to precede the coming of Chriſt, another follows, which ſhould take place at the ſame time; *and that man of ſin be revealed*; who was now hid, tho' ſecretly working; by whom is meant not any particular perſon or individual; not the devil, for tho' he is the wicked one, a damned ſpirit, an oppoſer, an adverſary of God and Chriſt, and his people, and who has affected deity, and ſought to be worſhipped, and even by Chriſt himſelf; yet the man of ſin is here diſtinguiſhed from ſatan, ver. 9. nor is any particular emperor of *Rome* intended, as *Caius Caligula*, or *Nero*, for tho' theſe were monſters of iniquity, and ſet up themſelves as Gods, yet they ſat not in the temple of God; nor is *Simon Magus* deſigned, who was a very wicked man, a ſorcerer, and who gave out himſelf to be ſome great one, and was called the great power of God, before his profeſſion of faith in Chriſt; and afterwards affirmed that he was God, the father in *Samaria*, the ſon in *Judea*, and the ſpirit in the reſt of the nations of the world; and becauſe of his ſigns and lying wonders, had a ſtatue erected by the *Roman* emperor with this inſcription, *to Simon the holy God*; but then this wicked man was now already revealed: nor is this to be underſtood of a certain *Jew*, that is to be begotten by the devil on a virgin of the tribe of *Dan*, and who is to reign three years and a half, and then to be deſtroyed by Chriſt, which is a fable of the *Papiſts*; but a ſucceſſion of men is here meant, as a king is uſed ſometimes for an order and ſucceſſion of kings, *Deut.* xvii. 18. and an high-prieſt, for that whole order from *Aaron*'s time to the diſſolution of it, *Heb.* ix. 7. ſo here it intends the whole hierarchy of *Rome*, monks, friars, prieſts, biſhops, archbiſhops, cardinals, and eſpecially popes, who may well be called *the man of ſin*, becauſe notoriouſly ſinful; not only ſinners, but ſin itſelf, a ſink of ſin, monſters of iniquity, ſpiritual wickedneſſes in high places: it is not eaſy to reckon up their impieties, their adulteries, inceſt, ſodomy, rapine, murder, avarice, ſimony, perjury, lying, necromancy, familiarity with the devil, idolatry, witchcraft, and what not; and not only have they been guilty of the moſt notorious crimes themſelves, but have been the patrons and encouragers of others in ſin; by diſpenſing with the laws of God and man, by making ſins to be venial, by granting indulgences and pardon for the worſt of crimes, by licenſing brothel-houſes, and countenancing all manner of wickedneſs; and therefore it is no wonder to hear of the following epithet, *the ſon of perdition*; ſince theſe are not only the *Apollyon*, the king of the bottomleſs pit, the deſtroyer, the cauſe of the perdition of thouſands of ſouls, for the ſouls of men are their wares; but becauſe they are by the righteous judgment of God appointed and conſigned to everlaſting deſtruction; the devil, the beaſt, and the falſe prophet will have their portion together in the lake that burns with fire, *Rev.* xx. 10. the ſame character as here is given of *Judas* the betrayer of Chriſt, *John* xvii. 12.

Ver. 4. *Who oppoſeth*, &c.] Or is an oppoſer, an adverſary of Chriſt, the antichriſt; who oppoſes him in his kingly office, ſtiling himſelf the head and ſpouſe of the church, aſſuming to himſelf all power in heaven and in earth, taking upon him to diſpenſe with the laws of Chriſt, and to make new ones; who oppoſes him in his prieſtly office, by pretending to offer him up again in the ſacrifice of the maſs, and by making angels and ſaints departed, interceſſors and advocates; and alſo in his prophetic office, by teaching for doctrines the commandments of men, and ſetting up unwritten traditions before the word of God, requiring the worſhipping of images, angels and ſaints, when Chriſt requires that the Lord God only ſhould be worſhipped and ſerved; and by introducing the doctrine of works and of merit inſtead of grace, and with a multitude of other things, in which he moſt manifeſtly appears to be diametrically oppoſite and contrary to Chriſt: *and exalteth himſelf above all that is called God, or that is worſhipped.* The *Syriac* verſion renders the laſt clauſe, ודחלא, *and religion*; and the *Greek* word does ſignify religion, worſhip, or devotion, as it is tranſlated in *Acts* xvii. 23. but here the act of worſhip is put for the object, and is rightly rendred, *or that which is worſhipped*; as it is in the *Vulgate Latin* verſion, and in the *Arabic* verſion, *or that which is to be worſhipped*; and it was uſual with the *Jews* to call God the object of worſhip, by the name of worſhip itſelf, and by which they uſed to ſwear: it is ſaid [c] of *R. Benjamin* the juſt, that he was appointed over the alms cheſt; one time a woman came to him and said, *Rabbi*, relieve me, he replied to her העבודה, *by the worſhip*; (that is by God who is worſhipped) there is nothing in the alms cheſt: and elſewhere [d] it is ſaid by one, concerning two that were fatherleſs, for whom the collectors of alms gathered, העבודה, *by the worſhip*, they go before my daughter: and a little after, העבודה, *by the worſhip*, theſe things are holy to thee; where the *Gloſs* ſays, it is an oath: and ſo here the word is to be underſtood of deity itſelf; and the meaning is, that antichriſt would exalt himſelf above all the Gods of the *Gentiles*, who are only nominally, and not by nature Gods; to theſe were aſcribed, ſome one thing, to ſome another; one had the government of heaven, another of hell, another of the ſeas, and another of the winds, *&c.* but this haughty creature antichriſt, aſſumes to himſelf all power, both in heaven, earth, and hell. Angels are ſometimes called Gods, *Pſal.* viii. 4. becauſe they are ſent of God, and ſometimes repreſent him; the popes of *Rome* have exalted themſelves above theſe; pope *Clement* the VIth proclaimed a *Jubilee*, and promiſed forgiveneſs of ſins to all that ſhould come to *Rome*; and in his bull for it ſays, that "if any that was confeſſed ſhould die by the way, "he ſhould be free from all his ſins; *and we do* "*command the angels*, that they take ſuch a ſoul "out of purgatory entirely abſolved, and intro"duce it into the glory of paradiſe:" and in a manuſcript in the library at *Helmſted*, are theſe words, "we command the angels that they carry "ſuch a ſoul into *Abraham*'s boſom, as ſoon as it "has left the body:" kings and civil magiſtrates are called Gods, *Pſal.* lxxxii. 5. and this monſter of iniquity and firſt-born of ſatan, the popes of *Rome* have exalted themſelves above theſe; they have not only took upon them to excommunicate emperors and kings, but to depoſe them and take away their crowns from them, and give their kingdoms to others, and abſolve their ſubjects from allegiance and fidelity to them; an emperor has held a pope's ſtirrup whilſt he alighted from his horſe, and was ſeverely reprimanded for holding the left inſtead of the right ſtirrup; and the ſame emperor held another pope's ſtirrup whilſt he got on his horſe, and who ſet his foot upon his neck when he abſolved him, being before excommunicated by him, uſing theſe words in *Pſal.* xci. 13. *thou ſhalt tread upon the lion*, &c. An emperor and an empreſs waited at a pope's gates three days barefoot; another emperor and empreſs were crowned by the pope with his feet; he took the crown with his feet, and they bowing down put it upon their heads, and then kicked it off; and one of our own kings reſigned his crown and the enſigns of his royalty to the pope's legate, who kept them five days; and when he offered a ſum of money to the legate as an earneſt of his ſubjection, to ſhew his maſter's grandeur, he ſpurned at it; a king was thrown under a pope's table to lick the bones like a dog, whilſt he was eating; ſo truly has this paſſage had its accompliſhment in that impious and inſolent ſett of men. *Rome* is by the *Jewiſh* [e] writers called *Magdiel*, which ſignifies *magnifying itſelf*; the reaſon is becauſe, שיתגדל, *becauſe it magnifies itſelf* above all theſe [f]; that is, above all kingdoms and ſtates: but what is worſe and moſt dreadfully blaſphemous, follows, *ſo that he as God ſitteth in the temple of God*; not in the temple of *Jeruſalem*, which was to be deſtroyed and never to be rebuilt more, and was deſtroyed before this man of ſin was revealed; but in the church of God, ſo called, 1 *Cor.* iii. 16. 2 *Cor.* vi. 16. the *Ethiopic* verſion renders it, *in the houſe of God*; for antichriſt roſe up out of, and in the midſt of the church; and it was a true church in which he firſt appeared, and over which he uſurped power and authority; tho' it has been ſo corrupted by him, as now to be only nominally ſo; here he ſits and has homage done him by his creatures, as if he was a God, and is not only ſtiled Chriſt's vicar, but a God on earth, and our Lord God the pope; ſo in the triumphal arch at the entry of pope *Sixtus* the fourth, theſe lines were put, *oraculo vocis, mundi moderaris habenas, & meritò in terris crederis eſſe Deus*; the ſenſe is, that he governed the world by his word, and was deſervedly believed to be *God on earth*; and their canon law [g] ſays, "it is clearly enough ſhewn "that the pope cannot be looſed or bound by any "ſecular power; ſince it is evident that he is called "*God* by that pious prince *Conſtantine*, and it is "manifeſt that God cannot be judged by men:" and pope *John* the XXIId is expreſsly called [h], *our Lord God the pope*: the *Ethiopic* verſion reads, *he ſhall ſay to all I am the Lord God*; ſee *Ezek.* xxviii. 2. the *Alexandrian* copy, and ſome others, and the *Vulgate Latin* verſion leave out the phraſe, *as God*, but the *Syriac* retains it: however, the ſame blaſphemy is expreſſed in the next clauſe, *ſhewing himſelf that he is God*; by uſurping a power over the conſciences and ſouls of men; by diſpenſing with the laws of God and man; by aſſuming to himſelf all power in heaven and in earth; by taking upon him to open and ſhut the gates of heaven at pleaſure; and by pardoning ſin, which none but God can do; this is the mouth ſpeaking blaſphemies, *Rev.* xiii. 5, 6.

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[c] T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 11. 1.

Ver. 5. *Remember ye not, that when I was yet with you*, &c.] At *Theſſalonica*, for the Apoſtle had been there in perſon, and had preached there with great boldneſs and ſucceſs; he had declared the whole counſel of God, and the Goſpel came in power and worked effectually in them, and yet there was too great a forgetfulneſs of it; with which the Apoſtle tacitly charges them, and rebukes them gently for it; and as a faithful monitor, ſtirs up their pure minds by way of remembrance, and reminds them of former truths delivered to them: *I told you theſe things*; or *words*, as the *Arabic* verſion; concerning the coming of Chriſt, as that it would not be yet, that there muſt be a defection from the faith, and antichriſt muſt be revealed; which ſhows that theſe were things of moment and importance, and were uſeful and profitable to be inſiſted on; and therefore the Apoſtle had told them of them, and ſpoke freely and largely about them, at his firſt preaching among them, and were what he inculcated every where; and alſo that his doctrine was all of a piece at one time as another; it was not yea and nay, or contradictory; what he now ſaid was no other than what he had ſaid before; and therefore it was the more inexcuſable in them, to be ſhaken or troubled by any means with another doctrine.

Ver. 6. *And now ye know what withholdeth*, &c.] Or hinders the revelation of the man of ſin, or antichriſt; by which is meant not the Apoſtle *Paul*, tho' he by his miniſtry was a very great hindrance of the growth of error, and the ſpread of evil practices in the churches, and ſo of the more open appearance of the man of ſin in his fore-runners; and after his departure from *Epheſus*, and impriſonment at *Rome*, and ſuffering death, there was a great falling off in the churches, and among profeſſors of religion, which made way for the manifeſtation of antichriſt in due time: nor the preaching of the Goſpel, in its power and purity, in the ſeveral parts of the world; tho' ſo long as this obtained, got ground, and gained ſucceſs, the man of ſin could not ſhew his head; and therefore it muſt, as it did, decline, and was gradually taken away that he might appear: nor the Spirit of God, as the Spirit of truth and holineſs, tho' as long as he continued in his gifts and operations of grace in the churches, they were preſerved from antichriſtian doctrine and worſhip; but when he removed from them, this enemy and adverſary of Chriſt and his Goſpel came in like a flood: nor the general defection in ver. 3. tho' that was to be previous to the revelation of antichriſt, and was to be what would uſher him in; nor could he appear until the wickedneſs of men was come to a pitch, that they would be ready to receive him, and pay homage and worſhip to him: nor is the decree of God meant, tho' till the time came fixed by God for his appearance, the decree muſt be a bar in his way; ſince as there is a time for every purpoſe, nothing can come to paſs till that time comes: but by that which withheld, let or hindred the open appearance of antichriſt, were the *Roman* empire and emperors; theſe ſtood in his way, and whilſt this empire laſted, and the emperors wore the imperial crown, and ſat on the throne, and held the government in their hands, the popes could not come at the height of their ambition, dignity and authority, nor ſhine in their glory; nor could the whore of *Babylon* take her ſeat, and ſit upon the ſeven hills of *Rome* until the *Roman* emperor was taken out of the way: this therefore hindered, *that he might be revealed in his time*. The *Ethiopic* verſion renders it, *until his time appointed came*; wherefore till the time that God had fixed for the appearance of this monſter of iniquity, this ſon of perdition, the *Roman* empire muſt continue, and *Roman* emperors muſt keep their place and dignity to prevent his appearance ſooner: the reaſon why the Apoſtle expreſſes this not in plain words, but in an obſcure manner, and with ſo much caution was, that he might not offend *Roman* emperors, and provoke them to a ſevere perſecution of them as ſeditious perſons, that ſought the deſtruction of the empire: the word here uſed, which is rendered *withholdeth*, or *letteth*, as in the next verſe, ſignifies a ruler or governour, and anſwers to the *Hebrew* word עצר, to *keep back*, or *reſtrain*; and which is uſed of kings, who by their laws and government reſtrain and withhold people from doing what they would; ſee 1 *Sam.* ix. 17. 2 *Chron.* xiv. 11. to which the Apoſtle, who well underſtood the *Hebrew* language, doubtleſs had reference; ſo יורש עצר, is rendered, a *magiſtrate*, in *Judges* xviii. 7.

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[d] T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 24. 1.

[e] Jarchi in Gen. xxxvi. 43.

[f] Abarbinel in Dan. fol. 42. 3.

[g] Gratian. Decret. diſt. 96. can. *ſatis*.

[h] Extravag. *cum inter*.

Ver. 7. *For the myſtery of iniquity doth already work*, &c.] Or *the myſtery of that wicked one*, as the *Syriac*; meaning either antichriſt himſelf, and the ſpirit of antichriſt, which were already in the world, 1 *John* ii. 18. and iv. 2. *myſtery* being one of the names of antichriſt, *Rev.* xvii. 5. and antiently this word was engraven on the mitres of the popes of *Rome*: or the evil doctrines and practices of antichriſt may be intended; for as the doctrine of the Goſpel is called a myſtery, and the myſtery of godlineſs; ſo the doctrines and practices of antichriſt may be called the myſtery of iniquity, eſpecially as they were now ſecretly ſpread, imbibed and practiſed: the foundations of it were now laying in the church by falſe teachers; for errors and hereſies of every ſort, reſpecting the perſon and offices of Chriſt, and in oppoſition to them were now broached; idolatry and holding communion with idolaters now obtained; worſhipping of angels was uſed by ſome; and ſuperſtition and will-worſhip, worſhip after the commandments of men were practiſed; days and months and years, diſtinguiſhed by *Jews* and *Pagans*, and difference of meats were obſerved; celibacy and virginity began to be admired and commended; dominion and magiſtracy were deſpiſed, and church-authority contemned, and many, as *Diotrephes*, loved to have the pre-eminence; and the doctrine of juſtification by the works of the law was induſtriouſly ſpread, and zealouſly preached and received; all which laid the foundation, and are the life and ſoul of popery: *only he who now letteth*, will let, *until he be taken out of the way*; that is, the *Roman* empire and *Roman* emperors, and which were by degrees entirely removed, and ſo made way for the revelation of this wicked one: and which was done partly by *Conſtantine* the emperor receiving the chriſtian faith, whereby the *Roman* empire as pagan ceaſed; and by increaſing the riches of the church, and feeding the pride, ambition, and covetouſneſs of the biſhops, eſpecially the biſhop of *Rome*; and next by removing the ſeat of the empire from *Rome* to *Byzantium*, which he called *Conſtantinople*: here the *Greek* emperors continued in ſucceſſion, and neither they themſelves, nor even their exarchs, reſided at *Rome*, but at *Ravenna*; ſo that way was made for antichriſt to come to his ſeat, and there was nothing to rival and eclipſe the grandeur, power, and glory of the *Roman* popes: and that which let was alſo taken out of the way, by the diviſion of the empire, by *Theodoſius*, giving to his elder ſon *Arcadius*, the eaſtern, and to the younger, *Honorius*, the weſtern parts of it: the eaſtern empire was in proceſs of time ſeized upon and poſſeſſed by *Mahomet*, and the *Saracens*; and the weſtern empire was over-run by the *Goths*, *Vandals*, and *Huns*, and became extinct about the year 476, in *Auguſtulus* the laſt of the *Roman* emperors, who was obliged to abdicate the government by *Odoacer* king of the *Heruli*; when the kingdom of the *Lombards* took place in *Italy*, and afterwards that was tranſlated to *Charles* the great, king of the *French*; ſo that there was nothing more of the *Roman* empire remaining than the bare name, as at this day; and by this means the popes of *Rome* got to the height of their power and glory, which is meant by the revelation of the man of ſin.

Ver. 8. *And then ſhall that wicked be revealed*, &c.] That lawleſs one, who ſets himſelf above the laws of God and man, and diſpenſes with them at pleaſure, who judges all men, but is judged by no man; as he was in his eccleſiaſtical power, when *Phocas*, who murdered the emperor *Mauritius*, granted to *Boniface* the third to be called univerſal biſhop; and in his civil power in ſucceeding popes, who took upon them the power over kings and emperors, to crown, depoſe, and excommunicate at pleaſure: *whom the Lord ſhall conſume with the Spirit of his mouth*; that is, *the Lord Jeſus*, as the *Alexandrian* copy, and *Vulgate Latin* verſion read; and the *Syriac* verſion, *our Lord Jeſus*; who is Lord of lords, and God over all; and ſo able to do what he is here ſaid he ſhall do: and which he will do *with the Spirit of his mouth*; meaning either the holy Spirit, the third perſon which proceeds from him, as in *Pſal.* xxxiii. 6. and ſo the *Ethiopic* verſion, *whom the Spirit of our Lord Jeſus ſhall caſt out*; Chriſt will by his Spirit blow a blaſt upon antichriſt and his kingdom, which he ſhall never recover again, but ever after conſume and waſte away: or elſe by his Spirit is meant his Goſpel; the ſcriptures in general are the breath of God, being divinely inſpired by him, and are the ſword of the Spirit, the two-edged ſword of law and Goſpel, which proceeds out of Chriſt's mouth; the Goſpel contains the words of Chriſt, which are ſpirit and life; theſe come out of his mouth, and are ſharper than any two-edged ſword; and as hereby ſinners are cut to the heart, hewn and ſlain, convicted and converted, ſo by this likewiſe antichriſt will be conſumed, and is conſuming; for this phraſe denotes the beginning of his deſtruction, which took place at the time of the reformation by the preaching of the Goſpel by *Luther* and others; by which this man of ſin received his deadly wound, and has been in a conſumption ever ſince, and is ſenſibly waſting in his power and glory every day, and will e'er long come to utter deſtruction: *and ſhall deſtroy with the brightneſs of his coming*; either in a ſpiritual way, when he ſhall come in his ſpiritual kingdom and glory, by the light of his Goſpel and the illuminations of his Spirit; when at eventide it ſhall be light; when he the ſun of righteouſneſs ſhall ariſe; when latter day, light, and glory ſhall appear, and latter day darkneſs, the groſs darkneſs of popery, paganiſm, and judaiſm which cover the people ſhall be removed, and antichriſt in every form ſhall diſappear: or in a perſonal manner, when he ſhall come to judge the quick and dead, which will be in flaming fire and great glory; and then will antichriſt and his followers, the beaſt and thoſe that have worſhipped him, be caſt with the devil and the falſe prophet into the lake which burns with fire and brimſtone; and this will be the laſt and utter end of him. In this paſſage there is a manifeſt reference to *Iſ.* xi. 4. *with the breath of his mouth ſhall he ſlay the wicked*; which the *Targumiſt* paraphraſes, "with the word "of his lips he ſhall ſlay ארמילוס רשיעא, *Armillus* "*the wicked*;" and which the *Jews* ſay will be done by the Meſſiah at his coming; "for ſo [i] ſay "they, that phraſe in *Deut.* xxii. 8. *if a man fall* "*from thence*, has reſpect to *Armillus* the wicked, "who at the coming of our Meſſiah will be ſlain, "as it is ſaid in *Iſ.* xi. 4." This *Armillus* the *Jews* ſay [k], is the head of all idolatry, the tenth king who ſhall reign at *Rome*, the city of ſatan; that he ſhall riſe up after *Gog* and *Magog*, and ſhall go up to *Jeruſalem* and ſlay *Meſſiah ben Joſeph*, and ſhall himſelf be ſlain by Meſſiah the ſon of *David*; yea, they ſay expreſly [l], it is the ſame whom the *Gentiles* call antichriſt: it is the ſame with *Romulus* the firſt king of the *Romans*, and deſigns a *Roman*, the *Roman* antichriſt; and it may be obſerved that the *Targumiſt* interprets *the breath of his mouth*, by his word; and ſo ſays another of their writers [m], "the meaning is by the word of his lips, for the word "goes out of the mouth with the vapour and "breath:" ſuch an expreſſion as this is ſaid [n] to be uſed by *Moſes*, when he was bid by God to anſwer the angels who objected to his having the law given him; "I am afraid, ſays he, they will *ſlay* "(or burn me) בהבל שבפיהם, *with the breath of* "*their mouth*:" much more may this be feared from the breath of Chriſt's mouth.

Ver. 9. Even him *whoſe coming is after the working of ſatan*, &c.] That is, as a deceiver, a liar, and a murderer; for ſuch was the working of ſatan with our firſt parents; he ſeduced *Eve*, not only by ſubtlety, but by lying; he abode not in the truth, is the father of lyes, and a murderer from the beginning: and ſuch is the working of antichriſt his firſt-born; he comes in a deceitful way, under a profeſſion of Chriſt, and a pretenſion of faith in him, and love to him; but ſpeaks lies in hypocriſy, for ſuch are his doctrines and tenets; and is not only a murderer of the bodies of the ſaints, but of the ſouls of men; which are the wares the whore of *Babylon* deals in: *with all power*; not omnipotence, for that is peculiar to God, and is not in ſatan nor in antichriſt, tho' the latter aſſumes to himſelf all power in heaven and in earth, and claims a juriſdiction both temporal and ſpiritual over men; but rather this means great power, or all kind of power of doing miracles, as follows: *and ſigns, and lying wonders*; that is, ſuch ſigns and miracles as are not real, but feigned, only in appearance, not in truth, like thoſe that were done by the magicians of *Egypt*; and theſe were done to countenance lyes, and to induce perſons to believe them; and how many miracles and lying wonders the church of *Rome* pretends to, every body knows.

Ver. 10. *And with all deceivableneſs of unrighteouſneſs*, &c.] Not that he deceives or goes about to deceive, or thinks to deceive by open unrighteouſneſs; but by unrighteouſneſs, under a pretence of righteouſneſs and holineſs; as with the doctrines of juſtification and ſalvation by a man's own righteouſneſs, with the doctrines of merit and of works of ſupererogation, which are taking to men, and by which they are deceived, and are no other than unrighteouſneſs with God, and betray ignorance of his righteouſneſs, and a non-ſubmiſſion to it; as alſo with practices which carry a ſhew of holineſs, religion and devotion, when they are no other than acts of impiety, ſuperſtition, and will-worſhip; as their litanies and prayers, their worſhip of images, angels, and ſaints departed, their frequent faſts and feſtivals, their pilgrimages, penance, and various acts of mortification and the like; but then theſe deceptions only have place, *in them that periſh*; whom the God of this world has blinded, from whom the Goſpel is hid, and to whom it is fooliſhneſs: all men indeed are in a loſt periſhing condition, thro' original and actual ſin; but all ſhall not periſh, there are ſome that God will not have periſh, whom Chriſt is given for that they ſhould not periſh, and whom he has redeemed by his blood, and to whom he gives eternal life; but there are others that are veſſels of wrath afore ordained to condemnation, reprobate men left to themſelves, and given up to their hearts luſts; and theſe and only theſe are finally and totally deceived, by the ſigns and lying wonders, and falſe appearances of antichriſt; ſee *Matt.* xxiv. 24. *becauſe they received not the love of the truth that they might be ſaved*; by the *truth* is meant either Chriſt the truth of types, the ſum of promiſes, in whom the treaſures of wiſdom and knowledge are, and by whom grace and truth came; or the Goſpel often called truth, and the word of truth, it coming from the God of truth, has for its ſubject Chriſt the truth, is dictated and directed into by the Spirit of truth, and contains nothing but truth: and by *the love* of it is meant, either the lovelineſs of it, for truth is an amiable, lovely thing, in its nature and uſe; or an affection for it, which there is where true faith in it is, for faith works by love: there may be a flaſhy affection for the truths of the Goſpel, where there is no true faith in Chriſt, or the root of the matter is not, as in the ſtony ground hearers; and there may be an hiſtorical faith in the doctrines of the Goſpel, where the power of them is denied, and there is no true hearty love for them; and in theſe perſons there is neither faith nor love; the truths of the Goſpel are neither believed by them, nor are they affected with them, that ſo they might be ſaved; for where there is true faith in the Goſpel of Chriſt, and in Chriſt the ſubſtance of it, there is ſalvation; the reaſon therefore of theſe mens periſhing is not the decree of God, nor even want of the means of grace, the revelation of the Goſpel, but their rejection and contempt of it.

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[i] Tzeror Hammor, fol. 148. 2.

[k] Apud Buxtorf. Lex. Talmud. col. 221, 222, 223.

[l] Abkath Rochel, par. 1, ſign. 7. p. 52.

[m] In Ohel Moed. fol. 19. 1.

[n] T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 88. 2.

Ver. 11. *And for this cauſe God ſhall ſend them ſtrong deluſion*, &c.] Or *efficacy of error*, which God may be ſaid to ſend; and the *Alexandrian* copy reads, *does ſend*; becauſe it is not a bare permiſſion, but a voluntary one; or it is his will that error ſhould be that truth may be tried, and be illuſtrated by its contrary, and ſhine the more thro' the force of oppoſition to it; and that thoſe which are on the ſide of it, might be made manifeſt, as well as that the rejecters of the Goſpel might be puniſhed; for the efficacy of error is not to be conſidered as a ſin, of which God cannot be the author, but as a puniſhment for ſin, and to which men are given up, and fall under the power of, becauſe they receive not the love of the truth, which is the reaſon here given: and this comes to paſs partly thro' God's denying his grace, or withholding that light and knowledge, by which error may be diſcovered and detected; and by taking from men the knowledge and conſcience of things they had, ſee *Rom.* i. 28. So that they call evil good, and good evil, and don't appear to have the common ſenſe and reaſon of mankind, at leaſt do not act according to it; and by giving them up to judicial blindneſs and hardneſs of heart, and to the God of this world, to blind their minds; and without this it is not to be accounted for, that the followers of antichriſt ſhould give into ſuch ſenſeleſs notions as thoſe of tranſubſtantiation, works of ſupererogation, &c. or into ſuch ſtupid practices as worſhipping of images, praying to ſaints departed, and paying ſuch a reſpect to the pretended relicks of ſaints, &c. as they do; but a ſpirit of ſlumber is given them, and eyes that they ſhould not ſee, and ears that they ſhould not hear, becauſe of their rejection of the Goſpel: and *that they ſhould believe a lye*; that the pope is Chriſt's vicar on earth, and has power to forgive ſins; that the bread and wine in the Lord's ſupper are tranſubſtantiated into the very body and blood of Chriſt; with other lying tenets ſpoken in hypocriſy concerning good works, merit, pardon, pennance, &c. with a multitude of lying wonders and falſe miracles, of which their legends are full; and this is the firſt and more near end of ſtrong deluſion or efficacious error being ſent them; the more remote and ultimate one follows.

Ver. 12. *That they all might be damned*, &c.] Or *judged*, diſcerned and diſtinguiſhed from true chriſtians and real believers; or rather that they might be condemned and puniſhed with everlaſting deſtruction from the preſence of the Lord, and have their portion in the lake which burns with fire and brimſtone; where the devil, the falſe prophet, and the beaſt, whoſe followers they are, will be caſt; and it is but a righteous thing with God to give them up to ſuch deluſion, that they may be damned, ſince they received not the love of the truth that they might be ſaved; and the following character of them juſtifies the divine procedure: *who believed not the truth*; neither the word of truth, the Goſpel of ſalvation, nor Chriſt, who is truth itſelf; and therefore were righteouſly given up to believe a lye; and whoſe damnation is juſt, according to the declaration of Chriſt, he that believeth not ſhall be damned: *but had pleaſure in unrighteouſneſs*; in ſin, as all unrighteouſneſs is; in ſinful ways and works, and in unrighteous doctrines; as the doctrines of merit, of works of ſupererogation, and of juſtification by works, being derogatory to the juſtice of God, and to the righteouſneſs of Chriſt; and in the unrighteous perſecution and bloodſhed of the ſaints, the martyrs of Jeſus; in which the followers of antichriſt take as much delight and pleaſure, as an intemperate man does in drinking wine or ſtrong drink to exceſs; and therefore the whore of *Babylon* is ſaid to be drunk with the blood of the ſaints; and it is but juſt ſhe ſhould have blood to drink, or be puniſhed both with temporal and eternal deſtruction.

Ver. 13. *But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you*, &c.] Leſt the ſaints ſhould be diſcouraged by the above account of Antichriſt, and his followers, and fear they ſhould be left to the ſame deceptions, and damnation be their portion; the Apoſtle being perſuaded better things of them, gives their character, and repreſents their caſe in a quite different light; and ſignifies, that he and his fellow-miniſters were under obligation to be continually thankful to God for what he had done for them; for as God is the Father of mercies, whether ſpiritual or temporal, thanks are to be given to him; and ſaints are not only to bleſs his name for what they themſelves receive from him, but for what others enjoy alſo, and that continually; becauſe ſpiritual bleſſings, eſpecially ſuch as afterwards inſtanced in, are permanent and durable, yea everlaſting: the characters which ſhow them to be different from the followers of Antichriſt, are, *brethren, beloved of the Lord*; or *of God*, as the *Vulgate Latin* and *Ethiopic* verſions read: they were the brethren of Chriſt, being the dear children of God, born of him, and belonging to his family, and of the Apoſtles, and of one another, being of the houſhold of faith; and they were beloved by God the Father, as the inſtances of their election to ſalvation by him, and their vocation to eternal glory ſhew; and by the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who had wrought out for them the ſalvation they were choſen to; and and by the Lord the Spirit, by whom they were regenerated, called, ſanctified, and brought to the belief of the truth; and ſince they had intereſt in the everlaſting love of the three divine perſons, there was no danger of their falling away and periſhing. The reaſon of the Apoſtle's thankſgiving for the perſons thus deſcribed, is, *becauſe God hath from the beginning choſen you to ſalvation*; which is to be underſtood, not of an election of them, as a nation, for they were not a nation, only a part of one; nor of them as a church, for they were not ſo from the beginning; nor to the outward means of grace, the miniſtry of the word and ordinances, for the choice is unto ſalvation; nor to any office, for they were not all officers in the church, only ſome; nor does it intend effectual vocation, for that is diſtinguiſhed from it in the following verſe; but an eternal appointment of perſons to grace and glory: and this is an act of God the Father, in Chriſt, from eternity; and which ariſes from his ſovereign good will and pleaſure, and is an inſtance of his free grace and favour, for the glorifying of himſelf; and is irreſpective of the faith, holineſs, and good works of men; all which are the fruits and effects, and not the motives, conditions, or cauſes of electing grace. This act is the leading one to all other bleſſings of grace, as juſtification, adoption, vocation, and glorification, and is certain and immutable in its ſelf, and in its effects. The date of it is *from the beginning*; not from the beginning of the preaching of the Goſpel to them, and the ſenſe be, that as ſoon as the Goſpel was preached, they believed, and God choſe them; for what was there remarkable in them that this ſhould be peculiarly obſerved of them? The *Bereans* are ſaid to be more noble than they were: nor from the beginning of their vocation, for predeſtination or election precedes vocation; ſee *Rom.* viii. 30. nor from the beginning of time, or of the creation of the world, but before the world began, even from eternity; and in ſuch ſenſe the phraſe is uſed in *Prov.* viii. 23. and that it is the ſenſe of it here, is manifeſt from *Eph.* i. 4. where this choice is ſaid to be before the foundation of the world. The end to which men, by this act, are choſen, is *ſalvation*; not temporal, though the elect of God are appointed to many temporal ſalvations and deliverances, and which they enjoy both before and after converſion; yet ſalvation here deſigns the ſalvation of the ſoul, though not excluſive of the body, a ſpiritual and an eternal ſalvation, ſalvation by Jeſus Chriſt, as is expreſſed in 1 *Theſſ.* v. 9. and the ſame decree that appoints men to ſalvation, appoints Chriſt to be the ſaviour of them; and there is ſalvation in and by no other. The means thro' which this choice is made, are *thro' ſanctification of the Spirit*, and *belief of the truth*; by *ſanctification* is meant, not any thing external, as reformation of life, obedience to the law, or outward ſubmiſſion to Goſpel ordinances; but internal holineſs, which lies in a principle of ſpiritual life in the ſoul, and in a principle of ſpiritual light in the underſtanding; in a flexion of the will to the will of God, and the way of ſalvation by Chriſt; in a ſettlement of the affections on divine and ſpiritual things, and in an implantation of all grace in the heart; and is called the ſanctification of *the Spirit*, partly from the ſpirit or ſoul of man being the principal ſeat of it, and chiefly from the Spirit of God being the author of it; and this being a means fixed in the decree of election to ſalvation, ſhows, that holineſs is not the cauſe of election, yet is certain by it, and is neceſſary to ſalvation; and that the doctrine of election is no licentious doctrine, ſince it provides for, and ſecures true and real holineſs. *Truth* deſigns either the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who is the truth of types and promiſes, and the ſubſtance of the truth of the Goſpel, in whom it lies, and by whom it comes; or the Goſpel itſelf, which comes from the God of truth, lies in the ſcriptures of truth, is dictated and directed into by the Spirit of truth; the ſum of it is Chriſt the truth, and has nothing in it but truth. The *belief* or *faith* of this intends, not an hiſtorical faith, or a mere aſſent to truth; but a cordial embracing of it, a receiving of the love of the truth, a feeling of the power of it unto ſalvation, and a believing in Chriſt, the ſubſtance of it; which is a ſeeing of him ſpiritually, and a going out of the ſoul to him in acts of hope, reliance, truſt, and dependance: and this being alſo a means ſettled in the choice of men to ſalvation, makes it appear, that faith is no cauſe of election, but the effect of it; that it is neceſſary to ſalvation, and therefore appointed as a means; that it is certain to the elect by it, and that they therefore cannot be finally and totally deceived, or be carried away with the error of the wicked, or with the deceiveableneſs of unrighteouſneſs with which Antichriſt works.

Ver. 14. *Whereunto he called you by our Goſpel,* &c.] Salvation being appointed as the end in the decree of election, and ſanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth, as means; the elect in effectual vocation are called to the participation of each of theſe; firſt to the one, and then to the other; to grace here, and glory hereafter: and the means by which they are called is the Goſpel, which the Apoſtle calls *our Goſpel*, not becauſe they were the authors, or the ſubject of it; for with regard to theſe it is ſtiled the Goſpel of God, and the Goſpel of Chriſt; but becauſe they were entruſted with it, and faithfully preached it, and in oppoſition to another Goſpel publiſhed by falſe teachers. And by this they were called *to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*; not his eſſential glory, tho' he will be ſeen and known in the glory of his perſon as he is, ſo far as creatures in a ſtate of perfection will be capable of; nor his mediatorial glory, tho' it will be one part of the ſaints happineſs in heaven to behold this glory of Chriſt; but rather, the glory which ſhall be perſonally put upon the ſaints, both in ſoul and body, in the reſurrection morn, is here intended: and which is called the glory of Chriſt, becauſe it is in his hands for them; and is what he is preparing for them, and for which he gives them both a right and a meetneſs; and which he at laſt will introduce them into; and it will lie greatly in conformity to him, and in the everlaſting viſion and enjoyment of him: and now God's elect are called by the miniſtry of the word to *the obtaining* of this, not by any merit of theirs, or by any works of righteouſneſs done by them, but to the *poſſeſſion* of it, as the word uſed properly ſignifies. The *Syriac* verſion renders it, *that ye may be a glory to our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*; as the ſaints will be at the laſt day, and to all eternity, when they ſhall be raiſed again, and have the glory of God upon them, and be for ever with the Lord.

Ver. 15. *Therefore, brethren, ſtand faſt,* &c.] In the doctrine of the Goſpel in general, and in the article of Chriſt's ſecond coming in particular, and not in the leaſt waver about the thing itſelf, nor be ſhaken in mind, and troubled as if it was juſt at hand; and the rather, it became them to be concerned that they ſtood faſt in the truth, and perſevered unto the end, ſince there was to be a falling away, and the myſtery of iniquity was already working, and Antichriſt would ſhortly appear, whoſe coming would be with all deceivableneſs, of unrighteouſneſs; and they had the greater encouragement to continue firm and unmoved, ſeeing they were choſen from eternity unto ſalvation thro' ſanctification and belief of the truth, and were called in time by the Goſpel to the enjoyment of the glory of Chriſt in another world. *And hold the traditions which ye have been taught*; meaning the truths of the Goſpel, which may be called traditions, becauſe they are delivered from one to another; the Goſpel was firſt delivered by God the Father to Jeſus Chriſt, as mediator, and by him to his Apoſtles, and by them to the churches of Chriſt; whence it is called the form of doctrine delivered to them, and the faith once delivered to the ſaints: and alſo the ordinances of the Goſpel which the

Apoſtles received from Chriſt, and as they received them, faithfully delivered them, ſuch as baptiſm and the Lord's ſupper; as well as rules of conduct and behaviour, both in the church, and in the world, even all the commandments of Chriſt, which he ordered his Apoſtles to teach, and which they gave by him; ſee ch. iii. 6. and 1 *Ep*. iv. 2. And ſo the *Syriac* verſion here renders it, *the commandments*; and theſe were ſuch as theſe ſaints had been taught by the Apoſtles, under the direction of Chriſt, and thro' the guidance of his Spirit; and were not the traditions of men, or the rudiments of the world, but what they had received from Chriſt, thro' the hands of the Apoſtles: *whether by word, or our epiſtle*, that is, by *our* word; as well as by our epiſtle, and ſo the *Arabic* verſion reads; theſe doctrines, ordinances, and rules of diſcipline were communicated to them, both by word of mouth, when the Apoſtles were in perſon among them, and by writing afterwards to them; for what the Apoſtles delivered in the miniſtry of the word to the churches, they ſent them in writing, that they might be a ſtanding rule of faith and practice; ſo that this does not in the leaſt countenance the unwritten traditions of the *Papiſts*: and ſince theſe were what were taught them, *viva voce*, and they received them from the mouth of the Apoſtles, or by letters from them, or both, it became them to hold and retain them faſt, and not let them go, either with reſpect to doctrine or practice.

Ver. 16. *Now our Lord Jeſus Chriſt himſelf*, &c.] The Apoſtle having exhorted the ſaints to perſeverance, cloſes this ſecond part of his Epiſtle, relating to the coming of Chriſt, with a prayer for the ſaints, that they might be comforted and eſtabliſhed. The objects addreſſed are Chriſt and the Father. And in each of their characters are reaſons contained, encouraging to believe the petitions will be regarded; for it is *our Lord Jeſus Chriſt himſelf* who is prayed unto; who is our Lord, not by creation only, in which ſenſe he is Lord of all, but by redemption, and thro' a marriage relation; and he is our Jeſus, our ſaviour, and redeemer; and our Chriſt, the anointed prophet, prieſt, and king; even he himſelf, who ſtands in theſe relations and offices; and what may not be expected from him? *and God, even our Father*; not by creation, but by adoption; and as it is in his power, he has a heart to give, and will give good things unto his children: and inaſmuch as Chriſt is equally addreſſed as the object of prayer, as the Father, and is indeed here ſet before him, or firſt mentioned, it may be concluded, that there is an entire equality between them, and that Chriſt is truly and properly God; otherwiſe religious worſhip, of which prayer is a conſiderable branch, would not be given him, nor would he be ſet upon an equal foot with the Father, and much leſs before him. The *Arabic* verſion reads, *our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, our Father*; and the *Ethiopic* verſion alſo, *our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, God our Father*; as if the whole of this, or all theſe epithets and characters belong to Chriſt, and he was the only perſon addreſſed; but the common reading is beſt: *which hath loved us*; this refers both to the Father, and to Chriſt. The Father had loved them with an everlaſting and unchangeable love, as appeared by his chuſing them unto ſalvation by Chriſt, ſecuring them in his hands, and making an everlaſting covenant with him, on their account; by ſending his ſon to be the ſaviour of them; by regenerating, quickening, and calling them by his grace, adopting them into his family, pardoning all their ſins, juſtifying their perſons, and giving them both a meetneſs for, and a right unto eternal glory. And Chriſt, he had loved them with the ſame love; and which he ſhewed by undertaking their cauſe in the council of peace; by eſpouſing their perſons, in the covenant of grace; by aſſuming their nature in the fulneſs of time; by dying in their room and ſtead; and by his continued interceſſion and mediation for them, and by many other inſtances. And ſince they had ſuch a ſhare in the affection, both of the Father, and the Son, it need not to have been doubted but that what was prayed for would be granted: to which is added, *and hath given us everlaſting conſolation*; all true, ſolid conſolation is from God and Chriſt: God is called the God of all comfort; and if there be any real conſolation, it is in, by, and from Chriſt; and it is the gift of God, an inſtance of his grace and favour, and not a point of merit; the leaſt degree of conſolation is not deſerved, and ought not to be reckoned ſmall: and it is everlaſting; it does not indeed always continue, as to the ſenſible enjoyment of it, in this life, being often interrupted by indwelling ſin, the hidings of God's face, and the temptations of ſatan, yet the ground and foundation of it is everlaſting; ſuch as the everlaſting love of God, the everlaſting covenant of grace, the everlaſting righteouſneſs of Chriſt, and everlaſting ſalvation by him, and he himſelf, who is the conſolation of *Iſrael*, as well as the bleſſed Spirit, the comforter, who ever abides as the earneſt and pledge of future happineſs. And the preſent ſpiritual joy of the ſaints is what no man can take away from them, and what will eventually iſſue in everlaſting conſolation, without any interruption in the world to come, when ſorrow and ſighing ſhall flee away, and all tears be wiped from their eyes: *and good hope thro' grace*. The *Syriac* verſion reads, *in his grace*; and the *Ethiopic* verſion, *a good hope, and his grace*; hope, as well as faith, is the gift of God, a free-grace gift of his: and it may be called a good one, becauſe God is the author of it; and it is built on a good foundation, the perſon, blood, and righteouſneſs of Chriſt; and is of good things to come, and therefore called the bleſſed hope; and is what is ſure and certain, and will never deceive, nor make aſhamed; and ſince conſolation is given here, and hope of happineſs hereafter, it may be concluded, the following requeſts will be regarded.

Ver. 17. *Comfort your hearts*, &c.] That is, apply the comfort given, and cauſe it to be received, which unbelief is apt to refuſe; and increaſe it, by ſhedding abroad the love of Chriſt, and of the Father; by the diſcoveries of pardoning grace; by the application of Goſpel promiſes; by the word and ordinances, which are breaſts of conſolation; and by indulging with the gracious preſence, and comfortable communion of Father, Son, and Spirit. The *Arabic* verſion reads, *comfort your hearts by his grace*, joining the laſt clauſe of the preceding verſe to this. This petition ſtands oppoſed to a being troubled and diſtreſſed about the ſudden coming of Chriſt, as the following one does to a being ſhaken in mind on that account, ver. 2. *And ſtabliſh you in every good word and work*; that is, in every good word of God, or truth of the Goſpel, which contains good tidings of good things, ſo as not to waver about them, or ſtagger in them, or depart from them; in practice of every duty, ſo as to be ſtedfaſt, and immoveable, and always abounding therein: good words and good works, principles and practices, ſhould go together, and the ſaints ſtand in need of ſtability in both. For though, as to their ſtate and condition, they are eſtabliſhed in the love of God, in the covenant of grace, in the arms of Chriſt, and in him the foundation, ſo as they can never be removed; yet they are often very unſtable, not only in their frames, and in the exerciſe of grace, but in their attachment and adherence to the Goſpel and intereſt of Chriſt, and in the diſcharge of duty.

C H A P. III.

IN this chapter the Apoſtle requeſts of the *Theſſalonians*, that they would pray for him, and other Goſpel miniſters; and he puts up prayers for them, gives them rules about dealing with diſorderly perſons, and concludes the Epiſtle with his uſual ſalutation. The requeſt to pray for miniſters is in *ver.* 1. the petitions to be made for them are, that their miniſtry might be ſucceeded, and their perſons preſerved and delivered from evil-minded men, deſtitute of faith in Chriſt, ver. 1, 2. and for the conſolation of the ſaints, obſerves the faithfulneſs of God engaged in their behalf to eſtabliſh them in the faith they had, and to preſerve them from every thing and perſon that is evil, ver. 3. and expreſſes his confidence in them with reſpect to their walk and converſation, ver. 4. and then prays for them, that their hearts might be directed into the love of God, and patience of Chriſt, ver. 5. And next follows an order to withdraw from every diſorderly walker, particularly idle and ſlothful perſons, ver. 6. and from ſuch a lazy, idle life, the Apoſtle diſſuades by his own example, who behaved not diſorderly, nor eat the bread of others, but wrought with his own hands, tho' he had a right to a maintenance without it, but did this to ſet an example to them, ver. 7, 8, 9. He puts them in mind of a precept of his when among them, that ſuch who would not work ſhould not eat, ver. 10. and the order he now gave, and the precept he reminds them of, were not without reaſon; ſeeing there were diſorderly, idle perſons, and buſy-bodies among them, whom the Apoſtle exhorts and beſeeches in the name of Chriſt, to be induſtrious, and eat their own bread, as the fruit of their labours, ver. 11, 12. and as for the other members of the church, he exhorts them to diligence and conſtancy in well-doing, and to mark thoſe that were incorrigible, and have no converſation with them, yet dealing with them, not as enemies, but admoniſhing them as brethren, ver. 13, 14, 15. And cloſes all with prayers, that the Lord would give them peace, and grant his preſence to them, and with his uſual ſalutation, written with his own hand, as a token of this being a genuine Epiſtle of his, and by which every Epiſtle of his might be known, ver. 16, 17, 18.

Ver. 1. *Finally, brethren, pray for us,* &c.] The Apoſtle now proceeds to the laſt and cloſing part of the Epiſtle, which reſpects church diſcipline, and the removing of diſorderly perſons from their communion; and introduces it with a requeſt to pray for him, and the reſt of his fellow-miniſters, particularly *Silvanus* and *Timotheus*, who joined with him in this Epiſtle: he ſignifies that nothing more remained; this was the laſt he had to ſay, that they, the *brethren*, not the preachers of the word only, but the members of the church, would be ſolicitous for them at the throne of grace; as it becomes all the churches, and the ſeveral members of them to pray for their miniſters: with reſpect to their private ſtudies, that they might be directed to ſuitable ſubjects; that their underſtandings might be opened to underſtand the ſcriptures; that their gifts might be increaſed, and they be more and more fitted for publick ſervice: and with reſpect to their public miniſtrations, that they be brought forth in the fulneſs of the bleſſing of the Goſpel of Chriſt; that they have a door of utterance given them to preach the Goſpel, freely and boldly as it ought to be ſpoken; and that their miniſtry be bleſſed to ſaints and ſinners: and with reſpect to the world, and their conduct in it, that they be kept from the evil of it, and ſo behave, as to give none offence, that the miniſtry be not blamed; and that they be not allured by the flatteries, nor intimidated by the frowns of the world, but endure hardneſs as good ſoldiers of Chriſt: and with reſpect to their perſons and ſtate, that their ſouls may proſper, and that they may have much of the preſence of God, and much ſpiritual joy, peace, comfort, and ſtrength of faith; and that they may enjoy bodily health, and their lives be ſpared for further uſefulneſs. This requeſt is frequently urged by the Apoſtle; which ſhows his ſenſe of the importance of the work of the miniſtry, the inſufficiency of men for it, the neceſſity of freſh ſupplies of grace, and the great uſefulneſs of prayer. The particular petitions he would have put up, follow, *that the word of the Lord may have* free *courſe.* By *the word of the Lord*, or *of God*, as the *Vulgate Latin* and *Ethiopic* verſions read, is meant the Goſpel; which is of God, and not of man, comes by the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and is concerning him, his perſon and offices, and concerning peace, pardon, righteouſneſs, life, and ſalvation by him, as the ſubject-matter of it: and the requeſt is, that this might *have free courſe*; or *might run*; be propagated and ſpread far and near: the miniſtry of the word is a courſe or race, and miniſters are runners in it, having their feet ſhod with the preparation of the Goſpel of peace; which is the meſſage they are ſent with, and the errand they run upon; which comes from heaven, and is to be carried into all the world, and ſpread: ſatan and his emiſſaries do all they can to hinder the progreſs of it; God only can remove all obſtructions and impediments; when he works none can lett; all mountains become a plain before *Zerubbabel.* Wherefore the Apoſtle directs to pray to him for it, with what follows, *and be glorified, even as* it is *with you*; the Goſpel is glorified when it is attended upon by large numbers, and is heard with a becoming reverence; when it is received in the love of it, is greatly prized and highly eſteemed; when it is cordially embraced, and chearfully obeyed. It is glorified when ſinners are converted by it, and the lives of the profeſſors of it are agreeable to it; and thus it was glorified in theſe ſeveral inſtances at *Theſſalonica*; and therefore the Apoſtle puts them upon praying, that it might be ſo elſewhere, as there; even *every where*, as the *Syriac* verſion adds.

Ver. 2. *And that we may be delivered from unreaſonable and wicked men,* &c.] Either from the unbelieving *Jews*, see *Rom.* xv. 30, 31. who were the avowed enemies of the Goſpel, and did all they could to hinder the ſpread of it; and who were the implacable and conſtant adverſaries of the Apoſtle; who often lay in wait for him, and oppoſed him, and gave him trouble in all places, ſtirring up the people againſt him: or from the falſe teachers, and thoſe of their party, who are the falſe brethren by whom he often was in perils; who were enemies of the croſs of Chriſt, and great hindrances to the ſpread of the Goſpel; being men of abſurd principles, and of wicked lives and converſations, whereby they perverted the Goſpel of Chriſt, brought a reproach upon it, ſtumbled ſome, and overthrew the faith of others; and from theſe the Apoſtle deſires to be delivered: *for all men have not faith*; no man has faith of himſelf, it is the gift of God, and the operation of his Spirit; and it is only given to the elect of God, who are ordained unto eternal life, and therefore it is called the faith of God's elect; all mankind have it not, none but Chriſt's ſheep; and the reaſon why others have it not, is, becauſe they are not of his ſheep. This is a truth; but rather the true ſenſe of the words is, that all that are profeſſors of religion, and members of churches, and even all that are preachers of the word, have not faith. They may have an hiſtorical and temporary faith, and the faith of miracles, and even all faith but the true faith; they may profeſs to believe, and yet not believe, as *Simon Magus*, and his followers ſeem to be intended here; for this is given as a reaſon why the Apoſtle deſired to be delivered from the above men. The *Jews* ſay [°], that "he that ſtudies not in the law, "לאו ביה מהימנותא, *there is no faith in him*— "and it is forbidden to come near him, or to trade "with him, or to walk with him, *becauſe there is* "*no faith in him*." The Apoſtle ſeems to allude to this cuſtom.

Ver. 3. *But the Lord is faithful*, &c.] Or *God*, as the *Vulgate Latin* and *Ethiopic* verſions read, as do alſo the *Alexandrian* and *Claromontane* copies. This is ſaid for the comfort of the ſaints, leſt they ſhould be diſcouraged upon hearing that all profeſſors of faith in Chriſt had it not, who might be ready to take it to themſelves, and fear, that either they had it not, or if they had, that they might loſe it, and fall from it. Wherefore the Apoſtle obſerves to them the comfortable attribute of God's faithfulneſs, which he will not ſuffer to fail. He has promiſed many things, and he is faithful that has promiſed, who alſo will do them, nor will any good thing he has promiſed ever fail. *Who ſhall ſtabliſh you*; in the doctrines of the Goſpel, ſo as not to be moved away from them, or be finally and totally ſeduced by thoſe unreaſonable and wicked men; and alſo in the grace of faith, which tho' it may be weakened, and there may be a falling from a degree of the ſtedfaſtneſs of it, as to its act and exerciſe, yet it ſhall never finally and totally fail, he who is the author will be the finiſher of it; and likewiſe in the profeſſion both of the doctrine and grace of faith, which true believers ſhall hold faſt unto the end; for God will not ſuffer the righteous to be moved, or to depart from him; he has promiſed them perſeverance, and he is faithful to give it to them. *And keep you from evil*; from the evil of ſin; not from the being and commiſſion of it entirely, which is not to be expected in this life; but from the dominion of it, at leaſt from its reigning unto death, and from the damning power of it: and alſo from that evil one ſatan; from his ſnares and temptations, ſo as to be entangled and overcome by them; for God is faithful, who will not ſuffer his to be tempted beyond their ſtrength, but will enable them to bear it, and make way for their eſcape, and deliver out of it; and likewiſe from evil men, unreaſonable and wicked men, ſo as not to be drawn aſide by them, by their principles and practices, by their frowns or flatteries.

Ver. 4. *And we have confidence in the Lord touching you*, &c.] The ground of confidence concerning them was not in themſelves, in their grace, and ſtrength, and wiſdom, and conduct, and good behaviour; but in the Lord, in his grace and ſtrength, and in the power of his might, without whom they could do nothing, but through him ſtrengthening them, could do all things. *That ye both do, and will do the things which we command you*; referring both to the commandments, which they had already given them by Chriſt, and they had ſhowed, and continued to ſhow a proper regard unto, ſee 1 *Ep.* iv. 1, 2. and alſo to what would be obſerved to them, as in ver. 6, 12.

Ver. 5. *And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God*, &c.] By which may be meant either the love with which God is loved. This is the ſum and ſubſtance of the firſt and chief commandment in the law, and is what every man in a ſtate of nature is deſtitute of; it is implanted in the heart in regeneration, and is a fruit of the Spirit of God; and where it is, it oftentimes grows cold, and needs to be ſtirred up and re-inflamed, by the Spirit of God, which may be intended, by a directing of the heart into it, that is, to a lively exerciſe of it: or elſe the love with which God loves his people is deſigned, which is free, ſovereign, unchangeable, and from everlaſting to everlaſting; and to have the heart directed into this, is to be led into it directly; or by a ſtrait line, as the word ſignifies, and not in a round-about way, by works and duties, as the cauſes or conditions of it; and to be led further into it, ſo as to wade into theſe waters of the ſanctuary, from the anckles to the knees, and from thence to the loins, and from thence till they become a broad river to ſwim in; or ſo as to comprehend the heighth, and depth, and length, and breadth of this love, and to be rooted and grounded in it, and firmly perſuaded of intereſt in it; and that nothing ſhall ſeparate from it; and ſo as to have the heart ſenſibly affected with it. The phraſe of directing the heart to God, and to ſeek him, is uſed in the *Septuagint*, in 2 *Chron.* xix. 3. and xx. 33. And this is not to be done by a believer himſelf, nor by the miniſters of the Goſpel: the Apoſtle could not do it, and therefore he prays *the Lord* to do it; by whom is meant the Spirit of God, ſince he is diſtinguiſhed from God the Father, into whoſe love the heart is to be directed, and from Chriſt, a patient waiting for whom 'tis alſo deſired the heart may be directed into; and ſince it is his work to ſhed abroad the love of God in the heart, and to lead unto it, and make application of it; and which is a proof of his deity, for none has the direction, management, and government of the heart, but God, *Prov.* xxi. 1. and in this paſſage of ſcripture appear all the three perſons; for here is the love of the Father, patient waiting for Chriſt, and the Lord the Spirit. For it follows, as another branch of the petition, *and into the patient waiting for Chriſt*; or *patience of Chriſt*, as the *Vulgate Latin* and *Arabic* verſions render it; and may intend either

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[°] Zohar in Lev. fol. 33. 2.

that patience, of which Chriſt was the ſubject; and which appeared in his quiet ſubmiſſion to all that outward meanneſs he did in his ſtate of humiliation; in bearing the inſults and reproaches of men, and the frowardneſs of his own diſciples, in ſuffering himſelf to be tempted by ſatan; and in bearing the ſins of his people, the wrath of God, and ſtrokes of juſtice in the manner he did: and for the ſaints to have their hearts directed into this patience of Chriſt, is of great uſe unto them, to endear Chriſt unto them; to lead them into the greatneſs of his love, and alſo of his perſon; and to make them more patient under the croſs, when they conſider him, and have him for an example. Or elſe it may reſpect the grace of patience, which he is the author of, for all grace comes from him; and he from hence may be called the God of patience, as his word, which is the means of it, is the word of his patience; and it is by his ſtrength that ſaints are ſtrengthened unto all patience, and long-ſuffering: and to be directed into this, or to the exerciſe of it, is of great uſe under afflictions from the hand of God, and under the reproaches and perſecutions of men, and under divine deſertions, and want of an anſwer of prayer, and under the temptations of ſatan, and in an expectation of the heavenly glory. And the heart is never more in the exerciſe of this, than when it is directed into the love of God; ſee *Rom.* v. 2, 3, 4, 5. Or this may refer to that patience of which Chriſt is the object, and be underſtood, either of a patient bearing the croſs for his ſake; for every believer has a croſs to take up and bear for Chriſt, and which is to be born conſtantly, chearfully, and patiently; and nothing more ſtrongly animates to ſuch a patient bearing of it, than a ſenſe of the love of God; ſo that a being directed into that, leads alſo to this: or as our verſion points out the ſenſe, it may be underſtood of a patient waiting for the ſecond coming of Chriſt. Chriſt will certainly come a ſecond time, tho' when he will come is uncertain; and his coming will be very glorious, in itſelf, and of great advantage to the ſaints: hence it becomes them, not only to believe it, hope for it, love it, and look for it, but to wait patiently for it; which being directed to by the Spirit of God, is of great uſe unto them in the preſent ſtate of things.

Ver. 6. *Now we command you, brethren,* &c.] The Apoſtle is now come to the main thing itſelf, he has in view in this part of the Epiſtle, which is to encourage a regard to the diſcipline of God's houſe; and to exhort this church, to excommunicate, or remove from communion all diſorderly perſons; and thoſe who are to do this, he points out, and calls upon, and even commands; and theſe are the fraternity, the *brethren*, the ſociety of believers, all the members of the church; for to them to whom belongs the power of receiving members, to them only belongs the power of excluding offenders: the executive power lies in the hands of the elders or paſtors of churches; they are the perſons by whom the church receives or caſts out members; but the power of judgment, or of determining who ſhall be received into, or who ſhall be removed from communion, lies in the church, and not in the paſtors and elders only; whoever therefore take upon them to receive, or refuſe, or caſt out members of themſelves, and at their own pleaſure, act the part of *Diotrephes*, 3 *John* 9, 10. The authority for removing diſorderly perſons from communion, is an apoſtolical command, *we command you*; who are the Apoſtles of Chriſt, immediately ſent by him, who had their miſſion and commiſſion from him, and which were confirmed by miracles; theſe had a greater power and authority than the ordinary miniſters of the word; they were the ambaſſadors of Chriſt, ſtood in his ſtead, repreſented him, and acted in his name; what they ſaid, he ſpake by them; and it was all one, as if he had ſpoke it himſelf: and that this might appear not to be of them, but of him, 'tis added, *in the name of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*; that is, by his power and authority, if they had any regard to that, or to his honour and glory: *that ye withdraw yourſelves from every brother that walketh diſorderly*; by a *brother* is meant, not one in a natural or civil ſenſe, who is ſo by blood, or by neighbourhood, by being of the ſame country, or of the ſame human ſpecies, ſince all are of one blood; but one in an eccleſiaſtical ſenſe, a church member, who is called a brother, tho' he may not be really a child of God, one of the brethren of Chriſt, or born of the Spirit; yet being a fellow-citizen with the ſaints, and of the houſhold of God externally, he bears this character; and ſuch an one only is cognizable by a church, who have nothing to do to judge them that are without, only them that are within: and *every brother* in this ſenſe falls under their notice; every one that is a member, whether male or female, for this word includes both; and as the ſiſters, as well as the brethren, ſtand in the ſame relation, are in the ſame church-ſtate, partake of the ſame ordinances, and enjoy the ſame privileges, they are obliged to regard the ſame rules of the Goſpel, and duties of religion, and in caſe of diſorder, to be withdrawn from: and this alſo regards every brother, of whatſoever ſtate or condition, bond or free, high or low, rich or poor; no partiality is to be uſed, no preference to be given to one above the other; a poor member in a diſorder is not to be bore hard upon, whilſt a rich one is winked and connived at: and it alſo reſpects the brethren, whether private members, or officers of the church; for not only the former, but alſo the latter, when they walk diſorderly, whether in the diſcharge of their office, or in any other part of their conduct, are liable to the notice and cenſure of the church: and which is only to be done when any of them *walk diſorderly*; not for every diſorder they are guilty of; there's no man lives without ſin; and church members have their infirmities, and will have, as long as they are in the fleſh, or in the body; and they are not to be made offenders for a word, or for a ſingle diſorder, or for the common infirmities of life; nor are the juſt to be ſet aſide for a thing of nought, or a ſmall offence, and that not continued in: it is one thing to be guilty of a diſorder, and another thing to *walk* diſorderly; which denotes a way, a courſe, a ſeries of diſorder, and proceeding on in it, a going from evil to evil, an increaſing to more ungodlineſs; for walking is a progreſſive action, and diſorderly perſons don't ſtop, but grow worſe and worſe; for they take pleaſure in their diſorders; they chuſe their own ways, and delight in their abominations; the paths of ſin are pleaſant paths to them: and they are diſorderly walkers, who pertinaciouſly and ſtubbornly continue in their diſorders, notwithſtanding the admonitions of private perſons, and of the whole church; and of this ſort there are ſuch that walk diſorderly in the world, in the commiſſion of notorious and ſcandalous ſins, ſuch as uncleanneſs, intemperance, covetouſneſs, *&c.* and that walk diſorderly in families;

milies; as huſbands that are not affectionate to their wives, and provide not for their houſhold; and wives that are not in ſubjection to their huſbands; parents that provoke their children to wrath; and children that are diſobedient to their parents; maſters who give not that which is fit and equal to their ſervants; and ſervants that deſpiſe their maſters becauſe they are brethren, when they ſhould ſerve them the more chearfully, becauſe faithful and beloved: and alſo that walk diſorderly in churches, that fill not up their places, but neglect attendance with the church, on the word and ordinances; and who are contentious and quarrelſome, and will not ſubmit to the ſentiments of thoſe who are ſuperior to them in number and ſenſe; and likewiſe ſuch who entertain bad notions and principles, derogatory to the grace of God, the perſon and offices of Chriſt, and the operations of the Spirit; who walk not in the truth, nor according to the ſtandard of the word of God; and eſpecially ſuch are deſigned here, who are buſy bodies, and idle perſons, who work not at all, but live at the tables, and upon the ſubſtance of others, as appears from ver. 11. Theſe act contrary to the order and decorum of nations, towns and families, and to that which God has fixed among mankind; and to the example of God, and Chriſt as God, who work hitherto and jointly together in providence, and in the government of the world; and to the example which Chriſt, as man, has ſet, and to the example of the Apoſtles, and to their commands: wherefore it follows, *and not after the tradition which he received of us*; meaning either the Goſpel of Chriſt, which being preached was received, but the walk and converſation of ſome was not agreeable to it; or the ordinances of the Goſpel, and the precepts of religion which the Apoſtles delivered, and were received, and yet due attendance to them was not given; ſee the note on ch. ii. 15. or rather that particular injunction concerning quietneſs, and doing their own buſineſs, and working with their own hands, 1 *Theſſ.* iv. 11. The *Vulgate Latin* verſion reads, *which they received of us*; the ſenſe is the ſame; and the *Ethiopic* verſion, *and not according to the conſtitution we appointed them*. Now what is commanded to be done to ſuch diſorderly perſons, by the church, even the whole fraternity, is to *withdraw* themſelves from them; by which is meant, not only to diſtinguiſh themſelves from them by an orderly and regular converſation, and a ſtrict obſervance of Goſpel-diſcipline, which to do is very right; nor barely to curb and reſtrain the affections towards ſuch perſons, leſt by carrying it as heretofore, in a kind, tender, and affectionate manner, they ſhould take encouragement from hence to continue in their diſorders, as tender parents keep in their affections, and from ſhowing them to their children, when in diſorder, and under their corrections, that they might not ſeem to countenance them in that which is evil, tho' this is alſo very proper; nor alſo merely to contract or ſhut up the hand to ſuch perſons, and refuſe to diſtribute to them, living ſuch an idle life, and in ſuch a diſorderly way, tho' this is what ought to be done; nor does this phraſe only intend a forbidding ſuch perſons their houſes and their tables, not ſuffering them to ſit at the one, nor even to come into the other, not allowing any company and converſation with them, that they may have no opportunity of indulging their lazineſs and tale-bearing, tho' ſo to ſerve them is highly juſt and reaſonable; nor does it deſign only a ſuſpenſion, or a debarring of them from the Lord's table, which ought not to be done to any perſons, whilſt they continue in relation to the church, and members of it; but a removal of them from church communion, or an excommunication of them; which is ſometimes expreſſed by rejecting perſons, caſting them out of the church, and putting them away, and here by withdrawing from them; which are all ſynonymous phraſes, and intend excluſion from the communion of the church. And ſo the *Ethiopic* verſion here renders it, *that ye remove every brother*, &c. From this paſſage we learn who they are that are to be excommunicated or removed from the communion of churches; all diſorderly walkers; what the act of excommunication is, it is a withdrawing from them, a ſeparating them from the church, and its communion; and who they are that have the power to do it, the whole fraternity or body of the church; and alſo the authority for it, an apoſtolical command, in the name of Chriſt.

Ver. 7. *For yourſelves know how ye ought to follow us*, &c.] The Apoſtle goes on to diſſuade from that which denominates perſons diſorderly walkers, and expoſes them to the cenſure of the church, and that partly by the example of the Apoſtles, and partly by their command. He appeals to them, to their knowledge and judgment, it being a thing well known to them, that they ought to walk as they had the Apoſtles for enſamples; for who ſhould they follow but their ſpiritual fathers, ſhepherds, and guides? and eſpecially ſo far as they were followers of Chriſt, as they were, in the caſe referred unto, working with their own hands: *for we behaved not ourſelves diſorderly among you*; they could appeal to them as witneſſes, and God alſo, how holily, juſtly, and unblameably they walked among them; ſee 1 *Ep.* ii. 10. and particularly, that they did not live an idle and inactive life among them.

Ver. 8. *Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought*, &c.] Or freely, at free coſt, without paying for it; he ſignifies, that what they eat, they bought with their own money, and lived on no man, without giving him a valuable conſideration for what they had; tho' if they had not paid in money for their food, they would not have eat it for nought, ſince they laboured among them in preaching the Goſpel to them; and ſuch labourers are worthy of their maintenance, *Luke* x. 7. tho' the former ſenſe is the Apoſtle's here: *but wrought with labour and travel night and day*; not only laboriouſly preaching the Goſpel to them, as often as they could have opportunity, but working very hard and inceſſantly with their hands, at the occupations and trades, they had been brought up to; and that of the Apoſtle *Paul*'s was a tent-maker, at which he ſometimes wrought, thereby miniſtring to his own, and the neceſſities of others, *Acts* xviii. 3. and xx. 34. nor was this inconſiſtent with his learning and liberal education. It was uſual with the *Jewiſh* doctors to learn a trade, or follow ſome buſineſs and calling of life; ſee the note on *Mark* vi. 3. The Apoſtle's end in this was, *that we might not be chargeable to any of you*; or burdenſome to them, they being for the moſt part poor; and the Apoſtles being able partly by their own hand labour, and partly by what they received from *Philippi*, *Phil.* iv. 16. to ſupport themſelves, choſe to do it, that they might not lie heavy upon them, and any ways hinder the ſpread of the Goſpel among them, at its firſt coming to them. And ſo *Maimonides* ſays the ancient *Jewiſh* doctors behaved, and with a like view: wherefore, ſays he[p], "if a "man is a wiſe man, and an honourable man, and "poor, let him employ himſelf in ſome handicraft "buſineſs, even tho' a mean one, and not diſtreſs "men (or be burdenſome to them); it is better to "ſtrip the ſkins of beaſts that have been torn, than "to ſay to the people, I am a conſiderable wiſe "(or learned) man, I am a prieſt, take care of "me, and maintain me; and ſo the wiſe men have "ordered: and ſome of the greateſt doctors have "been hewers of wood, and carriers of timber, "and drawers of water for the gardens, and have "wrought in iron and coals, and have not required "any thing of the congregation; nor would they "take any thing of them, when they would have "given to them."

Ver. 9. *Not becauſe we have not power*, &c.] To forbear working, or require a maintenance from the churches to whom we miniſter, ſince Chriſt has ordained, that they that preach the Goſpel ſhould live of the Goſpel; ſee 1 *Cor.* ix. 4, 5, 6, 14. This the Apoſtle ſays to preſerve their right of claim, when and where they ſhould think fit to make uſe of it; and leſt other miniſters of the word, who could not ſupport themſelves as they did, ſhould be hurt by ſuch an example; and leſt covetous men ſhould make uſe of it to indulge their ſin, and improve it againſt the maintenance of Goſpel-miniſters: wherefore the Apoſtle obſerves to them, that they did not do this, as conſcious that they had no right to demand a ſupply from them, *but to make ourſelves an enſample unto you to follow us*; for it ſeems there were many idle, lazy perſons among them, who either had no callings or trades, or did not attend to them; wherefore the Apoſtles wrought with their own hands, to ſet an example, who could not for ſhame but work, when they ſaw perſons in ſo high an office, and of ſuch a character, working with labour and travel, night and day, among them.

Ver. 10. *For even when we were with you*, &c.] At *Theſſalonica* in perſon, and firſt preached the Goſpel to them, *we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither ſhould he eat*; the *Ethiopic* verſion reads in the ſingular number, *when I was with you, I commanded you*; uſing the above words, which were a ſort of a proverb with the *Jews*, and is frequently uſed by them, דאי לא אכיל, or לעי לא נגים, *that if a man would not work, he ſhould not eat*[q]. And again[r], "he that "labours on the evening of the ſabbath (or on "week days) he ſhall eat on the ſabbath-day; "and he who does not labour on the evening of "the ſabbath, from whence ſhall he eat (or what "right and authority has he to eat) on the ſabbath-day?" Not he that could not work thro' weakneſs, bodily diſeaſes, or old age, the neceſſities of ſuch are to be diſtributed to, and they are to be taken care of, and provided with the neceſſaries of life by the officers of the church; but thoſe that can work, and will not, ought to ſtarve, for any aſſiſtance that ſhould be given them by the members of the church, or the officers of it.

Ver. 11. *For we hear that there are ſome*, &c.] This is the reaſon of the order or command given in ver. 6. for withdrawing from diſorderly perſons. When the Apoſtle was with them, he obſerved that there were idle perſons among them, and therefore gave orders then, that if they would not work, they ſhould not eat; and in his former Epiſtle, having intelligence that there were ſtill ſuch perſons among them, he exhorts them to their duty, and puts the church upon admoniſhing them; and ſtill information is given him, that there were ſome ſuch perſons yet among them; for as the Apoſtle had the care of all the churches upon him, ſo he kept a correſpondence with them, and by one means or another, by ſending meſſengers to them, or by receiving letters from thoſe he correſponded with, he learned the ſtate of them; and his information was generally good, and what might be depended upon; ſee 1 *Cor.* i. 11. as it was in this caſe relating to ſome perſons: *which walk among you diſorderly*; and who they were, and which alſo explains ver. 6. are immediately obſerved: *working not at all*; at their callings, trades, and buſineſſes in which they were brought up, but lived an idle and lazy life: and this was walking diſorderly indeed, even contrary to the order of things before the fall, when man was in a ſtate of innocence; for before ſin entered into the world, *Adam* was put into the garden of *Eden* to keep and dreſs it; man was created an active creature, and made for work and buſineſs; and to live without, is contrary to the order of creation, as well to the order of civil ſocieties, and of religious ones, or churches, and even what irrational creatures do not. *But are buſy bodies*; tho' they work not at all at their own buſineſs, yet are very buſy in other mens matters, and have the affairs of kingdoms, and cities, and towns, and neighbourhoods, and churches, and families, upon their hands; which they thruſt themſelves into, and intermeddle with, tho' they have no buſineſs at all with them: theſe wander from houſe to houſe, and curiouſly enquire into perſonal and family affairs, are tatlers, full of prate and talk, and, like the *Athenians*, ſpend all their time in telling or hearing new things; and they alſo ſpeak things which they ſhould not; they carry tales from one to another, and privately whiſper things to the diſadvantage of their fellow-creatures and chriſtians, and backbite and ſlander them. Theſe are the peſts of nations and neighbourhoods, the plagues of churches, and the ſcandal of human nature; ſee 1 *Tim.* v. 13. 1 *Pet.* iv. 15.

Ver. 12. *Now them that are ſuch*, &c.] For this was not the caſe and character of them all. Did ſuch practices generally obtain, no community, civil or religious, could ſubſiſt. And the Apoſtle wiſely diſtinguiſhes them from others, that the innocent might not be involved in the charge. *We command and exhort by our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*; uſing both authority and intreaty, taking every way to reclaim them, commanding in the name of Chriſt, and beſeeching for the ſake of Chriſt, *that with quietneſs they work*; with their own hands, at their proper callings, and ſo ſupport themſelves, provide for their families, and have ſomething to give to them that are in need; by which means they will live peaceable and quiet lives, in godlineſs and honeſty, and not diſturb the peace of neighbourhoods, churches, and families: *and eat their own bread*; got by their own labour, and bought with their money, and not the bread of others, or that of idleneſs.

Ver. 13. *But ye, brethren*, &c.] The reſt of the members of the church, who were diligent and induſtrious in their callings, minded their own buſineſs, and did not trouble themſelves with other mens matters, took care of themſelves, and their families, and were beneficent to others: *be not weary in well doing*; which may be underſtood generally of all well doing, or of doing of every good work; which is well done when done according to the will of God, in faith, and from a principle of love, and in the name and ſtrength of Chriſt, and with a view to the glory of God: or particularly of acts of beneficence to the poor; for tho' the idle and lazy ſhould not be relieved, yet the helpleſs poor ſhould not be neglected. This the Apoſtle obſerves, leſt covetous perſons ſhould make a handle of this, and with-hold their hands from diſtributing to any, under a notion of their being idle and diſorderly; or leſt the ſaints ſhould be tired, and become weary of doing acts of charity thro' the ingratitude, moroſeneſs, and ill manners of poor people; see *Gal.* vi. 9.

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[p] Hilchot Mattanot Anayim, c. 10. §. 18.

[q] Bereſhit Rabba, §. 14. fol. 13. 1. Echa Rabbati, fol. 48. 4. & Midraſh Kohelet, fol. 65. 4.

[r] T. Bab. Avoda Zara, fol. 3. 1.

Ver. 14. *And if any man obey not our word*, &c.] Of command, to work quietly, and eat his own bread, now ſignified *by this epiſtle*, particularly in ver. 12. *note that man*; ſome read this clauſe in connexion with the preceding phraſe, *by this epiſtle*, or by an epiſtle; and ſo the *Ethiopic* verſion, *ſhew* or *ſignify him by an epiſtle*; that is, give us notice of it by an epiſtle, that we may take him under our cognizance, and ſeverely chaſtiſe him, according to the power and authority given us by Chriſt; but that phraſe rather belongs to the preceding words: and the clauſe here reſpects the notice the church ſhould take of ſuch a perſon; not in a private way, or merely by way of admonition and reproof, ſuch as is given before rejection from communion; but by the black mark of excommunication; lay him under cenſure, exclude him your communion, put a brand upon him as a ſcabbed ſheep, and ſeparate him from the flock; and ſo the *Syriac* verſion renders it, נתפרש, *let him be ſeparated* from you; and this ſenſe is confirmed by what follows, *and have no company with him*; as little as can be in common and civil converſation, leſt he ſhould take encouragement from thence to continue in his ſin, and leſt others ſhould think it is connived at; and much leſs at the Lord's table, or in a ſacred and religious converſation, or in a way of church-fellowſhip and communion: *that he may be aſhamed*; that he may have his eyes turned in him, as the word ſignifies, and he may be brought to a ſight and ſenſe of his ſin, and be filled with ſhame for it, and loath it, and himſelf on the account of it, and truly repent of it, and forſake it; and this is the end of excommunication, at leaſt one end, and a principal end of it, to recover perſons out of the ſnare of the devil, and return them from the error of their ways: ſo the *Jews* ſay *, "in matters of heaven (of God or "religion) if a man does not return privately, "מכלימין, they *put him to ſhame* publickly; and "publiſh his ſin, and reproach him to his face, "and deſpiſe and ſet him at nought until he re-"turns to do well."

Ver. 15. *Yet count him not as an enemy*, &c.] As an enemy of Chriſt, and the chriſtian religion, as the *Jews* and pagans were; or as an enemy of all righteouſneſs, as *Elymas* the ſorcerer was; as one that has an implacable hatred to good men, and a perſecutor of them, and has an utter averſion to them and their principles; nor deal with him in an hoſtile, fierce, furious, and paſſionate manner, as if you were ſeeking his deſtruction, and not his reſtoration. This ſeems to be levelled againſt the *Jews*, who allowed of hatred to incorrigible perſons: they ſay †, "an hater that is ſpoken of in "the law, is not of the nations of the world, "but of *Iſrael*; but how ſhall an *Iſraelite* hate an "*Iſraelite?* does not the ſcripture ſay, *thou ſhalt* "*not hate thy brother in thine heart?* the wiſe men "ſay, when a man ſees him alone, who has com-"mitted a tranſgreſſion, and he admoniſhes him, "and he does not return, lo, it is, מצוה לשנאו, "*a commandment to hate him* until he repents and "turns from his wickedneſs." *But admoniſh*, or *reprove* him *as a brother*; as one that has been called a brother, and a member of the church, and who, tho' criminal, has no bitterneſs in him againſt the church, or againſt the name of Chriſt, and the doctrines of Chriſt; and therefore ſhould not be treated in a virulent manner, but with a brotherly affection, meekneſs, compaſſion, and tenderneſs; and who indeed is to be reckoned as a brother, whilſt the cenſure is paſſing, and the ſentence of excommunication is executing on him; for till it is finiſhed, he ſtands in ſuch a relation: tho' this alſo may have reſpect, as to the manner of excommunicating perſons, ſo to the conduct of the church to ſuch afterwards; who are not to neglect them, and much leſs to treat them as enemies, in a cruel and incompaſſionate manner; but ſhould enquire, and diligently obſerve, what effect the ordinance of excommunication has upon them, and renew their admonitions and friendly reproofs, if poſſible, to recover them.

Ver. 16. *Now the Lord of peace himſelf*, &c.] The prince of peace, who is peaceable himſelf, and the author of peace in all his churches, and who requires peace, calls for it, and encourages it: *give you peace always by all means*; both a conſcience-peace, thro' the blood, righteouſneſs, and ſacrifice of Chriſt, and faith in them, which paſſes all underſtanding, and which, when he gives, none can take away; and a church-peace, being freed from all ſuch diſorderly perſons, and their abetters, the diſturbers of it: and indeed, the way to have true peace and proſperity in churches, is to keep up the diſcipline of God's houſe. The Apoſtle prays for it in faith, upon an obſervance of the rules he had given; he prays for conſtant and perpetual peace, which is greatly to be deſired; and that it might be had by all means, and in every way thro' praying, preaching, adminiſtring the ordinances, laying on cenſures, when neceſſary, and chriſtian converſation. Some copies, and the *Vulgate Latin* verſion read, *in every place*; as well as at *Theſſalonica*. *The Lord* be *with you all*; by his preſence, to comfort and refreſh; by his power, to keep and preſerve; by his grace, to aſſiſt; and by his Spirit, to counſel, adviſe, and direct.

Ver. 17. *The ſalutation of Paul with mine own hand*, &c.] In writing his Epiſtles, the body and ſubſtance of them, he uſed an Amanuenſis, but the ſalutation he wrote with his own hand: *which is the token in every Epiſtle*; by which they might be known to be true and genuine, and be diſtinguiſhed from counterfeit ones: and the rather he mentions this, that they might be troubled neither by word, nor by ſpirit, nor by epiſtle, as from them, as they had been, ch. ii. 2. for it ſeems that this wicked practice of counterfeiting the Epiſtles of the Apoſtles, or carrying about ſpurious ones, under their name, began ſo early; to prevent which, the Apoſtle took this method, *ſo I write*, as follows:

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* Maimon. Hilch. Deyot, c. 6. §. 8.

† Ib. Hilchot Rotzeach, c. 13. §. 14.

Ver. 18. *The grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt be with you all. Amen.*] This was the ſign or token; ſee the note on *Rom.* xvi. 20.

The ſubſcription to this Epiſtle is, *The ſecond Epiſtle to the Theſſalonians was written from Athens*; tho' it ſeems rather to be written from *Corinth*. In the *Syriac* verſion it is ſaid, "the ſecond Epiſtle to the *Theſſalonians* which is written from "*Laodicea* of *Piſidia*, and ſent by the hands of "*Tychicus*."

AN

EXPOSITION, &c.

The Firſt Epiſtle of PAUL the Apoſtle to *TIMOTHY.*

TIMOTHY, to whom this Epiſtle is written, was eminent for his early piety and acquaintance with the ſacred ſcriptures; his mother was a *Jeweſs*, and his father a *Greek*, which was the reaſon why he was not circumciſed in his infancy. Mention is made in the ſecond Epiſtle to him of his mother *Eunice*, and grandmother *Lois*, as believers, and of his knowledge of the ſcriptures from a child: this excellent perſon the Apoſtle meeting with at *Lyſtra*, and having a good report of him from the brethren there, he choſe him to be his companion in his travels, and to aſſiſt him in the ſpread of the Goſpel; and knowing that it would be very diſagreeable to the *Jews* to hear the word of God from the lips of an uncircumciſed perſon, he took him and circumciſed him, becoming all things to all, that he might gain ſome. This being done, he went along with him into ſeveral parts, and he made great uſe of him, in preaching the word, planting churches, and writing Epiſtles; he ſent him to various places with meſſages from him, to *Corinth*, *Philippi*, and *Theſſalonica*; and now had left him at *Epheſus*, where he beſought him to abide for a while; for that he was the biſhop, paſtor, or overſeer of that church is not likely, ſince his reſidence here was not conſtant, and was afterwards called away from hence by the Apoſtle, who deſired his ſtay there, under whom, and by whoſe directions, he acted whilſt there; and ſeeing that this church had elders, biſhops, or overſeers, whom the Holy Ghoſt had ſet over them, whom the Apoſtle called to him at *Miletus*, and gave them ſome advice and inſtructions. The deſign of *Timothy*'s continuance there was to check growing errors and hereſies, and to take care of, and preſerve the diſcipline of God's houſe; and to charge him with theſe things was the deſign of this Epiſtle; in which he teaches him how to behave himſelf in the church of God, by taking heed to his doctrine and converſation; and gives rules relating to the qualifications of biſhops and deacons, and to the care of widows, and with regard to church cenſures, and the becoming walk and converſation of all ſorts of perſons of every office, age, ſex, rank, and order. This Epiſtle is thought to be written about the year 55.

CHAP. I.

IN this chapter, after the inſcription and ſalutation, the Apoſtle having entreated *Timothy* to abide at *Epheſus*, obſerves, that his end was, that he might check the falſe teachers there, whom he deſcribes; and then he gives an account of his Apoſtleſhip, and alſo of his converſion, to the encouragement of ſinners, and to the glory of the grace of God; and cloſes with an exhortation to *Timothy* to conſtancy and perſeverance in his chriſtian warfare. The inſcription and ſalutation are in ver. 1, 2. and much in the common form; and whereas, when he went into *Macedonia*, he deſired *Timothy* to continue at *Epheſus*, his end was, to reſtrain the falſe teachers from preaching the doctrine they did, which was contrary to the Goſpel, fabulous, uſeleſs, and unedifying, ver. 3, 4. for tho' theſe men ſet up for teachers of the law, they went off, and ſtrayed from its general end, which was love with faith, thro' their ignorance of it, ver. 5, 6, 7. not but that the law itſelf was good, as Goſpel-miniſters full well knew; which is ſaid to prevent an objection againſt them, as laying it aſide as uſeleſs; but the abuſe of it is what is complained of, it being made for ſome perſons, and not for others who are mentioned, between which, and the ſound doctrine of the Goſpel, there is an agreement, ver. 8, 9, 10, 11. which leads on the Apoſtle to obſerve his call to the office of a preacher of it by Chriſt, his qualification for it, and inveſtiture with it, for which he gives thanks, ver. 12. And in order to illuſtrate the grace of God in converting him firſt, and then making him a miniſter of the word, he takes notice of his ſtate and condition before converſion, what a vile ſinner he had been, and of the abundant grace God beſtowed on him in it, ver. 13, 14. And that this caſe of his might not ſeem ſtrange and incredible, he obſerves, that this is the ſum of the Goſpel, that Chriſt came into the world to ſave the chief of ſinners, ſuch an one as he was, ver. 15. And beſides, the end of the Lord in his converſion was, by the pattern of long-ſuffering he ſhewed in him, that others might be encouraged to believe in Chriſt alſo, ver. 16. and then for all this grace beſtowed on him, he aſcribes honour and glory to God, ver. 17. and renews his charge to *Timothy* to fight manfully againſt the falſe teachers, to which he ſhould be the more induced by the conſideration of the prophecies that went before of him, ver. 18. and to hold faith and good conſcience, which had been dropped by ſome profeſſors; of which inſtances are given in *Hymeneus* and *Philetus*, ver. 19, 20.

Ver. 1. *Paul an Apoſtle of Jeſus Chriſt*, &c.] His name was well known to *Timothy*, and very dear to him; and ſo was his office as an Apoſtle, and which he mentions, not ſo much for *Timothy*'s ſake, but for the ſake of others, that what he delivers in this Epiſtle, might come with its proper weight and authority, and be regarded: of this his office, as well as name, ſee the note on *Rom.* i. 1. How he came into this office next follows, not of himſelf, nor by men, but *by the commandment of God*; the appointment and decree of God, by which he was ſeparated to this office, even from eternity, and is the ſame with the counſel or will of God, *Eph.* i. 1. or it may refer to the order given by the Holy Ghoſt to the church, to ſet apart him and *Barnabas* to the work of the miniſtry, *Acts* xiii. 2. tho' this commandment is called the commandment of God *our Saviour*; by whom is meant God the Father; and this character of him is mentioned, to ſhow that the embaſſy the Apoſtle was ſent on as ſuch, and in which the diſcharge of his office greatly lay, was the affair of ſalvation, to publiſh and declare that to the ſons of men; and alſo to ſhow the concern which God the Father has in that work: he reſolved upon it, and appointed his people to it, and determined upon ſaving them by his Son, whom he pitched upon to be his ſalvation; he drew the ſcheme of it by his infinite wiſdom, and ſent his Son into the world to execute it; and he ſends his miniſters to publiſh the Goſpel of it, and his Spirit to reveal and apply it to the hearts of his choſen ones; and keeps them by his power unto it, and will at laſt put them into the full poſſeſſion of it; ſo that this character well ſuits with him, to whom it is alſo given, *Tit.* iii. 4. as well as with his Son Jeſus Chriſt, to whom it is more commonly aſcribed, and from whom he is here diſtinguiſhed: for it follows, *and Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, which is *our hope*; who is both the author, and the ground and foundation of the grace of hope of ſalvation, and eternal life; not earthly enjoyments, nor any external thing whatever; not birth-privileges, carnal deſcent, religious education, morality and civility, obedience to the law of *Moſes*, moral or ceremonial; nor a profeſſion of Chriſt, nor a bare ſubjection to his ordinances, but he himſelf: and there is good ground to hope for pardon thro' his blood, which was ſhed for it; and for juſtification by his righteouſneſs, which is freely wrought out, and freely imputed; and for ſalvation by him, ſince it is in him, and in no other, and is compleatly effected by him, and that for the worſt of ſinners, and is wholly of free grace, and which every one that believes in him ſhall enjoy; and ſo for eternal life, which hope is converſant with; and good reaſon there is for it in Chriſt, ſeeing it is in him, and in his gift; what his grace gives a meetneſs for, and his righteouſneſs a title to; and which he is poſſeſſed of in the name of his people, prepares for them, and will introduce them into. The *Complutenſian* edition reads, *of God the Father, and our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt*; and ſo the *Ethiopic* verſion, *of God, and our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt*.

Ver. 2. *Unto Timothy my own ſon in the faith*, &c.] Not in the fleſh, or by natural deſcent, but in a ſpiritual ſenſe, in the faith of Chriſt; for *Timothy* was not related to the Apoſtle according to the fleſh, as ſome have thought, but the relation was ſpiritual; tho' the Apoſtle was not properly his ſpiritual father, or the inſtrument of his converſion; for *Timothy* was a converted perſon, and a diſciple of Chriſt, and well reported of by the brethren, when the Apoſtle firſt met with him, *Acts* xvi. 1, 2. but he calls him his ſon, either becauſe of his age, being a young man; or becauſe of his affection for him, ſo the *Vulgate Latin* verſion reads, *a beloved ſon*; or rather, becauſe he was inſtructed more largely by the Apoſtle into the doctrine of faith; and as a ſon, with a father, ſerved with him in the Goſpel of Chriſt. It may be rendered a *true* or *genuine ſon in the faith*, in diſtinction from nominal chriſtians, formal profeſſors and hypocrites. *Timothy* was a real chriſtian, a true believer, and an hearty and upright profeſſor and preacher of the faith of Chriſt, as well as truly regenerated by the Spirit of God. *Grace, mercy, and peace from God our Father, and Jeſus Chriſt our Lord*; the *Arabic* verſion reads, *and Lord Jeſus Chriſt our Lord*. The form of ſalutation is the ſame as in all the Epiſtles of the Apoſtle, only that *mercy* is here inſerted; and when he wiſhes *grace* to *Timothy*, he may mean a freſh diſcovery of the love and free favour of God unto him, and an increaſe of grace in him, and of the gifts of the Spirit upon him; and by *mercy* he may intend a freſh application of the pardoning mercy of God, thro' Chriſt, and all aſſiſtance and ſucceſs in his work as a miniſter, and all ſuccour and ſupport under every trial and exerciſe, and mercy at the laſt day, or the mercy of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt unto eternal life; and by *peace* he may deſign peace of conſcience thro' the blood of Chriſt, and all proſperity, temporal, ſpiritual, and eternal. And all this being wiſhed for equally from Chriſt, as from God the Father, is a proof of the proper deity of our Lord.

Ver. 3. *As I beſought thee to abide ſtill at Epheſus*, &c.] Where it ſeems he now was, being left here by the Apoſtle, and where he was deſired by him to continue: *when I went into Macedonia*; not when he went his firſt journey there, for *Timothy* was then along with him, *Acts* xvi. 3, 12. and ſo he ſeems to be in his journey thro' it, in *Acts* xx. 3, 4. It may be this may refer to a journey which *Luke* has given no account of: *that thou mighteſt charge ſome, that they teach no other doctrine*; than the doctrine of Chriſt and his Apoſtles; than what had been preached by the Apoſtle at *Epheſus*, and the ſaints there had received; than what was agreeable to the ſcriptures of truth, and was according to godlineſs; for all other doctrines muſt be divers and ſtrange ones: nor would he have them teach in another way, in new words, but hold faſt the form of ſound words; for new words often produce new doctrines: the Apoſtle perhaps by other doctrine chiefly reſpects the doctrine of juſtification by the works of the law. It ſeems as if there were ſome teachers in this place the Apoſtle was ſuſpicious of, or he had heard that they began to innovate in the doctrine of faith; wherefore he deſires *Timothy* to continue a while, in order to be a check on theſe perſons, and to charge them not to introduce any new doctrine; for it was only *ſome*, and not all that taught there, he was ſo to charge. Some refer this to hearers, and render the words, *that they follow no other doctrine*; but it ſeems beſt to underſtand it of teachers; the *Syriac* and *Arabic* verſions render the words as we do.

Ver. 4. *Neither give heed to fables*, &c.] Old wives fables, ch. iv. 7. or *Jewiſh* fables, *Tit.* i. 14. the traditions of the elders; any thing that was not true; or if it was, yet idle, vain, trifling, and unprofitable: *and endleſs genealogies*; not of deities, as the *Theogony* of the *Gentiles*, or the ten *Sephirot* or numbers in the *Cabaliſtic* tree of the *Jews*, or the *Æones* of the *Gnoſticks* and *Valentinians*, which are ſaid to proceed from one another, as ſome have thought; but both the public and private genealogies of the *Jews*, which they kept to ſhew of what tribe they were, or to prove themſelves prieſts and levites and the like; of which there was no end, and which often produced queſtions and debates. By reaſon of their captivities and diſperſions, they were much at a loſs to diſtinguiſh their tribes and families. Some care *Ezra* took of this matter, when the *Jews* returned from the *Babyloniſh* captivity. It is ſaid [a], that עשרה יוחסין, "*ten genealogies* (or ten ſorts of perſons genealogized) came "out of *Babylon*; prieſts, levites, *Iſraelites*, prophane (or unfit for the prieſthood, though they "ſprung from prieſts) proſelytes, freemen (ſervants made free) baſtards, *Nethinim* or *Gibeonites*, ſuch whoſe father was not known, and "thoſe that were took up in the ſtreets." Theſe *Ezra* brought up to *Jeruſalem* thus diſtinguiſhed, that they might be taken care of by the *Sanhedrim*, and kept diſtinct; but theſe would often intermix and cauſe diſputes; and ſometimes theſe mixtures were connived at thro' partiality or fear [b]. "Says, "*R. Jochanan*, by the temple, it is in our hands, "(the Gloſs adds, to diſcover the illegitimate families of the land of *Iſrael*) but what ſhall I do? "for lo, the great men of this age are hid (or "impure): in which he agreed with *R. Iſaac*, "who ſaid, the family that is hid, let it be hid. "*Abai* alſo ſaith, we have learned this by tradition, there was a family of the houſe of *Tzeriphah*, beyond *Jordan*, and a Son of *Zion*, (a famous man, a man of authority) ſet it at a diſtance, (proclaimed it illegitimate) by his authority. And again, there was another, and he "made it near (or pronounced it right) by his "power.——Again, there was another family, and "the wiſe men would not diſcover it." By which we may ſee what management there was in theſe things, and what a foundation was laid for queſtions and debates. Of theſe public and private genealogies, ſee the note on *Matt.* i. 16. to which may be added what *R. Benjamin* ſays [c] of ſome *Jews* in his time, who were the *Rechabites*, and were very numerous, and had a prince over them of the houſe of *David*; and, adds he, they have a genealogical book; ומשגרות שאלות, *and extracts of queſtions*, which I ſhould be tempted to render *cluſters of queſtions*, which are with the head of the captivity; and this comes very near to what our Apoſtle here ſays. And when it is obſerved, that *Herod*, that he might hide the meanneſs of his deſcent and birth, burnt all the genealogical writings in the public archives [d], it muſt be ſtill more difficult to fix the true account of things; and for the loſs of the genealogical book, the public one, the *Jews* expreſs a very great concern: for they ſay [e], that "from "the time the book of genealogies was hid, the "ſtrength of the wiſe men was weakened, and the "light of their eyes grew dim. Says *Mar Zutra*, "between *Azel* and *Azel*, (that is, between 1 *Chron.* "viii. 38. and ch. ix. 44.) there's need of four "hundred camel loads of commentaries." So intricate an affair, and ſuch an endleſs buſineſs was this. And this affair of genealogies might be now the more the ſubject of enquiry among *judaizing* chriſtians, ſince there was, and ſtill is, an expectation among the *Jews*, that in the times of the Meſſiah theſe things will be ſet aright. Says *Maimonides* [f]; "in the days of the king Meſſiah, when "his kingdom ſhall be ſettled, and all *Iſrael* ſhall "be gathered to him, יתייחסו כולם, *they ſhall all* "*of them be genealogized*, according to his word, "by the Holy Ghoſt, as it is ſaid, *Mal.* iii. 3. he "ſhall purify the ſons of *Levi*, and ſay, this is a "genealogized prieſt, and this is a genealogized "levite; and ſhall drive them away who are not "genealogized (or related) to *Iſrael*, as it is ſaid, "*Ezra* ii. 63. Hence you learn, that by the Holy "Ghoſt they ſhall be genealogized, thoſe that arrogate and proclaim their genealogy; and he "ſhall not genealogize *Iſrael* but by their tribes, "for he ſhall make known that this is of ſuch a "tribe, and this is of ſuch a tribe; but he ſhall "not ſay concerning ſuch an one he is a baſtard, "and this is a ſervant; for ſo ſhall it be, that the "family that is obſcure ſhall be obſcure." Or elſe the genealogical account of their traditions may be meant, which they trace from *Moſes* to *Joſhua*, from *Joſhua* to the elders, from the elders to the prophets, from the prophets to the men of the great ſynagogue, and from one doctor to another [g]; which to purſue is endleſs, tedious, and tireſome: *which miniſter queſtions*; as the traditions of the elders, and the genealogical account of them did; the *Talmud* is full of the queſtions, debates, contentions, and deciſions of the doctors about them: *rather than godly edifying, which is in faith*; and which is the principal end of preaching, hearing, and converſation; and that may be called *godly edifying*, or *the edification of God*, as it may be rendered, which he is the author of, and which he approves of, and is by, and according to his word; or that in which ſouls are built up, an habitation for God, and are built up in faith and holineſs, and by an increaſe of every grace: and this is *in faith*, not only in the grace of faith, but by the doctrine of faith, on which the ſaints may build one another, and by which they are edified thro' the faithful miniſtration of it by the miniſters of the word; when fabulous ſtories and diſputes, about genealogies, are uſeleſs and unedifying: not that the Apoſtle condemns all genealogies, ſuch as we have in the writings of the Old Teſtament, and in the Evangeliſts, nor all enquiries into them, and ſtudy of them, which, rightly to ſettle, is in ſome caſes of great importance and uſe, but the private and unprofitable ones before mentioned. Some copies read, *the diſpenſation of God, which is in faith*; meaning the diſpenſation of the myſteries of grace, which are in the doctrine of faith, which becomes a faithful ſteward of them, and not fables and genealogies, which iſſue in queſtions, quarrels, and contentions.

Ver. 5. *Now the end of the commandment is charity*, &c.] By the *commandment* may be meant, the order given to *Timothy*, or the charge committed to him; ſee ver. 18. to forbid the teaching of another doctrine, and to avoid fables and endleſs genealogies; the end and deſign of which was to cultivate peace, to maintain and ſecure brotherly love, which cannot long ſubſiſt, when a different doctrine is introduced and received; and to promote godly edification, which is brought about by charity or love, for charity edifies; but is greatly hindered by ſpeculative notions, fabulous ſtories, and genealogical controverſies and contentions: or by it may be intended, the miniſtration of the Goſpel, called the commandment, ch. vi. 14. becauſe enjoined the preachers of it by Chriſt; the end of which is to bring perſons to the obedience of faith, or to that faith which works by love, to believe in Chriſt, to love the Lord, his truths, ordinances, people, and ways; or rather the moral law is deſigned, which is often called the commandment, *Rom.* vii. 8, 9, 10, 11, 12. ſince of this the Apoſtle treats in ſome following verſes; the end and deſign, ſum and ſubſtance, completion and perfection of which law are love to God, and love to one another; ſee *Matt.* xxii. 36, 37, 38, 39. *Rom.* xiii. 8, 9. *Gal.* v. 14. which charity or love, when right, ſprings *out of a pure heart*; which no man has naturally; every man's heart is naturally impure; nor can he make it pure, by the ſtrength of nature, or by any thing that he can do: there are ſome that are pure in their own eyes, and in the eſteem of others, and yet are not cleanſed from their filthineſs, and are inwardly full of all manner of impurity; tho' there are ſome that have pure hearts, and they are ſuch, who have clean hearts created in them by the Spirit of God; who are regenerated and ſanctified by him; whoſe hearts are purified by faith; and who have their hearts ſprinkled from an evil conſcience by the blood of Chriſt; and who are not double-minded, ſpeak with a heart and a heart, but whoſe hearts are ſincere and upright, and without hypocriſy; ſo that charity or love, from ſuch a heart, is love without diſſimulation, which is not in tongue and words only, but in deed and in truth; 'tis an unfeigned love, or loving with a pure heart fervently. *And of a good conſcience*; there is a conſcience in every man, that accuſes or excuſes, unleſs it is cauterized or ſeared; but this conſcience is naturally evil and defiled, and does not perform its office aright; either it takes no notice of, and is not concerned about ſin, and has no remorſe for it, or it takes notice of little things, and lets paſs greater ones, or ſpeaks peace when deſtruction is at hand: a good conſcience is a conſcience purified by the grace of God, and purged from dead works by the blood of Chriſt; under the influence of which a man acts uprightly in the diſcharge of his duty, and exerciſes a conſcience void of offence towards God and man; and charity, proceeding from ſuch a conſcience, is of the right kind: *and of faith unfeigned*; with which a man really, and from the heart, believes what he profeſſes; ſo did not *Simon Magus*, and all other temporary believers, whoſe faith is a feigned faith, a dead and inactive one; whereas true faith is an operative grace; it is attended with good works, and particularly it works by love: and that charity or love, which ſprings from faith unfeigned, is unfeigned love alſo, ſuch as anſwers the deſign, and is the ſubſtance of the commandment. Theſe words may be conſidered in a gradation, or as a ſpiritual genealogy, in oppoſition to the endleſs ones before mentioned, thus; that charity which is the end of the commandment, comes out of a pure heart, out of which proceeds a good conſcience, and from thence faith unfeigned. But the other way of interpreting ſeems beſt.

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[a] Miſn. Kidduſhin, c. 4. §. 1.

[b] T. Bab. Kidduſhin, fol. 71. 1. & Hieroſ. Kidduſhin, fol. 65. 3.

[c] Maſſaot, p. 83.

[d] Euſeb. Eccl. Hiſt. l. 1. c. 7.

[e] T. Bab. Peſachim, fol. 62. 2.

[f] Hilchot Melacim, c. 12. §. 3.

[g] Pirke Abot, c. 1. §. 1, &c.

Ver. 6. *From which ſome having ſwerved*, &c.] The Apoſtle in this verſe, and the next, deſcribes the perſons he ſuſpected of teaching other doctrines, and of introducing fables and endleſs genealogies; they were ſuch who departed from the above things; they erred from the commandment, or law, notwithſtanding their great pretenſions to a regard unto it; at leaſt they miſſed the mark, the end and deſign of it; they went aſtray from that, and inſtead of promoting charity or love, created feuds, contentions, and diviſions in the churches; and were far from having a pure heart, being filthy dreamers, and ſenſual perſons, deſtitute of the Spirit of God, and were ſuch who put away a good conſcience, and made ſhipwreck of faith: ſuch were *Hymeneus*, *Philetus*, *Alexander*, and others, of whom he alſo ſays, they *have turned aſide to vain jangling*; which he elſewhere calls empty talk, and vain bablings, ch. vi. 20. 2 *Ep.* ii. 16. from the ſolid doctrines of the Goſpel, and a ſolid way of handling them, they turned to vain, idle, uſeleſs, and unprofitable ſubjects of diſcourſe, and to treating upon ſubjects in a vain, jejune, and empty manner; entertaining their hearers with fooliſh and trifling queſtions and anſwers to them about the law, and with ſtrifes about words, which were unſerviceable and unedifying; they were unruly and vain talkers, *Tit.* i. 10.

Ver. 7. *Deſiring to be teachers of the law*, &c.] They were very fond of being called *Rabbi*, *Rabbi*, and ſtiled doctors of the law, and of being thought to have ſkill in interpreting the law, and good talents in expounding it, and preaching upon it; which was now moſt in vogue, and gained the greateſt applauſe, when the preaching of the Goſpel was treated with contempt, not only by the unbelieving *Jews*, but by *judaizing* chriſtians, and carnal profeſſors. *Underſtanding neither what they ſay, nor whereof they affirm*; they did not underſtand the law, the nature and end, the purity and ſpirituality, and perfection of it, which they were ſo fond of teaching, and went into many fooliſh and unlearned queſtions about it; ſee 2 *Tim.* ii. 23. *Tit.* iii. 9. and which they as fooliſhly anſwered: theſe are the ignorant and unlearned men, who, notwithſtanding their vain ſhow of learning, and pretence to ſkill in interpreting the law, wreſted the ſcriptures to their own deſtruction, and that of others; they were ignorant of the things they talked of, and knew not by what arguments to confirm them, and yet were very bold and confident in their aſſertions: and generally ſpeaking ſo it is, that thoſe who can prove leaſt, aſſert moſt, and that with the greateſt aſſurance.

Ver. 8. *But we know that the law is good*, &c.] The Apoſtle ſays this to prevent an objection that might be made to him, that ſeeing he bore ſo hard on ſuch who were fond of being teachers of the law, he was himſelf againſt the law, and the preaching and proper uſe of it; but this he would not have concluded, for he and his fellow-labourers in the miniſtry, and all true believers know, from the ſcriptures of truth, from the agreement of the law with the Goſpel, and from their own experience, that the law is good, provided it be uſed in a lawful way, and to lawful purpoſes: and this is to be underſtood not of the ceremonial law, which was now diſanulled, becauſe of the weakneſs and unprofitableneſs of it, ſo that there was no lawful uſe of that; but of the moral law, which muſt needs be good, ſince the author of it is God, who is only good; and nothing but good can come from him:

the law, ſtrictly moral, is a copy of his nature, tranſcribed out of himſelf, as well as with his own hands; and is a declaration of his will, and is enſtamped with his authority, and therefore muſt be good: the matter of it is good, it contains good, yea great and excellent things; the matter of it is honeſtly and morally good, as to love mercy, do juſtice, and walk humbly with God: and it is pleaſantly good to a regenerate man, who loves it, and delights in it after the inner man, and ſerves it with his Spirit; tho' the carnal mind cannot be ſubject to it, but rejects it, and rebels againſt it: and it is alſo profitably good; for tho' obedience to it is not profitable to God, yet it is to men; and tho' eternal life is not obtained hereby, nor any reward given for keeping it, yet in keeping it there is a reward; and that peace is enjoyed, which the tranſgreſſors of it are ſtrangers to: it is good in the uſes of it, both to ſinners and to ſaints. To ſinners it is uſeful for the knowledge of ſin, to convince of it, and bring them to a ſenſe of it, and concern for it, which is effectually done, when the Spirit of God ſets in with it, or brings this commandment home to the heart; and if it has not this uſe, it is ſometimes a means of reſtraining men from ſin, which is the uſe of civil laws among men; and if it has not this, it is of uſe however to accuſe men rightly of ſin, and to pronounce juſtly guilty before God for it, to curſe them as they deſerve it, and to ſentence to condemnation and death: and to believers it is of uſe, tho' they are not under it as in the hands of *Moſes*, and as a covenant of works, and are freed from its curſe and condemnation, and under no obligation to ſeek for life and righteouſneſs by it; to them it is of uſe, to point out to them what is the will of God, and what ſhould be done, and not done; and it is a rule of walk and converſation to them, as in the hands of Chriſt; and is as a glaſs to them to behold their own deformity, the impurity of their nature, the plague of their own hearts, and the imperfection of their obedience; by which they ſee the inſufficiency of their own righteouſneſs, how far they are from perfection, and what carnal creatures they are, when compared with this law: and as this ſerves to put them out of conceit with themſelves, ſo it tends to make Chriſt and his righteouſneſs more lovely and valuable in their eſteem; who has wrought out a righteouſneſs as broad and as long as the law is, and by which it is magnified and made honourable, and has delivered them from its curſe and condemnation. And this law is good as it is holy, in its author, nature, and uſe; and as it is juſt, requiring juſt things, and doing that which is juſt, by acquitting thoſe who are intereſted in Chriſt's righteouſneſs, and in condemning thoſe that have no righteouſneſs; and as it is a ſpiritual and perfect law, which reaches the ſpirit and ſoul of man, and is concerned with inward thoughts and motions, as well as outward actions; and eſpecially the end of it, the fulfilling end of it is good, which is Jeſus Chriſt, who was made under it, came to fulfil it, and has anſwered all the demands of it: ſo that it muſt be good, and which cannot be denied, *if a man uſe it lawfully*; for if it is uſed in order to obtain life, righteouſneſs, and ſalvation by the works of it, or by obedience to it, it is uſed unlawfully; for the law does not give life, nor can righteouſneſs come by it; nor are, or can men be ſaved by the works of it; to uſe the law for ſuch purpoſes, is to abuſe it, as the falſe teachers did, and make that which is good in itſelf, and in its proper uſe, to do what is evil; namely, to obſcure and fruſtrate the grace of God, and make null and void the ſufferings and death of Chriſt. A lawful uſe of the law is to obey it, as in the hands of Chriſt, the king of ſaints, and lawgiver in his church, from a principle of love to him, in the exerciſe of faith on him, without any mercenary, ſelfiſh views, without truſting to, or depending on, what is done in obedience to it, but with a view to the glory of God, to teſtify our ſubjection to Chriſt, and our gratitude to him for favours received from him.

Ver. 9. *Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man*, &c.] No man is naturally righteous ſince *Adam*, excepting the man Chriſt Jeſus: ſome that are righteous in their own opinion, and in the eſteem of others, are not truly and really ſo; none are righteous, or can be juſtified in the ſight of God by the works of the law; thoſe only are righteous men, who are made ſo thro' the imputation of Chriſt's righteouſneſs to them: and ſuch a righteous man is here intended, who believes in Chriſt with the heart unto righteouſneſs, who lays hold on Chriſt's righteouſneſs, and receives it by faith; in conſequence of which he lives ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly, tho' not without ſin, ſince there is no ſuch juſt man upon earth. Now for ſuch a man the law was not made; which muſt be underſtood not of its original conſtitution and make, for it was certainly made for, and given to *Adam*, who was a righteous man, and was written upon his heart in a ſtate of innocence; and who had a poſitive law made alſo for him, and given to him as a trial of his obedience to this: it was alſo delivered to the *Iſraelites* on mount *Sinai*, who were many of them, at leaſt, righteous men; and beſides all this, the law was made for Jeſus Chriſt; he was the end, the mark, and ſcope at which it aimed, and for whoſe ſake it was given to *Iſrael*, that he might be made under it, and fulfil it. Nor does this expreſſion deny all uſe of the law to a righteous man, which has been pointed out on the preceding verſe, but only removes an unlawful uſe, and a wrong end of the law: it never was made with any ſuch view as to obtain righteouſneſs by it; for, a righteous man, as *Adam*, in innocence, and all that are juſtified by Chriſt's righteouſneſs need it not for ſuch a purpoſe, becauſe they are already righteous; and ſinners can never attain to righteouſneſs by it, ſince it cannot give life unto them: it is made therefore not for the former with the view now mentioned, but for the latter, and that both for the reſtraining of ſin, and puniſhing of ſinners. The words, δικαιω νομος ȣ κειται, may be rendered, *the law does not lie upon a righteous man*, or againſt him. It does not lie as a weight or burden on him; its precept does not lie on him, as a taſk to be performed; nor does its penalty, the curſe, lie on him as a puniſhment to be bore by him: it does not lie upon him, nor againſt him, as an accuſing law, its mouth is ſtopped by the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, by which he is denominated a righteous man; nor as a terrifying law, and bringing into bondage by its threats and menaces; nor as a rigorous law, obliging to obedience in a forcible and compulſive way; ſeeing there is no need of it, the righteous man delights in it, and chearfully ſerves it, and the love of Chriſt conſtrains him to obey it freely. And much leſs does it lie on him, or againſt him as a curſing or condemning law, ſince Chriſt has redeemed him from the curſe of it. *But for the lawleſs and diſobedient*; by the *lawleſs* are meant, not the *Gentiles*, which were without the written law, but ſuch who have it, and deſpiſe and reject it, and live not according to it, but tranſgreſs it: and *the diſobedient* deſign ſuch who are unſubjected to it; who are ſons of *Belial*, children without the yoke; who caſt the law of the Lord behind their backs; who are not, nor can they be ſubject to it without the powerful and efficacious grace of God. Now the law lies upon, and againſt ſuch perſons, as an accuſing, terrifying, curſing, and condemning law. *For the ungodly, and for ſinners*; by the *ungodly* are intended, ſuch as are without God in the world, who neither fear God, nor regard man, who neglect and deſpiſe the worſhip of God, and ſay to him, depart from us, *Job* xxi. 14, 15. and by *ſinners* are deſigned notorious ones, who are exceeding great ſinners, always ſinning, making ſin their conſtant buſineſs and employment; on and againſt theſe the law lies: *for unholy and prophane*; ſuch are unholy perſons, who are deſtitute of inward principles of truth and holineſs, and who live unholy lives and converſations; and *prophane* perſons are thoſe who prophane the name of the Lord by curſing and ſwearing, and who prophane his day, doctrines, and ordinances, and live diſſolute and prophane lives, being abandoned to all ſin and wickedneſs; theſe three couples of wicked men, expreſſed in general terms, ſeem to have reſpect greatly to the moral part of the four precepts of the decalogue, as the following particulars do to the other ſix: *for murderers of fathers, and murderers of mothers*; tho' there is no law that expreſly mentions this, yet is beyond all doubt a breach both of the fifth and ſixth commands; and if curſing parents, and diſobedience to them, were puniſhable by the law with death, then much more the murder of them; ſee *Lev.* xx. 9. *Deut.* xxi. 18. tho' the words will bear to be rendered, *for ſtrikers of fathers, and ſtrikers of mothers*; and ſo the *Syriac* and *Arabic* verſions render them, and againſt this there was an expreſs law, *Exod.* xxi. 15. According to the *Pompeian* law, one guilty of parricide was to be ſewed up in a ſack with a dog, a cock, a viper, and an ape, and caſt into the ſea, or into a river[h]: *for manſlayers*, guilty of the murder of any man, which was always puniſhable with death, and was a breach of the ſixth command; ſee *Gen.* ix. 6. *Exod.* xx. 13. and xxi. 12.

Ver. 10. *For whoremongers*, &c.] Fornicators and adulterers, who were tranſgreſſors of the ſeventh command, *Exod.* xx. 14. ſee *Lev.* xx. 10. theſe God will judge, and ſuch ſhall have their portion in the lake that burns with fire and brimſtone: *for them that defile themſelves with mankind*; who are guilty of ſodomy; ſuch, according to the law, were to die, *Lev.* xviii. 22. and xx. 13. the wrath of God was revealed from heaven in a very viſible and remarkable manner againſt this abomination, by raining fire and brimſtone upon *Sodom* and *Gomorrha*, and upon the cities of the plain, who defiled themſelves in this way: *for men ſtealers*; who decoyed ſervants or free men, and ſtole them away, and ſold them for ſlaves; ſee the laws againſt this practice, and the puniſhment ſuch were liable to, in *Exod.* xxi. 16. *Deut.* xxiv. 7. This practice was condemned by the *Flavian* law among the *Romans*[i], and was not allowed of among the *Grecians*[k]; the death with which ſuch were puniſhed, was ſtrangling, according to the *Jews*[l]: *for liars*; who ſpeak what is falſe, againſt their own knowledge and conſcience, and with a deſign to deceive; who lye againſt their neighbours, and act falſly and deceitfully in trade and merchandize, as well as ſpeak that which is not true; ſee *Lev.* vi. 2. *for perjured perſons*; who take a falſe oath on any account, and bear falſe witneſs againſt their neighbour. Now upon, and againſt all, and each of theſe, the law lies, as an accuſing, threatning, and curſing law: *and if there be any other thing that is contrary to ſound doctrine*; the law lies againſt it, takes notice of it, charges with it, condemns and puniſhes for it: by *ſound doctrine* is meant, the doctrine of the Goſpel, which is in itſelf pure and incorrupt, and is the cauſe of ſoundneſs and health to others; 'tis health to the navel, and marrow to the bones; its doctrines are the wholeſome words of Chriſt, and by them ſouls are nouriſhed up unto eternal life; when the errors and hereſies of men are in themſelves rotten and corrupt, and alſo eat as do a canker. Here it may be obſerved, that there is an entire harmony and agreement between the Goſpel and the law, rightly underſtood and uſed; what is contrary to the one, is alſo to the other; the Goſpel no more countenances ſin than the law does; and whatever is repugnant to the Goſpel, is liable to be puniſhed by the law.

Ver. 11. *According to the glorious Goſpel of the bleſſed God*, &c.] For no doctrine is ſound, but but what is agreeable to that: this is a very great encomium of the Goſpel. The doctrine preached by the Apoſtles was not only Goſpel, or good news, and glad tidings, but the Goſpel of God; of which he is the author, and which relates to his glory, the glory of all his perfections; which reveals his purpoſes, ſhews his covenant, and exhibits the bleſſings and promiſes of it; and is the Goſpel of the bleſſed God, who is bleſſed in himſelf, and is the fountain of bleſſedneſs to others; and particularly he bleſſes his choſen ones with ſpiritual bleſſings, and which are ſet forth and declared in the Goſpel; for which reaſon this epithet ſeems to be given to God here: and it is a glorious one; it diſcovers the glory of God, of his wiſdom, grace, and love in the ſalvation of men; its doctrines of peace and pardon, righteouſneſs and ſalvation by Jeſus Chriſt, are glorious ones; and ſo are its promiſes, being great and precious, all yea and amen in Chriſt, abſolute, unconditional, unchangeable, and irreverſible; its ordinances alſo are glorious ones, being amiable and pleaſant, and not grievous and burdenſome to believers; and it is glorious in its effects, being the power of God unto ſalvation, the means of enlightning the blind, of quickning the dead, of delivering men from bondage and ſervitude, of turning men from ſin and ſatan to God, and of refreſhing and comforting diſtreſſed minds, and of reviving the ſpirits of drooping ſaints, of eſtabliſhing and ſtrengthening them, and nouriſhing them up to eternal life. The Apoſtle adds, *which was committed to my truſt*; to diſtinguiſh this Goſpel from another, from that of the falſe teachers, which was an inglorious one, and he had nothing to do with; and to ſhew the excellency and worth of it; it being valuable, was deſerving of care and keeping, and was a depoſitum the perſon intruſted with was faithfully and carefully to keep and preſerve.

Ver. 12. *And I thank Jeſus Chriſt our Lord*, &c.] The ſubject-matter of this thankſgiving being the Apoſtle's call to the miniſtry of the word, and his furniture and fitneſs for it, ſhows, that whilſt others were fond of being teachers, and called doctors of the law, he eſteemed it an high honour and ſpecial favour beſtowed upon him, that he was a preacher of the Goſpel; and that all his gifts and abilities for it were not of himſelf, nor from men, but were owing to the free grace of God, and favour of Chriſt; wherefore he gloried not in them, as if he had not received them, but gives Chriſt the glory of them, and thanks to him for them: *who hath enabled me*; who gave him all his abilities for the preaching of the Goſpel, and all that ſtrength to perform the various parts of labour and ſervice he was called unto, and all that firmneſs, reſolution, and fortitude of mind he was endued with, to bear and ſuffer what he did for the ſake of Chriſt and his Goſpel. *For that he counted me faithful*; not that he was ſo antecedent to the grace and gifts beſtowed on him by Chriſt, or that Chriſt foreſaw that he would be ſo, and therefore choſe him for his ſervice; but he counted him faithful, having made him ſo by his grace, and thus he kept him; faithfulneſs being a neceſſary requiſite and qualification for a Goſpel-miniſter, he having a great truſt committed to him, being made a ſteward of the manifold grace and myſteries of God: *putting me into the miniſtry*. The miniſtry of the word, the work of the miniſtry, or preaching of the Goſpel, the diſpenſation or adminiſtration of it to the ſons of men; this he did not thruſt himſelf into, nor take this honour to, and of himſelf; nor was he put into it by men, but was choſen to it of God, and called unto it by the Spirit, and was placed in it by Chriſt himſelf, who in perſon appeared to him, and made a miniſter of him; ſee *Rom.* i. 1. *Acts* ix. 15. and xiii. 2. and xxvi. 16. The *Arabic* and *Ethiopic* verſions read, *his miniſtry*, the miniſtry of Chriſt.

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[h] Pompon. Lætus de Leg. Rom. p. 156.

[i] Ib. p. 154.

[k] Philoſtrat. Vit. Apollon. l. 8. c. 3.

[l] Miſna Sanhedrin, c. 10. §. 1. & Maimon. Hilch. Geniba, c. 9. §. 1.

Ver. 13. *Who was before a blaſphemer*, &c.] Of the name of Chriſt, contrary to which he thought he ought to do many things; and he not only blaſphemed that name himſelf, calling him an impoſtor and a deceiver, but he compelled others to blaſpheme it alſo, *Acts* xxvi. 9, 11. This, as well as what follows, is ſaid, to illuſtrate the grace of God in his converſion, and call to the miniſtry: *and a perſecutor*; for not content to ſpeak evil of Chriſt, of his perſon, people, truths and ordinances, he acted againſt them; not only breathed out againſt the diſciples threatnings and ſlaughter, but did many evil things to them and deſtroyed them which called on the name of Chriſt; perſecuted Chriſt in his members, and them beyond meaſure, even unto death, *Acts* ix. 1, 5, 13, 21. and xxii. 4. *Gal.* i. 13. *And injurious*; not barely uſing contumelious and reproachful words of Chriſt, and his people, which is the ſenſe of ſome verſions, and ſeems to be included in the firſt character; but uſing force and violence, and doing injury, not only to the characters, but perſons and properties of the ſaints, making havock of the church, haling men and women out of their houſes, and committing them to priſon; and now it was that *Benjamin* ravined as a wolf, the Apoſtle being of that tribe; ſee *Acts* viii. 3. *Gen.* xlix. 27. *But I obtained mercy*; the *Vulgate Latin* verſion reads, *the mercy of God*; God had mercy on him, unaſked and unſought for, as well as unmerited; God had mercy on him when he was in the career of his ſin, and ſtopped him; and of his abundant mercy begat him again to a lively hope of forgiveneſs and eternal life; and thro' his great love quickned him, when dead in treſpaſſes and ſins; and according to the multitude of his tender mercies, forgave and blotted out all his iniquities; and put him openly among his children, his family and houſhold; and to all this added the grace of Apoſtleſhip: he put him into the miniſtry, and of a blaſpheming and injurious perſecutor, made him a laborious, faithful, and uſeful preacher of the Goſpel. *Becauſe I did it ignorantly in unbelief*. This is ſaid, not as an extenuation of his ſin, or as an excuſe for himſelf; for this was not the Apoſtle's method, ſince in the next verſe he calls himſelf the chief of ſinners; beſides, ignorance is not an excuſe, but an aggravation of ſin, eſpecially when there are means of knowledge, and theſe are not attended to; and when perſons are not open to conviction, and reject the fulleſt evidence, which was the caſe here: nor can unbelief be pleaded in ſuch a man's favour, who heard what *Stephen* had to ſay; and tho' he could not reſiſt his wiſdom, received not the truth ſpoken by him, but conſented to his death; moreover, all ſins ſpring from ignorance, and are aggravated by unbelief: but this phraſe deſcribes the Apoſtle's ſtate and condition; he was a poor, blind, ignorant bigot, an unbelieving and hardened creature, and ſo an object of mercy, pity, and compaſſion; and he who has compaſſion on the ignorant, and them that are out of the way, had compaſſion on him. He indeed did not know that Jeſus was the Chriſt, or that his followers were the true church of God; he really thought he ought to do what he did, and that in doing it, he did God good ſervice; he had a zeal, but not according to knowledge; and therefore did not ſin wilfully and maliciouſly againſt light, and knowledge, and conſcience, and ſo not the ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt; as ſome of the *Phariſees* did, and therefore died without mercy, and were not capable ſubjects of mercy, and proper objects of it; nor is it ever extended to ſuch: but this not being the caſe of the Apoſtle, mercy was of ſovereign good-will and pleaſure vouchſafed to him; his ignorance and unbelief were not a reaſon or cauſe of his obtaining mercy, which is always ſhown in a ſovereign way; but a reaſon, ſhewing, that that was mercy that was vouchſafed to him, ſince he was ſuch an ignorant and unbelieving creature. It is a good note of *Beza*'s on the place, *en merita preparationis quæ profert apoſtolus*; what works, merits, previous qualifications and preparations were there in the Apoſtle, fitting him for the grace and mercy of God, ſeeing in the midſt of his ſins, and in the full purſuit of them, the grace of God laid hold upon him, and mercy was ſhown him? there's nothing between his being a blaſphemer, a perſecutor, an injurious perſon, an ignorant unbeliever, and his obtaining mercy.

Ver. 14. *And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant*, &c.] That is, the love of *Jehovah* the Father; ſo the *Ethiopic* verſion reads, *the grace of God*; of God the Father, ſince he is diſtinguiſhed in the text from Jeſus Chriſt. God is abundant in grace and goodneſs; he is rich and plenteous in mercy; there is an overflow of love in his heart to his choſen people, and in converſion it flows out, and abounds and ſuper-abounds; ſee *Rom.* v. 20. *with faith and love which is in Chriſt Jeſus*; theſe are the effects of the love and favour of God diſplayed in converſion, or which the grace of God brings along with it, and implants in the ſoul at that time, as it did in the Apoſtle; for by *faith* is not meant the faithfulneſs of God to his Son, and to his covenant, oath, and promiſe, which now began viſibly to be made good; nor the faith of the Goſpel committed to the Apoſtle's truſt, which was an high favour; but the grace of faith, which is a pure gift of God, and a diſtinguiſhing inſtance of his grace; for all men have it not, only his elect; and is a moſt precious and excellent grace, and of great uſe and importance: it receives every bleſſing from Chriſt, and gives him all the glory; thro' it much peace, joy, and comfort are enjoyed here, and with it is connected eternal life and ſalvation hereafter: and by *love* alſo is meant, not the love with which God loves his people, for that is deſigned by the grace of our Lord, tho' there is a very great diſplay of that in converſion, which is a time of love; but the internal grace of love, even love to God, to Chriſt, and to his people, which the Apoſtle was before deſtitute of; but now inſtead of unbelief he had faith, and inſtead of rage and madneſs againſt Chriſt, and the ſaints, his ſoul was filled with love to both. The *Arabic* verſion reads, *with my faith, and my love*. The phraſe, *which is in Chriſt Jeſus*, denotes either that the ſpring of theſe graces is in Chriſt, and that they come from him, in whom all fulneſs dwells; or that he is the object of them, in which they center, and on whom they are exerciſed, and particularly that love to the ſaints was ſhown for his ſake.

Ver. 15. *This is a faithful ſaying, and worthy of all acceptation*, &c.] This is ſaid, leſt it ſhould be thought ſtrange, or ſcarcely credible, that ſo great a ſinner ſhould be ſaved; as well as to give a ſummary of the glorious Goſpel the Apoſtle was entruſted with; and in oppoſition to fables, endleſs genealogies, and vain jangling, and contentions about the law. The doctrine of Chriſt's coming into the world, and of ſalvation by him, as it is the ſum and ſubſtance of the Goſpel, ſo it is *a faithful ſaying*; in which the faithfulneſs of God is diſplayed to himſelf, and the perfections of his nature, his holineſs, juſtice, love, grace, and mercy; to his law, which is magnified, and made honourable; to his word of promiſe hereby fulfilled; and to his Son in carrying him thro' the work: and the faithfulneſs of Chriſt is diſcovered herein, both to his Father with whom, and to his friends for whom, he engaged to obtain ſalvation; and the faithfulneſs of miniſters is ſhewn in preaching it, and of other ſaints in profeſſing it, and abiding by it: it is a true ſaying, and not to be diſputed or doubted of, but to be believed moſt firmly; it is certain that God the Father ſent his Son into the world for this purpoſe; and Chriſt himſelf aſſures us, that he came for this end; his carriage to ſinners, and his actions, teſtified the ſame; his works and miracles confirm it; and the numberleſs inſtances of ſinners ſaved by him, evince the truth of it: and it is *worthy of all acceptation*; or to be received by all ſorts of perſons, learned or unlearned, rich or poor, greater or leſſer ſinners; and to be received in all ways, and in the beſt manner, as the word of God, and not man; with heartineſs and readineſs, and with love, joy, and gladneſs, and with meekneſs, faith, and fear, and by all means; for it is entirely true, abſolutely neceſſary, and ſuitable to the caſe of all, and is to be highly valued and eſteemed by thoſe who do approve and accept of it. It is the chriſtian *Cabala*, or the evangelical tradition, delivered by the Father to Chriſt, by him to his Apoſtles, and by them to the ſaints, by whom it is cordially received. The Apoſtle ſeems to allude to the *Cabala* of the *Jews*, their oral law, which they ſay [m] was delivered to *Moſes* on mount *Sinai*, and by him to *Joſhua*; and by *Joſhua* to the elders; and by the elders to the prophets; and ſo from one to another to his times: but here he ſuggeſts, that if they would have a *Cabala*, here is one, that is firm, and true, and certain, and worthy to be received; whereas the *Jewiſh* one was precarious, yea falſe and untrue. Indeed, ſometimes the words of the prophets are ſo called by them; ſo that paſſage in *Joel* ii. 13. is called קבלה, *Cabala* [n], ſomething delivered and received; upon which, one of their commentators [o] has theſe words, "whatever a prophet commands the *Iſraelites*, "makes known unto them, or exhorts them to, is "a *Cabala*." And if a prophetic command or admonition, then ſurely ſuch an evangelical doctrine, as follows, is entitled to this character, *that Chriſt Jeſus came into the world to ſave ſinners*; Chriſt came into the world, being ſent by his Father, but not againſt his will, but with his free conſent: he came voluntarily in the fulneſs of time into this ſinful world, where he was ill treated; and this was not by local motion, or change of place, but by aſſumption of nature; and the end of it was, that he might be the ſaviour of loſt ſinners, as all men are, both by *Adam*'s ſin, and their own tranſgreſſions; tho' he came not to ſave all, for then all would be ſaved, whereas they are not; and if he came to ſave them, he muſt have then ſo far loſt his end; but he came to ſave ſinners, of all ſorts, even notorious ſinners, the worſt and chief of ſinners: and the Apoſtle inſtances in himſelf, *of whom I am chief*; or *firſt*; not that he was the firſt in time; *Adam* was the firſt man that ſinned, tho' *Eve* was before him in the tranſgreſſion: it is a moſt ſtupid notion, that ſome gave into from this paſſage, as if the ſoul of *Adam* paſſed from one body to another, till it came to *Paul*, and therefore he calls himſelf the firſt of ſinners: but his meaning is, that he was the firſt in quality, or the greateſt and chiefeſt of ſinners, not only of thoſe that are ſaved, but of all men, *Jews* or *Gentiles*; and this he ſaid not hyperbolically, nor out of modeſty, but from a real ſenſe or apprehenſion he had of himſelf, and his ſins, which were made exceeding ſinful to him; or he was the chief of ſinners, and exceeded all others in his way of ſinning, in blaſpheming the name of Chriſt, and perſecuting his ſaints; otherwiſe his converſation was externally moral, and in his own, and in the opinion of others, blameleſs: he was no fornicator, adulterer, thief, extortioner, *&c.* but in the above things he went beyond all others, and was a ring-leader in them; and the remembrance of theſe ſins abode with him, and kept him humble all his days; he was always ready to acknowledge them, and expreſs his vileneſs and unworthineſs on account of them: hence he here ſays, not *of whom I was*, but *of whom I am chief*. Now ſuch ſinners, and all ſorts of ſinners, Chriſt came to ſave from all their ſins, original and actual; from the law, its curſe and condemnation; from the bondage of ſatan, the evil of the world, and wrath to come, and from every enemy; and that, by his obedience, ſufferings, and death, by fulfilling the law, bearing its penalty, offering himſelf a ſacrifice for ſin, thereby finiſhing it, making reconciliation for it, and bringing in an everlaſting righteouſneſs: and a great ſaviour he is, and an only one; a full, ſuitable, able, and willing ſaviour; a ſaviour of the ſoul, as well as of the body, and of both with an everlaſting ſalvation.

Ver. 16. *Howbeit, for this cauſe I obtained mercy*, &c.] Tho' ſo great a ſinner, and even the chief of ſinners: *that in me firſt Jeſus Chriſt might ſhew forth all long-ſuffering*; not that the Apoſtle was the firſt that was converted upon Chriſt's coming to ſave ſinners; for there were many converted before him, and very great ſinners too, and he ſpeaks of himſelf as one born out of due time; unleſs it can be thought that he was the firſt of the perſecutors of the church, upon the death of *Stephen*, that was converted: but the word *firſt*, is not an *adverb* of time, but a *noun* expreſſing the character of the Apoſtle, as before; and the ſenſe is, that in him, the firſt or chief of ſinners, Jeſus Chriſt exhibited an inſtance of his abundant long-ſuffering exerciſed towards his elect for their ſalvation; he waiting in the midſt of all their ſins and rebellions to be gracious to them; and of this, here was a full proof in the Apoſtle *Paul*: what long-ſuffering and patience were ſhewed, whilſt he held the clothes of them that ſtoned *Stephen*, when he made havock, and haled men and women to priſon, and perſecuted them to death? and this was done, *for a pattern to them that ſhould hereafter believe on him to life everlaſting*; either to thoſe of his fellow-perſecutors, or of others in that age, who ſhould be made ſenſible of their ſins, and by this inſtance and example of grace, be encouraged to believe in Chriſt for life and ſalvation; or to all awakened and convinced ſinners then, and in every age, who from hence may conceive hope of ſalvation in Chriſt for themſelves, tho' ever ſo great ſinners; ſince ſuch patience and long-ſuffering were exerciſed towards, and ſuch grace beſtowed upon, one that had been a ſinner of the firſt rank and ſize, yea, the chief of ſinners: in him was delineated the grace of God, and in his converſion it was painted in its moſt lively colours; and a juſt repreſentation is given of it, for the encouragement of the faith and hope of others in Chriſt. Chriſt is here repreſented as the object of faith; and true faith regards him, looks unto him, and deals with him for eternal life and ſalvation. Our countryman, Mr. *Mede*, thinks, that the ſenſe is, that the converſion of the Apoſtle *Paul* was a pattern of the converſion of the *Jews* in the latter day; and his thought ſeems to be a very good one: the Apoſtle's converſion is a pledge and earneſt of theirs, and ſhowed, that God had not caſt away all that people; and carries in it ſome likeneſs and agreement with theirs: as his, theirs will be in the midſt of all their blindneſs and unbelief; and when they have filled up the meaſure of their ſins; and they will be a nation born at once, ſuddenly, and by the immediate power and grace of God, without the miniſtry of the word, which they will not hear: thus they'll be converted as he was, and become as hearty lovers and friends of the *Gentile* churches.

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[m] Pirke Abot, c. 1. §. 1.

[n] Miſn. Taanith, c. 2. §. 1.

[o] Jarchi in ib.

Ver. 17. *Now unto the king eternal*, &c.] This doxology, or aſcription of glory to God, on account of the grace beſtowed upon the Apoſtle, may be conſidered, either as referring to all the three divine perſons, Father, Son, and Spirit, who are the one and only God; and to whom all the attributes of wiſdom, power, eternity, immortality, or incorruptibleneſs, and inviſibility belong; and who are jointly concerned in the grace beſtowed upon any of the ſons of men. Or elſe to God the Father, in agreement with a parallel place in *Rom.* xvi. 27. who is the only true God, in oppoſition to nominal and fictitious deities, tho' not to the excluſion of the Son and Spirit; and to whom the ſeveral epithets here uſed, may be unqueſtionably given: he has ſhown his wiſdom in the works of creation, providence, and grace; he is the everlaſting king, or the king of ages, or of worlds; he is maker of the worlds, and the governour of them throughout all ages and generations; he only has immortality, and is the incorruptible God, and who is inviſible, whoſe ſhape has never been ſeen, nor his voice heard: or elſe this may be thought to belong to Jeſus Chriſt, ſince it is to him the Apoſtle gives thanks for putting him into the miniſtry; and from him he obtained mercy, and received abundant grace; and he it was who came into the world to ſave ſinners, and who ſhewed forth all long-ſuffering in him, ver. 12, 13, 14, 15, 16. upon which the Apoſtle breaks out into this attribution of glory and honour, and which agrees with *Jude* 25. And every thing here ſaid is applicable to him; he is the eternal king, whoſe is the kingdom of nature, providence, and grace; his throne is for ever and ever, and of his kingdom and government there is no end; he is *the king of ages*, as the phraſe may be rendered, and ſo his kingdom is called, מלכות כל עלמים, *the kingdom of all ages*, *Pſ.* cxlv. 13. and which endures throughout all generations; and this diſtinguiſhes him from all other kings. Scarce any king ever reigned an age, but Chriſt has reigned, and will reign throughout all ages. No regard is here had, as ſome have thought, to the *Æones* of the *Gnoſticks* and *Valentinians*; but rather the Apoſtle adopts a phraſe into his doxology, frequently uſed by the *Jews* in their prayers, many of which begin after this manner; "bleſſed art thou, O Lord our God, מלך העולם, "*the king of the age*, or *world*, &c." and רבון כל העולמים, *Lord of all ages*, or *worlds*, &c.[p] Other attributes and epithets follow, as *immortal*, or *incorruptible*. Chriſt is the living God, and the living redeemer; and tho' he died as man, he'll die no more, but ever lives to make interceſſion for his people, and to reign over them, and protect them: who alſo may be ſaid to be *inviſible*, who was ſo in his divine nature, till manifeſt in the fleſh; and now in his human nature he is taken out of the ſight of men, and is not to be beheld with bodily eyes by men on earth: and he is *the only wiſe God*; he is *the only God*, ſo the *Alexandrian* copy, the *Syriac* and *Vulgate Latin* verſions read; not to the excluſion of the Father or Spirit, but in oppoſition to all falſe deities, or thoſe who are not by nature God: and he is the only wiſe God; who is wiſdom itſelf, and of himſelf; and is the fountain of wiſdom, both natural and ſpiritual, unto others; wherefore to him be *honour and glory for ever and ever, amen.* Chriſt is crowned with honour and glory, and he is worthy of it; and it becomes all men to honour the Son, as they do the Father: he is the brightneſs of his glory, and equal to him; and the glory of deity, of all the divine perfections, and works, and alſo worſhip, ſhould be given him; as well as the glory of ſalvation, and of all the grace the ſons of men partake of; and that not only now, but to all eternity.

Ver. 18. *This charge I commit unto thee, ſon Timothy*, &c.] After a digreſſion the Apoſtle had made concerning himſelf, his converſion, and call to the miniſtry, he returns to his former ſubject, and original deſign, and renews the charge he gave to *Timothy*; and which was not only an order to charge others to teach no other doctrine than that of the Goſpel; but includes the charge of preaching it himſelf, and intends the glorious Goſpel of the bleſſed God committed to his truſt, and the whole form of ſound words he had heard of him, and which he had charged him to keep pure and incorrupt: and this was done, *according to the prophecies which went before on thee*; by which are meant, not the prophecies of the Old Teſtament, tho' of theſe *Timothy* had a conſiderable ſhare of knowledge from a child, and was hereby greatly qualified to have ſuch a charge committed to him; but then theſe were not prophecies concerning *him*, but the Meſſiah, his perſon, office, kingdom, and grace: nor are any particular revelations made unto the Apoſtle *Paul* concerning *Timothy* intended, of which there is no account; the revelations and viſions he had, related not to men, and their characters, but to doctrines; rather the teſtimonies of the brethren at *Lyſtra* and *Iconium*, and the good reports they made of him to the Apoſtle, which promiſed and fore-boded future uſefulneſs, are deſigned; tho' it ſeems beſt of all to underſtand theſe prophecies of ſuch as were delivered out by the prophets in the church, for ſuch there were in thoſe times; who, when *Timothy* was a child, or a youth, foretold, that he would have great gifts beſtowed upon him, and would be a very uſeful, diligent, laborious, and ſucceſsful preacher of the Goſpel; and therefore the Apoſtle mentions theſe to ſtimulate him the more to the diſcharge of his work, that he might anſwer the prophecies concerning him: for he adds, *that thou by them mighteſt war a good warfare*; that is, that in conſideration of the charge committed to him, and the prophecies that went before of him, he might be the more induſtrious to fulfil his miniſtry, which is ſignified by a warfare, in alluſion to the ſervice of the levites, which is ſo called, *Numb.* viii. 24. with zeal and courage, faithfulneſs and integrity: for not that warfare is intended, which is common to all believers; who being enliſted as voluntiers under Chriſt, the captain of their ſalvation, and having on the whole armour of God, fight againſt the world, the fleſh, and the devil; and are more than conquerors thro' him that has loved them: but that warfare, which is peculiar to the miniſters of the word; whoſe buſineſs it is more eſpecially to fight the good fight of faith, and as good ſoldiers of Chriſt, to endure hardneſs for the ſake of him, and his Goſpel; and who beſides the other enemies, have to do with falſe teachers; and their warfare lies in publiſhing and defending the Goſpel of Chriſt, and in contending for it, and in the weakening of ſatan's kingdom, and enlarging the kingdom of Chriſt; and for which the weapons of their warfare are peculiarly made, and are eminently ſucceeded; and when they are uſed to ſuch good purpoſes, by the miniſters of the Goſpel, they war a good warfare.

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[p] Seder Tephillot, fol. 2. 2. & 3. 2. & 37. 1, 2. Ed. Baſil. fol. 2. 1, 2, & 3. 1. & 4. 1. & 5. 2. & paſſim, Ed. Amſterdam.

Ver. 19. *Holding faith, and a good conſcience*, &c.] By *faith* is meant, not the grace of faith, but the doctrine of faith, a ſenſe in which it is often uſed in this Epiſtle; ſee ch. iii. 9. and iv. 1. and v. 8. and the *holding* of it does not intend a mere profeſſion of it, and a retaining of that without wavering, which is to be done by all believers; but a holding it forth in the miniſtry of the word, in oppoſition to a concealing or dropping it, or any part of it; and a holding it faſt, without wavering, and in oppoſition to a departure from it, or any cowardice about it, and againſt all oppoſers: to which muſt be added, *a good conſcience*; the conſcience is not naturally good, but is defiled by ſin; and that is only good, which is ſprinkled by the blood of Chriſt, and thereby purged from dead works; the effect of which is an holy, upright, and becoming converſation; and which ſeems to be chiefly intended here, and particularly the upright conduct and behaviour of the miniſters of the Goſpel, in the faithful diſcharge of their work and office; ſee 2 *Cor.* i. 12. *Heb.* xiii. 18. to which may be added 1 *Tim.* iii. 9. *Which ſome having put away*; that is, a good conſcience; and which does not ſuppoſe that they once had one, ſince that may be put away which was never had: the *Jews*, who blaſphemed and contradicted, and never received the word of God, are ſaid to put it from them, *Acts* xiii. 46. where the ſame word is uſed as here; and ſignifies to refuſe or reject any thing with deteſtation and contempt: theſe men always had an abhorrence to a good conſcience among men, and to a good life and converſation, the evidence of it; and at length threw off the maſk, and dropped the faith they profeſſed, as being contrary to their evil conſcience: tho' admitting it does ſuppoſe they once had a good conſcience, it muſt be underſtood not of a conſcience cleanſed by the blood of Chriſt, but of a good conſcience in external ſhew only, or in compariſon of what they afterwards appeared to have: and beſides, ſome men, deſtitute of the grace of God, may have a good conſcience in ſome ſenſe, or with reſpect to ſome particular facts, or to their general conduct and behaviour among men, as the Apoſtle *Paul* had whilſt unregenerate, *Acts* xxiii. 1. and which being acted againſt, or loſt, is no inſtance of falling from the true grace of God, which this paſſage is ſometimes produced in proof of: *concerning faith have made ſhipwrack*; which deſigns not the grace, but the doctrine of faith, as before obſerved, which men may profeſs, and fall off from, and entirely drop and loſe. Tho' ſuppoſing faith as a grace is meant, the phraſe, *have made ſhipwrack* of it, is not ſtrong enough to prove the total and final falling away of true believers, could ſuch be thought to be here meant; ſince perſons may be ſhipwracked, and not loſt, the Apoſtle *Paul* was thrice ſhipwracked, and each time ſaved; beſides, as there is a true and unfeigned, ſo there is a feigned and counterfeit faith, which may be in perſons who have no true grace, and may be ſhipwracked, ſo as to be loſt.

Ver. 20. *Of whom is Hymeneus and Alexander*, &c.] The former of theſe is mentioned in 2 *Tim.* ii. 17, 18. and that part of faith he made ſhipwrack of, or erred in, was the doctrine of the reſurrection of the dead, whereby the faith of ſome nominal believers were overthrown; and this was attended with the putting away of a good conſcience, he ſeemingly before had; for his prophane and vain bablings increaſed to more ungodlineſs: the latter ſeems to be the ſame with *Alexander* the copperſmith, who did the Apoſtle much evil, 2 *Tim.* iv. 14. and it may be is the ſame with him who was at *Epheſus* when the Apoſtle was there, *Acts* xix. 33, 34. and where he might be now with *Hymeneus*, with whom he might agree in his erroneous opinions, and therefore are particularly mentioned, *Epheſus* being the place where *Timothy* now was. It ſeems by their names that they were both *Greeks*; *Alexander* is a known name among the *Greeks*, ſince the times of *Alexander* the Great, and even became common among the *Jews*; ſee the note on *Acts* iv. 6. and *Hymenæus* was a name among the *Grecians*, from *Hymen*, the heathen God of marriage: one of this name is mentioned among thoſe ſaid to be raiſed from the dead by *Æſculapius*[q]; there was alſo a biſhop of *Jeruſalem* of this name[r]. *Whom I have delivered to ſatan*; not by excommunication, which is the act of a church, and not of a ſingle perſon; but by an apoſtolical power he had of delivering the bodies of men into the hands of ſatan, by him to be tortured and afflicted, in order to bring them to a ſenſe of their ſins, and as a chaſtiſement and correction for them, and a token of God's diſpleaſure at them; ſee the note on 1 *Cor.* v. 5. *That they may learn not to blaſpheme*; or *that being chaſtized*,

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[q] Apollodorus de Orig. Deor. l. 3. p. 172.

[r] Euſeb. Eccl. Hiſt. l. 7. c. 14. 30.

chaſtized, corrected, or diſciplined; *they might not blaſpheme*, as they had before done; either by words, contradicting reviling and ſcoffing at the doctrine of the reſurrection; or by their unbecoming lives and converſations, giving themſelves great liberty in ſinning, ſuppoſing there was no truth in that doctrine; whereby they not only blaſphemed the chriſtian religion themſelves, but cauſed it to be evil ſpoken of by others.

CHAP. II.

IN this chapter the Apoſtle exhorts to prayer for all ſorts of men; gives rules and directions about the dreſs of women, and their ſubjection to their huſbands; and concludes with ſome comfort to them. The Apoſtle exhorts to prayer in the firſt place, directs to the ſeveral parts and branches of prayer, and points to the perſons to be prayed for, and what ſhould be prayed for on their account, ver. 1, 2. And next follow the reaſons or arguments engaging to it, which are taken from the agreeableneſs of it in the ſight of God; from the will of God, that all men ſhould be ſaved; from there being but one God of all, and one mediator between God and men; from Chriſt's giving himſelf a ranſom-price for all; and from the Apoſtle being a preacher of the Goſpel to the *Gentiles*, as well as *Jews*, ver. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7. wherefore he concludes and determines, according to his apoſtolical power and authority, that prayer be made in any place, provided there were faith and purity, and wrath and doubting were laid aſide, ver. 8. Alſo, he exhorts women to appear, eſpecially in public ſervice, in a modeſt and becoming dreſs, and to adorn themſelves with good works, ver. 9, 10. and that they ſhould be ſilent learners, and not teachers, and be in ſubjection to their huſbands, ver. 11, 12. The reaſons of which ſubjection are taken from the formation of *Adam* before *Eve*, and from *Eve*'s being deceived, and not *Adam*, ver. 13, 14. However, for the comfort of women, it is obſerved, that tho' in ſorrow they bring forth children, yet thro' the birth of a ſon, the promiſed Meſſiah, they ſhall be ſaved, who continue in faith, charity, and holineſs, with ſobriety, ver. 15.

Ver. 1. *I exhort therefore, that firſt of all*, &c.] The two principal parts of public worſhip, being the miniſtry of the word and prayer; and the Apoſtle having inſiſted on the former, in the preceding chapter, in which he orders *Timothy* to charge ſome that they teach no other doctrine than that of the Goſpel, gives an account of his own miniſtry, and call to it, and of the glorious Goſpel of the bleſſed God, which was committed to his truſt, and ſtirs up *Timothy* to the faithful and diligent diſcharge of his work and office; now proceeds to the latter, to prayer, and exhorts unto it; either *Timothy* in particular, for ſo read the *Syriac*, *Arabic*, and *Ethiopic* verſions, *I exhort thee*, or *deſire thee*; or elſe the church in general; unleſs it ſhould rather be thought to be a charge to *Timothy* to exhort, and ſo *Beza*'s *Claromontane* copy reads, *exhort thou therefore*; but it is commonly conſidered as an exhortation of the Apoſtle's, which he was very urgent in: it was what lay much upon his mind, and he was greatly deſirous that it ſhould be attended unto; for ſo the words may be read, *I exhort firſt of all*, or *before all things*; of all things he had to ſay, this was the chief, or it was what he would have principally and chiefly done by others: for this does not ſo much regard the order of time, that prayer ſhould be made early in the morning, in the firſt place, before any thing elſe is done, and particularly before preaching, which ſeems to have been the cuſtom of the primitive ſaints, *Acts* iv. 31. but the pre-eminence and ſuper-excellency of it; tho' the words may be rendered, *I exhort, that firſt, the ſupplications of all be made*; and ſo may regard publick prayer, the prayer of the whole church, in diſtinction from private prayer, or the prayer of a ſingle perſon; which is expreſſed by different words, *ſupplications*, *prayers*, *interceſſions*, and *giving of thanks*: the firſt of theſe, *ſupplications*, ſignifies ſuch petitions for things that are wanted by men, either by themſelves or others; and that either for their bodies or ſouls, as food and raiment for the one, and diſcoveries of pardoning love, ſupplies of grace, ſpiritual peace, comfort, &c. for the other: and the ſecond word, *prayers*, ſignifies good wiſhes and deſires, directed and expreſſed to God for things that are in themſelves to be wiſhed for, and deſired of God, either for ourſelves or others: and the next word, *interceſſions*, intends either complaints exhibited in prayer againſt others that have done injuries; or prayers put up for others, either for the averting of evil from them, or for the beſtowing ſome good thing on them: and the laſt word, *thankſgivings*, with which requeſts ſhould always be made known to God, deſigns that branch of prayer in which thanks are given to God for mercies received, whether temporal or ſpiritual: and theſe are to *be made for all men*; not only for all the ſaints, for all the churches of Chriſt, and miniſters of the Goſpel; nor only for near relations and friends, according to the fleſh; but for all the inhabitants of the country and city, in which men dwell, the peace and proſperity of which are to be prayed for; yea, for enemies, and ſuch as reproach, perſecute, and deſpitefully uſe the ſaints, even for all ſorts of men, *Jews* and *Gentiles*, rich and poor, high and low, bond and free, good men and bad men: for it cannot be underſtood of every individual that has been, is, or ſhall be in the world; millions of men are dead and gone, for whom prayer is not to be be made; many in hell, to whom it would be of no ſervice; and many in heaven, who ſtand in no need of it; nor is prayer to be made for ſuch who have ſinned the ſin unto death, 1 *John* v. 16. beſides, giving of thanks, as well as prayers, are to be made for all men; but certainly the meaning is not, that thanks ſhould be given for wicked men, for perſecutors, and particularly for a perſecuting *Nero*, or for hereticks, and falſe teachers, ſuch as *Hymeneus* and *Alexander*, whom the Apoſtle had delivered to ſatan. But the words muſt be underſtood of men of all ſorts, of every rank and quality, as the following verſe ſhews.

Ver. 2. *For kings, and for all that are in authority*, &c.] For ſupreme governours, as the emperor of *Rome*, and kings of particular nations; and for all ſub-governours, or inferior magiſtrates, as procurators or governours of provinces, and proconſuls, and the like; all that were in high places, and acted under the authority of thoſe that were ſupreme; theſe are particularly mentioned, the then governours, whether ſupreme or ſubordinate, who were avowed enemies, and violent perſecutors of the ſaints; and it might be a ſcruple with ſome of them,

them, whether they ſhould pray for them, and therefore the Apoſtle enjoins it; and this in oppoſition to the notions and practices of the *Jews*, who uſe to curſe the heathens, and pray for none but for themſelves, and thoſe of their own nation: *that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, in all godlineſs and honeſty*; which does not merely deſign the end of civil government by kings and magiſtrates, which is to preſerve the peace and quiet of the commonwealth; to protect the perſons and properties of men, that they may poſſeſs their own undiſturbed; and to ſecure to them their civil and religious rights and liberties, that they may have the free uſe and exerciſe of religion, ſignified by *all godlineſs*; and to encourage morality and virtue, expreſſed by *honeſty*; and ſo is an argument for prayer, taken from the advantage of civil government: nor does this clauſe only point out the duty of ſaints to live peaceably under the government they are, and not diſturb it; to mind only their religious exerciſes among themſelves, and behave honeſtly and morally among men, as they generally ſpeaking are, the quiet in the land; but alſo expreſſes the thing to be prayed for; and the ſenſe is, that ſince the hearts of kings are in the hands of the Lord, and he can turn them as he pleaſes, prayer ſhould be made to him for them, that he would either convert them, and bring them to the knowledge of the truth, they now perſecuted; or at leaſt ſo diſpoſe their hearts and minds, that they might leave off to perſecute, and ſo ſaints might live peaceably under them, enjoy their religious liberty, and be encouraged in their moral converſation. The *Arabic* verſion renders it, *that they may be preſerved*; that is, kings, and all in authority. It is a ſaying of *R. Hananiah*, or *Ananias*, the ſagan of the prieſts[s], "pray for the peace or ſafety of the "kingdom; (one of their commentators on it "adds[t], even of the nations of the world, which "is remarkable, and agrees with the exhortation "of the Apoſtle) for if there was no fear "of that, men would devour one another alive."

Ver. 3. *For this is good and acceptable in the ſight of God our Saviour.*] Not only to live peaceably and quietly under the government men are, ſince that is the ordination of God, and to live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly, which his grace teaches; but to pray for all ſorts of men, and for thoſe who are ſet in the higheſt place of government, even tho' enemies and perſecutors: this is good in itſelf, and in the ſight of an omniſcient God, who ſees not as man ſeeth; and it is acceptble unto him thro' Jeſus Chriſt, by whom every ſacrifice of prayer or praiſe is ſo; for by God our Saviour is meant God the Father, who is the ſaviour of all men, in a way of providence, and the ſaviour of all the elect in a way of ſpecial grace; ſee the note on ver. 1.

Ver. 4. *Who will have all men to be ſaved*, &c.] The ſalvation which God wills that all men ſhould enjoy, is not a mere poſſibility of ſalvation, or a mere putting them into a ſalvable ſtate; or an offer of ſalvation to them; or a propoſal of ſufficient means of it to all in his word; but a real, certain, and actual ſalvation, which he has determined they ſhall have; and is ſure from his own appointment, from the proviſion of Chriſt as a Saviour for them, from the covenant of grace, in which every thing is ſecured neceſſary for it, and from the miſſion of Chriſt to effect it, and from its being effected by him: wherefore the will of God, that all men ſhould be ſaved, is not a conditional will, or what depends on the will of man, or on any thing to be performed by him, for then none might be ſaved; and if any ſhould, it would be of him that willeth, contrary to the expreſs words of ſcripture; but it is an abſolute and unconditional will reſpecting their ſalvation, and which infallibly ſecures it: nor is it ſuch a will as is diſtinguiſhable into antecedent and conſequent; with the former of which it is ſaid, God wills the ſalvation of all men, as they are his creatures, and the work of his hands; and with the latter he wills, or not wills it, according to their future conduct and behaviour; but the will of God concerning man's ſalvation is entirely one, invariable, unalterable, and unchangeable: nor is it merely his will of approbation or complacency, which expreſſes only what would be grateful and well-pleaſing, ſhould it be, and which is not always fulfilled; but it is his ordaining, purpoſing, and determining will, which is never reſiſted, ſo as to be fruſtrated, but is always accompliſhed: the will of God, the ſovereign and unfruſtrable will of God, has the governing ſway and influence in the ſalvation of men; it riſes from it, and is according to it; and all who are ſaved God wills they ſhould be ſaved; nor are any ſaved, but whom he wills they ſhould be ſaved: hence by all men, whom God would have ſaved, cannot be meant every individual of mankind, ſince it is not his will that all men, in this large ſenſe, ſhould be ſaved, unleſs there are two contrary wills in God; for there are ſome who were before ordained by him unto condemnation, and are veſſels of wrath fitted for deſtruction; and it is his will concerning ſome, that they ſhould believe a lye, that they all might be damned; nor is it fact that all are ſaved, as they would be, if it was his will they ſhould; for who hath reſiſted his will? but there is a world of ungodly men that will be condemned, and who will go into everlaſting puniſhment: rather therefore all ſorts of men, agreeable to the uſe of the phraſe in ver. 1. are here intended, kings and peaſants, rich and poor, bond and free, male and female, young and old, greater and leſſer ſinners; and therefore all are to be prayed for, even all ſorts of men, becauſe God will have all men, or all ſorts of men, ſaved; and particularly the *Gentiles* may be deſigned, who are ſometimes called the world, the whole world, and every creature; whom God would have ſaved, as well as the *Jews*, and therefore heathens, and heathen magiſtrates were to be prayed for as well as *Jewiſh* ones. Moreover, the ſame perſons God would have ſaved, he would have alſo *come to the knowledge of the truth*; of Chriſt, who is the truth, and to faith in him, and of the truth of the Goſpel, as it is in Jeſus; not merely to a notional knowledge of it, which perſons may arrive unto, and not be ſaved, but a ſpiritual and experimental knowledge of it; and all that are ſaved are brought to ſuch a knowledge, which is owing to the ſovereign will, and good pleaſure of God, who hides the knowledge of Goſpel truths from the wiſe and prudent, and reveals them to babes: whence it appears, that it is not his will with reſpect to every individual of mankind, that they ſhould thus come to the knowledge of the truth; for was it his will they ſhould, he would, no doubt, give to every man the means of it, which he has not, nor does he; he ſuffered all nations to walk in their own ways, and overlooked their times of ignorance, and ſent no meſſage nor meſſenger to inform them of his will; he gave his word to *Jacob*, and his ſtatutes unto *Iſrael* only;

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[s] Pirke Abot, c. 3. §. 2.

[t] Bartenora in ib.

and the Goſpel is now ſent into one part of the world, and not another; and where it does come, it is hid to the moſt; many are given up to ſtrong deluſions to believe a lye, and few are ſavingly and experimentally acquainted with the truths of the Goſpel; though all that are ſaved are brought to the knowledge of ſuch truths, as are neceſſary to ſalvation; for they are choſen to it thro' ſanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth.

Ver. 5. *For there is one God*, &c.] This does not ſo much regard the unity of God, with reſpect to himſelf, or his divine eſſence, though that is a truth; but does not carry in it any apparent and forcible reaſon why all men ſhould be prayed for, for which it is produced; but the unity of God with reſpect to men, as that there is but one God, who is the creator of all men, and who, in a providential way, is the ſaviour of all men; and in a way of ſpecial grace is the one God, the one covenant God of all ſorts of men, of *Jews* and *Gentiles*; for he has taken of the latter into the covenant of his grace, as well as the former, and has loved them with a ſpecial and diſtinguiſhing love, has choſen them in Chriſt to ſalvation, and has ſent his Son to redeem them; and of theſe he calls by his grace, regenerates, ſanctifies, adopts, pardons, and juſtifies; ſee *Rom.* iii. 29, 30. and therefore all ſorts of men, *Gentiles* as well as *Jews*, are to be prayed for: another argument follows, *and one mediator between God and men*; a mediator is of more than one, and has to do with two parties; and theſe at variance among themſelves, between whom he ſtands as a middle perſon; his buſineſs is to bring them together, and make peace between them; and ſuch an one is Chriſt: the two parties are God and his elect, who in their nature-ſtate are at a diſtance from God, and at enmity to him, and who have broken his law, and affronted his juſtice; Chriſt ſtands as a middle perſon, a day's man between them, and lays his hands upon them both; has to do with things pertaining to the glory of God, and makes reconciliation for the ſins of the people; brings them that were afar off nigh to God, and makes peace for them by the blood of his croſs, by fulfilling the law, and ſatisfying juſtice for them; in conſequence of this, he appears for them in the court of heaven, intercedes and pleads for them, is their advocate, and ſees that all covenant bleſſings, of which he is the mediator, are applied unto them, and preſerves their perſons, which are committed to his car eand charge, ſafe to everlaſting happineſs: and this mediator is *the man Chriſt Jeſus*; not that he is a mere man, for he is truly and properly God; or that he is a mediator only according to the human nature: it was proper indeed that he ſhould be man, that he might have ſomething to offer, and that he might be capable of obeying, ſuffering, and dying, and ſo of making ſatisfaction in the nature that had ſinned; but then, had he not been God, he could not have drawn nigh to God on the behalf of men, and undertook for them, and much leſs have performed; nor would his blood, righteouſneſs, and ſacrifice have been available to cleanſe from ſin, to procure the pardon of it, juſtify from it, make atonement for it, or make peace with God: the reaſon why he is particularly mentioned as man, is, with a view to the argument in hand, praying for all men; ſince he who is the mediator between God and man, has aſſumed a nature which is common to them all: and this mediator is ſaid to be one, not ſo much in oppoſition to other mediators, angels or ſaints departed, tho' it is a truth, and ſtands full againſt them, but with reſpect to men; there is but one mediator between God, and all ſorts of men, through whom both *Jews* and *Gentiles* have an acceſs to God, and peace with him; and therefore prayer thro' this mediator ſhould be made for all. So the *Jews* ſay of the Meſſiah [u], that he is, אמצעי אל, *a mediator*, *God*, a middle perſon between God and men. And they call him, עמודא דאמצעיתא, *the pillar of mediation* [w], or the middle pillar; that is, the mediator or reconciler. And *Philo* [x] the *Jew* ſpeaks of the word, as μεσος, *a middle* perſon, and ſtanding in the middle between the dead and the living, and between God and men. The *Ethiopic* verſion here renders it, *there is one elect of God*; which is one of the characters of the Meſſiah, *Iſ.* xlii. 1.

Ver. 6. *Who gave himſelf a ranſom for all*, &c.] What the mediator gave as a ranſom for men is *himſelf*, his body and his ſoul, which were both made an offering for ſin; and his life, which is the reſult of union between ſoul and body; his whole human nature as in union with his divine perſon, and ſo might be truly ſaid to be himſelf: this he gave into the hands of men, of juſtice and of death; and that voluntarily, which ſhows his great love to his people; and alſo as a *ranſom*, or a ranſom-price for them, αντιλυτρον, in their room and ſtead; to ranſom them from the ſlavery of ſin, and damnation by it, from the captivity of ſatan, and the bondage of the law, and from the grave, death, hell, ruin, and deſtruction: and this ranſom was given for *all*; not for every individual of mankind, for then all would be delivered, freed, and ſaved, whereas they are not; or elſe the ranſom-price is paid in vain, or God is unjuſt to receive a ſufficient ranſom-price from Chriſt, and yet not free the captive, but puniſh the perſon for whom he has received ſatisfaction; neither of which can be ſaid. But the meaning is, either that he gave himſelf a ranſom for many, as in *Matt.* xx. 28. for the *Hebrew* word, כל, to which this anſwers, ſignifies ſometimes many, a multitude, and ſometimes only a part of a multitude, as *Kimchi* obſerves [y]; or rather it intends, that Chriſt gave himſelf a ranſom for all ſorts of men, for men of every rank and quality, of every ſtate and condition, of every age and ſex, and for all ſorts of ſinners, and for ſome out of every kindred, tongue, people, and nation, for both *Jews* and *Gentiles*; which latter may more eſpecially be deſigned by all, as they are ſometimes by the world, and the whole world; and ſo contains another argument, why all ſorts of men are to be prayed for, ſince the ſame ranſom-price is given for them; as that for the children of *Iſrael* was the ſame, for the rich as for the poor. We [z] read, that when the people of *Iſrael* comforted the high-prieſt upon the death of his wife, or any relation, they uſed to ſay to him, אנו כפרתך, *we are thy atonement*, expiation, or ranſom; that is, as the commentators [a] explain it, by us thou ſhalt be atoned, for we will be in thy room and ſtead, with reſpect to all things that ſhall come upon thee; but here the high-prieſt and mediator is the atonement and ranſom for the people: *to be teſtified in due time*; or *a teſtimony in his own times*; that is, the ſum and ſubſtance of what is before ſaid is the Goſpel, which is a teſtimony concerning the perſon, office, and grace of Chriſt, exhibited in the times of the Meſſiah, or the Goſpel-diſpenſation. Some copies read, *the myſtery*, which is another word often uſed for the Goſpel; for that that is intended, appears by what follows.

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[u] R. Albo, Sepher Ikkarim, orat. 2. c. 28.

[w] Sepher Jetzira, p. 126.

[x] Quis rerum divin. Hæres, p. 508, 509, 510.

[y] Sepher Shoraſh. rad. כלל.

[z] Miſna Sanhedrim, c. 2. §. 1.

[a] Jarchi & Bartenora in ib.

Ver. 7. *Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an Apoſtle*, &c.] He was ordained or appointed to be a preacher of the Goſpel from all eternity, and was ſeparated or ſet apart unto it in time, and was put into the miniſtry of it by Chriſt himſelf, and was not a common or ordinary preacher of the word, but an Apoſtle, an extraordinary officer in the Goſpel-church. *I ſpeak the truth in Chriſt, and lye not*; which are a ſort of an oath, or an appeal to Chriſt the omniſcient God, for the truth of what he ſaid, concerning his ordination to the Goſpel; ſee a like phraſe in *Rom.* ix. 1. The phraſe, *in Chriſt*, is left out in the *Alexandrian* copy, and in three of *Beza*'s ancient copies, and in ſome others, and in the *Vulgate Latin*, *Syriac*, *Arabic*, and *Ethiopic* verſions: *a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity*; the Goſpel of the uncircumciſion, or which was to be preached to the uncircumciſed *Gentiles*, was committed to this Apoſtle; and his work and miniſtry lay among them, and therefore he is called the Apoſtle of the *Gentiles*: and ſo he was *in faith and verity*; which may regard the ſubject-matter of his teachings and miniſtry; it was the faith and truth of the Goſpel, even the whole of it, the faith which was once delivered to the ſaints, and the truth as it is in Jeſus; or elſe the character of the Apoſtle, as a teacher, that he was a true and faithful one, who with all integrity and veracity, fully and faithfully preached the Goſpel; and ſince he was appointed a teacher of it to the *Gentiles*, this is another argument why they, as well as the *Jews*, ſhould be prayed for.

Ver. 8. *I will therefore that men pray every where*, &c.] In this declaration of the Apoſtle's will concerning prayer, he only takes notice of *men*; not but that it is both the duty and privilege of women, as well as men, to pray in their houſes and cloſets; but becauſe he is ſpeaking of public prayer in the church, which only belongs to men, he ſpeaks only of them; and his will is, that prayer ſhould be performed by them every where, or in any place, in any part of the world where they lived. Now was the prophecy in *Mal.* i. 11. fulfilled, and now was the time come our Lord refers to, *John* iv. 21. This ſeems to be ſaid in oppoſition to a *Jewiſh* notion, that the temple at *Jeruſalem* was the only place for prayer, and that prayer made elſewhere ought to be directed towards that. The *Jews* ſay [b], that “ there is no way for the prayers “ of the nations of the world to aſcend, ſeeing the “ gates of heaven are only opened in the land of “ *Iſrael*. —— And again, that the prayers with- “ out the land have no way to go up before the “ Lord, but the *Iſraelites* ſend them without the “ land over-againſt *Jeruſalem*; and when they “ come to *Jeruſalem*, from thence they remove, “ and aſcend above.——No prayer aſcends above “ from that place in which it is made, till it come “ to the land of *Iſrael*, and from thence to *Jeru-* “ *ſalem*, and from thence to the ſanctuary, and “ then it aſcends above.” They have alſo many rules concerning places of private prayer, as that care ſhould be taken that it be not in a place where there is any filth, or any bad ſcent [c]. *Lifting up holy hands*; lifting up of hands was a prayer-geſture among the heathens [d], and ſo it was among the *Jews* [e]. *R. Simeon* lift up his hands in prayer to the bleſſed God, and prayed his prayer. Yea, they [f] ſay, “ it is forbidden a man to lift up his “ hands above, except in prayer, and in bleſſings “ to his Lord, and ſupplications, as it is ſaid, *Gen.* “ xiv. 22. which is interpreted of lifting up of hands “ in prayer.” And this was an emblem of the elevation of the heart in prayer to God, without which the former would be of little avail. It is an obſervation of the *Jews* [g], we have found prayer without lifting up of hands, but we never found lifting up of hands without prayer. And theſe hands muſt be holy and pure; there muſt be purity of heart, and cleanneſs of hands, or a freedom from any governing ſin, which renders prayer unacceptable unto God; ſee *Iſ.* i. 15, 16. The Apoſtle alludes to a cuſtom of the *Jews*, who always uſed to waſh their hands before prayer; ſee *Judith* xii. 7, 8. So it is ſaid [h] of the *Septuagint* interpreters, that after the *Jewiſh* manner they waſhed their hands and prayed. The account *Maimonides* gives [i], is this; “ cleanneſs of hands, how is it done? a “ man muſt waſh his hands up to the elbow, and “ after that pray; if a man is on a journey, and “ the time of prayer is come, and he has no wa- “ ter, if there is between him and water four miles, “ which are eight thouſand cubits, he may go to “ the place of water, and waſh, and after that “ pray. If there is between him more than that, “ he may rub his hands, and pray. But if the “ place of water is behind him, he is not obliged “ to go back but a mile; but if he has paſſed “ from the water more than that, he is not obliged “ to return, but he rubs his hands and prays; “ they do not make clean for prayer but the “ hands only, in the reſt of prayers, except the “ morning prayer; but before the morning prayer “ a man waſhes his face, his hands and feet, “ and after that prays.” But, alas! what does all this waſhing ſignify? Unleſs, as *Philo* the *Jew* [k] expreſſes it, a man lifts up pure, and as one may ſay virgin hands, to heaven, and ſo prays. *Without wrath, and doubting*; or reaſoning, or diſputation in a contentious way: the former of theſe, ſome think, has reference to *murmuring*, as the *Ethiopic* verſion renders it, impatience and complaint againſt God in prayer, and the other to doubt and diffidence about being heard, and having the petitions anſwered; for prayer ought to be with praiſe to God, and faith in him: or rather, *wrath* may intend an angry and unforgiving temper towards men, with whom prayer is made, which is very unbecoming; ſee *Matt.* v. 23, 24. and vi. 12. 1 *Pet.* iii. 7. and both that and doubting, or diſputation, may have regard to thoſe heats and contentions that were between the *Jews* and *Gentiles*, which the Apoſtle would have laid aſide, and they join together in prayer, and in other parts of publick worſhip, in love and peace. *Maimonides* [l] ſays, “ men may not ſtand praying, either with laughter, “ or with levity, nor with confabulation, *nor with* “ *contention, nor with anger*, but with the words “ of the law.” And it is a ſaying of *R. Chanina*, “ in a day of *wrath*, a man may not pray [m].”

Ver. 9. *In like manner alſo*, &c.] Let the women pray likewiſe; though they are not to lead in prayer, or be the mouth of the church, which would be indecent, yet they are to join with the church in publick prayer; ſee *Acts* i. 14. and in like manner as the men, with purity of heart and hand,

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[b] Shaare Ora, fol. 24. 2, 3.

[c] Maimon. Hilchot Tephilla, c. 4. §. 8, 9.

[d] Apuleius de Mundo, p. 276.

[e] Zohar in Exod. fol. 4. 2.

[f] Ib. in Num. fol. 79. 1.

[g] T. Hieroſ. Taaniot, fol. 67. 2.

[h] Ariſt. Hiſt. 70. p. 98.

[i] Hilch. Tephilla, c. 4. §. 2, 3.

[k] De Charitate, p. 698. Vid. ib. de Victim. Offerent. p. 848.

[l] Hilch. Tephilla, c. 4. §. 18.

[m] T. Bab. Erubin, fol. 65. 1.

hand; without murmuring and impatience towards God, and without wrath and anger towards others, and in faith, without doubting and diſtruſt: and the Apoſtle proceeds to point out what ſort of dreſs he would have them appear in at the time of prayer, and at any part of publick worſhip; and thus the *Ethiopic* verſion renders it, *ſo let the women be cloathed in prayer*, namely as follows; *that women adorn themſelves in modeſt apparel:* the word rendered *apparel* ſignifies a long robe, which reaches down to the feet; and the word tranſlated *modeſt*, ſignifies that which is clean, neat and decent, yea, beautiful and ornamental; and the ſenſe of the Apoſtle is, that he would not have them to come to public worſhip in rags, and in dirty and filthy garments, but, that their bodies ſhould be covered with clean and decent raiment; ſo the *Iſraelites* waſhed their clothes that they might be ready to meet the Lord at mount *Sinai*, Exod. xix. 14. The *Jews* always appeared in their beſt clothes on the ſabbath-day; this is one of their rules: [n] "for " the honour of the ſabbath every man muſt be " clothed, כסות נקייה, *with clean or neat apparel*; " and clothing on the week-day muſt not be as " clothing on the ſabbath-day; and if a man can " make no change, he muſt let down his *Talith* " (or upper garment, his cloak;) ſo that his clothing may not be as the clothing of the week- " days, when that was girt up about him." The Apoſtle adds *with ſhamefacedneſs and ſobriety*; theſe are the two general rules by which dreſs is to be regulated: it is right and proper, when it is conſiſtent with chaſtity, when it is not immodeſt and impudent, and more like the attire of an harlot, than of a woman profeſſing godlineſs; and when it is moderate as well as modeſt, and ſuitable to a perſon's age and ſtation, and is not beyond the circumſtances of life, in which they are. There is no religion or irreligion in dreſs, provided pride and luxury are guarded againſt, and modeſty and moderation preſerved. *Not with broidered hair*, or *plaited*, as in 1 *Pet*. iii. 3. ſee the note there. The *Jews* had women on purpoſe for this buſineſs; *Mary Magdalene* is thought to have her name from hence; ſee the note on *Matt*. xxvii. 56. *Or gold, or pearls or coſtly array:* not that the Apoſtle forbids all uſe or wear of ſuch things by proper perſons, whoſe circumſtances would admit of it, and upon proper occaſions, and at proper times: certain it is, that ear-rings and bracelets of gold, and jewels ſet in ſilver and gold, and raiment, coſtly raiment, were ſent by *Abraham*, and given to *Rebekah*, and wore by her, who was a woman profeſſing godlineſs: ſo the church in *Pſal*. xlv. 9, 13, 14. tho' in figurative expreſſions, yet in alluſion to what is literal, and honourable, and commendable, is ſaid to be in gold of *Ophir*, and her clothing to be of wrought gold, and to be brought to the king in raiment of needle work: but however juſtifiable ſuch a dreſs may be at other ſeaſons, the Apoſtle judged it very improper at the time of public prayer, or at the time of public worſhip; ſeeing it might ſwell the heart of the wearer with pride, ſo as to forget herſelf and the buſineſs ſhe was come about, and draw the eyes of others upon her; and ſo cauſe a general inattention. It was a complaint of *Chryſoſtom*'s many hundreds of years ago, that ſome who came to public worſhip, appeared in ſuch a dreſs, as if they came rather to dance than to pray; ſuch apparel ſhould be avoided: it is ſaid of *Pythagoras*, [o] that he taught the inhabitants of *Crotona*, the men literature, and the women chaſtity and modeſty; and by his diſputations, ſo far prevailed upon the latter, as to lay aſide their garments of gold and other ornaments of their dignity, as inſtruments of luxury; all which they brought into the temple of *Juno*, and dedicated them to that goddeſs; declaring, that ſhamefacedneſs or chaſtity, and not garments, are the true ornaments of matrons.

Ver. 10. *But (which becometh women profeſſing godlineſs)* &c.] By which is meant not any particular grace, was it, the fear of God might be deſigned, and ſo the *Syriac* verſion renders it; nor the whole of internal religion only; nor the form of godlineſs, or the whole ſcheme of Goſpel truth, which is according to godlineſs; nor only outward holineſs of life and converſation; but the whole of of all this, all religion, internal and external, the whole of godlineſs, both in a doctrinal and in a practical way. All this, theſe women the Apoſtle gives directions unto, had made a profeſſion of, and had been baptized upon it, and received members of churches; and as yet held their profeſſion: and ſuch perſons it beſt became them, not ſo much to adorn themſelves with any outward adornings, as *with good works*; ſuch as are mentioned in ch. v. 10. ſee 1 *Pet*. iii. 3, 4, 5. Good works are like good cloaths, to which the Apoſtle alludes; they don't make perſons men and women, but they adorn them as ſuch; ſo good works, they don't make men and women chriſtians, or believers, but they adorn them as ſuch; they are ornaments to their perſons, and to their profeſſion, and to the Goſpel they profeſs. See *Tit*. ii. 10.

Ver. 11. *Let the woman learn in ſilence*, &c.] The Apoſtle goes on to give ſome other inſtructions to women, how they ſhould behave themſelves in public worſhip, in the church of God; he would have them be learners and not teachers, ſit and hear, and learn more of Chriſt, and of the truth of the Goſpel, and to maintain good works; and he would have them learn in ſilence, and not offer to riſe and ſpeak, under a pretence of having a word from the Lord, or of being under an impulſe of the Spirit of the Lord, as ſome frantic women have done; and if they ſhould meet with any thing under the miniſtry of the word, they did not underſtand, or they had an objection to, they were not to ſpeak in public, but aſk their own huſbands at home; ſee 1 *Cor*. xiv. 34, 35. And thus, they were to behave *with all ſubjection*; both to the Miniſters of the word, and to their own huſbands; obeying from the heart the form of doctrine delivered to them; and ſubmitting chearfully to the ordinances of Chriſt; the whole of which is a profeſſed ſubjection to the Goſpel, and which becomes all profeſſing godlineſs.

Ver. 12. *But I ſuffer not a woman to teach*, &c.] They may teach in private, in their own houſes and families; they are to be teachers of good things, *Tit*. ii. 3. They are to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; nor is the law or doctrine of a mother to be forſaken, any more than the inſtruction of a father; ſee *Prov*. i. 8. and xxxi. 1, 2, 3, 4. *Timothy*, no doubt, received much advantage, from the private teachings and inſtructions of his mother *Eunice*, and grandmother *Lois*; but then women are not to teach in the church; for that is an act of power and authority, and ſuppoſes the perſons that teach, to be of a ſuperior degree, and in a ſuperior office, and to have ſuperior abilities to thoſe who are taught by them:

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[n] Maimon. Hilch. Sabbat. c. 30. §. 3.

[o] Juſtin. ex Trogo, l. 20. c. 4.

nor to uſurp authority over the man; as not in civil and political things, or in things relating to civil government; and in things domeſtic, or the affairs of the family; ſo not in things eccleſiaſtical, or what relate to the church and government of it; for one part of rule, is to feed the church with knowledge and underſtanding; and for a woman to take upon her to do this, is to uſurp an authority over the man: this therefore ſhe ought not to do, *but to be in ſilence*; to ſit and hear quietly and ſilently, and learn, and not teach, as in ver. 11.

Ver. 13. *For Adam was firſt formed*, &c.] Immediately by God, out of the duſt of the earth; and the breath of life was breathed into him, and he became a living ſoul; thus wonderfully and fearfully was he made; after this he was put into the garden of *Eden*, to dreſs it, and all creatures were brought to him, to give them names; and ſtill an help-meet or a companion was not found for him. All this while *Eve* was not as yet formed, but after this, *then Eve*. She was formed out of him, was made out of one of his ribs; and was formed for him, for his uſe, ſervice, help and comfort: and here lies the ſtrength of the Apoſtle's reaſon, why the woman ſhould be in ſubjection to the man; not ſo much becauſe he was made before her; for ſo were the beaſts of the field before *Adam*; and yet this gave them no ſuperiority to him; but becauſe ſhe was made out of him, and made for him, ſee 1 *Cor*. 11. 8, 9. So that the woman's ſubjection to the man, is according to the laws of nature and creation; and was antecedent to the fall; and would have been, if that had never been; though that brought her into a lower, and meaner, and more depreſſed eſtate; which the Apoſtle next mentions. The words may be rendered, *the firſt Adam*, or *Adam the firſt was formed, and then Eve*. See 1 *Cor*. xv. 45, 47.

Ver. 14. *And Adam was not deceived*, &c.] There is no need to ſay with interpreters, that he was not deceived firſt; and that he was not deceived immediately by the ſerpent, but by *Eve*; and that he is never ſaid in ſcripture to be deceived, as *Melchizedech* is never ſaid to have a father or mother. The Apoſtle's poſitive aſſertion is to be taken without any ſuch limitations or qualifications; *Adam* never was deceived at all; neither by the ſerpent, with whom he never converſed; nor by his wife, he knew what he did, when he took the fruit of her, and eat; he eat it not under any deception, or vain imagination, that they ſhould not die, but ſhould be as Gods, knowing good and evil. He took and eat out of love to his wife, from a fond affection to her, to bear her company, and that ſhe might not die alone; he knew what he did, and he knew what would be the conſequence of it, the death of them both; and inaſmuch as he ſinned willfully, and againſt light and knowledge, without any deception, his ſin was the greater: and hereby death came in, and paſſed on all men, who ſinned in him: *but the woman being deceived was in the tranſgreſſion*; and the ſerpent really beguiled her; ſhe owned it herſelf, *Gen*. iii.. 13. And this is elſewhere ſaid of her, 2 *Cor*. xi. 2. which never is of *Adam*. She really thought the ſerpent ſpoke truth, that ſhe and her huſband ſhould not die, if they eat of the fruit; but that it was good to make them wiſe; and that upon eating it, they ſhould be as Gods, knowing good and evil; and under this deception ſhe fell into the tranſgreſſion, and was the cauſe and means, by her perſuaſions and example, of bringing her huſband into the ſame ſin; which involved him and all his poſterity in ruin and deſtruction. And therefore ſhe is called by the *Jews* [p] אם העון *the mother of iniquity* and ſin; to which they refer, *Pſ*. li. 5. And they ſay, [q] ſhe was the cauſe of death to *Adam*, and to all the world: ſee the note on *Rom*. v. 12. And they obſerve [r] the order of the puniſhment of the ſerpent, *Eve*, and *Adam*, as of their ſin; the ſerpent was firſt accurſed, then *Eve*, and laſt of all *Adam*. They ſay “[s] *Samael* (the devil) could not ſubvert *Adam*, “till the ſerpent came and turned the heart of “*Eve*, and *Eve* turned his heart, and they both “ſinned; wherefore it is ſaid, *the woman which* “*thou gaveſt me*; *Samael* had no power to turn “him, till *Eve* came, and ſhe was the cauſe of “his eating.” Now inaſmuch as the ſerpent did not attack *Adam*, he being the ſtronger and more knowing perſon, and leſs capable of being managed and ſeduced; but made his attempt on *Eve*, in which he ſucceeded; and ſince not *Adam*, but *Eve*, was deceived, it appears that the man is the more proper perſon to bear rule and authority, as in civil and domeſtic, ſo in eccleſiaſtic affairs; and it is right for the woman to learn, and the man to teach: and ſeeing that *Eve* was the cauſe of tranſgreſſion to *Adam*, and of puniſhment to him and his poſterity, the ſubjection of the woman to the man was confirmed afreſh; and ſhe was brought into a more depreſſed ſtate of dependance on him, and ſubjection to him; ſee *Gen*. iii. 16. The *Ethiopic* verſion renders the text, *Adam hath not deceived, the woman hath deceived and prevaricated*.

Ver. 15. *Notwithſtanding ſhe ſhall be ſaved*, &c.] Not *Eve*, though no doubt ſhe is ſaved; ſince ſhe had a ſenſe of her ſin, and ſhame for it, a revelation of the Meſſiah to her, and faith in him; ſee *Gen*. iii. 7, 8, 15. and iv. 2. But rather any woman, particularly ſuch as profeſs godlineſs, who ſhall be ſaved *in child-bearing*; which is to be underſtood not of a temporal ſalvation, or being ſaved thro' child-bearing, thro' the perilous time, and be delivered out of it; for tho' this is generally the caſe, yet not always, not always the caſe of good women. *Rachel* died in child-bed: the *Jews* ſay [t] for three tranſgreſſions women die in child-bearing; becauſe they don't take care of their menſtrues, and of the cake of the firſt-fruits, and of lighting the lamp (when the ſabbath approaches.) But ſpiritual and eternal ſalvation is here meant; not that bearing children is the cauſe, condition, or means of ſalvation; for as this is not God's way of ſalvation, ſo it confines the ſalvation of women to child-bearing ones; and which muſt give an uneaſy reflection to maidens, and women that never bore any; but rather the meaning is, that good women ſhall be ſaved, notwithſtanding their bearing and bringing forth children in pain and ſorrow, according to the original curſe, in *Gen*. iii. 16. And ſo the words adminiſter ſome comfort to women, in their preſent ſituation of ſubjection and ſorrow; though they may be rendered impersonally thus, *notwithſtanding there is ſalvation through the birth of a ſon*: and the ſenſe is, that notwithſtanding the fall of man by the means of the woman, yet there is ſalvation for both men and women, thro' the birth of *Immanuel*, the child born, and ſon given; at whoſe birth, the Angels ſung peace on earth, good will to men; through the true Meſſiah, the ſeed of the woman, through the incarnate Saviour, who was made of a woman, there is ſalvation for loſt ſinners: he was born of a woman, and came into the world in order to obtain ſalvation for them; and he has effected it, and it is in him, for all ſuch who apply to him for it; and with it all true believers, men and women, ſhall be ſaved through him, *if they continue in faith and charity, and holineſs, with ſobriety*. The *Vulgate Latin* verſion reads in the ſingular, *if ſhe continues*, &c. but the ſenſe is the ſame; for the *ſhe* or woman is to be taken in a collective ſenſe, as it is in the context, for many women; even for ſuch as profeſs faith and godlineſs. The *Syriac* and *Ethiopic* verſions render the words, *ſhe ſhall be ſaved by her children, if they continue*, &c. *i. e.* ſhe ſhall be ſaved by bearing of children, and bringing of them up in a religious way; if they, the children, continue as they were brought up; which is a very ſtrange rendering of the words, and is as ſtrange an interpretation of them; and yet is what many have given into, but needs no confutation. The meaning of the words is, that there is ſalvation thro' the incarnate Meſſiah, for all ſorts of perſons; for all men and women who believe in him, with that faith which works by love, and ſhews itſelf in holineſs and ſobriety; provided that they continue herein. For there are ſome that profeſs theſe things, that have only a temporary faith, and feigned love, and not true holineſs; and theſe fall away, and are not ſaved; but ſuch who have theſe graces in truth, as they do, and ſhall continue in them, ſo they ſhall certainly be ſaved.

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[p] Tzeror Hammor, fol, 141. 3.

[q] T. Hieroſ. Sabbat, fol. 5. 2. Zohar, in Gen. fol 27. 3. Caphtor, fol. 37. 2.

[r] T. Bab. Erubin, fol. 18. 1. & Taanith fol. 15. 2. Bereſhit Rabba, §. 20. fol. 17. 1.

[s] Midraſh Ruth in Zohar in Gen. fol. 27. 3.

[t] Miſn. Sabbat, c. 2. §. 6.

CHAP. III.

IN this chapter the Apoſtle treats of the qualifications of officers of churches, biſhops and deacons, and of their wives; and points at the principal reaſon of writing this Epiſtle to *Timothy*: and firſt, he commends the office of a biſhop, as a good and deſirable one; and aſſerts it to be ſuch in the ſtrongeſt manner, ver. 1. and then follow the qualifications for it, ſome of which are of the œconomical or domeſtic kind, and regard him as an huſband and parent, and the head of a family; others of a moral nature, and relate to ſobriety, hoſpitality, temperance, patience, and liberality; and others of the eccleſiaſtical ſort, as aptneſs to teach, and that he ſhould not be a novice in religion; and in general, that he ſhould be a man of a blameleſs life, and of good report in the world, ver. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7. next an account is given of the qualifications of deacons; ſome which concern their moral character; others their ſoundeſs in the faith; and others their domeſtic affairs, and their conduct in their families; about which they ſhould be firſt examined, before they are put into their office; the characters of their wives are alſo given; and for their encouragement in the faithful performance of their office, it is obſerved, that they hereby obtain a good degree of honour and boldneſs in the faith of Chriſt, ver. 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13. And the end of the Apoſtle's writing this epiſtle, and particularly of giving *Timothy* this account of the qualifications of the officers of the church of God, is, that he might know whom to appoint over it, and how to conduct in it himſelf; which he commends from its being the houſe of God, the church of the living God, and the pillar and ground of truth, ver. 14, 15. Of which truth, he gives a ſummary, in ſeveral particulars of it, which open the great myſtery of godlineſs, ver. 16.

Ver. 1. *This is a true ſaying*, &c.] Some think this clauſe belongs to the laſt verſe of the preceding chapter; and then the ſenſe is, this is a doctrine that is true, and to be believed, that there is ſalvation through the birth of a ſon, or through the incarnate ſon of God, for men and women that believe in him, and continue in the faith of him, and love to him, joined with works of righteouſneſs and holineſs. And ſo the ſame phraſe ſeems to belong to what goes before in ch. iv. 8, 9. and 2 Ep. ii. 10, 11. Though it regards what follows in ch. i. 15. and ſo it ſeems that it ſhould be conſidered here; and is uſed to excite attention, and ſuggeſts, that what was about to be ſaid, was of moment and importance, and what was without controverſy, and unqueſtionably true. The Apoſtle having denied to women, the work and office of teaching; proceeds to obſerve, that tho' this belonged to men, yet not to every man; and therefore, he gives the qualifications of ſuch; which might ſerve as a direction to churches, in the choice of them; as well as be a means of ſtirring up perſons in ſuch an office, to a proper regard to themſelves and their work: *if a man deſire the office of a biſhop*; which is the ſame with that of a paſtor or elder; and ſo here the *Syriac* verſion renders it, *if a man deſires preſbytery*, or *elderſhip*; and it lies in preaching the word, adminiſtering the ordinances of the Gopel, and taking care of the diſcipline of the church, and in the viſiting, inſpection, and overſight of it; as the word επισκοπη, *Epiſcopacy*, here uſed, ſignifies; and this work and office may be lawfully and laudably deſired, with a view to the glory of God, and the good of immortal ſouls. Nor ſhould any undertake it, but ſuch who find in themſelves an hearty deſire, and inclination to it, on ſuch principles, and a real delight and pleaſure in it; and ſuch an one *he deſireth a good work*: the office of a biſhop, elder, or paſtor of a church, is *a work*, and a very laborious one; wherefore ſuch are called labourers in the word and doctrine: it is not a mere title of honour, and a place of profit, but it is a buſineſs of labour and care; yet a good one, a famous and excellent one; it being an employment in things of the greateſt excellency in themſelves, and of the greateſt uſefulneſs for the good of men, and the honour of God; as the doctrines, ordinances, and diſcipline of the Goſpel; and ſo muſt be excellently, honeſtly, pleaſantly, and profitably a good work.

Ver. 2. *A biſhop then muſt be blameleſs*, &c.] Or *an elder*, as the *Syriac* verſion renders it; not that it can be expected that ſuch an one ſhould be entirely free from ſin, or be blameleſs in the ſight of God; but that he ſhould be one, who is ſo before men, and has not been guilty of any notorious and flagitious crime; and particularly, is not chargeable with the vices hereafter mentioned or hinted at. So the prieſts under the law were to be without blemiſh, even in their bodies, *Lev.* xxi. 17—23. to which the Apoſtle may here allude. *The huſband of one wife*; which is not to be underſtood in a myſtical and allegorical ſenſe of his being the paſtor of one church, ſince the Apoſtle afterwards ſpeaks of his houſe and children, that are to be ruled and kept in good order by him, in diſtinction from the church of God; but in a literal ſenſe of his conjugal eſtate; though this rule does not make it neceſſary that he ſhould have a wife; or that he ſhould not marry, or not have married a ſecond wife, after the death of the firſt; only if he marries or is married, that he ſhould have but one wife at a time; ſo that this rule excludes all ſuch perſons from being elders, or paſtors, or overſeers of churches, that were *polygamiſts*; who had more wives than one at a time, or had divorced their wives, and not for adultery, and had married others. Now polygamy and divorces had very much obtained among the *Jews*; nor could the believing *Jews* be eaſily and at once brought off of them. And though they were not lawful nor to be allowed of in any; yet they were eſpecially unbecoming and ſcandalous, in officers of churches. So the high-prieſt among the *Jews*, even when polygamy was in uſe, might not marry, or have two wives at once; if he did, he could not miniſter in his office until he divorced one of them.[v] For it is written, *Lev.* xxi. 13. *he ſhall take a wife*, אחת ולא שתים, *one, and not two*[w]. And the ſame that is ſaid of the high-prieſt, is ſaid of all other prieſts; ſee *Ezek.* xliv. 22. likewiſe the *Egyptian* prieſts might not marry more wives than one, though others might have as many as they pleaſed[x]: and ſo the *Flamines* among the *Romans*.[y] An elder or paſtor muſt alſo be one that is *vigilant*; or wakeful and watchful, who is diligent in his buſineſs, and attends to his care and charge; is watchful over himſelf, his words, and actions; and watches for the ſouls of men, to do them all the good he can; and is ſober in body, is temperate, and uſes moderation in eating and drinking; and in mind, is modeſt, humble, and prudent; and ſo the *Vulgate Latin* verſion renders the word, *prudent*; and the *Ethiopic* verſion, *a wiſe man*, one of a ſound judgment, a good underſtanding, and prudent conduct; is not wiſe above what is written, but thinks ſoberly of himſelf, as he ought. The *Syriac* and *Arabic* verſions render it, *chaſt*, as free from intemperance, ſo from uncleanneſs: and *of good behaviour*; neat and decent in his apparel; modeſt in his whole deportment and conduct, and affable and courteous to all; beautiful in his life and converſation, being adorned with every thing that is graceful and comely: *given to hoſpitality*; to the love of ſtrangers, and to the entertainment of them; and eſpecially the ſaints and fellow-miniſters, who are exiled, or are travelling for the ſake of ſpreading the Goſpel, or upon ſome lawful and laudable account. Theſe he is to aſſiſt by his advice and counſel, and with the neceſſaries of life, according to his abilities. *Abraham* and *Lot* are noted inſtances of this virtue. *Apt to teach*; who has a conſiderable furniture of knowledge; is capable of interpreting the ſcripture to the edification of others; is able to explain, lay open, and illuſtrate the truths of the Goſpel, and defend them, and refute error; and who is not only able, but ready and willing to communicate to others, what he knows; and who likewiſe has utterance of ſpeech, the gift of elocution, and can convey his ideas of things in plain and eaſy language, in apt and acceptable words; for otherwiſe it ſignifies not what a man knows, unleſs he has a faculty of communicating it to others, to their underſtanding and advantage.

Ver. 3. *Not given to wine*, &c.] One that does not ſit at it, or is continually drinking it, and is intemperate in the uſe of it; otherwiſe it is lawful for perſons in ſuch an office to drink wine, and ſometimes abſolutely neceſſary; ſee ch. v. 23. it ſignifies one that is not given to much wine, as in ver. 8. is not addicted to it, or a follower of it; the *Syriac* verſion renders it, *who does not tranſgreſs over wine*, or go beyond due bounds in the uſe of it, who is not immoderate in it; the *Arabic* verſion renders it, *not inſolent through wine*, as one that is heated with it, is fierce and furious, and wrangling and quarrelſome, and often very miſchievous and injurious; and this ſenſe is followed by ſome. *No ſtriker*; either with his hands, ſo the *Syriac* verſion, *whoſe hand is not ſwift to ſtrike*; not one who is nimble and ready at it, who no ſooner is abuſed or injured, but he lifts up his hands and ſtrikes; is but a word and a blow: or with his tongue; ſo the *Arabic* verſion, *not wounding with his tongue*; being too ſharp and ſevere in the admonitions and reproofs of weak brethren, or fallen believers; and eſpecially, he ought not to uſe ſcurrilous, reproachful, and contumelious language to any; ſee *Jer.* xviii. 18. *Not greedy of filthy lucre*; not covetous of getting money, of amaſſing wealth and riches together; or deſirous of popular applauſe and glory from men. This clauſe is not in the *Alexandrian* copy, nor in five of *Beza*'s manuſcripts and other copies, nor is it in the *Vulgate Latin* verſion, nor in any of the *Oriental* verſions; it ſeems to be tranſcribed from *Tit.* i. 7. And indeed it is unneceſſary here; ſince the ſame is expreſſed by the word, *covetous*, at the end of the verſe, and makes that a tautology; and moreover, by leaving out this clauſe, the oppoſition appears more manifeſt, between *no ſtriker* and what follows, *but patient*; one who patiently bears all reproaches and injuries, puts up with affronts, and gives up what is his right and due, rather than contend, quarrel, and ſtrike; who is patient towards all men, and does not bear hard on thoſe that have offended, but is moderate and mild, and gentle in his cenſures, reproofs, and admonitions: *not a brawler*; not a quarrelſome litigious perſon, given to fighting, either with the fiſt or ſword, or any other weapon: *not covetous*; or a lover of money in an immoderate way, greedy of worldly ſubſtance and riches, and inſatiable in his deſires after them; niggardly, ſordid, and illiberal; acting a mercenary part; ſeeking his own things, and not the things of Chriſt; his gain from his quarter, and not the good of ſouls; and withholding from himſelf, from his family, and the poor, what ought to be enjoyed by them. Whereas on the other hand, he ought to be generous and liberal, hoſpitable, and charitable, and ready to communicate on all occaſions, according to his abilities.

Ver. 4. *One that ruleth well his own houſe*, &c.] His family, wife, children, and ſervants; and is not to be underſtood of his body, and of keeping of that under, and of preſerving it chaſte and temperate, as appears from what follows: *having his children in ſubjection with all gravity*; keeping a good decorum in his family; obliging his children to obſerve his orders, and eſpecially the rules of God's word; and not as *Eli*, who did not uſe his authority, or lay his commands upon his ſons, nor reſtrain them from evil, or ſeverely reprove them for their ſins, but neglected them, and was too mild and gentle with them; 1 *Sam*. ii. 23. and iii. 13. but like *Abraham*, who not only taught, but commanded his children and his houſhold, to keep the way of the Lord; *Gen.* xviii. 19. and ſo ſhould thoſe act who are in ſuch an office as is here treated of; and ſhould not only rule well in their families, preſide over them, go before them, and ſet an example to them, and keep their children in obedience and ſubjection; but this ſhould be *with all gravity*; not only in the maſter of the family, but in the children; who as their father is, or ſhould be, ſhould be brought up in, and uſed to gravity in words and in dreſs; and in the whole of their deportment and converſation. This may be obſerved againſt the papiſts who forbid marriage to the miniſters of the Goſpel.

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[v] Maimon. Iſſure Bia, c. 7. §. 13. & Cele Hamikdaſh. c. 5. §. 10.

[w] T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 59. 1.

[x] Diodor. Sicul. l. 1. p. 51. vide Tertull. de monogamia c. 17 & Exhort. caſtitat. c. 13.

[y] Alex. ab Alex. Genial dier. l 6. c 12.

Ver. 5. *For if a man know not how to rule his own houſe*, &c.] Which is an affair of leſs importance, and more eaſy to be done; not requiring ſo much reſolution, prudence, care, and thought: *how ſhall he take care of the church of God?* preſide over it, rule in it, provide for it, and ſee that every thing is in its proper place, and done according to the will of God. The argument is from the leſſer to the greater.

Ver. 6. *Not a novice*, &c.] Or *one newly planted*, the *Arabic* verſion adds *in the faith*; meaning not a young man, for ſo was *Timothy* himſelf; but a young profeſſor and church member; one that is lately come to the knowledge of the truth, and has juſt embraced and profeſſed it, and become a member of a church, a new plant there: ſo the *Hebrew* word נטע *a plant*, is by the *Septuagint* in *Job* xiv. 9. rendered by this very word. The reaſon why ſuch a perſon ſhould not be a biſhop, elder, or paſtor of a church, is, *leſt being lifted up with pride*; through the dignity of the office he is advanced to, and the high opinion of men he ſtands in, and the great gifts qualifying him for ſuch a place, he is ſuppoſed to have: for pride on account of theſe, is apt to creep in, and ſwell and elate the minds of young profeſſors eſpecially; ſo that there is danger that *he fall into the condemnation of the devil*; or *of the ſlanderer*, as the word is rendered in ver. 11. and the ſenſe then is, leſt he ſhould be cenſured and condemned by ſuch who are given to calumny and detraction, and are glad of any opportunity to reproach and vilify the miniſters of the word: but it is better to underſtand it of ſatan; and then the meaning is, either leſt ſuch an one fall under the cenſure and condemnation of the accuſer of the brethren; or rather leſt he fall into the ſame condemnation and puniſhment the devil is fallen into, their crimes being alike. For it ſeems from hence, that pride was the firſt ſin of the devil, and the cauſe of his apoſtacy from God; being elated with his own knowledge, ſtrength, and dignity; and not being able to bear it, that the human nature ſhould be advanced above that of angels.

Ver. 7. *Moreover he muſt have a good report of them which are without*, &c.] That is, *without the church*, as the *Arabic* verſion reads; for wicked men, though they diſlike the principles and profeſſion of godly miniſters, and deſpiſe their office, yet cannot but ſpeak well of their becoming life and converſation. And this part of their character is neceſſary to invite perſons to hear them, and to recommend their miniſtry to them, as well as for the reaſons that follow: *leſt he fall into reproach*; into the reproach of men; not only of the world, but of profeſſors of religion; who may be apt to upbraid him with his paſt ſins; eſpecially ſuch that may fall under his cenſures, admonitions, and reproofs, which hereby will become in a great meaſure uſeleſs and ineffectual: *and the ſnare of the devil*; leſt ſatan ſhould take encouragement from hence to tempt him to other and greater ſins; or leſt finding himſelf ſlighted and deſpiſed by the people of God, becauſe of his former ſins, he ſhould break out into anger and revenge againſt them; or into deſpondency and deſpair in himſelf; or ſhould be negligent of his duty, and timorous of exhorting and reproving others, leſt they ſhould retort upon him, and reproach him with his former crimes. The *Jews* have a regard to the wiſdom, prudence, gravity, and manners of a man, they appoint as a miniſter of a congregation. Their rule is this[z]: "they don't appoint a meſſenger or miniſter of "a congregation, but he who is the greateſt in the "congregation for wiſdom and works; and if he "is an elderly man, it is the better; and they "take care that the meſſenger or miniſter of the "congregation be a man whoſe voice is pleaſant, "and he is uſed to read: but he whoſe beard "is not full grown, though he is a very conſiderable man, he may not be a miniſter of the "congregation, becauſe of the honour of the congregation."

Ver. 8. *Likewiſe muſt the deacons be grave*, &c.] The Apoſtle proceeds to give the qualifications, and ſo the rules for chuſing another ſort of officers in the church, deacons; whoſe work and buſineſs is, not to preach the goſpel, and adminiſter ordinances; but to take care of the ſecular affairs of the church, and particularly to ſerve tables; to provide the bread and wine for the Lord's table, to attend at it, and diſtribute the elements from the miniſter to the people, to collect for it, defray the charges of it, and divide what remains among the poor; and they are to take care of the miniſter's table, that he is provided for in a comfortable way, and to ſtir up the members to their duty in this reſpect; and to take care of the poor's table, and diſtribute what the church collects for them, with ſimplicity and chearfulneſs; and are to be helps to the paſtor, in obſerving the walk of members, in compoſing differences between them, in viſiting the ſick and poor, and in preparing matters for church-meetings. Their characters are, that they be *grave*; in their ſpeech, geſture, and dreſs; honeſt, and of good report among men; and chaſte in their words and actions; all which may be ſignified by the word here uſed; and the latter may be rather hinted at, becauſe of *Nicholas*, one of the firſt deacons, who was charged with uncleanneſs: *not double tongued*; whoſe hearts and tongues do not agree together; and who being a ſort of middle perſons between the paſtor and the members of the church, ſay one thing to one, and another to the other; which to do is of bad conſequence: or who ſpeak well to the poor when they apply to them, and promiſe them to do them all the ſervice they can, and when it comes to the upſhot ſpeak againſt them: *not given to much wine*; which impairs the health, ſtupifies the mind, and ſo renders unfit for any ſuch office, as well as waſtes the temporal eſtate; and may lead them to embezzle and conſume the church's ſtock: *not greedy of filthy lucre*; for ſuch would with-hold from the poor that which is meet for them, and make uſe of money in their hands, to their own advantage.

Ver. 9. *Holding the myſtery of the faith*, &c.] The doctrine of the Goſpel called *the faith*, becauſe

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[z] Maimon. Hilchot Tephilla, c. 8. §. 11.

cauſe it contains things to be believed; propoſes Chriſt the object of faith; is the means by which faith comes, and is unprofitable without it: it is called *the myſtery*, becauſe it is of divine revelation, and could have never been diſcovered by human reaſon; and now it is revealed, the modus of many things contained in it, remains a myſtery; ſeveral of the doctrines of it are myſterious ones, particularly the doctrine of the trinity; and which the antient *Jews* call by this very name, [a] רזא דמהימנותא *the myſtery of faith*; the incarnation of the ſon of God, the union of the ſaints to Chriſt, and their communion with him, and the reſurrection of the dead, with others. Now this myſterious doctrine of faith is to be held by deacons; they are to profeſs it, and to hold faſt the profeſſion of it, and that *in a pure conſcience*; with a conſcience ſprinkled by the blood of Chriſt; with a conſcience void of offence both towards God and man; with a ſuitable life and converſation; a converſation becoming the Goſpel of Chriſt, and by which it is adorned: and this part of their character is neceſſary, that ſuch may be able to inſtruct and eſtabliſh thoſe who are weak in the faith, and oppoſe and refute the erroneous, and alſo recommend the Goſpel by their own example; otherwiſe ſhould their principles or practices be bad, their influence on others might be very pernicious and fatal.

Ver. 10. *And let theſe alſo firſt be proved*, &c.] Not that they ſhould be tried in any part of the deacon's office, to ſee how capable they are of performing it; but their internal and external characters are to be looked into and examined, and if they appear to be right, then they are to be approved of, choſen and called unto, and inveſted with the office: *then let them uſe the office of a deacon*; let them be employed and miniſter in the ſeveral parts and branches of that office: *being found blameleſs*; not without ſin, but free from any groſs and enormous one; not before God, but in the ſight of men; ſee the note on ver. 2.

Ver. 11. *Even ſo* muſt their *wives* be *grave*, &c.] Some inſtead of *wives* read *women*, and underſtand them of Deaconneſſes, ſuch as were in the primitive churches; whoſe buſineſs it was to viſit the poor and ſick ſiſters of the church, and take care of things belonging to them; but it is better to interpret the words, of the wives of the deacons, who muſt be as their huſbands, *grave* in ſpeech, geſture and dreſs, of an honeſt report, a good behaviour, and chaſte converſation; which will reflect honour and credit to their huſbands: *not ſlanderers*; or accuſers, and ſo act like devils, as the word is ſometimes rendered; for ſhould they act ſuch a part, and accuſe either the poor, or any of the members of the church wrongfully, or on any trifling occaſion, as perſons addicted to this vice, are wont to do, it would be of bad conſequence: and they alſo ſhould be *ſober*, temperate, not given to wine; exceſſive drinking is very ſcandalous in the female ſex; and is the rather mentioned here, becauſe women in the eaſtern countries were too frequently addicted to it: *faithful in all things*; as in the marriage bed, ſo with whatſoever elſe they are entruſted with in the family, and civil concerns of their huſbands; and this is the rather obſerved, becauſe the wives of deacons may be ſometimes entruſted with the church's ſtock in their huſband's abſence, to impart to the poor.

Ver. 12. *Let the deacons be the huſbands of one wife*, &c.] See the note on ver. 2. *ruling their children and their own houſes well.* Theſe qualifications are the ſame with thoſe of the biſhop or elder; ſee the note on v. 4.

Ver. 13. *For they that have uſed the office of a deacon well*, &c.] With diligence and faithfulneſs, with ſimplicity and chearfulneſs; taking good care of the miniſter and poor, and of the diſcipline of God's houſe: *purchaſe to themſelves a good degree*; not an higher office, as that of preſbytery or epiſcopacy, which is a ſenſe calculated to ſerve a hierarchy; nor a degree in glory and happineſs hereafter; but rather an increaſe of gifts and grace; or a degree of reſpect and honour in the church: or the ſenſe is, they poſſeſs and enjoy, which is the meaning of the word rendered, *purchaſe*, a very honourable office in the church; and which is ſo to them, they uſing it well, and diſcharging it in an honourable manner; unleſs the Apoſtle ſhould deſign what the *Jews* called דרגא דמהימנותא *a degree of faith*; [b] but that is expreſſed in the next clauſe: *and great boldneſs in the faith, which is in Chriſt Jeſus*; either in the exerciſe of the grace of faith at the throne of grace; or in aſſerting the doctrine of faith before men; and in reproving either for error or immorality; all which may be boldly done by thoſe who uſe this office well.

Ver. 14. *Theſe things write I unto thee*, &c.] Concerning the offices of biſhops and deacons, their ſeveral qualifications and the rules of judging of perſons fit for ſuch ſervice: *hoping to come unto thee ſhortly*; at *Epheſus*. He could not tell whether he could come or no, and therefore makes no promiſe, but hoped he ſhould; and ſince it was uncertain, he thought fit to write the above things for his inſtruction and uſe.

Ver. 15. *But if I tarry long*, &c.] Or ſhould long delay coming, defer it longer than may be expected; let it be obſerved that theſe things are written, *that thou mayeſt know how thou oughteſt to behave thyſelf in the houſe of God*; that is, the church of God, as it is afterwards explained; called a houſe, in alluſion either to an edifice, it being a ſpiritual houſe built of lively ſtones, or true believers, upon the foundation Jeſus Chriſt, and who alſo is the door into it; the pillars of it are the miniſters of the goſpel; and the windows are the ordinances, and which alſo are the entertainment in it: or elſe to a family, as this is ſometimes called the houſhold of God, and of faith; the family named of Chriſt, of which he is the maſter; and in which are fathers, young men and children; in which miniſters are ſtewards; and which is regulated by good and wholeſome laws: and it is called the houſe of God, becauſe as an edifice, it is of his building and repairing, and in which he dwells; and as a family, is what he provides for. Now the above things were written to *Timothy*, that he might know how to order and manage things in this houſe and family; what became him to do himſelf, in the character he was; and what perſons to direct in the choice of, to be officers in it. And of this houſe it is ſaid, *which is the church of the living god*; in oppoſition to, and diſtinction from the houſes and temples of idols which are inanimate and ſenſeleſs creatures; whereas the true God is the living God, has life in himſelf, eſſentially, originally, and independently, and is the author and giver of life to others. It is added, *the pillar and ground of the truth*; which holds forth the truth to be ſeen and read of all, as pillars that bear inſcriptions; and which ſupports and maintains truth, as every true church of Chriſt does ſo long as it remains ſo; though truth is the pillar and ground of the church; for if once truth is gone, a church is no more ſo: rather therefore *Timothy* himſelf is here deſigned; and the ſenſe is, that what was written to him, was with this view, that he might the better know how to conduct himſelf in the church of God, as a pillar and ground of truth, to hold it forth and to ſecure it: miniſters of the goſpel are called pillars, *Gal.* ii. 9. and that with greater propriety than the Church itſelf, which is before called an houſe: though it may be beſt of all to underſtand it of Chriſt as incarnate, the great myſtery of godlineſs; who as he is the ground and foundation of the church, and all believers, ſo he is the foundation of all true doctrine; and particularly the doctrine of his perſon, as truly God and truly man, is the pillar and ground which ſupports all other truths, and without which they fall to the ground: and ſo this clauſe may be read in connection with the following words, thus; *the pillar and ground of the truth*, and *without controverſy, is the great myſtery of godlineſs*, &c. And this way of ſpeaking is uſed by the *Jews*, both of perſons, and things; ſo *Zebulun* is ſaid [c] to be עמוד התורה *the pillar of the law*; and it is ſaid [d] of "the great *Sanhedrim* in *Jeruſalem*, "they are the *root* of the oral law; and they are "עמודי ההוראה *the pillars of doctrine*; and from "them go forth the ſtatutes and judgments unto "*Iſrael*;" and the ſame is ſaid of things as of perſons. *Maimonides* ſays, [e] "the *foundation* of foun"dations and the *pillar of wiſdom*, is to know that "there is a firſt being, that gives being to all be"ings;" and *R. Sangari*, another of their writers, ſays, [f] "there are two things which are "עמודי התורה *the pillars of the law*; the one is "that the law is from God; the other is that it is "received with a faithful (or ſincere) heart, from "the congregation:" to which may be added, that it is ſaid [g] that "the myſtery of faith is "עקרא וקיומא *the root and ground* of the world;" all which may ſerve to illuſtrate this paſſage.

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[a] Zohar in Gen. fol. 12. 4. & 13. 1, 2. & in Exod. fol. 66. 3.

[b] Ibid. in Exod. fol. 36. 3.

Ver. 16. *And without controverſy great is the myſtery of godlineſs*, &c. What follows is ſo, the incarnation of Chriſt, his birth of a virgin, the union of the two natures divine and human in his perſon; this is a myſtery, which though revealed, and ſo to be believed, is not to be diſcerned nor accounted for, nor the modus of it to be comprehended by reaſon: and it is a great one, next, if not equal, to the doctrine of a Trinity of perſons in the divine eſſence; and is a myſtery of godlineſs, which tends to encourage internal and external religion, powerful and practical godlineſs in all the parts and branches of it; and is ſo beyond all diſpute and doubt. *God was manifeſt in the fleſh*; not God eſſentially conſidered, or Deity in the abſtract, but perſonally; and not the firſt nor the third perſon; for of neither of them can this or the following things be ſaid; but the ſecond perſon, the word, or ſon of God; ſee 1 *John* iii. 8. who exiſted as a divine perſon, and as a diſtinct one from the father and ſpirit, before his incarnation; and which is a proof of his true and proper deity: the ſon of God in his divine nature is equally inviſible as the father, but became manifeſt by the aſſumption of human nature in a corporal way, ſo as to be ſeen, heard, and felt: and by *fleſh* is meant, not that part of the body only, which bears that name, nor the whole body only, but the whole human nature, conſiſting of a true body, and a reaſonable ſoul; ſo called, partly to denote the frailty of it, and to ſhew that it was not a perſon, but a nature, Chriſt aſſumed; and the clauſe is added, not ſo much to diſtinguiſh this manifeſtation of Chriſt from a ſpiritual manifeſtation of him to his people, as in diſtinction from all other manifeſtations of him in the Old Teſtament, in an human form for a time, and in the cloud, both in the tabernacle and temple. This clauſe is a very apt and full interpretation of the word *Moriah*, the name of the mount in which *Jehovah* would manifeſt himſelf, and be ſeen, *Gen.* xxii. 2, 14. *Juſtified in the ſpirit*; either by the ſpirit of God, making his human nature pure and holy, and preſerving it from original ſin and taint; and by deſcending on him at his baptiſm, thereby teſtifying that he was the ſon of God; and by the miracles wrought by his power, which proved *Jeſus* to be the Meſſiah against thoſe that rejected him; and by his coming down upon the Apoſtles at *Pentecoſt*; and who in their miniſtry vindicated him from all the aſperſions caſt upon him: or elſe it is to be underſtood of the divine nature of Chriſt in diſtinction from his fleſh or human nature; in the one he was manifeſt and put to death for the ſins of his people, which were put upon him, and bore by him; and by the other, he was quickened and declared to be the ſon of God; and being raiſed from the dead, he was juſtified and acquitted from all the ſins of his people, and they were juſtified in him; he having made full ſatisfaction to juſtice for them. *Seen of angels*; meaning not miniſters of the Goſpel, and paſtors of churches, who are ſometimes ſo called; but the bleſſed ſpirits, the inhabitants of heaven: by theſe he was ſeen at his birth, who then deſcended and ſung praiſe to God on that account; and in the wilderneſs, after he had been tempted by Satan, when they miniſtered unto him; and in the garden upon his agony and ſweat there, when one appeared and ſtrengthened him; and at his reſurrection from the dead, who rolled away the ſtone from the ſepulchre, and told the women he was riſen from the dead; as alſo at his aſcenſion to heaven, when they attended him thither in triumph; and now in heaven, where they wait upon him, and worſhip him, and are miniſtring ſpirits, ſent forth by him to do his pleaſure; and he is ſeen by them in the miniſtry of the Goſpel; into the truths of which they look with pleaſure, and gaze upon with unutterable delight and admiration; eſpecially thoſe which reſpect the perſon and office of Chriſt. Some copies read *ſeen of men*, but that is implied in the firſt clauſe: *preached unto the Gentiles*; the worſt of men, and that by the expreſs orders of Chriſt himſelf; and which was foretold in the prophecies of the Old Teſtament, and yet was a myſtery, hid from ages and generations paſt: *believed on in the world*; among the *Jews*, and in the nations of the world, ſo that he was preached with ſucceſs; and faith in Chriſt is the end of preaching; though this is not of a man's ſelf, but is the gift of God, and the operation of his power: and it was a marvellous thing, conſidering, the reproach and ignominy Chriſt lay under, through the ſcandal of the croſs, that he ſhould be believed on as he was. This can be aſcribed to nothing elſe but to the power of God, which went along with the miniſtry of the word. *Received up into glory*; he was raiſed from the dead, and had a glory put upon his riſen body; he aſcended in a glorious manner to heaven, in a cloud, and in chariots of angels, and was received there with a welcome by his Father; and is ſet down at his right hand, and crowned with glory and honour, and glorified with the glory he had with him before the world was.

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[c] Tzeror Hammor, fol. 152. 1.

[d] Maimon. Hilchot Memarim, c. 1. §. 1.

[e] Hilchot Yeſode Hattora, c. 1. §. 1.

[f] Coſri, par. 3. §. 23. fol. 159. 2.

[g] Zohar in Gen. fol. 124. 1.

CHAP. IV.

IN this chapter the Apoſtle foretels a dreadful apoſtaſy which ſhould happen in the laſt times, the particulars of which he gives; and on occaſion of one branch of it, diſcourſes of chriſtian liberty in eating all ſorts of food fit for uſe; and delivers out exhortations to *Timothy* to various duties relating to himſelf, his doctrine, and his charge. The prophecy is in ver. 1, 2, 3. the author of this prophecy is the Spirit of God; the manner in which it was delivered was very clear and expreſs; the time when it ſhould be fulfilled, the laſt days; the thing itſelf, a departure of ſome from the faith; the means whereby it would come about are, ſome giving heed to ſeducing ſpirits, and doctrines of devils, and the hypocriſy and hardened conſciences of others, who would forbid marriage, and order an abſtinence from certain meats; the evil of which laſt is expoſed by their being the creatures of God, and by their being made for this purpoſe to be received with thankfulneſs by all believers, and who know the truth: and the reaſons why they ſhould be received and uſed, follow; becauſe they are all good, as they are the creatures of God; and becauſe there is nothing to be refuſed, provided it be received with a thankful heart; and becauſe every creature is ſanctified by the word of God, and prayer, ver. 4, 5. And then *Timothy* is exhorted to put the brethren in mind of thoſe things, by which he would ſhew himſelf to be a faithful miniſter of Chriſt, and well inſtructed in the doctrines of the Goſpel, ver. 6. and to reject things prophane and fabulous, but uſe himſelf to internal and powerful godlineſs, ſince outward worſhip ſignifies little, but the former has the promiſe of this, and the other world annexed to it; which is a true ſaying, and to be depended on, ver. 7, 8, 9. and which is confirmed from the practice and experience of the Apoſtles, and therefore ſhould be taught with authority, ver. 10, 11. And then the Apoſtle gives *Timothy* ſome advice, which being taken, would prevent his being deſpiſed on account of his youth; as with reſpect to his life and converſation, ſo to behave as to be a pattern to others, ver. 12. and with reſpect to the exerciſe of his miniſtry, to make uſe of ſuch means, as reading and meditation, that his profiting might be manifeſt to all, ver. 13, 14, 15. and with reſpect to the doctrines he preached, to abide by them, whereby he would be a means of ſaving himſelf, and others, ver. 16.

Ver. 1. *Now the Spirit ſpeaketh expreſly*, &c.] The prophecy hereafter mentioned was not an human conjecture, but as all true prophecy, it came from the Spirit of God, who ſpoke or delivered it; either in the prophets of the Old Teſtament, who, as they ſpoke of the Goſpel-diſpenſation; ſo of the defection that ſhould be in it; and particularly of antichriſt, and of the apoſtacy thro' him, which is what is here intended, eſpecially in *Daniel*'s prophecies, under the names of the little horn, and vile perſon, ch. vii. and xi. or in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who foretold that falſe prophets would ariſe and deceive many; or in ſome of the prophets in the chriſtian church, ſuch as *Agabus*, and others, who might in ſo many words foretel this thing; or rather in the Apoſtle himſelf, at this time, ſince this prophecy was delivered not in dark ſayings, in an enigmatical way, in an obſcure manner, as prophecies generally were, but in plain language, and eaſy to be underſtood, and wanted no interpreter to unriddle it; and ſeeing that it is no where to be found in ſo many expreſs words elſewhere: and moreover, the Apoſtle does not ſay the Spirit *hath ſpoken* but the Spirit *ſpeaketh*; then, at the time of the writing of theſe words, in and by him. The prediction follows, *that in the latter times ſome ſhould depart from the faith*; that is, from the doctrine of faith, notwithſtanding it is indiſputably the great myſtery of godlineſs, as it is called in the latter part of the preceding chapter; for from the true grace of faith there can be no final and total apoſtaſy, ſuch as is here deſigned; for that can never be loſt. It is of an incorruptible nature, and therefore more precious than gold that periſhes; Chriſt is the author and finiſher of it; his prevalent mediation is concerned for it; it is a gift of ſpecial grace, and is without repentance; it ſprings from electing grace, and is ſecured by it; and between that and ſalvation there is an inſeparable connexion; it may indeed decline, be very low, and lie dormant, as to its acts and exerciſe, but not be loſt: there is a temporary faith, and a perſuaſion of truth, or a mere aſſent to it, which may be departed from, but not that faith which works by love: here it intends a profeſſion of faith, which being made, ſhould be dropped by ſome; or rather the doctrine of faith, which ſome would embrace, and then err concerning, or entirely quit, and wholly apoſtatize from. And they are ſaid to be *ſome*, and theſe many, as they are elſewhere repreſented, tho' not all; for the elect cannot be finally and totally deceived; the foundation of election ſtands ſure amidſt the greateſt apoſtacy; and there are always a few names that are not defiled with corrupt principles and practices; Chriſt always had ſome witneſſes for the truth in the darkeſt times: and now this defection was to be *in the latter times*; either of the apoſtolic age, which *John*, the laſt of the Apoſtles, lived to ſee; and therefore he calls it the laſt time, or hour, in which were many antichriſts, 1 *John* ii. 18. And indeed in the Apoſtle *Paul*'s time, the myſtery of iniquity began to work, which brought on this general defection; tho' here it has regard to ſome later times under the Goſpel-diſpenſation; to the time when the man of ſin, and the ſon of perdition, was revealed, and when all the world wondered after the beaſt: and indeed, ſuch will be the degeneracy in the laſt days of all, that when the ſon of man comes, as the grace, ſo the doctrine of faith will be ſcarcely to be found in the world: the means by which this apoſtacy will obtain and prevail, will be thro' mens *giving heed to ſeducing ſpirits*; either to doctrines, which are of a deceiving nature; or to men who profeſs to have the Spirit of God, and have not, but are evil men and ſeducers, deceiving, and being deceived; that lie in wait to deceive, and handle the word of God deceitfully; and by attending on the miniſtry of ſuch perſons, thro' hearing them, and converſing with them, the defection was to begin and ſpread; and therefore ſuch ſhould be carefully avoided, and their miniſtry ſhunned; nor ſhould they be received, nor bid God ſpeed. *And doctrines of devils*; ſuch as are deviſed by devils, as all damnable doctrines be; and all lying ones, for the devil is the father of them; and as are all the falſe doctrines introduced by antichriſt, for his coming was after the working of ſatan; and particularly thoſe doctrines of his concerning worſhipping of angels, and ſaints departed, may be called the doctrines of devils, or of *dæmons*; being much the ſame with the dæmon worſhip among the heathens, of which the devil was the inventer: unleſs by doctrines of devils ſhould be meant the doctrines of men, who for their cunning and ſophiſtry, for their lyes and hypocriſy, for their malice, and murdering of the ſouls of men, are comparable to devils.

Ver. 2. *Speaking lyes in hypocriſy*, &c.] Or *thro' the hypocriſy of thoſe that ſpeak lyes*; for the Apoſtle is ſtill ſpeaking of the means by which the apoſtacy ſhould riſe, and get ground; and it ſhould be by the means of perſons that ſhould deliver lying or falſe doctrine under the colour of truth, and make great pretenſions to religion and holineſs, which would greatly take with men, and captivate and lead them aſide: and this plainly points at the abetters of antichriſt, the *Romiſh* prieſts, who deliver out the lying doctrines of merit, purgatory, invocation of ſaints, faſtings, pilgrimages, *&c.* and the fabulous legends of ſaints, and the lying wonders and miracles done by them, and all under a ſhew of godlineſs, and the promoting of religion and holineſs: *having their conſcience ſeared with a hot iron*; which exactly deſcribes the above mentioned perſons, whoſe conſciences are cauterized and hardened, and paſt feeling; and have no regard to what they ſay or do, make no conſcience of any thing, but under a cloak of ſanctity commit the moſt ſhocking impieties; and are men of the moſt infamous characters, and of the moſt enormous and ſcandalous lives and converſations; ſo that the metaphor may be taken either from the ſearing of fleſh with an iron, or cauterizing it, whereby it grows callous and hard; or from the *ſtigma's* or marks which uſed to be put on malefactors, or ſuch who have been guilty of notorious crimes.

Ver. 3. *Forbidding to marry*, &c.] Which points out not the *Encratites*, *Montaniſts*, and *Manichees*, who ſpoke againſt marriage; but the *Papiſts*, who forbid it to their prieſts under a pretence of purity and holineſs, and at the ſame time allow them to live in all manner of debauchery and uncleanneſs; for theſe are the perſons that forbid marriage in an authoritative way, and in hypocriſy: for that phraſe is to be joined to all the ſentences that follow it; as thro' the hypocriſy of thoſe whoſe conſciences are ſeared; and thro' the hypocriſy of thoſe that forbid marriage to their prieſts, this being, by the common people, taken as an inſtance of great purity and holineſs, and hereby they are drawn into the deception; as well as alſo thro' the hypocriſy of thoſe that command *to abſtain from meats*; not from ſome certain meats forbidden by the law of *Moſes*, as did ſome *judaizing* chriſtians; but from all meats at ſome certain ſeaſon of the year, as at what they call the *Quadrageſima* or *Lent*, and at ſome days in the week, as *Wedneſdays* and *Fridays*; and this all under an hypocritical pretence of holineſs, and temperance, and keeping under the body, and of mortification; when they are the greateſt pamperers of their bodies, and indulge themſelves in all manner of ſenſuality: the evil of this is expoſed by the Apoſtle, as follows, *which God hath created*; and therefore muſt be good, and ought not to be abſtained from: and beſides, the end of his creation of them is, *to be received*; to be taken, and uſed, and eat; and therefore it is wicked to command men to abſtain from them, and evil in thoſe that do it: and the manner in which they ſhould be received is *with thankſgiving*; ſince they are the creatures of God, and uſeful to men, and men are unworthy of them, having forfeited them by ſin; and ſince they are the bounties of providence, and a free uſe of them is allowed; ſo far then ſhould men be from abſtaining from them, that they ought to take them, and uſe them with all thankfulneſs: and eſpecially this ſhould be done *of them which believe and know the truth*; that is, who believe in Chriſt, and know the truth of the Goſpel, which frees from every yoke of bondage, and from the burdenſome rites, ceremonies, and inventions of men; for theſe have the good creatures as the fruits of divine love, thro' Chriſt the mediator, and as bleſſings indeed; and who have the beſt right, claim, and title to them thro' Chriſt, being in him heirs of the world, and for whoſe ſake all things are; and therefore theſe, as they know how to uſe them, and not abuſe them, are to receive them at the hands of God, with thankſgiving, and not put them away, or abſtain from them under a pretence of religion and holineſs.

Ver. 4. *For every creature of God is good*, &c.] For food; and ſhould be taken and uſed for that purpoſe, at all times, without diſtinction; even every creature which is made for food, and which is eaſy to be diſcerned by men: *and nothing to be refuſed*; or rejected as common and unclean, or to be abſtained from at certain times: *if it be received with thankſgiving*; if not, perſons are very ungrateful, and very unworthy of ſuch favours; and it would be juſt in God to with-hold them from them; and this they may expect at his hands, who reject them with contempt, or receive them with unthankfulneſs, or abſtain from them in a religious way he never enjoined.

Ver. 5. *For it is ſanctified*, &c.] Or ſet apart for uſe, and may be lawfully uſed at all times: *by the word of God*; which declares that there is nothing in itſelf common, or unclean, or unfit for uſe, and that nothing that goes into a man defiles him; ſo that by virtue of this word of God, every creature may be made uſe of, that is fit for food: or elſe this deſigns the word of God, which gives a bleſſing to what is eaten; for it is not by bread or meat only, but through the word of God commanding a bleſſing on what is eaten, that man lives, *Matt.* iv. 4. and therefore this bleſſing upon our food ſhould be aſked for: wherefore it follows, *and prayer*; this being uſed before eating for a bleſſing on the food, and after it, in a way of thankſgiving for it, ſanctifies every creature of God, or gives men a free uſe of any, or all of them. So the *Iſraelites*, when they had eaten, and were full, were to bleſs the Lord, *Deut.* viii. 10. And thus our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, at meals, uſed to take the food, and bleſs it, or aſk a bleſſing on it, *Matt.* xiv. 19. And ſo did the *Eſſenes* among the *Jews*[h], and the Chriſtians in *Tertullian*'s[i] time. And the practice is highly neceſſary and commendable, nor ought it to be diſuſed.

Ver. 6. *If thou put the brethren in remembrance of theſe things*, &c.] Either of all the main and principal things already mentioned in the preceding chapters; as that the end of the commandment is love; that Chriſt's coming into the world to ſave the chief of ſinners, is a faithful ſaying, and worthy of acceptation; that prayers ſhould be made for all ſorts of men, for the reaſons given; and that there is ſalvation for men and women thro' the incarnate Son of God; that ſuch and ſuch are the qualifications of elders and deacons; and that the incarnation of Chriſt is without controverſy, the great myſtery of godlineſs: or of the things which are particularly hinted at in the prophecy delivered in the beginning of this chapter; as that there ſhould be a falling off from the doctrine of faith in the latter days; that this ſhould come to paſs thro' attending to erroneous ſpirits, and doctrines of *dæmons*, and thro' the lyes of hypocritical, hardened, and infamous men; whoſe particular dogma's, by which they might be known, would be, to forbid marriage to certain perſons, which is of divine inſtitution and honourable, and to order an abſtinence from meats at certain times, contrary to the will and providence of God. Theſe the Apoſtle would have *Timothy* propoſe, and ſubject to conſideration, and from time to time refreſh the memories of the ſaints with, who are apt, thro' negligence and inattention, and the weakneſs of the natural faculty, to be forgetful hearers of the word; that whenever ſuch perſons ſhould ariſe, they might be on their guard againſt them. It is one part of the buſineſs of Goſpel miniſters to put the churches in mind of what they have received and known, and are eſtabliſhed in. By *the brethren* are meant, the members of the church at *Epheſus*; whom the Apoſtle accounted as brethren, being of the ſame family and houſhold, and would have *Timothy* reckon and uſe as ſuch, and not as ſubjects and ſervants, to be lorded over. *Thou ſhalt be a good miniſter of Jeſus Chriſt*; a miniſter of Jeſus Chriſt is one of his making, qualifying, calling, and ſending; and who makes Chriſt, the doctrines reſpecting his perſon and offices, his grace, righteouſneſs, and ſalvation, the ſubject of his miniſtry; and he is a good one, who, beſides having a good work of grace wrought in him, has good gifts and abilities from Chriſt, and who makes a good uſe of them, and freely and fully imparts them for the good of others; and being employed in a good work, he abides in it, and nothing can deter or remove him from it; and ſuch an one was *Timothy*, and ſo would it be manifeſt by doing what the Apoſtle hints unto him; as well as he would appear to be *nouriſhed up in the words of faith, and of good doctrine*: by which are meant the truths of the Goſpel, called the words of faith, becauſe they are things to be believed, hold forth the object of faith, Chriſt, and are the means by which faith comes, and is increaſed: and good doctrine, being the doctrine of the ſcriptures, and of Chriſt, and of his Apoſtles, and according to godlineſs; and contain good things, which make for the glory of the grace of God, and the comfort and welfare of immortal ſouls. Theſe are of a nouriſhing nature; they are the wholeſome and ſalutary words of Chriſt; they have in them milk for babes, and meat for ſtrong men; by which both grow and thrive, when error eats as does a canker. So *Philo* the *Jew* [k] ſpeaks of the ſoul, being *nouriſhed with ſciences*, and not with food and drink, which the body needs; and a little after he ſays, you ſee the food of the ſoul what it is, it is the continual word of God. Now *Timothy*, by diſcharging his work aright, would ſhew to the brethren, that as he had been nouriſhed and trained up, firſt under his religious parents, and then under the Apoſtle *Paul*; ſo he ſtill continued in the ſame truths, and to live and feed upon them, and to be nouriſhed by them: or the words may be rendered actively, *nouriſhing*; that is, either himſelf, as the *Syriac* verſion renders it, or others; for tho' all nouriſhment comes from Chriſt the head, yet it is miniſtred by joints and bands to the members; it is conveyed by the means of the word and ordinances, miniſtred by the preachers of the Goſpel, who feed the church with knowledge, and with underſtanding; and none but thoſe who are nouriſhed themſelves, are fit to be the nouriſhers of others; and ſuch an one was this Evangeliſt: for it follows, *whereunto thou haſt attained*; he had arrived to a conſiderable degree of knowledge of Goſpel truths, and was ſtill purſuing and following on to know more of them, and was exhorted to continue in them, knowing of whom he had learned them. All this is ſaid by way of encouragement to him, to do as the Apoſtle directs.

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[h] Porphyr. de Abſtinentia, l. 4, §. 12.

[i] Apolog. c. 39.

Ver. 7. *But refuſe prophane and old wives fables*, &c.] Either *Jewiſh* ones, the traditions of the elders; or thoſe of the *Gnoſticks*, concerning God, angels, and the creation of the world; or thoſe doctrines of dæmons, and which forbad marriage, and commanded abſtinence from meats before mentioned; which are called prophane, becauſe impious, and ungodly, and old wives fables, becauſe fooliſh and impertinent; and which were to be rejected with abhorrence and contempt, in compariſon of the words of faith and good doctrine. *And exerciſe thyſelf* rather *unto godlineſs*; either to the doctrines which are according to godlineſs, and tend to godly edification, which the above fables did not, ſtudy theſe, meditate on them, digeſt them, and deliver them to others; or to a godly life and converſation, exerciſe thyſelf, to have a conſcience void of offence to God and men; or to internal religion, inward godlineſs, the exerciſe of the graces of faith, hope, love, fear, reverence, humility, &c. or rather to the ſpiritual worſhip of God, according to his will, not in a formal, cold, and cuſtomary way, but with the heart, in truth and ſincerity, in faith, and with fervency and purity.

Ver. 8. *For bodily exerciſe profiteth little*, &c.] Meaning not the exerciſe of the body in the *Olympic* games, as by running, wreſtling, &c. which profited but little, for the obtaining of a corruptible crown at moſt; tho' ſince a word is uſed here, and in the preceding verſe borrowed from thence, there may be an alluſion to it: much leſs exerciſe of the body for health or recreation, as riding, walking, playing at any innocent diverſion; which profits but for a little time, as the *Syriac* and *Arabic* verſions read; and the latter renders the phraſe, *bodily recreation*: nor is the exerciſe of the body in the proper employment of trade and buſineſs, to which a man is called, and which profits for the ſupport of life for a little while, intended; nor any methods made uſe of for the mortification of the body, and the keeping of it under, as watchings, faſtings, lying on the ground, ſcourging, &c. but rather mere formal external worſhip, as oppoſed to godlineſs, or ſpiritual worſhip. There ought to be an exerciſe of the body, or a preſenting of that in religious worſhip before God; there ſhould be an outward attendance on the word and ordinances; but then without internal godlineſs, this will be of little advantage: it is indeed ſhowing an outward regard to public worſhip, and may be a means of keeping perſons out of bad company, and from doing evil things; but if this is truſted to, and depended on, it will be of no avail to everlaſting life; ſee *Luke* xiii. 26, 27. *but godlineſs is profitable unto all things*; to the health of the body, and the welfare of the ſoul; to the things of this life, and of that which is to come; to themſelves and others, tho' not to God, or in a way of merit: *having promiſe of the life that now is*; of the continuance of it, of length of days, of living long in the earth, and of enjoying all neceſſary temporal good things, the mercies of life; for God has promiſed to his ſpiritual worſhippers, to them that fear him, and walk uprightly, that their days ſhall be prolonged, that they ſhall want no good thing, nor will he with-hold any from them, that is for their good, that is proper and convenient for them: *and of that which is to come*; even of eternal life; not that eternal life is merited or procured hereby; for it is the free gift of God, and is not by any works of men, for otherwiſe it would not be by promiſe; for its being by promiſe, ſhows it to be of grace: there is nothing more or leſs in it than this, that God promiſes glory to his own grace; for internal godlineſs, which animates and maintains ſpiritual worſhip, is of God, is of his own grace, and every part of it is a free gift of his, as faith, hope, love, fear, *&c.*

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[k] Allegor. l. 2. p. 90, 92.

Ver. 9. *This is a faithful ſaying*, &c.] A true one, and to be believed, that godlineſs has ſuch promiſes annexed to it; ſee 1 *Pet.* iii. 10, 11. *Matt.* vi. 33. *Pſ.* lxxxiv. 11, 12. *and worthy of all acceptation*; by all godly perſons, to encourage them to the exerciſe of godlineſs.

Ver. 10. *For therefore we both labour*, &c.] Not in the word and doctrine, tho' they did; nor in the exerciſe of internal godlineſs, tho' there is a work in faith, and a labour in love; nor with their own hands, at their trades and buſineſs, to ſupport themſelves, and others; but by enduring hardſhips and afflictions, as ſtripes, impriſonment, wearineſs, pain, watchings, faſtings, hunger, thirſt, cold, and nakedneſs; ſee 2 *Cor.* xi. 23—27. *And ſuffer reproach*; with patience and chearfulneſs. The *Alexandrian* copy, and another manuſcript, read, *we ſtrive*; or contend even to an agony, combating with ſin, ſatan, and the world, with prophane men, and with falſe teachers; and to all this they were animated by the promiſes made to godlineſs; and therefore they ſhowed it by their practices, or rather by their ſufferings, that they believed it to be a true and faithful ſaying; and which is further confirmed by what follows: *becauſe we truſt in the living God*; for the accompliſhment of the ſaid promiſes, who has power, and therefore can, and is faithful, and therefore will make good what he has promiſed; and ſince it is life he has promiſed, faith is the more encouraged to truſt in him, ſince he is the living God, in oppoſition to, and diſtinction from, lifeleſs idols; he has life in himſelf, eſſentially, originally, and independently, and is the author and giver of life, natural, ſpiritual, and eternal, unto others. Wherefore there is good reaſon to truſt in him for the fulfilling of the promiſes of the preſent and future life, made unto godlineſs. *Who is the ſaviour of all men*; in a providential way, giving them being and breath, upholding them in their beings, preſerving their lives, and indulging them with the bleſſings and mercies of life; for that he is the ſaviour of all men, with a ſpiritual and everlaſting ſalvation, is not true in fact. *Specially of thoſe that believe*; whom tho' he ſaves with an eternal ſalvation; yet not of this, but of a temporal ſalvation, are the words to be underſtood: or as there is a general providence, which attends all mankind, there is a ſpecial one which relates to the elect of God; theſe are regarded in providence, and are particularly ſaved and preſerved before converſion, in order to be called; and after converſion, after they are brought to believe in Chriſt, they are preſerved from many enemies, and are delivered out of many afflictions and temptations; and are the peculiar care and darlings of providence, being to God as the apple of his eye: and there is a great deal of reaſon to believe this, for if he is the ſaviour of all men, then much more of them who are of more worth, value, and eſteem with him, than all the world beſide; and if they are ſaved by him with the greater ſalvation, then much more with the leſs; and if he is the common ſaviour of all men, and eſpecially of ſaints, whom he ſaves both ways, then there is great reaſon to truſt in him, for the fulfilment of the promiſes of life, temporal and eternal, made to godlineſs, and godly perſons. This epithet of God ſeems to be taken out of *Pſal.* xvii. 7. where he is called, מושיע חוסים, *the ſaviour of them that truſt*, or believe.

Ver. 11. *Theſe things command and teach.*] What are to be commanded, command, and what are to be taught, teach; command to refuſe, and reject all prophane and fabulous doctrines, and exhort to the exerciſe of true godlineſs, and teach the profitableneſs of that, and declare the promiſes made unto it, and aſſert the truth and acceptableneſs of them; command, order, and encourage believers to labour and ſuffer reproach for the ſake of Chriſt, and his Goſpel, in hope of enjoying the ſaid promiſes, and teach them to truſt in the God of their lives, and the ſaviour of all men; and whereas to this authoritative way of teaching, *Timothy*'s youth might be objected by himſelf, and others; it follows,

Ver. 12. *Let no man deſpiſe thy youth*, &c.] *Timothy* was now a young man; ſome think he was about three and twenty years of age; but he might be older, and yet be ſo called. *Saul* is ſaid to be a young man, when he held the clothes of them that ſtoned *Stephen*, when he muſt be at leaſt thirty years of age, ſome ſay thirty-five; ſince thirty years after that he ſtiles himſelf *Paul* the aged, when he muſt be ſixty years of age and upwards, *Acts* vii. 58. *Philem.* ver. 9. Young men are ſometimes honoured by God with great gifts, for uſefulneſs both in church and ſtate, as *Samuel*, *David*, *Solomon*, *Daniel*, and his companions: nor ſhould they be deſpiſed on account of their age, when they have gifts ſuitable to their office, and behave well in it, but, on the contrary, ought to be eſteemed for their works ſake; and ſuch ſhould take care that no man has an opportunity or reaſon to treat them with contempt on that account: the Apoſtle's ſenſe is, either that *Timothy*, being in office, ſhould not ſuffer any man to uſe him contemptuouſly, but exert his power and authority, and magnify his office, and not allow men to trample upon him, or uſe him ill, tho' he was a young man; which ſenſe ſuits with the preceding words: or rather his meaning is, that he would have him ſo conduct, and behave himſelf, as he had taught him to behave, in the houſe and church of God, and ſo fill up his place and office, and live ſuch an exemplary life and converſation, that there might be no occaſion for any to deſpiſe his age, or him, on the account of it: and this agrees with what follows, *but be thou an example of the believers*; the members of the church, before called brethren, from their relation to one another, and here believers, from their concern with Chriſt, the object of their faith; a more honourable character cannot be given of men, tho' treated with great contempt in this age of infidelity. The *Mahometans* would engroſs this character to themſelves, calling themſelves the believers, and reckoning all others infidels; but to them only it belongs, who believe in Chriſt unto righteouſneſs and life everlaſting. Now ſometimes young men may be examples to older ones; and all that are in office in the church, eſpecially in the miniſtry, whether old or young, ſhould be enſamples to the flock, and that in the following things: *in word*; meaning either the word of truth, the doctrine of the Goſpel; by delivering that which is according to the rule of God's word, ſhewing in it incorruptneſs, gravity, and ſincerity, and by holding it faſt; all which may be for the imitation of others, to receive the pure doctrine, and retain it: or rather this may reſpect common diſcourſe; which ſhould not be corrupt, filthy, nor fooliſh; but ſhould be always with grace, ſeaſoned with ſalt, or ſhould be grave and ſerious, wiſe and prudent, pleaſant, profitable, and edifying. *In converſation*; in the family, church, and world; which ſhould be as becomes the Goſpel of Chriſt, in all godlineſs and honeſty, with ſimplicity and godly ſincerity; ſo as to adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour, recommend it to others, ſtop the mouths of gainſayers, and obtain a good report of them that are without. *In charity*; in love to God, to Chriſt, and one another; without which, if a man has the tongue of men and angels, or ever ſuch great and excellent gifts, he is nothing. *In Spirit*; in the exerciſe of ſpiritual gifts; in ſpiritual talk and converſation; and in fervency of ſpirit, or true zeal for the honour of God, the glory of the redeemer, the ſpread of his Goſpel, truths and ordinances, and the ſupport of the ſame. This clauſe is wanting in the *Alexandrian* and *Claromontane* copies, and in the *Vulgate Latin*, *Syriac*, and *Ethiopic* verſions. *In faith*; in the exerciſe of the grace of faith; in holding faſt the profeſſion of faith; and in retaining the doctrine of faith, with all integrity, faithfulneſs, and conſtancy, ſtanding faſt in it, ſtriving and contending for it. *In purity*; or chaſtity of body, in oppoſition to all impurity of the fleſh, by fornication, adultery, and the like; which was very proper to be ſuggeſted to a young man: tho' this may alſo have reſpect to all that is before ſaid, as to purity of language, converſation, love, zeal, and faith.

Ver. 13. *Till I come*, &c.] To *Epheſus*; where the Apoſtle hoped to be ſhortly, but was prevented; he afterwards came to *Miletus*, and ſent for the elders of *Epheſus* thither, when he took his final leave of them. He mentions this circumſtance, not as if *Timothy* was to attend to the following things no longer, but to quicken him to an attendance to them from the conſideration of his being ſhortly with him. *Give attendance to reading*; that is, of the ſcriptures, which the *Jews* call, מקרא, *reading*. [l] "Says *R. Tanchum Bar Chanilai*, for "ever let a man divide his years or life into three "parts; one third (let him ſpend) in the *Mikra*, "(the ſcriptures, and the reading of them) another third in the *Miſna*, and the other third in "the *Talmud*." And this is to be underſtood, not of the reading of the ſcriptures in public, for the advantage of others, a cuſtom which obtained in the *Jewiſh* ſynagogues; ſee *Acts* xiii. 15. and xv. 21. but in private, for his own uſe and ſervice, that he might be more perfect, and more thoroughly furniſhed for the work and office to which he was called; for the ſcriptures are the fund of ſpiritual knowledge, as well as the teſt and ſtandard of doctrine, out of which all muſt be fetched, and by which it muſt be tried; and if *Timothy*, who had known the ſcriptures from a child, had been trained up in them, and was always converſant with them, had need to give diligent attention to the reading of them, then much more others: as alſo *to exhortation, to doctrine*; as he was privately to read the ſcriptures, for his own benefit, he was publickly to expound them, or preach from them, to the advantage of others; for theſe two, exhortation and doctrine, are branches of the miniſterial work, which reading furniſhes and qualifies for. *Exhortation* intends the ſtirring up of believers to the exerciſe of grace, and the diſcharge of duty; and is a conſiderable part of the work of the miniſtry, and on which a miniſter of Chriſt ſhould much inſiſt; and it becomes the ſaints to ſuffer every word of exhortation from them, and receive it kindly, 2 *Tim.* iv. 2. *Rom.* xii. 8. *Heb.* xiii. 22. The word ſignifies alſo *conſolation*, and which is another branch of the miniſtry. Believers are oftentimes diſconſolate thro' the prevalence of corruptions, the power of ſatan's temptations, and the hidings of God's face, and need comfort; when the miniſters of the Goſpel ſhould be *Barnabaſes*, ſons of conſolation, and ſhould ſpeak comfortably to them; for which they are qualified by the God of all comfort, who comforts them in all their tribulations, that they might be capable of ſpeaking good and comfortable words to others. *Doctrine* deſigns the teaching and inſtructing of the church in the myſteries of the Goſpel; opening and explaining the truths of it; defending them againſt all oppoſers, and refuting errors and hereſies contrary to them. This is the evangelic *Talmud*; and theſe three, *reading*, *exhortation*, and *doctrine*, may anſwer to the above three things the *Jew* adviſes men to divide their time among, the *Mikra*, *Miſna*, and *Talmud*: reading anſwers to the *Mikra*, and indeed is no other; and exhortation to the *Miſna*, or oral law; and doctrine to the *Talmud*, and which alſo that word ſignifies: but the Apoſtle would have *Timothy* ſpend his time in, and give his attention to that which might be truly beneficial to himſelf, and profitable unto others.

Ver. 14. *Neglect not the gift that is in thee*, &c.] What qualifies men for the work of the miniſtry, is a *gift* from God: it is not of nature, nor is it mere natural abilities and capacity; nor is it any thing acquired, it is not human learning, or the knowledge of languages, arts, and ſciences; nor is it ſpecial ſaving grace; for a man may have all theſe, and yet not be apt to teach, or fit for the miniſtry; but it is a peculiar and diſtinct gift, it is a gift of interpreting the ſcriptures, and of diſpenſing the myſteries of grace to the edification of others; which, when it meets in a man with all the reſt before-mentioned, makes him very conſiderable: and this gift is *in* a man; it is a treaſure put into earthen veſſels, a good treaſure in the heart, out of which a good miniſter of Chriſt brings forth many good things, things new and old, both for the delight and profit of men: and this gift is by no means to be neglected; this talent ſhould not be hid in the earth, or wrapped up in a napkin; it ſhould not lie dormant and uſeleſs, but ſhould be

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[l] T. Bab. Avoda Zara, fol. 19. 2.

ſtirred up, cultivated and improved; as it may, by reading, meditation, and prayer. And in order to enforce this exhortation on *Timothy*, the Apoſtle adds, *which was given thee by prophecy*; that is, it was propheſied of before-hand, by ſome of the prophets in the church, that a very extraordinary gift ſhould be beſtowed upon this young man, which would make him a very uſeful perſon in the church of God; ſee ch. i. 18. and ſince it was now given, he ought not therefore to neglect it: or it was given him, as ſome read it, *with prophecy*, that he ſhould uſe it, and it ſhould be of great advantage to many ſouls; or together with this gift of preaching, he had alſo a gift of foretelling things to come; or it may be, the words may be better rendered, *for prophecy*; that is, for preaching, for propheſying is frequently uſed for preaching; ſee 1 *Cor.* xiii. 2. and xiv. 1, 3, 31. and then the ſenſe is, that this gift was given him to qualify him for the interpreting of the ſcriptures, the explaining of the prophecies of the Old Teſtament, and for the preaching of the Goſpel; and therefore he ſhould not neglect it, but uſe it for this purpoſe: and he adds, that it was given him *with the laying on of the hands of the preſbytery*; or of *the elderſhip*, or elders. So γερουσια, *elderſhip*, is uſed by the *Septuagint* on *Exod.* iii. 16, 18. for the elders of *Iſrael*. Now of theſe elders *Paul* was one, 2 *Tim.* i. 6. nor is it unuſual to call the Apoſtles elders; ſee 1 *Pet.* v. 1. 2 *John* i. and 3 *John* i. Who joined with the Apoſtle in the impoſition of hands on *Timothy*, is not certain; I ſhould think only Apoſtles, ſince here was a gift of the Holy Ghoſt came along with it; and it was only thro' the laying on of the hands of the Apoſtles, that the Holy Ghoſt was given. *Philip*, an Evangeliſt, laid not hands on the believing *Samaritans*; but *Peter* and *John*, Apoſtles, were ſent down from *Jeruſalem* to *Samaria* to do it, whereby many received the gifts of the Holy Ghoſt, fitting them to take the care of thoſe new converts, and to ſpread the Goſpel further in thoſe parts, *Acts* viii. 5, 12, 14, 17, 18. And ſince gifts have ceaſed being conveyed this way, the rite of laying on of hands in ordinations ſeems uſeleſs, and of no avail. The Apoſtle in calling thoſe that joined with him, in putting hands on *Timothy*, the *preſbytery* or *elderſhip*, may have ſome reference to the זקני העדה, *the elders of the congregation*, which laid hands on the bullock for a ſin-offering, *Lev.* iv. 15. by whom ſome underſtand the great *Sanhedrim* [m]; others [n], not all the elders, but ſome particular perſons, in number three; and ſo the ordination of a *Rabbi* was by three [o]; hence we read of סמיכה בזקינים, *impoſition of hands by the elders* [p].

Ver. 15. *Meditate on theſe things*, &c.] Not only on thoſe inſtructions, advices, and exhortations, which the Apoſtle had given him, throughout this chapter, which might be very uſeful to him, often to think of, and revolve in his mind, and ſeriouſly conſider and reflect upon; but upon the ſcriptures, the reading of which he had recommended to him, and the doctrines contained therein; it becomes every man not only to read, but meditate on the word of God, and much more miniſters of the Goſpel. The ſcriptures ſhould be read with care, and be induſtriouſly and laboriouſly ſearched into, as men dig in mines for ſilver or golden oar; and paſſages in it ſhould be carefully compared together, the more obſcure with thoſe that are more plain and eaſy; and the whole is to be ſtudied with great attention and application: *give thyſelf wholly to them*; to the reading of the ſcriptures, meditation upon them, and preaching the doctrines contained in them, clear of all ſecular affairs, or worldly buſineſs, and employment. The Apoſtles threw off the branch of deaconſhip, or miniſtring to the poor, that they might give themſelves up wholly to the miniſtry of the word, and prayer; and much more ſhould worldly buſineſs be caſt off, where the circumſtances of miniſters and churches will admit of it: a chriſtian ſoldier, or miniſter of the Goſpel, ought not, if poſſible, to be entangled with the affairs of this life; he finds enough to do without, in the diſcharge of his miniſterial function; and tho' the Apoſtles ſometimes wrought with their own hands, yet it was not becauſe they had ſo much leiſure from the miniſtry, or time on their hands, or becauſe they had not a power of forbearing working, but out of neceſſity; ſee *Acts* xx. 34. 1 *Cor.* ix. 6, 7. 2 *Tim.* ii. 4. or theſe words may be rendered, *be thou in theſe things*; let thine heart be in them; for if a miniſter's heart is not in his work, if he does not take delight in it, it will be a ſlavery and drudgery to him; ſpend all thy time and ſtrength in them, give thyſelf continually to them, and be always diligent and laborious in them: *that thy profiting may appear to all*; that it may be manifeſt to all that attend the miniſtry of the word, that there is an increaſe in gifts, a growing in ſpiritual knowledge, an improvement of the talents beſtowed: or that this profiting or increaſe might appear *in all things*; in every branch of the miniſtry, both in exhortation or conſolation, and in doctrine: or that it might be manifeſt *among all*; that is, all that hear might receive ſome profit, might learn, and be comforted, and edified; faith might be increaſed, and the joy of it be furthered; and all under the miniſtry viſibly thrive and flouriſh.

Ver. 16. *Take heed unto thyſelf*, &c.] Not as a man, or a chriſtian only, but as a miniſter; and as every miniſter ſhould take heed to his life and converſation, that it be exemplary, as in ver. 12. to his gifts, that they be not loſt, or neglected, but uſed and improved; to the errors and hereſies abroad, that he be not infected with them; and to his flock, which is the other part of himſelf, that he feed it with knowledge and underſtanding: *and to thy doctrine*; preached by him, that it be according to the ſcriptures, be the doctrine of Chriſt, and his Apoſtles, and according to godlineſs; that it tend to edification, and is pure, incorrupt, and all of a-piece; and that it be expreſſed in the beſt manner, with all boldneſs and plainneſs; and that he defend it againſt all oppoſition: *continue in them*; or *with them*; the members of the church at *Epheſus*; or rather in the doctrines of the Goſpel; which ſhould be done, tho' a majority is againſt them; tho' rejected by the wiſe, learned, and rich; tho' not to be comprehended by carnal reaſon; and tho' loaded with reproach and ſcandal; and tho' perſecuted, yea even unto death for them: *for in doing this, thou ſhall both ſave thyſelf*; a miniſter by taking heed to himſelf, and doctrine, ſaves himſelf from the pollutions of the world, from the errors and hereſies of falſe teachers, from the blood of all men, and from all juſt blame in his miniſtry. *And them that hear thee*; by being an example to them in doctrine and converſation, a miniſter is the means of ſaving and preſerving thoſe that attend on him, from erroneous principles, and immoral practices; and by faithfully preaching the Goſpel to his hearers, he is inſtrumental in their eternal ſalvation;

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[m] Bartenora in Miſn. Menachot, c. 9. §. 8.

[n] Siphri in Maimon. in Miſn. ib. c. 9. §. 7.

[o] Miſn. Sanhedrin, c. 1. §. 3. & Maimon. & Bartenora in ib.

[p] T. Hieroſ. Horayot, fol. 46. 2.

vation ; for though Jeſus Chriſt is the only ſaviour, the only efficient and procuring cauſe of ſalvation, yet the miniſters of the Goſpel are inſtruments by which ſouls believe in him, and ſo are ſaved ; the word preached by them, being attended with the Spirit of God, becomes the engrafted word, which is able to ſave, and is the power of God unto ſalvation ; and nothing can more animate and engage the miniſters of the word to take heed to themſelves, and doctrine, and abide therein, than this, of being the happy inſtruments of converting ſinners, and ſaving them from death ; ſee *Jam.* v. 20.

CHAP. V.

IN this chapter the Apoſtle lays down rules about the manner of rebuking perſons ſuitable to their ſeveral ages ; gives directions concerning widows, both old and young ; and inſtructs *Timothy* how to behave towards elders in office on different accounts. The rules for giving reproof to old men, as fathers ; to young men, as brethren ; to elder women, as mothers ; and to the younger, as ſiſters, are in ver. 1, 2. Next follow the directions about taking care of widows, who are to be honoured and maintained by the church, that are widows indeed, ver. 3. not ſuch who have relations that are capable of taking care of them, who ought to do it, and not burden the church ; ſince ſo to do is an act of piety, a requiting parents for their former care and kindneſs, and is good and acceptable in the ſight of God, ver. 4. but ſuch who are deſolate and alone, and have no huſbands nor children, nor any to ſupport their wants, but wholly depend on the providence of God, and are conſtant at the throne of grace crying for help and relief, which ſhows they are living chriſtians ; whereas ſuch who ſpend their time in ſinful luſts and pleaſures, are dead while they live ; wherefore if members of churches, with reſpect to this buſineſs, would be blameleſs, they ought to take care of the former, and reprove the latter, ver. 5, 6, 7. And as for thoſe perſons who caſt their poor widows upon the church, and won't provide for them, when they are able, they are to be looked upon as deniers of the faith, and to be worſe than the heathens themſelves, ver. 8. The qualifications of widows to be taken care of by the church, beſides thoſe before-mentioned, are, that they be ſixty years of age, having been the wife of one man, and well known for their good works, ſome of which are particularly mentioned, ver. 9, 10. but thoſe who are under the age fixed, and eſpecially are fit for marriage, and the procreation of children, ſhould be rejected, becauſe of their laſciviouſneſs, idleneſs, tatling, and buſying themſelves about other peoples matters ; theſe, on the contrary, ſhould be directed to marry, bear children, take care of houſhold affairs, and give no occaſion to the enemy to reproach and blaſpheme ; and the rather ſuch advice ſhould be taken, ſince there had been ſome ſad inſtances of apoſtacy in ſuch perſons, ver. 11, 12, 13, 14, 15. And then the Apoſtle repeats his order to believers, to take care of their poor widows, who were able to do it themſelves, that ſo the church might not be burdened, and might be able to relieve ſuch as were real and proper objects, ver. 16. And then follow rules with reſpect to elders in office, as that thoſe that rule well, and labour in the miniſtry of the word, ſhould be honourably maintained ; which is confirmed by a paſſage of ſcripture in the Old Teſtament, and by a ſaying of Chriſt's in the New, ver. 17, 18. that an accuſation ſhould not be received againſt one of ſuch a character, but by two or three witneſſes, ver. 19. and that ſuch of them that fell into any notorious ſin, ſhould be publickly rebuked, in order to make others afraid to ſin, ver. 20. And theſe things the Apoſtle, in the moſt ſolemn manner, charges *Timothy*, in the ſight of God, Chriſt, and the angels, to obſerve, without partiality, ver. 21. To which he adds, that he would not have him be haſtily concerned in the ordination of any one as an elder, leſt he ſhould involve himſelf in his ſin, whereas by acting otherwiſe he would be free, ver. 22. and then inſerts ſome advice to himſelf, to take care of his health, ver. 23. and concludes the chapter with obſerving, on occaſion of what he had ſaid, ver. 22. that ſome mens ſins were open, and their characters were eaſily diſcerned, and others were private, and ſuch were alſo the good works of others ; which made the caſe either more eaſy or more difficult to determine what was to be done ; and therefore nothing ſhould be done ſuddenly and raſhly, ver. 24, 25.

Ver. 1. *Rebuke not an elder*, &c.] By whom is meant, not an elder in office, but in age ; for elders by office are afterwards ſpoken of, and particular rules concerning them are given, ver. 17, 19. Beſides, an elder here is oppoſed, not to a private member of a church, but to young men in age ; and the Apoſtle is here giving rules to be obſerved in rebuking members of churches, according to their different age and ſex, and not according to their office and ſtation ; and this ſenſe is confirmed by a parallel text in *Tit.* ii. 2—6. Now an ancient man, a member of a church, is not to be rebuked in a ſharp and ſevere way ; the word here uſed ſignifies to ſmite or ſtrike ; and ſo the *Arabic* verſion renders it, *do not ſtrike an elder* ; meaning not with the hand, but with the tongue, giving hard words, which are as heavy blows ; reproof is a ſmiting, and there is a gentle and a ſharp one, *Pſ.* cxli. 4. *Tit.* i. 13. It is with the former, and not the latter, that a man in years is to be reproved, when he is in a fault, whether with reſpect to doctrine or practice, as ſuch perſons may be as well as younger ones ; and when they are obſerved to err, they ſhould not be roughly and ſharply dealt with : *but intreat* him *as a father* ; as a child ſhould intreat a father, when he is going out of the way ; give him honour and reſpect, fear and reverence, and perſuade him to deſiſt ; intreat and beſeech him to return to the right path of truth and holineſs ; uſe him as a father in Chriſt, that has known him that is from the beginning, and as of long ſtanding in the church : this muſt be underſtood of leſſer crimes, and not of atrocious and flagitious ones, obſtinately continued in, to the great ſcandal of religion, and diſhonour of the Goſpel ; for then ſeverer methods muſt be uſed ; ſee *Iſ.* lxv. 20. But tho' this is the ſenſe of the paſſage, yet the argument from hence is ſtrong, that if an elder in years, a private member, who is ancient, and in a fault, is not to be roughly uſed, but gently intreated, then much more an elder in office. *And the younger men as brethren* ; the *Syriac*, *Arabic*, and *Ethiopic* verſions read, *as thy brethren*. *Timothy* was a young man himſelf ; and as he was to conſider an elderly man as his father, and uſe him accordingly ;

cordingly; ſo he was to conſider young men as equal with him, at leaſt in age, and take the more freedom with them, in reproving them for their faults, and uſe ſomewhat more authority with them; and yet conſider them as brethren in Chriſt, and reprove them in a brotherly way, and with brotherly love.

Ver. 2. *The elder women as mothers*, &c.] When they offend in any point, they are to be reaſoned, and argued, and pleaded with, as children ſhould with their mothers; ſee *Hoſ.* ii. 2. and are to be conſidered as mothers in *Iſrael*, and to be treated with great tenderneſs and reſpect. *The younger as ſiſters*; uſing the freedom as a brother may with a ſiſter; and conſidering them as ſiſters in Chriſt, and in a way becoming the relation, tell them their faults freely and privately, but *with all purity*; in ſuch manner as to preſerve chaſtity in looks, in words, and actions.

Ver. 3. *Honour widows that are widows indeed.*] Who thoſe are, ſee in ver. 5, 9, 10. The honour to be given them is not a putting of them into the office of a deaconneſs, in the church; which office, ſome think, is referred to in *Acts* vi. 1. 1 *Tim.* iii. 11. and v. 9. and did obtain in ſome of the primitive churches; and it might be that ſome of theſe widows, the Apoſtle here, and hereafter ſpeaks of, might be preferred to the reſt, and be ſet over them, and have the care of ſuch, who were more infirm; but then this could only be the caſe of ſome, whereas the honour here ſpoken of, is what is to be given to all, that are really widows; and therefore rather regards ſome external honour and reſpect to be ſhown them, by words and actions; and eſpecially it deſigns an honourable proviſion for them, and maintenance of them; in which ſenſe the word is uſed in ver. 17. and in *Matt.* xv. 4, 5, 6. So with the *Jews*, giving gifts to perſons, and making preſents to them, is called honour. When *Manoah* aſked the angel's name, that he might do him honour, when his ſaying came to paſs, *Judg.* xiii. 17. the ſenſe, according to them is[q], "that I may enquire in what place I may "find thee, when thy prophecy is fulfilled, and "give thee, דורן, *a gift*; for there is no honour, "but what ſignifies a gift, as it is ſaid, *Numb.* "xxii. 17. *honouring I will honour thee.*" So giving gifts to the poor, or providing for their maintenance, is doing them honour; and that this is the ſenſe here, appears by what follows in the context.

Ver. 4. *But if any widow have children or nephews*, &c.] Such are not widows indeed; they are not deſolate, or alone, or without perſons to take care of them; their children or nephews ſhould, and not ſuffer the church to be burdened with them. Wherefore it follows, *let them learn firſt to ſhew piety at home*; which ſome underſtand of the widows, who inſtead of caſting themſelves upon the church, for a maintenance, or taking upon them the office of a deaconneſs, to take care of others, ſhould continue in their own families, and bring up their children and nephews in like manner, as they have been brought up by their parents, which will be more pleaſing and acceptable unto God; but it is better to interpret it of their children; and ſo the *Ethiopic* verſion expreſſes it, *let the children firſt learn to do well to their own houſe*, or *family*. It is the duty of children to take care of their parents in old age, and provide for them, when they can't for themſelves: this is a leſſon they ought to learn in the firſt place, and a duty which they ought principally to obſerve; they ſhould not ſuffer them to come to a church for relief, but firſt take care of them themſelves, as long as they are in any capacity to do it; and theſe ſhould be their firſt care before any others; ſo to do is an act of piety, a religious action, a pious one; it is doing according to the will and law of God, and is well-pleaſing to him: *and to requite their parents*; for all the ſorrow, pain, trouble, care, and expences they have been at in bearing and bringing them forth into the world, in taking care of them in their infancy, in bringing them up, giving them an education, providing food and raiment for them, and ſettling them in the world; wherefore to neglect them in old age, when uncapable of providing for themſelves, would be baſe ingratitude; whereas to take care of them is but a requital of them, or a repaying them for former benefits had of them: *for that is good and acceptable before God*; it is good in itſelf, and grateful, and well-pleaſing in his ſight; it is part of the good, and perfect, and acceptable will of God; and which, as other actions done in faith, is acceptable to God thro' Jeſus Chriſt.

Ver. 5. *Now ſhe that is a widow indeed*, &c.] A real widow, whom the *Jews*[r] call, גמורה, *a perfect one*, in oppoſition to one that is divorced, or a brother's widow, that has had the ſhoe plucked off for her: and ſuch an one as the Apoſtle means, is one that is *deſolate*, or *alone*; who has neither huſband to take care of her, nor children or nephews to ſhew kindneſs to her, nor any worldly ſubſtance to ſubſiſt upon: *but truſteth in God*; not in man, nor in an arm of fleſh, but in the living God, the giver of all good things, the judge of widows; who vindicates their cauſe, avenges the injuries done them, protects and defends them, and relieves their wants, and gives all encouragement to them, to truſt in him; ſee *Jer.* xlix. 11. *and continueth in ſupplications and prayers night and day*; as the widow *Anna* did, *Luke* ii. 36, 37. A widow indeed is one that has no outward dependance, betakes herſelf to the Lord, puts her confidence in him, and cries to him continually for a daily ſupply; and ſuch an one, amidſt all her poverty and meanneſs, is a living believer, one that lives by faith on the Lord; and is profitable, and uſeful to the church by her prayers and ſupplications made for them, as well as for herſelf; whereas ſhe that is in the next verſe deſcribed, is juſt the reverſe.

Ver. 6. *But ſhe that liveth in pleaſure*, &c.] Voluptuouſly, and deliciouſly; lives a wanton, looſe, and licentious life, ſerving divers luſts and pleaſures: *is dead while ſhe liveth*; is dead in treſpaſſes and ſins, while ſhe lives in them; is dead morally or ſpiritually, while ſhe lives a natural or corporal life. There is a likeneſs between a moral and a corporal death. In a corporal death, the ſoul is ſeparated from the body; and in a moral death, ſouls are ſeparated from God, and are alienated from the life of God; and are without Chriſt, who is the author and giver of ſpiritual life; and have not the Spirit, which is the Spirit of life: death defaces and deforms the man, and a moral death lies in the defacing of the image of God, firſt enſtamped on man, and in a loſs of original righteouſneſs; for as death ſtrips a man naked of all, as he was when he came into the world, ſo ſin, which brings on this moral death, has ſtripped man of his moral righteouſneſs, whereby he is become dead in law, as well as in ſin: and as in death, there is a privation of all ſenſe, ſo ſuch who are dead, morally or ſpiritually, have no true ſenſe of ſin, and of their ſtate and condition; are not concerned about ſin, nor troubled for it, but rejoice in it, boaſt of it, plead for it, and declare it: between ſuch perſons and dead men, there is a great ſimilitude; as dead men are helpleſs to themſelves, ſo are they; they can do nothing of, nor for themſelves, in matters of a ſpiritual nature; and as dead men are unprofitable unto others, ſo are they to God, and man; and as dead men are hurtful and infectious to others, ſo they by their evil communications corrupt good manners; and as dead bodies are nauſeous and diſagreeable, ſo are ſuch perſons, eſpecially to a pure and holy being; and as dead men are deprived of their ſenſes, ſo are theſe: they are blind and cannot ſee, and diſcern the things of the Spirit of God; they have not ears to hear the joyful ſound of the Goſpel, ſo as to underſtand it, approve of it, and delight in it; they have no feeling, nor are they burdened with the weight of ſin; nor have they any taſte and ſavour of the things of God, but only of the things of men; ſo that in a ſpiritual ſenſe they are dead, while they are alive. It is a common ſaying to be met with in *Jewiſh* writers, רשעים שבחייהן קרויין מתים, *the wicked whilſt alive are ſaid to be dead* [s]. And they ſay [t] alſo, that men are called, מתים, *dead*, from the time they ſin; and that he that ſins is accounted, כמת, *as a dead man* [u].

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[q] Bemidbar Rabba, §. 10. fol. 199. 4.

[r] Jarchi in Ezek. xliv. 22.

Ver. 7. *And theſe things give in charge*, &c.] Concerning rebuking perſons of a different age and ſex, and concerning the maintenance of widows; and particularly that children provide for their parents, when helpleſs; and that widows truſt in God, and give themſelves to prayer and ſupplication, and not live in ſin: *that they may be blameleſs*; before men, and in the view of the world, and not be chargeable with any notorious crime; tho' none are without blame in themſelves, and before God, but as conſidered in Chriſt Jeſus.

Ver. 8. *But if any provide not for his own*, &c.] Not only for his wife and children, but for his parents, when grown old, and can't help themſelves: *and ſpecially for thoſe of his own houſe*; that is, who are of the ſame houſhold of faith with him; ſee *Gal.* vi. 10. and ſo the *Syriac* verſion renders it, *and eſpecially thoſe who are the children of the houſe of faith*; for tho' the tie of nature obliges him to take care of them, yet that of grace makes the obligation ſtill more ſtrong and binding; and he muſt act both the inhuman and the unchriſtian part, that does not take care of his pious parents: wherefore it follows, *he hath denied the faith*; the doctrine of faith, tho' not in words, yet in works; and is to be conſidered in the ſame light, and to be dealt with as an apoſtate from the chriſtian religion. *And is worſe than an infidel*; for the very heathens are taught and directed by the light of nature to take care of their poor, and aged parents. The daughter of *Cimon* gave her ancient father the breaſt, and ſuckled him when in priſon. *Æneas* ſnatched his aged father out of the burning of *Troy*, and brought him out of the deſtruction of that city on his back; yea, theſe are worſe than the brute creatures, and may be truly ſaid to be without natural affections; ſuch ſhould go to the ſtorks and learn of them, of whom it is reported, that the younger ones will feed the old ones, when they can't feed themſelves; and when weary, and not able to fly, will carry them on their backs. The *Jews* [w] have a rule or canon, which obliged men to take care of their families, which runs thus: "as a man is bound to provide for his wife, ſo he is "bound to provide for his ſons and daughters, "the little ones, until they are ſix years old; and "from thence forward he gives them food till "they are grown up, according to the order of "the wiſe men; if he will not, they reprove him, "and make him aſhamed, and oblige him; yea, "if he will not, they publiſh him in the congre-"gation, and ſay ſuch an one is cruel, and will "not provide for his children; and lo, he is worſe "than an unclean fowl, which feeds her young."

Ver. 9. *Let not a widow be taken into the number*, &c.] That is, of widows, to be maintained by the church; tho' ſome chuſe to underſtand theſe words of the number of ſuch who were made deaconeſſes, and had the care of the poor widows of the church committed to them; and ſo the *Arabic* verſion renders it, *if a widow be choſen a deaconneſs*; but the former ſenſe is beſt, for it appears from ver. 16. that the Apoſtle is ſtill ſpeaking of widows to be relieved: now ſuch were not to be taken under the church's care for relief, *under threeſcore years old*; for under this age it might be ſuppoſed they would marry, and ſo not be deſolate, but would have huſbands to provide for them; or they might be capable of labour, and ſo of taking care of themſelves. The age of ſixty years was by the *Jews* [x] reckoned, זקנה, *old age*, but not under. *Having been the wife of one man*; that is, at one time; for ſecond marriages are not hereby condemned, for this would be to condemn what the Apoſtle elſewhere allows, *Rom.* vii. 2, 3. Nor is the ſenſe only, that ſhe ſhould be one who never had more huſbands than one at once; for this was not uſual for women to have more huſbands than one, even where polygamy obtained, or where men had more wives than one; this rather therefore is to be underſtood of one who had never put away her huſband, and married another, which was ſometimes done among the *Jews*; ſee *Mark* x. 12. and this being a ſcandalous practice, the Apoſtle was willing to put a mark of infamy upon it, and exclude ſuch perſons who had been guilty of it, from the number of widows relieved by the church.

Ver. 10. *Well reported of for good works*, &c.] Both by the members of the church, and by them that were without: particularly *if ſhe have brought up children*; that is, *well*, as the *Arabic* verſion adds; in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; commanding them, as *Abraham* did, to keep the way of the Lord, and to do juſtice and judgment; training them up in the paths of religion and virtue, from which they will not ſo eaſily depart when grown up. *If ſhe have lodged ſtrangers*; as *Abraham* and *Lot* did, who entertained angels unawares: this may be underſtood of ſtrangers in common, but eſpecially of the brethren, miniſters, and others, who came from diſtant parts, and travelled about to ſpread the Goſpel of Chriſt. The [y] *Jews* ſay many things, בכבוד אכסניא, *in honour of hoſpitality*, or entertaining of ſtrangers, eſpecially of receiving into their houſes the diſciples of the wiſe men, and giving them food and drink, and the uſe of their goods; this was what gave perſons a very great character with them, and highly recommended them. *If ſhe have waſhed the ſaints feet*; which was uſual in thoſe hot countries, where they wore ſandals only, partly for refreſhment, and partly for the removal of duſt and filth, contracted in walking; inſtances of this we have in ſeveral places of ſcripture, *Gen.* xviii. 4. and xix. 2. It was ſuch a common piece of civility, that our Lord complains of the neglect of it towards him, *Luke* vii. 44. it was what he did to his own diſciples, and in ſo doing ſet them an example of what they ſhould do to one another, *John* xiii. 14. and being a mean and low office, and which very likely was done by the ſervants of the houſe; the ſenſe may be, if ſhe has condeſcended to do the meaneſt office for the ſaints. *If ſhe have relieved the afflicted*; either in body, with her purſe; or in mind, by viſiting them, and ſpeaking comfortably to them: in general, *if ſhe have diligently followed every good work*; not only have done good works at certain times, but has followed that which is good; has cloſely purſued it, and that with great eagerneſs and diligence; has been conſtant and indefatigable in the performance of it.

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[s] T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 18. 2. & Hieroſ. Beracot, fol. 4. 4. Midraſh Kohelet, fol. 78. 2. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 58. 3. Caphtor, fol. 79. 1, 2. & 84, 1. Jarchi in Gen. xi. 32. & Baal Hatturim in Deut. xvii. 6.

[t] Tzeror Hammor, fol. 5. 2.

[u] Ib. fol. 6. 2. & 127. 2.

[w] Maimon. Hilchot Iſhot, c. 12. §. 14.

[x] Pirke Abot, c. 5. §. 21.

[y] T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 63. 2.

Ver. 11. *But the younger widows refuſe*, &c.] To admit them into the number of widows relieved by the church; partly becauſe they are fit for labour, and ſo can take care of themſelves; and partly becauſe they may marry, as the Apoſtle afterwards adviſes they ſhould, and ſo would have huſbands to take care of them: *for when they have begun to wax wanton againſt Chriſt*; that is, being at eaſe, and without labour, live a wanton, looſe, and licentious life, and in carnal luſts and pleaſures, contrary to the commands of Chriſt, and to the reproach and diſhonour of his name: *they will marry*; not that it would be criminal in them to marry, or that ſecond marriages are unlawful; for the Apoſtle afterwards ſignifies that it was right, fit, and proper that ſuch ſhould marry; but his ſenſe is, that marriage being the effect of wantonneſs, would not be ſo honourable in them, and eſpecially after they had made application to the church for relief, and had declared themſelves widows indeed, and deſolate, and ſuch as truſted in God, and gave themſelves up to ſupplication and prayer; wherefore it would be much better for them, and more to the credit of religion, to marry firſt, than afterwards, and would be beſt not to apply at all to the church; and if they ſhould, it would be moſt adviſeable to reject them, for the ſaid reaſons.

Ver. 12. *Having damnation*, &c.] Not for their ſecond marriage, but for their wantonneſs againſt Chriſt, or their ſinful and luxurious way of living contrary to the Goſpel of Chriſt: and this is to be underſtood not of eternal damnation, which cannot, with propriety, be ſaid to be had now; but either of the reproach and ſcandal caſt upon them, and religion, for their wantonneſs; or the judgment and cenſure of the church for the ſame; or having ſin, and the guilt of ſin upon them, in which ſenſe the word is uſed, *Rom.* v. 16. *Becauſe they have caſt off their firſt faith*; or that faith which they firſt profeſſed, even the doctrine of faith; which they may be ſaid to caſt off, becauſe they walked not according to it, their converſation was not becoming their profeſſion of it; and tho' they continued to profeſs the ſame faith, they did, in words, yet in works they denied it, or caſt it off; for which reaſon they fell under the notice, judgment, and condemnation of the church, as well as expoſed themſelves to the reproach of men.

Ver. 13. *And withal they learn to be idle*, &c.] Being at eaſe, and without labour, living at the expence of the church: *wandering about from houſe to houſe*; having nothing elſe to do: ſuch an one is what the *Jews* [z] call, אלמנה שובבית, *the gadding widow*; who, as the *Gloſs* ſays, "goes about and "viſits her neighbours continually; and theſe are "they that corrupt the world." Of this ſort of women muſt the *Jews* be underſtood, when they ſay [a], it is one of the properties of them to be, יוצאניות, *going out*, or gadding abroad, as *Dinah* did; and that it is another to be, דבריות, *talkative*, which agrees with what follows: *and not only idle, but tatlers alſo*; full of talk, who have always ſome news to tell, or report to make of the affairs of this, or the other perſon, or family: *and buſy bodies*; in the matters of other perſons, which don't concern them: *ſpeaking things which they ought not*; which either are not true, and if they are, are not to be ſpoken of, and carried from place to place: this is a very great inconvenience the Apoſtle obſerves, ariſing from the admiſſion of ſuch young widows to be relieved and maintained at the church's charge.

Ver. 14. *I will therefore that the younger* women *marry*, &c.] Or *the younger widows* rather; and ſo ſome copies read; for this is not the Apoſtle's advice to young women in general, tho' it will ſuit with them, but with younger widows in particular, of whom he is ſpeaking: *bear children*; and bring them forth, and feed, and nouriſh them, and bring them up in a religious way: *guide the houſe*; manage domeſtic affairs, direct, order, or do what is proper to be done for the good of the family; which is much more commendable than to throw themſelves upon the church, and live an idle and wanton life, and after that marry: and ſo *give none occaſion to the adverſary to ſpeak reproachfully*; that is, either that ſatan, the grand adverſary of the ſaints, might have no opportunity to reproach them, and caſt in their teeth their unbecoming walk, or accuſe them before the throne; or that any enemy of the chriſtian religion might have no room nor reaſon to ſpeak evilly of Chriſt, his Goſpel, truths, and ordinances, on account of the diſorderly converſation of any that profeſs his name; or that the ο αντικειμενος, the great oppoſer of Chriſt, the man of ſin, and ſon of perdition, even antichriſt, 2 *Theſſ.* ii. 4. might have no handle from hence to ſpeak reproachfully of marriage, and forbid it, under a pretence of ſanctity, as in ch. iv. 3.

Ver. 15. *For ſome are already turned aſide after ſatan.*] Meaning ſome of thoſe younger widows, whom the Apoſtle knew, and had obſerved to have departed from the faith they firſt profeſſed, and turned their backs on Chriſt, and gave themſelves up to carnal luſts and pleaſures, and to an idle and an impure life and converſation, walked according to the courſe of this world, and the prince of it, by whom they were led captive at his will; for ſo every one that apoſtatizes from a profeſſion of Chriſt, and follows either falſe teachers, and their doctrines, as the *Gnoſticks* that condemned marriage, or any ſinful and impure way of life, may be ſaid to turn aſide after ſatan; and as the Apoſtle knew this to be fact, from his own obſervation, he therefore gives the above advice.

Ver. 16. *If any man or woman that believeth have widows*, &c.] That is, if any member of a church, whether a brother or a ſiſter, have mothers or grandmothers, or any near relations widows, in mean circumſtances, and uncapable of taking care of themſelves: *let them relieve them*; out of their own ſubſtance; which is what the Apoſtle before calls ſhewing piety at home, and requiting their own parents: *and let not the church be charged*; or burdened with the maintenance of them: *that it may relieve them that are widows indeed*; that the church may be in a better capacity, its ſtock not being expended on others, to ſupply the wants of thoſe who are really widows; who have neither huſbands, nor children, nor any relations, to provide for them; nor any thing in the world to ſupport themſelves with.

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[z] T. Bab. Sota, fol. 22. 1.

[a] Bereſhit Rabba, §. 45. fol. 40. 3.

Ver. 17. *Let the elders that rule well*, &c.] By whom are meant not elders in age; though ſuch ought to be honoured and reſpected, and to have a proper maintenance either from their children or the church, when reduced, and incapable of helping themſelves; but then this is what ſhould be done to all ſuch perſons, whereas the elders here, are particularly deſcribed as good rulers and labourers in the word and doctrine; beſides, elders in age are taken notice of before: nor are civil magiſtrates intended, ſuch as were called the elders of *Iſrael*; for though ſuch as diſcharge their office well, are worthy of honour; yet it does not belong to any of them to labour in preaching the doctrine of the Goſpel: nor are deacons deſigned, for they are never called elders in ſcripture; nor is their work ruling, but ſerving of tables; nor does the miniſtry of the word belong to them as ſuch; nor is any maintenance allowed them from the church on account of their office: nor are lay elders meant, who rule but teach not; ſince there are no ſuch officers appointed in the churches of Chriſt; whoſe only officers are biſhops or elders and deacons: wherefore the qualifications of ſuch are only given in a preceding chapter. There are no other that rule in churches, but ſuch who alſo ſpeak to them the word of God; wherefore by him that rules, and the labourer in word and doctrine, are not meant two diſtinct orders, but different perſons of the ſame order; ſome of theſe ruling well, but do not take ſo much pains in the miniſtry of the word; whilſt others of them both rule well and labour in the word, and who are to be reckoned deſerving of the honour hereafter mentioned. Theſe are called *elders*, becauſe they are commonly choſen out of the ſenior members of the churches, though not always, *Timothy* is an exception to this; and becauſe of their ſenile gravity and prudence, which were neceſſary in them: and they may be ſaid to *rule*, becauſe they are ſet in the higheſt place in the church, and over others in the Lord, who are to ſubmit themſelves to them, and obey them. Chriſt's church is a kingdom, he is king of it, and his miniſtring ſervants are rulers under him; and who rule *well* when they rule not with force and cruelty, or lord it over God's heritage; but when they govern according to the laws which Chriſt the king and lawgiver has preſcribed; when they explain and inforce thoſe laws, and ſhew them to the people, and ſee that they are put in execution; and when they diſcharge this part of their work with diligence and prudence. Now let ſuch be *counted worthy of double honour*; which ſome underſtand of honour in this world, and in the world to come, and which they have; they are honoured now by Chriſt, though reproached by the world, by being called unto, qualified for, and ſucceeded in the work of the miniſtry; and when they have faithfully diſcharged it, they will be honoured by him hereafter, and be introduced into his joy with commendation, and ſhine as the ſtars for ever and ever. But rather this is to be underſtood both of that outward reſpect that is to be ſhewn them, by words and actions; and of a ſufficient maintenance that is to be provided for them; in which ſenſe the word *honour* is uſed in this chapter before; ſee the note on ver. 3. and ſome think that the compariſon is between the widows before mentioned, and theſe elders; that if poor widows in the church are to be honoured and maintained, then much more the officers of it; theſe are worthy of more honour, even of double honour, or a larger, and a more honourable maintenance: and indeed this ſeems to be the meaning of the word *double* when uſed both in an ill and in a good ſenſe; ſee *Rev.* xviii. 6. 2 *King*. ii. 9. and is an alluſion to the firſt-born among the *Jews*, who was to have a double portion of his father's goods, *Deut*. xxi. 17. and ſo may here ſignify, that the miniſters of the goſpel ought not to have a ſhort and ſcanty, but a large and honourable maintenance. *Eſpecially they who labour in the word and doctrine*; which lies in a conſtant reading of the ſcriptures, the word of God, and diligently ſearching into them, and comparing them together, in order to find out the mind and will of God in them; in a daily meditation upon them, and ſtudy of them; and in frequent and fervent wreſtling with God, or prayer to him, to give an underſtanding of them; and in endeavouring to find out the ſenſe of difficult paſſages, which are hard to be underſtood; and in providing for the different caſes and circumſtances of hearers, that every one may have a portion; and in the choice of apt and proper words to expreſs truth in, to the capacities of all: this is labouring in the word in private; beſides which there is labouring in doctrine, in public; in preaching the goſpel conſtantly, boldly, and faithfully; in holding it faſt againſt all oppoſition, and in defending it by argument, both by word and writing. The phraſe ſeems to be *Jewiſh*, a like one is often to be met with in *Jewiſh* writings: *Rabbenu* was ſitting, לעי באורייתא "*and labouring in the law* before the congre-"gation of the *Babylonians* at *Tzippore*[b];" and again[c], "*R. Jonah* gave tithes to *R. Acha bar* "*Aila*, not becauſe he was a prieſt, but becauſe "he לעי באוריתא *laboured in the law*; and they ſay[d], "there is no greater reward for a man in "the world, as for him דלעי באוריתא *who la-*"*bours in the law*;" hence we read[e] of עמל תורה *the labour of the law*, which they ſay the mouth is made for, and of labourers in the law[f]; and ſuch perſons they judged worthy of the greateſt reſpect, and to be preferred to others. For they ſay[g], "if a congregation is obliged to give a ſa-"lary to a doctor (or ruler of the ſynagogue) and "to a miniſter of the congregation, and it is not in "their power to give to both; if the ruler is a "famous man, and great in the law, and ex-"pert in doctrine, he is to be preferred, but if "not the miniſter of the congregation is to be "preferred."

Ver. 18. *For the ſcripture ſaith*, &c.] In *Deut*. xxv. 4. *thou ſhalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn*; ſee the notes on 1 *Cor*. ix. 9, 10. The ox for its ſtrength and labour, is a fit emblem of a Goſpel miniſter; and its treading the corn out of the huſk and ear, aptly repreſents the beating out, as it were, of Goſpel truths by the miniſters of it, their making the doctrines of the goſpel clear, plain and evident to the underſtandings of men; wherefore as the ox was not muzzled when it

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[b] Bereſhit Rabba, §. 33. fol. 28. 3. & paſſim.

[c] T. Hieroſ. Maaſer, Sheni, fol. 56. 2.

[d] Zohar in Gen. fol. 60. 4.

[e] T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 99. 2.

[f] Derech Eretz fol. 17. 4.

[g] Jore Dea, Tit. 251. §. 13.

trod out the corn, but might freely and largely feed upon it, ſo ſuch who labour in the preaching of the goſpel, ought to have a ſufficient and competent maintenance; for which purpoſe this citation is made, as alſo the following: *and the labourer is worthy of his reward*; which ſeems to be taken from *Luke* x. 7. which Goſpel was now written, and in the hands of the Apoſtle; who here, by two teſtimonies, the one from *Moſes*, and the other from Chriſt, ſupports the right of the honourable maintenance of the miniſters of the Goſpel.

Ver. 19. *Againſt an elder receive not an accuſation*, &c.] A charge of any crime: *but before two or three witneſſes*; good ſufficient ones, who are capable of well atteſting the fact: a charge againſt a paſtor of a church, is not to be eaſily received; it ſhould not be liſtened to privately, unleſs it clearly appears by ſuch a number of witneſſes; nor ſhould it be brought publickly before the church, until it is privately and previouſly proved by a ſufficient number of credible witneſſes, that it is really fact. The ſenſe is, not that judgment ſhall not paſs againſt him but by ſuch a number of witneſſes, or that the evidence upon his trial ſhall conſiſt of ſuch a number; for this is no other than what ought to be in the caſe of a private member, and of every man, according to *Deut.* xix. 15. But the ſenſe is, that the affair of an elder ſhall not be put upon a trial, much leſs ſentence paſs, until it has been privately proved againſt him, by proper teſtimonies beyond all exception; only in ſuch a caſe, ſhould a church admit a charge againſt its elder. The reaſon of this rule is, becauſe of his high office and the honour of the church, which is concerned in his, as well as of religion; for it carries in it ſome degree of ſcandal, for ſuch a perſon to be charged, even though he may be cleared; as alſo becauſe of his many enemies, who through envy, malice, and the inſtigation of ſatan, would be continually peſtering the church with charges, could they be eaſily admitted.

Ver. 20. *Them that ſin rebuke before all*, &c.] This the Apoſtle adds to the above rule, to ſhew that he was far from ſcreening wicked miniſters, or elders, guilty of flagitious crimes, and groſs enormities: for theſe words, though they may be applied unto, and may hold good of all offenders, that are members of churches; yet they ſeem chiefly to regard elders, even ſuch who ſin, who continue to ſin, who live in ſin, in ſome notorious ſin or another; which is evident and known, to the great ſcandal of religion, and diſhonour of the goſpel: and ſo ſome read the words, *them that ſin before all, rebuke*; not only admoniſh once and again, but degrade them from their office, and withdraw from them, as from other diſorderly perſons, and cut them off, and caſt them out of the church, and that in a public manner; and ſo the *Arabic* verſion renders it, *before the congregation*; which was done only in caſe of notorious offences: and which rule is obſerved by the *Jews*, and runs thus [h]; "a "wiſe man, an elder in wiſdom, and ſo a prince, "or the father of the *Sanhedrim* that ſins, they "don't excommunicate him, (with *Niddui*) al"ways בפרהסיא publickly, unleſs he does as *Je*"*roboam* the ſon of *Nebat* and his companions; "but when he ſins other ſins, they chaſtize him "privately." The end is, that *others alſo may fear*; that other elders, or other members of the church, or both, may fear to do the ſame evil things, leſt they incur the ſame cenſure and puniſhment: the *Syriac* verſion reads, *other men*; and the *Arabic* verſion, *the reſt of the people*. The phraſe ſeems to be taken out of *Deut.* xiii. 11. and xvii. 13.

Ver. 21. *I charge thee before God*, &c.] Who ſees and knows all things, and is a righteous and moſt impartial judge; with whom there is no reſpect of perſons, and in whoſe place and ſtead, the judges of the earth, both civil and eccleſiaſtical ſtand; and to whom they are accountable, for the judgment they paſs on men and things; and in whoſe houſe or church *Timothy* was, whoſe buſineſs he was doing, and which ought to be done, with a view to his glory; wherefore the Apoſtle gives him this ſolemn charge as in his ſight: *and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt*; who alſo is God omniſcient; and is Jeſus Chriſt the righteous, the head of the church, and the judge of quick and dead; before whoſe judgment-ſeat all muſt appear; where there will be no reſpect of perſons, nor any partiality uſed. *And the elect angels*; by whom are meant not ſome of the angels, the more choice, excellent, and principal among them; as the ſeven angels in *Tobit.* xii. 15. among whom *Raphael* is ſaid to be one. But this is a ſpurious account, and not to be credited; nor was it an antient tradition of the *Jews*, that there were ſeven principal angels; ſee the note on *Rev.* i. 4. The *Chaldee* paraphraſe on *Gen.* xi. 7. is miſtaken by Mr. *Mede*, where not *ſeven*, but *ſeventy* angels are ſpoken of: but here all the good angels are deſigned, called ſometimes the holy angels, and ſometimes the angels in heaven; and here, by the *Syriac* verſion, *his angels*; either the angels of God, as they are ſometimes ſtiled; or the angels of *Jeſus Chriſt*, being made by him, and being miniſters to him, and for him; and alſo *elect*, becauſe choſen to ſtand in that integrity and holineſs, in which they were created; and to enjoy everlaſting glory and happineſs, whilſt others of the ſame ſpecies were paſſed by and left to fall from their firſt eſtate, and appointed to everlaſting wrath and damnation: ſo that it may be obſerved that God's election takes place in angels as well as in men; and which flows from the ſovereign will and pleaſure of God; and was made in Chriſt, who is their head, and by whom they are confirmed in their happy ſtate; and in which they muſt be conſidered in the pure maſs, ſince they never fell; and which may ſerve to illuſtrate and confirm the doctrine of election with reſpect to men. Now before theſe the Apoſtle charges *Timothy*; ſince they are near to the ſaints, encamp about them, miniſter unto them, and are concerned for their good; are ſpectators of their actions, and witneſſes of what is done in churches, ſince they frequently attend the aſſemblies of the ſaints, and will deſcend with Chriſt, when he comes to judge the world in righteouſneſs: the mention of them in this charge gives no countenance to the worſhipping of angels, ſince they are not ſet upon a level with God and Chriſt; nor is the charge delivered before them as judges, but as witneſſes; nor are the words in the form of an oath, but of a charge; the angels are not ſworn by, or appealed unto; only in their preſence is this ſolemn charge given; and it may be obſerved, that even inanimate creatures, the heavens and the earth are ſometimes called upon as witneſſes; and beſides, it was uſual with the *Jews* to make ſuch kind of obteſtations. So *Agrippa* [l], in his ſpeech to the *Jews*, exhorting them to fidelity to the *Romans*, beſeeches them by their holy things, ϗ τȣς ιερȣς αγγελȣς τȣ θεȣ, *and the holy angels of God*, and their common country, that is, the good of it, that they would remain ſtedfaſt. What is the a-

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[h] Maimon. Talmud Tora, c. 7. §. 1.

[l] Joſeph. de Bello Jud. l. 2. c. 16. §. 4.

mount of this charge follows, *that thou obſerve thoſe things*; either all that are contained in the epiſtle, or more particularly, the rules preſcribed in this chapter; concerning rebuking members of a different age and ſex, providing for poor widows, and taking care of the miniſters of the Goſpel, and chiefly what regards the diſcipline of the church with reſpect to the elders of it; as not to admit an accuſation againſt them, unleſs it is ſufficiently evident, and yet not connive at notorious ſinners, but rebuke them publickly; and this charge belongs not only to *Timothy*, but to the whole church, and to all ſucceeding miniſters and churches in all ages. The manner in which theſe things are to be obſerved is, *without preferring one before another*; or, as the words may be rendered *without prejudgment*; that is, without prejudging a caſe, or determining before hearing, how it ſhall be; or as the *Syriac* verſion renders it, *in nothing let thy mind be prepoſſeſſed*: the ſenſe is, that he ſhould attend to any caſe that ſhould come before him in the church, without prejudice or prepoſſeſſion, and hearken to what is ſaid on both ſides; and judge impartially, and not in haſte, but weigh well and conſider the evidence that is given, and then determine as the caſe appears; ſo the *Arabic* verſion renders it, *without haſte*, or precipitancy; to which agrees the advice of the men of the great congregation, or *Ezra*'s congregation, who were in his time, and ſucceeded him; הוו מתונים בדין *be ſlow in judgment* [k], or long at it; that ſo by ſtrict and cloſe examination, things not known at firſt, may be diſcovered; and when judgment is paſſed, it ſhould not be through affection to one party, and diſreſpect to another; which is called in ſcripture a reſpect of perſons, and here a preferring one to another; and which is further explained by adding, *doing nothing by partiality*; or by inclining to one ſide more than to another. A judge ſhould not preponderate to either ſide, but ſhould hold the balance of juſtice even, and do nothing to turn the ſcale one way or another, but as the weight and truth of the evidence direct; and ſuch a rule ſhould be obſerved in all church affairs.

Ver. 22. *Lay hands ſuddenly on no man*, &c.] Which is not to be underſtood of removing cenſures from off offenders, upon their repentance, which ſhould not be ſuddenly and haſtily done; and which it ſeems in later times has been done by impoſition of hands; but ſince no ſuch cuſtom obtained in the Apoſtle's time, and a taking off of cenſures is never in ſcripture ſignified by this phraſe, it cannot be intended here; but rather the admiſſion of perſons into the work of the miniſtry, and the inſtalling of them into the office of an elder or paſtor; upon whom, in theſe early times, hands were laid by the Apoſtles, whereby gifts were conveyed, as on *Timothy*; ſee the note on ch. iv. 14. And from this rite, this act was ſo called, as it might be when it was laid aſide; juſt as with the *Jews*, an ordination of one of their Doctors is called, סמיכה, *impoſition of hands*, tho' they performed it by words, and not by laying on of hands; which now by them is not judged neceſſary [l]: and then the ſenſe is, do not haſtily and at once admit any perſon into the ſacred work of the miniſtry, or conſtitute him an elder, or paſtor, over a church of Chriſt; but let him be firſt proved, and let it plainly appear, that he has the grace of God in him, and has gifts for publick ſervice beſtowed on him; that he is found in faith, and of a good life and converſation; and a man of uprightneſs and fidelity: *neither be partaker of other mens ſins*; of any of the members of the church; by doing the ſame, joining with them therein, or, by conſenting to them and taking pleaſure in them, as done by others; by conniving at them, and not reſtraining them, nor reproving for them: or rather, this refers to raſh and haſty ordinations of miniſters; and either regards the ſins of thoſe who lay hands ſuddenly on men, and with whom the Apoſtle would not have *Timothy* join, that he might not be a partner in their ſins; or elſe the ſins of thoſe that are ordained, and theſe, whether before or after their ordination; which ſuch involve themſelves in, who either raſhly and ignorantly ordain ſuch perſons; and much more if they do it, knowing them to be ſuch: and theſe ſins may include both immorality and error; ſee 2 *John* 10, 11. *Keep thyſelf pure*; not from his own ſins, the ſin of nature, indwelling ſin, and actual tranſgreſſions; no man is, or can be pure, from either of theſe; nor can any man keep himſelf; Chriſt only is able to keep him from falling. But the Apoſtle's meaning is, that he ſhould keep himſelf pure from the ſins of others, by not raſhly and ſuddenly admitting any into the miniſtry; juſt as the Apoſtle was pure from the blood of all men, by faithfully preaching the goſpel; ſo he ſuggeſts that *Timothy* would be pure from partaking of other mens ſins, by obſerving a ſtrict diſcipline in the houſe of God. Some refer this to chaſtity of body, in oppoſition to the ſin of uncleanneſs, which his youthful age and the temptations about him might expoſe him to the danger of; and which is ſcandalous and infamous in a miniſter of the word. Which ſenſe ſerves to ſhew the connexion of the following words, which otherwiſe ſeem to ſtand unconnected.

Ver. 23. *Drink no longer water*, &c.] Though it was commendable in him to keep under his body, as the Apoſtle did by abſtemious living, and not pamper the fleſh, and encourage the luſts of it, and ſo preſerve purity and chaſtity; yet it was proper that he ſhould take care of his health, that it was not impaired by too much ſeverity, and ſo he be uncapable of doing the work of the Lord. And it ſeems by this, that his long and only uſe of water for his drink, had been prejudicial to his health; wherefore the following advice was judged proper: *but uſe a little wine*; ſome by *a little wine*, underſtand not the quantity, but the quality of the wine; a thin, ſmall, weak wine, or wine mixed with water; and ſo the *Ethiopic* verſion renders the words, *drink no more ſimple water*, (or water only) *but mix a little wine*; though rather the quantity is intended, and which is mentioned. Not as though there was any danger of *Timothy*'s running into an exceſs of drinking; but for the ſake of others, leſt they ſhould abuſe ſuch a direction, to indulge themſelves in an exceſſive way; and chiefly to prevent the ſcoffs of prophane perſons; who otherwiſe would have inſinuated that the Apoſtle indulged intemperance and exceſs: whereas this advice to the uſe of wine, was not for pleaſure, and for the ſatisfying of the fleſh, but for health, *for thy ſtomach's ſake*; to help digeſtion, and to remove the diſorders which might attend it: the *Ethiopic* verſion renders it, *for the pain of thy liver*, and *for thy perpetual diſeaſe*; which laſt might be a pain in his head, ariſing from the diſorder of his ſtomach: the laſt clauſe we render, *and thine often infirmities*; or weakneſſes of body, occaſioned by hard ſtudies, frequent miniſtrations, and indefatigable pains and labours he endured in ſpreading the goſpel of Chriſt.

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[k] Pirke Abot, c. 1. §. 1. vid. Maimon. in ib.

[l] Miſn. Sanhedrin, c. 1. §. 3. & Maimon. & Bartenora, in ib. Juchaſin, fol. 60. 1. & Maimon. Hilchot Sanhedrin, c. 4. §. 1, 2.

Ver. 24. *Some mens ſins are open before hand*, &c.] Some men are ſuch open and notorious ſinners, that there is no need of any enquiry about them, or any examination of them; or any witneſſes to be called to their character, in order to paſs judgment concerning them; they even prevent and ſuperſede any formal proceſs about them. With ſuch perſons, the Apoſtle intimates, *Timothy* could have no difficulty upon him, what to do with them; ſhould they be propoſed for the miniſtry, he would know at once what to do with them; namely, reject them. There would be no danger of his laying hands ſuddenly on ſuch; for the following phraſe *going before to judgment*, is not to be underſtood of God's judgment, or of the laſt and future judgment of the great day, but of human judgment: it is true indeed that ſome mens ſins are manifeſt and barefaced, before that day comes; whilſt others are ſo private, that they will not be known, till that day declares them, and brings to light the hidden things of darkneſs: and much ſuch a way of ſpeaking is uſed by the *Jews*; who ſay, [m] "whoever committeth one tranſgreſſion, "(a notorious one) in this world, it joins to "him, *and goes before him* ליום הדין *to the day* "*of judgment*." But this ſenſe agrees not with the context; and with what propriety ſoever it may be ſaid, of ſome mens ſins going before to judgment, it cannot be ſaid with any, that others follow after judgment; ſince at the general judgment, every work, both good and bad, with every ſecret thing, will be brought into it; and nothing will follow after that: wherefore the next clauſe, *and ſome* men *they follow after*; that is, ſome mens ſins follow after, is to be underſtood of their following after human judgment; or of their appearing in the light after judgment has been paſſed upon them, which before were hid: and the ſenſe of the whole is this, that the characters of ſome men are ſo well known, and it is ſo plain a caſe, that they are deſtitute of the grace of God; have not miniſterial gifts; or are unſound in the faith; or are men of immoral lives and converſations; ſo that there can be no diſpute about them, whether they are to be admitted into the miniſtry of the word or rejected. But there are other perſons who may be propoſed, whoſe ſins or errors are ſo private, that they may not be known; and yet, may appear aſterwards; wherefore it is proper to take time, and not be too haſty, or lay hands ſuddenly on men.

Ver. 25. *Likewiſe alſo the good works* of ſome *are manifeſt before hand*, &c. The characters of ſome men on the other hand, are ſo fair and bright; and it is ſo clear a point, that they have received the grace of God in truth; and have a rich furniture for the miniſtry; and are ſound in the doctrine of faith; and are men of ſuch godly lives and converſations, that they prevent any formal enquiry, examination, and judgment; and there can be no difficulty in admitting them at once: and therefore the above rule is not deſigned for ſuch perſons, but to guard againſt thoſe with whom things don't appear ſo very clear and manifeſt: *and they that are otherwiſe cannot be hid*; if they are men of bad principles or practices, they will be diſcovered in time; for there is nothing hid that ſhall not be revealed; time will make all things manifeſt; their errors and ſins will break out, and be expoſed: and therefore it is right to wait a while, and not to be quick in the reception of them, into the Goſpel-miniſtry; for otherwiſe, much miſchief may be done to the ſouls of men, and much diſhonour brought on the ways and doctrines of Chriſt.

CHAP. VI.

IN this chapter the Apoſtle, gives ſome inſtructions to ſervants; lays down ſome rules, by which to judge of falſe teachers; adviſes to contentment; expoſes the ſin of covetouſneſs; exhorts *Timothy* to avoid ſin, and follow after things that are good, to be conſtant in his warfare, the iſſue of which would be eternal life; gives him a charge with reſpect to himſelf, and orders him what he ſhould enjoin others, particularly the rich, and what he ſhould do himſelf; and wiſhes grace unto him, to enable him to diſcharge his duty. The inſtructions to ſervants are of two ſorts; firſt, to ſuch who had unbelieving maſters, whom they ought to honour and obey; that the name and doctrine of Chriſt be not evil ſpoken of: and then to ſuch as had believing maſters, that they deſpiſe them not being brethren, but ſhould the more chearfully ſerve them; becauſe believers in Chriſt, beloved of God, and partakers of his grace; which duties are worthy to be inſiſted upon in the Goſpel miniſtry, ver. 1, 2. and ſuch who teach not theſe things, are to be accounted falſe teachers, whoſe characters are given in ſeveral particulars; as men unſound, proud, ignorant, quarrelſome and covetous, and to be withdrawn from, ver. 3, 4, 5. And from hence the Apoſtle exhorts to contentment; and argues for it, partly from the gain of it along with godlineſs; and partly from the conſideration of what men are, when they come into the world, and what they will be, when they go out of it; and alſo from having food and raiment, which include all the neceſſaries of life, ver. 6, 7, 8. And then he expoſes the folly and danger of covetouſneſs, being the root of all evil; an enemy to true religion and godlineſs; and the cauſe of ruin and deſtruction, ver. 9, 10. Wherefore he addreſſes himſelf to *Timothy*, in particular, to avoid every thing of this kind; and to follow the reverſe of thoſe things that were in the falſe teachers; to fight the good fight of faith, and then lay hold on eternal life; to which he encourages him, from his vocation, and the profeſſion he had made, in a very publick manner, ver. 11, 12. And then follows a ſolemn charge unto him, given him before God and Chriſt; that he would obſerve what had been commanded him in the moſt perfect manner, until the appearance of Chriſt; which is certain, and may be concluded will be, from the various epithets of God; who will make him manifeſt in his own time, ver. 13, 14, 15, 16. To which is added an injunction on *Timothy*, to charge rich men not to be elated with their riches, nor truſt in them, ſince they are uncertain things; but in God, from whom they have received ſuch a plentiful meaſure of them; that they be beneficent to others, which will turn to their own advantage in the iſſue, ver. 17, 18, 19. And to cloſe all, he is very urgent upon *Timothy*, to keep the goſpel pure and incorrupt, he was entruſted with; and avoid every thing that was oppoſite to it, as prophane and mere babling, and having only a ſhew of knowledge, but not that itſelf; and the rather, ſince ſome prophane teachers and profeſſors of the goſpel had erred from it: and concludes with wiſhing him grace, to enable him to attend to the ſeveral inſtructions which had been given him, ver. 20, 21.

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[m] T. Bab. Sota, fol. 3. 2. vid. Avoda Zara, fol. 5. 1.

Ver. 1. *Let as many ſervants as are under the yoke*, &c.] Not under the yoke of the law of God, or under the yoke of Chriſt; though the ſervants here ſpoken of, were under both; but *under the yoke of government*, as the *Arabic* verſion renders it; that is, under the yoke of men, in a ſtate of ſervitude, under the government of maſters, and in their ſervice; being either apprentices to them, or bought with their money, or hired by them: *count their own maſters worthy of all honour*; and give it to them; which includes ſubjection to them; obedience to all their lawful commands, which are conſiſtent with religion and reaſon, with the laws of God, and with the light of nature; and all reverence of them, and reſpect unto them, expreſſed by words and geſtures: and all this is to be given to their *own* maſters to whom they belong; who have a property in them; whoſe money or goods they are; and that be they what they will, as to their religion and temper; whether they be believers or unbelievers; or whether they be good and gentle, kind and humane; or whether they be froward, peeviſh and ill-natured: *that the name of God and* his *doctrine be not blaſphemed*; by unbelieving maſters, who, ſhould their believing ſervants be refractory, diſobedient, rebellious, or diſrepectful, would be apt to ſay, what a God do theſe men ſerve? is this their religion? is this the goſpel they talk of? does their doctrine teach them ſuch things, to be diſobedient to their maſters, and carry it diſrepectfully to them? does it diſengage them from the laws of nature, and diſſolve the bonds of civil ſociety, and deſtroy the relation that ſubſiſts between man and man? If this be the caſe, away with their God and their doctrine too. Wherefore the Apoſtle exhorts, that if believing ſervants have any regard to that name they are called by, and call upon, and to the doctrine of the Goſpel they have embraced and profeſſed; that they would be obedient and reſpectful to their maſters; that they may have no occaſion to ſpeak reproachfully of God, and of the goſpel.

Ver. 2. *And they that have believing maſters*, &c.] That believe in one God, in oppoſition to the *Gentiles*, that held many Gods, and in Jeſus Chriſt, in diſtinction from the *Jews*; who believed in him with the heart, and profeſſed him with their mouths, and held the myſtery of faith in a pure conſcience. What is ſaid before, is ſaid to ſervants that had unbelieving maſters; who would be ready to blaſpheme, ſhould they act amiſs. Servants were under a ſnare both ways, through the inſinuations of falſe teachers; who ſuggeſted, that their ſervitude was not conſiſtent with their Chriſtian liberty; that they ought not to ſerve wicked men, becauſe being called of God, they were advanced above them; nor good men, becauſe they were upon a level with them. But the Apoſtle teaches another doctrine; *let them not deſpiſe* them, *becauſe they are brethren*; of the ſame family named of Chriſt, and of the ſame houſhold of God, and of faith, and have the ſame father; for though with regard to ſpiritual bleſſings, privileges, and ordinances, they were equal; yet not with regard to temporal and civil affairs; and therefore ſhould not treat them with leſs reſpect, or be more backward to obey their lawful commands, on that account: *but rather do* them *ſervice*; more heartily, and with a greater good-will, as to the Lord; theſe maſters belonging to him, and being engaged in his cauſe; which they their ſervants, by yielding a chearful obedience to them, are aſſiſting in: and the rather, *becauſe they are faithful*; in leſſer things, in giving to them, their ſervants, what is juſt and equal, proper food and ſuitable raiment, and their juſt wages; and in uſing their wealth and riches in a good way, for the intereſt of Chriſt, the aſſiſtance of the poor ſaints, and the ſpreading of the goſpel; and ſo in greater things, by holding faſt the profeſſion of their faith, adhering to Chriſt, his truths and ordinances: or *becauſe they are believing*, or *believers*; it is the ſame word, as before uſed; and therefore they ſhould be precious to them, and high in their eſteem; for faith is a precious grace, and ſuch as have it, are choſen of God, and precious: *and beloved*; of God, who had choſen them to ſalvation; and of Chriſt, who had redeemed them by his blood; and of the ſaints, who are taught of God to love one another: and this is another reaſon why they ſhould be ſerved, and not deſpiſed; and a third follows: *partakers of the benefit*; of the free grace of God; of redemption and ſalvation by Jeſus Chriſt, and of all ſpiritual bleſſings in him; and therefore ſhould ſerve them the more chearfully. The *Syriac* verſion renders it, *ſuch as enjoy reſt* in, or are *refreſhed by their ſervice*; or *by their ſervice to them*, as the *Arabic* verſion: the ſenſe is, that when believing ſervants ſerve their believing maſters readily and faithfully, their maſters are well pleaſed with them, delight in their ſervice, and conſider it as a benefit to them, and a kindneſs done them; and which therefore ſhould animate and encourage them to ſerve them. Some underſtand theſe characters of *faithful* and *beloved*, of the ſervants themſelves; that becauſe they are ſuch, therefore they ſhould ſerve, and not deſpiſe their believing maſters; and particularly the laſt clauſe, which may be rendered, *who in return receive a benefit* from them, as food, raiment, and wages; and beſides, they are uſed with humanity and kindneſs, and in a manner becoming Chriſtians; to which agrees the *Ethiopic* verſion, which renders it, *who will receive and help you*; will take care of you, and aſſiſt you, and ſupply you with what is proper and neceſſary: *theſe things teach and exhort*; the *Syriac* and *Arabic* verſions add *them*; the ſervants. The Apoſtle was not above inſtructing and exhorting perſons of ſuch a capacity, and in ſo low a ſtate of life; and it became *Timothy* to do ſo likewiſe; and every miniſter of the word.

Ver. 3. *If any man teach otherwiſe*, &c.] Or *another doctrine*, as the *Syriac* verſion renders it; a doctrine different from what the Apoſtle had now taught, concerning the duty of ſervants to their maſters; as did the falſe teachers, who depiſed dominion or government; not only civil-government, and ſo ſpoke evil of rulers and magiſtrates; and church-government, and therefore reviled the Apoſtles, elders and paſtors of churches; but family-government, and encouraged diſobedience to parents and maſters; ſee 2 Pet. ii. 10. *Jude* ver. 8. or *teach another doctrine*, from that of the bible, of Chriſt and his Apoſtles: *and conſent not to wholeſome words*; ſuch as the doctrines of the Goſpel; they are food to the ſaints, milk for babes, and meat for ſtrong men; they are ſweet and ſavoury food to a ſpiritual taſte; they are nouriſhing, and the means of a ſpiritual growth; they are ſalutary and healthful; they have no corruption, taint, or poiſon in them: even *the words of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*; the doctrines which he preached when on earth, who was anointed with the Spirit of God without meaſure, to preach the Goſpel, and by whom all the doctrines of grace and truth came; or the doctrines relating to Chriſt, to his perſon, offices, grace, righteouſneſs, ſacrifice and ſatisfaction; to what he is, has done, does, and will do. *And to the doctrine which is according to godlineſs.* The whole Goſpel is the myſtery of godlineſs; it is the truth that is after it, and it has a tendency to promote true godlineſs in heart and life: even ſuch is the nature of the more diſtinguiſhing doctrines of it, which are charged with licentiouſneſs; as the doctrine of eternal and perſonal election; for tho' it is not of works, but of grace, yet holineſs is a means fixed in election, and an end ſecured by it; it is the ſource and ſpring of all real holineſs; holineſs of heart is an evidence of it to believers themſelves; and holineſs of life is an evidence of it to the world; nor can any thing more powerfully engage men to it than the conſideration that they are choſen of God to grace and glory. The covenant of grace which is abſolute and unconditional, provides for both internal and external holineſs; and the promiſes of it under the influence of grace, powerfully operate in the minds of believers, to the cleanſing of them from all impurity of fleſh and ſpirit, and to the perfecting of holineſs in the fear of the Lord: and ſo the doctrines of free juſtification by the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, which does not make void the law, nor diſcourage good works; and of Chriſt's bearing the ſins of his people, and making ſatisfaction for them, that they being dead to ſin might live unto righteouſneſs; and of redemption of them by the blood of Chriſt from ſin, ſatan, and the law, which is done that they might be a peculiar people, zealous of good works; and of the effectual vocation of them, which is with an holy calling; and of their final perſeverance in grace and holineſs, are all of them doctrines according to godlineſs, and greatly encourage and promote it: now, whoever does not accede to theſe truths, and acquieſce in them, but differs from them, and teaches the reverſe of them, he is a falſe teacher, and is all that the Apoſtle ſays in the next words.

Ver. 4. *He is proud*, &c.] Or ſwelled and puffed up with a vain conceit of himſelf and his own notions, and treats with an haughty air, the faithful miniſters of the word. The doctrines of grace are of an humbling nature, eſpecially when they are ſpiritually and experimentally underſtood, and received; but notional knowledge, knowledge of natural things, and the doctrines of men, ſuch as are of their own invention, fill the mind with pride and vanity: *knowing nothing*; as he ought to know; not any thing that is ſolid and ſubſtantial; nothing of the Goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt: he may have knowledge of natural and civil things, but not of ſpiritual ones; he may have collected a medley of knowledge, together, but what will be of no real uſe either to himſelf or others: *but doting about queſtions and ſtrifes of words*: or he is *ſick* or *diſeaſed*; his mind is diſtempered; he is like one in a fever, that is delirious; his head is light and wild; his fancy is roving, and he talks of things he knows not what; his head runs upon *queſtions*; fooliſh and unlearned ones, about the law and works, and the neceſſity of them to juſtification and ſalvation; concerning genealogies, and other fruitleſs and unprofitable ſubjects: *and ſtrifes of words*; mere logomachies; contending and quarrelling more about words, than things, which tend to no profit, but to the ſubverting and confounding of hearers. The ill effects of which are as follow: *whereof cometh envy*; at the ſuperior gifts and talents of others; at their ſucceſs, and any little degree of honour and reſpect they have from others; which ſhews that ſuch men, in whom this vice is a governing one, are carnal men, for this is a work of the fleſh; and that they are deſtitute of charity, or the grace of love, which envieth not: alſo from hence comes *ſtrife*; contention, quarrelling; the peace and comfort of particular perſons, and even of whole communities, are broken and deſtroyed hereby; for fooliſh and unlearned queſtions gender ſtrifes, 2 *Tim.* ii. 24, 25. which are very unbecoming the ſervants of the Lord, and very uncomfortable to the churches of Chriſt: yea, theſe alſo produce *railings*; at one another, and eſpecially at the faithful miniſters of the Goſpel; for when the falſe teachers cannot overcome them by ſcripture and argument, they fall to railing and reviling of them: or entertain *evil ſurmiſes*; groundleſs ſuſpicions: or from hence follow, as the words may be rendred, *wicked opinions*; concerning the being, perfections, purpoſes, and providence of God; concerning the perſon and offices of Chriſt; concerning the law and goſpel, grace and good works; and ſo the *Syriac* verſion renders it, *an evil opinion of the mind*.

Ver. 5. *Perverſe diſputings of men of corrupt minds*, &c.] Who being corrupt in their principles, and corrupters of the word of God, diſpute in a very froward and perverſe way; rubbing and galling one another, and ſo provoke to wrath and anger, and every evil work: *and deſtitute of the truth* of Chriſt, who is the truth, knowing nothing of him ſpiritually and ſavingly; and of the Goſpel, the word of truth; and alſo of the truth of grace, being carnal, ſenſual, and having not the ſpirit of God. *Suppoſing that gain is godlineſs*; ſuch were *Simon Magus* and his followers, and other falſe teachers, who made merchandize of men, looked every one for his gain from his quarter, and acted as if there was nothing in religion, but worldly profit and gain; theſe ſerved themſelves, their own bellies, and ſelfiſh intereſts, and not the Lord Jeſus Chriſt. Wherefore the Apoſtle gives the following advice to *Timothy*, and thro' him to all miniſters and churches, *from ſuch withdraw thyſelf*; do not come near them; have nothing to do with them; do not lay hands on them, or admit them into the miniſtry; do not ſuffer them to preach, or encourage them by hearing them: if in the church, caſt them out; have no communion with them, neither in a civil nor in a religious way; avoid all converſation with them. The *Vulgate Latin* and *Ethiopic* verſions omit this clauſe; and it is wanting in the *Alexandrian* copy, and in *Beza*'s *Claromontane* Exemplar, but is in other copies.

Ver. 6. *But godlineſs with contentment is great gain.*] By *godlineſs* is not meant any particular grace, but all the graces of the ſpirit of God; as faith, hope, love, fear, *&c.* the whole of internal religion, as it ſhews itſelf in outward worſhip, and in all acts of holineſs of life and converſation; and which the doctrine that is according to godlineſs, teaches and engages to; and this is gain, very great gain indeed. A man poſſeſſed of true godlineſs is a gaining, thriving man: ſuch as are godly, or truly gracious, they are come into good and happy circumſtances, and are poſſeſſors of the true, ſolid, ſatisfying, durable, and unſearchable riches of grace; all their debts are paid, they are richly clothed, and deliciouſly fed, and are in a good family, even the houſhold of God, who before were in debt, arrayed in rags, were in a ſtarving condition, and ſtrangers and foreigners; yea, they are heirs of God, joint-heirs with Chriſt, and have both a right and a meetneſs for the heavenly inheritance; they are now made kings and prieſts to God, and in the preſent ſtate of things, have God to be their portion, and exceeding great reward; they have an intereſt in Chriſt, and in all ſpiritual bleſſings in him, and have the Spirit as the earneſt of their future inheritance; they are rich in faith, and in good works; their ſouls, which were loſt, are gained, and ſhall be ſaved with an everlaſting ſalvation; and e're long they will be poſſeſſed of all the riches of glory, ſignified by a houſe not made with hands, a city which has foundations, whoſe builder and maker is God, an incorruptible inheritance, and a kingdom and glory: how great is the gain of godlineſs! And what adds to this gain, and now goes along with it, is *contentment*; for this is not to be conſidered as the condition of godlineſs being great gain, as if it was not ſo without it; but as the effect of godlineſs, what that produces, and as a part of its gain. The word here uſed ſignifies *ſufficiency*; and ſo it is rendered in the *Vulgate Latin* verſion: it deſigns a competency of the good things of this life; and what that is, is expreſſed in ver. 8. and ſuch God gives to them that fear him, his godly ones, who ſhall lack no good thing convenient for them; for godlineſs has the promiſe of this life, as well as of that which is to come; and God does give to ſuch all things pertaining to life and godlineſs, even all things richly to enjoy. The word indeed properly ſignifies *ſelf-ſufficiency*, which in its ſtrict ſenſe only belongs to God, who is *El-Shaddai*, God all-ſufficient and ſelf-ſufficient; but here it intends ſuch a ſufficiency as a man himſelf judges to be ſo; for this phraſe does not ſo much deſign the thing itſelf, which is a ſufficiency, as the opinion, the ſenſe which the godly man has of it, who himſelf judges it, as *Jacob* did, to be enough; and ſuch a man is content with what he has, and thankful for it, ſubmits quietly to the will of God, and patiently bears every adverſe providence: and this is now the fruit and effect of godlineſs, or true grace, and is a conſiderable part of that gain which godlineſs brings with it; and ſuch a man is a happy man indeed, let his circumſtances be what they will. The *Jews* have a ſaying[n], that “ he is a rich man “ whoſe ſpirit reſts in, or is contented with his “ riches;” that is, as the *Gloſs* explains it, “ who “ rejoices in his portion, be it little or much:” thus, tho' godlineſs is not gain, nor gain godlineſs, in the ſenſe of the falſe teachers, yet is it true gain in a ſpiritual ſenſe.

Ver. 7. *For we brought nothing into this world*, &c.] Which is a reaſon both clearly ſhewing, that godlineſs is great gain, ſince thoſe who have it brought nothing into the world with them but ſin, and yet are now in ſuch happy circumſtances as before deſcribed; and that godly perſons ſhould be content with what they have, even of worldly things, ſeeing they are ſo much more than they had when they came into the world, into which they came naked; and which ſhould be a quieting conſideration under the moſt ſtripping providences; ſee *Job* i. 21. and it is *certain we can carry nothing out*: as men come into the world, ſo will they go out of it; nor will they need their worldly ſubſtance after death, any more than they did before they were born; and what they now have, and uſe not, will then be loſt to them, whatever gain it may be to others: wherefore it becomes them chearfully to uſe what they have, and be content therewith; ſee *Eccl.* v. 15, 16. The *Jews* have a ſaying like this[o], that “ as a man comes (into the world) בחליטין, ſimply or nakedly, ſo he goes “ out in like manner.”

Ver. 8. *And having food and raiment*, &c.] *Food* includes all things neceſſary to be eat and drank, of which there is a great variety, and is here expreſſed in the plural number; and *raiment* every neceſſary covering, as the word uſed ſignifies, and includes an habitation, which is a cover and ſhelter from the inclemencies of the weather. And now having all theſe comforts and neceſſaries of life, food to eat, and drink to extinguiſh thirſt and refreſh, raiment to put on, and a houſe to dwell in, *let us be therewith content*: there is very good reaſon why the ſaints ſhould be content; ſince more than theſe things cannot be enjoyed; and theſe they have with a bleſſing, and as a fruit and token of the love of God to them; theſe were all that *Jacob* deſired, *Agur* petitioned for, and Chriſt directs his diſciples daily to pray for; and which to have, is to have enough, a proper ſufficiency and competency: the words may be rendered, *we ſhall be content with them*; which the Apoſtle could ſay for himſelf, *Timothy*, and others, who had been content, even when they wanted theſe things. The *Vulgate Latin* and *Ethiopic* verſions read, *we are content*; and the *Syriac* verſion, *food and raiment are ſufficient for us*; and ſo the Apoſtle ſets himſelf, and others, as examples of contentment to be imitated and followed.

Ver. 9. *But they that will be rich*, &c.] Not they that are rich; for ſome rich men are good men, and do much good with their riches; and are as free from temptations and ſnares; and fooliſh and hurtful luſts, as other perſons, as *Abraham*, *Joſeph* of *Arimathea*, *Gaius*, and others were; but ſuch that would be rich, who labour after, make haſte for it, and are reſolved upon it, at any rate, right or wrong, as there be thouſands who never attain to it; ſo that the Apoſtle does not point at rich men particularly, but at ſuch who are determined to be rich, whether they ever are ſo or no: theſe *fall into temptation*; not in ſuch ſenſe in which the phraſe is uſed in *Jam.* i. 2. but in ſuch ſenſe as Chriſt uſes it, *Matt.* vi. 13. namely, a falling into temptation to ſin, ſo as to be drawn away by it, and overcome with it: *and a ſnare*; the *Vulgate Latin* verſion reads, *the ſnare of the devil*, and ſo *Beza*'s *Claromontane* copy; which perhaps is taken from ch. iii. 7. and tho' this ſeems not to be the genuine reading, yet it may give the true ſenſe: ſatan may be compared to a fowler; his temptations to ſin are his nets and ſnares; and they that will be rich, are the birds that are caught and entangled therein, out of which ſometimes it is impracticable to extricate themſelves: and into *many fooliſh and hurtful luſts*; carnal and worldly luſts, the luſts of the fleſh, the luſt of the eye, and the pride of life, which are the things that are in the world, and draw the affections to them; yea, what ſin is there but ſuch perſons may, and do fall into; as defrauding of the neighbour, oppreſſing the poor, lying, perjury, theft, murder, rapine, violence, and injuſtice of every kind; ſo that they may be ſaid to be *many*, and ſome of them are *fooliſh*. All ſin is folly, and every wicked man is a fooliſh one, and acts a part quite contrary to reaſon; but ſome evil ways are notoriouſly ſilly, weak and fooliſh, and which they that will be rich make uſe of to get money; tho' others of them are ſly and artful enough, and all of them are *hurtful* to their credit and reputation, or to the health of their bodies, and eſpecially to the welfare of their immortal ſouls. So the phraſe, יצריהון טפשא, *their fooliſh luſt*, is uſed by the *Targumiſt* in *Ezek*. xx. 25. and the corruption of nature in general, is by the *Jews* called the old and fooliſh king, in *Eccl*. iv. 13. They aſk [p], "why is he called a king? "becauſe all obey him; why is he called old? be-"cauſe he is joined to him (a man) from his birth "to his old age; and why is he called, כסיל, "*fooliſh?* becauſe he teaches him an evil way, "which he knows not how to warn him of again." *Which drown men in deſtruction and perdition*; that is, in utter ruin, in the ruin both of ſoul and body; and which is irrecoverable, like that of the drowning of a man in the ſea, with a milſtone about his neck; ſuch folly and danger do thoſe expoſe themſelves to, who will be rich at any rate.

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[n] T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 25. 2.

[o] Bereſhit Rabba, §. 42. fol 36. 3.

Ver. 10. *For the love of money is the root of all evil*, &c.] Of all the evils before-mentioned, and of others; not money itſelf, as ſilver and gold, which are God's creatures, and his gifts, and may be uſed to, and anſwer many good purpoſes; but the love of it, and not any love of it; for there may be a lawful love of it, and deſire after it, ſo far as it is requiſite to the neceſſaries of life, to anſwer the calls of providence, the duties we owe to God and men, to ſerve the intereſt of Chriſt, and do good to fellow-creatures and fellow-chriſtians: but it is an immoderate, inſatiable deſire after it, and an inordinate love of it, which is here meant, ſuch as is properly idolatry; as when a man loves it, not only beſides, but above God; ſerves it as if it was God, and places his truſt and confidence in it, independent of God, and his providence; ſuch love of it is the ſource and ſpring of all iniquity, as above; it was the ſin of *Judas*, and the root of all his iniquity. The phraſe is *Jewiſh*. So idolatry is ſaid to be, עיקר כל עונות, *the root of all iniquities* [q]; ſee *Heb*. xii. 15. *which while ſome coveted after*; in a greedy and inſatiable way: *they have erred from the faith*; the doctrine of faith. Obſerving that the profeſſors of it are generally poor, they have declined that path, and have not ſo much as heard the word; and if they have heard and embraced it, yet when perſecution ariſes becauſe of it, they drop their profeſſion of it; or elſe their minds are ſo filled with worldly cares, and deceitful riches, that the word is choaked, and becomes unprofitable, and by and by, *Demas* like, they forſake it, having loved this preſent world. *And pierced themſelves thro' with many ſorrows*; riches are therefore fitly compared to thorns, which give great trouble and uneaſineſs, both in getting and keeping them; and oftentimes the reflexion upon the unlawful ways and means made uſe of to obtain them, gives very pungent pain and diſtreſs; ſee *Job* xx. 15—29. The Apoſtle ſeems to allude to the *Hebrew* word, בצע, uſed for a covetous man, which ſignifies one that pierces, cuts, and wounds, as ſuch an one does both himſelf and others.

Ver. 11. *But thou, O man of God*, &c.] Not only by creation, as every man is; nor merely by ſpecial grace, as every one is, that is choſen of God, redeemed by Chriſt, and regenerated and ſanctified by the Spirit; but by his peculiar office, as an Evangeliſt and miniſter of the word, being qualified for, and devoted to, and employed in the ſervice of God. The phraſe is taken out of the Old Teſtament, where the prophets, *Elijah* and *Eliſha*, are ſo called, 2 *Kings* i. 9. and iv. 7, 9. *flee theſe things*; the *Arabic* verſion reads, *theſe abominations*; namely, all queſtions and ſtriſes of words, from whence ſo many evils follow, ver. 4, 5. and all worldly gain, ſelfiſh intereſt, and mercenary views in religion; a wicked reſolution to be rich, at any rate, and an immoderate love of the things of the world, and an eager purſuit after them, which expoſe to great danger, and even utter ruin; things very unbecoming any profeſſor of religion, but much more a miniſter of the Goſpel. *And follow after righteouſneſs*; not for juſtification before God, that he had followed after, and attained unto, which is the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, and not of the law; but for the honour of religion before men; and intends the doing of juſtice between man and man, giving every one their own, which an undue affection for the world ſometimes leads men from: *godlineſs*; ſpiritual religion, holineſs of heart, and converſation, which has the promiſe of this life, as well as of the other, and with contentment is great gain; wherefore to purſue this is much better than greedily to run after the riches of this world, or with the falſe teachers to ſuppoſe that godlineſs lies in worldly gain, or in ſecuring to a man his worldly intereſt: *faith*; the grace of faith, which looks not to things ſeen, which are temporal, but to things not ſeen, which are eternal; and leads off the mind from ſublunary enjoyments to God, and Chriſt, and the glories of another world; and is the leading grace to all others, and the foundation of good works, without which there is no pleaſing God in acts of moral righteouſneſs, or in any acts of religious worſhip, which may be called godlineſs: *love*; to God, which is inconſiſtent with ſerving mammon, or with an immoderate love of money; and to Chriſt, which will put a man on ſeeking, not his own things, but the things of Chriſt; and to the ſaints, which will direct him to ſerve them by acts of beneficence and liberality: *patience*; in bearing reproaches and indignities; in ſuffering injuries, loſs of goods, impriſonment, and every ſort of perſecution, for the ſake of the Goſpel, which a covetous diſpoſition will not admit of: laſt of all *meekneſs*; or humility, not ſeeking great things, but being content with a lower ſtation of life; for generally 'tis pride that puts men upon a determination to be rich at any rate: it may alſo deſign meekneſs in inſtructing the ignorant, in refuting error, and in reproving offenders.

Ver. 12. *Fight the good fight of faith*, &c.] The Apoſtle ſuggeſts to *Timothy*, that he had other buſineſs to do than to mind the things of this world; his life was a ſtate of warfare; he was a ſoldier, and was not to entangle himſelf with the things of this life; he had many enemies to engage with, as ſatan, and his principalities and powers; ſin, and the luſts of the fleſh; the world, and the men of it, and a great fight of afflictions to endure with them; as alſo falſe teachers, with whom particularly he was to fight the good fight of faith, that ſo the truth of the Goſpel, which they reſiſted, might continue with the ſaints. This fight is called *the fight of faith*; partly in oppoſition to the law, and to מלחמתה של תורה, *the fight*, or *war of the law*, the *Jews*[r] ſo much talk of; and in which the falſe teachers, in the Apoſtle's time, were ſo much engaged, and againſt whom the Apoſtles ſet themſelves; and partly becauſe the doctrine of faith, the faith of the Goſpel, the faith once delivered to the ſaints, is what they earneſtly contended, ſtrove, and fought for; and becauſe the grace of faith, as converſant with the ſcriptures of truth, was the weapon they fought with: and this may be called a *good* fight, becauſe it is in a good cauſe, the cauſe of God and truth; and under a good captain, Jeſus Chriſt the captain of our ſalvation; for which good weapons are provided, even the whole armour of God, and which are not carnal, but ſpiritual and mighty; to which may be added, that thoſe who are engaged in this fight may be ſure of victory, and the crown of glory, life, and righteouſneſs: ſo that when they have done fighting, they have nothing elſe to do, but to *lay hold on eternal life*; as *Timothy* for his encouragement is here bid to do. Eternal life is the prize of the high calling of God, which is held up, and held forth to thoſe who are fighting the Lord's battles; and this they ſhould look unto as the recompence of reward; and this they may lay hold upon, even now by faith, believing their intereſt in it, their right unto it, and that they ſhall enjoy it; of which they may be the more aſſured, becauſe of their effectual vocation: *whereunto thou art alſo called*; not barely by the external miniſtration of the Goſpel, in which ſenſe many are called, but few choſen and ſaved; but internally, by the ſpecial grace and power of the Spirit of God; and ſuch who are ſo called, are not only called to grace, but to eternal glory; and the God of all grace, who has called unto it, of his ſovereign good-will and pleaſure, is faithful, and will beſtow it. The word *alſo* is left out in the *Alexandrian* copy, and in the *Vulgate Latin*, and in all the *Oriental* verſions; but it ſeems to be emphatical, and is uſed to ſtrengthen *Timothy*'s faith, as to the enjoyment of eternal life; ſince it was not only the reward of grace, following upon the good fight of faith, but was that alſo to which he was called by the grace of God: *and haſt profeſſed a good profeſſion before many witneſſes*; both before the brethren at *Lyſtra*, at his baptiſm and admiſſion into the church, before whom he gave an account of his faith, and made a profeſſion of it; and who, upon this, and his agreeable life and converſation, gave a good report of him to the Apoſtle *Paul*, *Acts* xvi. 1, 2. and before the Apoſtle, and the reſt of the elders, when they laid their hands on him, whereby an extraordinary gift was conveyed unto him, 1 *Tim.* iv. 14. 2 *Tim.* i. 6. or it may be before the men of the world, ſome violent perſecutors, before whom he bravely, and with great intrepidity, profeſſed his faith in Chriſt Jeſus; and which he continued conſtantly to do, in every place whereever he came; and which being done ſo often, and ſo publickly, is a reaſon why he ſhould keep on till the battle was over.

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[p] Midraſh Kohelet, fol. 70. 2.

[q] R. David Kimchi in Iſ. xxvii. 9.

Ver. 13. *I give thee charge in the ſight of God*, &c.] Who is omniſcient and omnipotent: *who quickeneth all things*; all creatures, for all animate creatures have their life, motion, and being in him; and who quickeneth all his people, at firſt converſion, when dead in ſin, and afterwards when dull and lifeleſs; and who will quicken the dead at the laſt day. This ſeems to be mentioned to ſtrenghthen *Timothy* againſt the fears of death, that ſhould he die in fighting the Lord's battles, he was able to raiſe him from the dead, and would do it. *And before Chriſt Jeſus, who before Pontius Pilate witneſſed a good confeſſion*; or rather *under Pontius Pilate*; or, as the *Arabic* and *Ethiopic* verſions render it, *in the time of Pontius Pilate*; for this may refer not only to the confeſſion Chriſt made in his preſence, at his examination by him, when he owned himſelf to be a king, declared the nature of his kingdom, and ſignified that the end of his incarnation was to bear a teſtimony to the truth; but it may alſo refer to the faithful, plain, and open witneſs Chriſt bore to truth throughout the whole of his miniſtry, under *Pontius Pilate*, by his doctrine and miracles, and at laſt by his ſufferings and death, which he endured under him; and this is mentioned for *Timothy*'s imitation, and to encourage him, and all other ſaints, to hold faſt the profeſſion of their faith to the end.

Ver. 14. *That thou keep* this *commandment*, &c.] Meaning either what he had now laſt of all enjoined him, to fight the good fight of faith; or the whole of the orders he had given him throughout the Epiſtle, relating both to the doctrine and diſcipline of the houſe of God; or rather the work and office of preaching the Goſpel, which was committed to him by the Holy Ghoſt, and enjoined him by the commandment of the everlaſting God: and this the Apoſtle, before God and Chriſt, charges him to obſerve and keep, in the following manner, *without ſpot, and unrebukeable*; the ſenſe is, that he would diſcharge his miniſterial function with all faithfulneſs and purity; that he would ſincerely, and without any adulteration, preach the pure Goſpel of Chriſt; and that he would ſo behave in his life and converſation, that his miniſtry might not he juſtly blamed by men, or he be rebuked by the church here, or by Chriſt hereafter: and this he would have him do, *until the appearing of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*; to judge the quick and dead at the laſt day, and which will be very illuſtrious and glorious. Now Chriſt is hid from the eyes of men, but to them that look for him, he'll appear a ſecond time in great glory; in the glory of his Father, and of his own, and of the holy angels; and when his ſaints will appear with him in glory: and this the Apoſtle the rather mentions, ſince every man's work and miniſtry will then be made manifeſt; this bright day of Chriſt's appearing will declare it, and every one muſt give an account of himſelf, and his talents unto him: and this ſhows that the Apoſtle did not deſign this charge, and theſe inſtructions, for *Timothy* only, but for all other miniſters of the Goſpel, till the ſecond coming of Chriſt; tho' this was then, as now, ſo much unknown, when it would be, that it could not be ſaid but *Timothy* might live unto it.

Ver. 15. *Which in his times he ſhall ſhew*, &c.] For tho' the time of Chriſt's appearing is unknown, yet the thing itſelf is certain; God will bring it about, and make it manifeſt in his own time, in the time that is fixed and appointed by him; and which is only known unto him, and which he keeps in his own power, and has reſerved in his own breaſt: *who is the bleſſed*; the *Syriac* verſion reads, *the bleſſed God*; who is bleſſed in himſelf, in his Son and Spirit, in the perfections of his nature; who is God all-ſufficient, has enough in himſelf for himſelf, and for all his creatures; who is the fountain and the author of all bleſſedneſs, temporal, ſpiritual, and eternal, which any of them are, or ſhall be poſſeſſed of: *and only potentate*; or governour of the whole world, which can be ſaid of none but himſelf: he is the governour among the nations, and over all the nations of the earth; his kingdom rules over all other kingdoms; and he has his power and government from himſelf, whereas all other potentates have their power from him, as follows: *the king of kings, and lord of lords*; from whom they receive their ſceptres, crowns, and kingdoms; by whom they reign, and are continued in their power; for he ſets up kings, and removes kings at his pleaſure, and to him they muſt be accountable for all their adminiſtrations another day; and at preſent they are under his influence, and at his controul; he has their hearts, and their counſels, as well as kingdoms, in his hands, and under his over-ruling providence; and cauſes all to anſwer his wiſe and eternal purpoſes. Theſe titles are uſed by the *Jews*, who ſtile him, אדון כל האדונים מלך על כל המלכים, *Lord of all Lords, King over all Kings*[a]. The ſame name is given to Chriſt, *Rev.* xix. 16. which ſhews him to be equal with the Father.

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[r] Zohar in Num. fol. 99. 4. T. Hieroſ. Taanith, fol. 69. 2. & Bab. Chagiga, fol. 14. 1. Megilla, fol. 15. 2. & Sanhedrin, fol. 93. 2. & 111. 2. Midraſh Ruth, fol. 31. 4. Eccha Rabbati, fol. 53. 2. Caphtor, fol. 93. 2. & Seder Olam Rabba, c. 25. & Jarchi in Cant. iii. 8.

Ver. 16. *Who only hath immortality*, &c.] Angels are immortal, and ſo are the ſouls of men, and ſo will be the bodies of men after the reſurrection; but then neither of theſe have immortality of themſelves, they have it from God; who only has it, of himſelf, originally, eſſentially, and inderivatively. *Dwelling in that light which no man can approach unto*; in this preſent, frail, and mortal ſtate; yea, angels themſelves can't bear the luſtre of it, but cover their faces with their wings; for God is light itſelf, as well as clothes himſelf with light, as with a garment; and is the Father and fountain of lights to all his creatures. *Whom no man hath ſeen, nor can ſee*; no where but in Chriſt, at leaſt ſpiritually and ſavingly; and that but very imperfectly in the preſent ſtate: the ſin, frailty, and mortality of human nature muſt be taken away, in order to inherit the kingdom of God, and enjoy the beatific viſion of him; which ſaints in heaven have, who ſee him as he is, and in ſuch ſort, as no man now does, or can ſee him: *to whom be honour and power everlaſting, Amen.* Which may be conſidered either as a wiſh, that ſuch honour, power, and glory might be aſcribed unto him, as we ſupply it; or as an aſſertion that it is given to him, as it is by the angels, and by the ſaints in heaven and in earth.

Ver. 17. *Charge them that are rich in this world*, &c.] Or in the things of this world. The *Arabic* verſion reads, *in this preſent world*; in diſtinction from the world to come: ſome are poor in this world, and rich in another; others are rich in this world, and poor, and wretched, and miſerable in the world to come: ſome are rich in both worlds, and ſuch were at leaſt ſome of thoſe, the Apoſtle here refers to, who were members of the church at *Epheſus*, which was a rich city, and ſome rich men in it were called by the grace of God; and to diſtinguiſh theſe from others, who, tho' poor in this world, were rich in grace and in ſpiritual gifts, he ſo calls them; as well as to obſerve that their riches were like the world they were in, deceitful, empty, unſatisfying, and periſhing: theſe the Apoſtle would have not only ſpoke to, inſtructed, exhorted, and intreated, but ſtrictly charged and commanded, without paying any regard to their worldly grandeur and riches, *that they be not high-minded*; the *Ethiopic* verſion reads, *that they be not lifted up in this world*; with their wealth and worldly ſubſtance, and look down from the heighth of their honour and riches with contempt upon the poor; entertaining high thoughts of themſelves, as if their bodies were of another matter and make, when they have all one maker, are of one blood, and of the earth, earthly, and muſt return to it; or as if their ſouls were more large and capacious, and they were wiſer and more knowing, whereas riches are not always to men of underſtanding, a fool may be rich, and a wiſe man poor; or as if they were the peculiar favourites of heaven, when, for the moſt part, God chuſes and calls the poor of this world; or as if others were unworthy of their looks, company, and converſation. Riches produce pride; rich men are apt to be proud of themſelves, and deſpiſe others; and therefore this evil is taken notice of, as what they are to be cautioned againſt, and charged to the contrary: *nor truſt in uncertain riches*; or *in the uncertainty of riches*; they are here to-day, and gone to-morrow; no man that is poſſeſſed of them, can be ſure of them a moment; they make themſelves wings and flee away; he that gives them, can take them away at pleaſure: and there are various ways by which they are ſuddenly, and at once taken from the owners of them; as by loſs in trade, by ſhipwrack, by inundations, by fire, by thieves, *&c.* and yet men are apt to promiſe themſelves a continuance of them, and to have their dependance upon them, and place their truſt and confidence in them, yea, even good men; and that very much to the neglect of, and diſregard to the providence of God, which is always beſt and ſafeſt in every circumſtance and ſtation of life to depend upon, as follows: *but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy*; almoſt every word carries in it an argument or reaſon why he ſhould be truſted, becauſe he is *God*, and not a creature; the *living* God, who has life in himſelf, eſſentially and originally; is the author, giver, and maintainer of life in others; and who always is, ever continues unchangeably the ſame: and *giveth all things*; every good gift comes from him; all the gifts of nature, and bounties of providence; and as he gives, he can take away, and therefore ſhould be only regarded: and he gives all things *richly*, largely, and plenteouſly; what is neceſſary and convenient, and abundantly more than men deſerve: and that *to enjoy*; not to lay up, but to uſe for ſupport, refreſhment, and pleaſure, tho' not to abuſe.

Ver. 18. *That they do good*, &c.] Rich men ſometimes do much ill to themſelves, to the hurt of their bodies, by luxury, intemperance, and debauchery, and to their ſouls, to the ruin of them, and to others by fraud, oppreſſion, and violence; for it is in the power of their hands to do much evil, and alſo to do much good, as they ſhould; and much is required of them, ſince much is given them to do good with, and for which they are accountable: it becomes them, and eſpecially ſuch as believe in Chriſt, to do every good work in general, and to do acts of beneficence in particular, both to all men, and to the houſhold of faith. *That they be rich in good works*; or abound in the performance of them, as *Dorcas* is ſaid to be full of good works and alms-deeds; and to reckon that their true riches lie more in the exerciſe of grace, and in the fruits of it, doing good works, than in their worldly enjoyments. The phraſe ſeems to be *Rabbinical*. Frequent mention is made of, עשיר בתורה, *rich in the law*, and, עשיר במצות, *rich in the commandments* [t]; and it is ſaid [u], no man is poor but he that is without the law, and good works, for the riches of a man are the law, and good works. *Ready to diſtribute*; unaſked; and when they are aſked, do not turn away, and put off, but give at once, and without grief, and with chearfulneſs; want no arguments to preſs them to it, nor uſe any againſt it. *Willing to communicate*; of their good things to the neceſſities of the poor, making them common to them, and them partakers of them. Some render the word, *ſociable*, in oppoſition to that moroſeneſs, ſtiffneſs, and thoſe haughty and forbidding airs, with which rich men are apt to treat the poor, when they ſhould be affable and courteous to them, and admit them to a free converſation with them.

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[a] Zohar in Num. fol. 100. 2.

Ver. 19. *Laying up in ſtore for themſelves*, &c.] Laying up a treaſure in heaven, which will be for themſelves to enjoy to all eternity; whereas what they lay up here is for others, for their children or friends, and ſometimes for ſtrangers, and they know not who, whether for a wiſe man or a fool, yea even for enemies: ſo it is ſaid of king *Munbaz*, when he diſperſed his father's treaſures to the poor, his brethren and friends came about him, complaining of it; to whom he ſaid [w], "my fathers treaſured up below, I treaſure up above.——My fathers treaſured *up for others*, I treaſure up, לעצמי, *for myſelf*; my fathers treaſured up for this world, I treaſure up for the world to come." So it follows here, *a good foundation againſt the time to come*; by which is meant, not a foundation of happineſs, for that is laid already, and by God himſelf; and much leſs by doing acts of beneficence is that foundation laid; for there is no other foundation of happineſs, life, and ſalvation, that can be laid, beſides what is laid, which is Jeſus Chriſt: nor is the Apoſtle ſpeaking of laying a foundation here, to build upon, but of laying up a foundation in heaven, by which he intends happineſs itſelf; and which he calls a *foundation*, becauſe it is ſolid and ſubſtantial, permanent and durable, in oppoſition to the uncertain, precarious, tranſitory, and periſhing enjoyments and treaſures of this life; and *good*, becauſe profitable, when the laying up of worldly riches is often to the hurt of its owners, and will be uſeful, when they will not profit; and beſides, will always continue, and be a foundation that will always ſupport them, and never give way: now to lay up this, is no other than to ſeek thoſe things which are above, to ſhew a concern for them, and to ſet the affections on them, and live in the comfortable hope and expectation of enjoying them. The phraſe is the ſame with that in *Matt*. vi. 19, 20. and takes in a regard to ſpiritual riches, the riches of grace now, ſuch as ſanctifying, juſtifying, and pardoning grace through Chriſt; which will be a good foundation *againſt the time to come*; and will give both a right and meetneſs for the enjoyment of the heavenly treaſures, which will be for futurity, even to all eternity. *That they may lay hold on eternal life*; not by way of merit, but as the free gift of God, which the riches of grace give a title to, and a fitneſs for; and which ſhall be laid hold upon, and enjoyed by all that ſeek the true riches. The *Alexandrian* copy, the *Vulgate Latin*, *Syriac*, and *Ethiopic* verſions read, *true life*; for the preſent life is rather a ſhow, an appearance of life, than life itſelf.

Ver. 20. *Keep that which is committed to thy truſt*, &c.] That is, the Goſpel; ſee ch. i. 11. which is a rich treaſure put into earthen veſſels, and ought to be kept pure and incorrupt, and faithfully diſpenſed, and diligently preſerved, that ſo it may be continued genuine and ſincere, and not be either adulterated and depraved, or be taken away by falſe teachers. And it may alſo include his gifts for the miniſtration of it, which were to be kept in uſe, and ſtirred up, and not neglected, but cultivated and improved to the advantage of the church, and of the intereſt of Chriſt: *avoiding prophane and vain bablings*; about the law, and circumciſion, and other things, which the falſe teachers inſiſted much on, and amuſed their hearers with; and which were vain, empty, uſeleſs, and unprofitable talk. Some copies, and ſo the *Vulgate Latin* verſion, read, *prophane newneſſes of words*; or new words, which ought not to be introduced, for they often bring in new doctrines: the form of ſound words, the wholeſome words, the words of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the words which the Holy Ghoſt teacheth, ſhould be held faſt; and eſpecially all new words ſhould be avoided, which are contrary to them, or in the leaſt weaken them, or detract from them. *And oppoſitions of ſcience falſly ſo called*; the falſe teachers boaſted of their ſcience and knowledge, but it was not true, ſolid, ſpiritual, and ſaving; it was not an experimental knowledge of the Goſpel; it was not the excellent knowledge of Chriſt, which has eternal life connected with it; it was merely notional and ſpeculative; it was idle, empty, and uſeleſs, mere pagan philoſophy, and vain deceit, upon which they formed antitheſes, or oppoſitions and objections to the truths of the Goſpel; and even oppoſed themſelves, and the word of God, as well as the faithful miniſters of it.

Ver. 21. *Which ſome profeſſing*, &c.] Pretending to be maſters of the above ſcience, boaſting and making great ſhow of it, and valuing themſelves upon it: *have erred concerning the faith*; have wandered from the way of truth, and gone into the path of error; have fallen from the doctrine of faith, and made ſhipwrack of it, and become entire apoſtates: from the danger attending vain jangling, the uſe of new words, the profeſſion of a falſe ſcience, and making objections from it againſt the truth, does the Apoſtle diſſuade *Timothy* from them, ſince they generally iſſue in apoſtacy. *Grace be with thee. Amen.* This the Apoſtle wiſhes to him, that he might be enabled to diſcharge every branch of his duty he had pointed to him in this Epiſtle, and to keep him from all evil, and every falſe way, and preſerve him ſafe to the kingdom and glory of God. And which he doubted not but would be his caſe, and therefore puts his *Amen* to it. The *Alexandrian* copy, and *Arabic* verſion read, *grace be with you. Amen.*

[t] Zohar in Num. fol. 91. 3. Vajikra Rabba, §. 34. fol. 173. 4. & Tzeror Hammor, fol. 15. 2.

[u] Raya Mehimna in Exod. fol. 48. 3. Vid. T. Bab. Megilla, fol. 11. 1.

[w] T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 11. 1.

The firſt to Timothy was written from Laodicea, which is the chiefeſt city of Phrygia Pacatiana. This laſt clauſe is left out in the *Alexandrian* copy, and *Syriac* verſion; and indeed, in the Apoſtle's time, *Phrygia* was not known by ſuch an appellation as *Pacatiana*, which was given it ſome years after by the *Romans*; and which ſhows, that the ſubſcriptions to the Epiſtles are not only of human authority, but of later date, at leaſt ſome of them. The *Arabic* verſion calls it the metropolis of *Phrygia*, and leaves out *Pacatiana*; and one of *Beza*'s manuſcripts, inſtead of *Laodicea*, reads *Macedonia*, from whence, as from *Philippi*, or ſome other city there, he thinks it was written; and ſeveral learned men have been of opinion, that it was written from *Philippi*.

AN EXPOSITION, &c.

The Second Epiſtle of PAUL the Apoſtle to *TIMOTHY*.

THAT this Epiſtle was written to *Timothy*, whilſt he was at *Epheſus*, where the Apoſtle in his former Epiſtle had deſired him to ſtay, is evident from his making mention of ſome perſons in it, who were *Epheſians*; as *Oneſiphorus*, whom he commends, and *Alexander* the copperſmith, of whom he complains: and that this Epiſtle was written by the Apoſtle, when he was at *Rome*, is no leſs evident; for he expreſly calls himſelf a priſoner, ch. i. 8. and ſpeaks of being then in trouble, and in bonds, ch. ii. 9, 10. and the perſons that ſend their ſalutations in it to *Timothy*, were *Romans*, ch. iv. 21. but at what time it was written, is not ſo certain: it ſeems by ch. iv. 7. that it was but a little time before his martyrdom; tho' thoſe words may only ſignify, that he was now very much on the decline of life, was now grown an old man, and in continual expectation of death, and was in a conſtant readineſs for it, come when it would; having faithfully diſcharged his duty, and his warfare being as good as accompliſhed, and his race almoſt run out; for he afterwards preſſes *Timothy* to come to him, and that before winter; and deſires him to bring with him his cloak, books, and parchments, which one would think he ſhould have little occaſion for, if juſt upon his martyrdom: beſides, he ſays he was delivered out of the mouth of the lion, that by him the preaching of the Goſpel might be fully known, and that all the *Gentiles* might hear it; and expreſſes his confidence, that he ſhould be again delivered, ver. 9, 13, 17, 18. And it looks as if this Epiſtle was written before the Epiſtles to the *Philippians*, *Coloſſians*, and *Philemon*, ſince it appears that *Timothy* did come to him at *Rome*, as here deſired, and is joined with the Apoſtle in thoſe Epiſtles. Some therefore have placed this Epiſtle in the year 58, or 59, about the fourth or fifth of *Nero*'s reign. The deſign of it is to ſtir up *Timothy* to the faithful and diligent diſcharge of his duty, as a miniſter of the Goſpel; to abide conſtantly by the truths of it, and to animate him to ſuffer patiently, chearfully, and courageouſly for the ſake of it; and to warn him againſt falſe teachers, and their errors, who were already riſen, and would afterwards ariſe, and be followed by ſuch who had itching ears, and could not bear ſound doctrine; but this ſhould be no diſcouragement to him in the proſecution of his work; and laſtly, to deſire his preſence with him at *Rome*, being now deſtitute of his ſeveral aſſiſtants.

CHAP. I.

IN this chapter, after the inſcription and ſalutation, the Apoſtle expreſſes his great affection for *Timothy*, and highly commends him; exhorts him to various things relating to his office, as a preacher of the Goſpel; and concludes with taking notice of the kindneſs ſhewn him by *Oneſiphorus*. The inſcription and ſalutation are in ver. 1, 2. and then follows the preface to the Epiſtle, in which the Apoſtle teſtifies his great love to *Timothy*, and commends him; by declaring his thankfulneſs to God, that he had reaſon always to remember him in his prayers; by his deſire to ſee him again, who had ſhed ſo many tears for him, that his joy might be filled; and by taking notice of his unfeigned faith, the ſame with that which had dwelt in his anceſtors, ver. 3, 4, 5. And then he proceeds to exhort him to the exerciſe and improvement of his miniſterial gift; to ſhew a fortitude of mind, and a manly ſpirit in the cauſe of Chriſt; and to ſuffer chearfully for the ſake of it, ver. 6, 7, 8. and in order to animate and encourage him to the ſame, he gives a ſummary of the Goſpel, as containing in it the great doctrines of ſalvation, and eternal life, according to the free grace of God through Jeſus Chriſt, ver. 9, 10. and obſerves, that he himſelf was appointed a preacher of it to the *Gentiles*, ver. 11. and inſtances in himſelf, as ſuffering for it, without being aſhamed; and as having a ſtrong confidence in Chriſt, as able to keep him, and what he had committed to him, ver. 12. and then returns to his exhortation to *Timothy* to hold faſt the Goſpel of Chriſt; to which he urges him from the conſideration of the nature and value of it, being a form of ſound words, and that famous good thing, and of the means and manner in which he came to the knowledge of it; and chiefly from its being committed to him by the Holy Ghoſt, that dwelt in him; and alſo becauſe of the general defection of the *Aſian* profeſſors from it, ver. 13, 14, 15. but he excepts one perſon, *Oneſiphorus* by name, whom he commends for his kindneſs to him both at *Epheſus* and at *Rome*; and therefore intreats of the Lord mercy, both for him and his houſe, at the great day, ver. 16, 17, 18.

Ver. 1. *Paul an Apoſtle of Jeſus Chriſt*, &c.] Not of men, nor by men, but by Jeſus Chriſt, from whom he was ſent; by whom he was qualified; in whoſe name he came, and miniſtred; and whom he preached. Of his name *Paul*, and of his office, as an Apoſtle, ſee the note on *Rom.* i. 1. into which office he came *by the will of God*; not by the will of man, no not of the beſt of men, of *James*, *Cephas*, or *John*, or any of the other Apoſtles; nor by his own will, he did not thruſt himſelf into this office, or take this honour upon himſelf; nor was it owing to any merits of his, which he always diſclaims, but to the will and grace of God; it was by the ſecret determining will of God, that he was from all eternity ſeparated unto the Goſpel of Chriſt; and it was by the revealed will of God to the church, that he, with *Barnabas*, was ſet apart to the miniſtry of the word; ſee *Rom.* i. 1. *Acts* xiii. 2. *According to the promiſe of life which is in Chriſt Jeſus*; or *with reſpect unto it:* this points at the ſum and ſubſtance, or ſubject-matter, and end of his Apoſtleſhip, for which this grace was given to him, which was to publiſh the free promiſe of life and ſalvation by Jeſus Chriſt. By *life* here is meant, not this corporal life, which, and a continuation of it, were promiſed in the covenant of works, on condition of man's obedience to it; but eternal life, the promiſe of which is a free promiſe made by God, of his own free ſovereign will and pleaſure, in the covenant of grace, from everlaſting; and is an abſolute and unconditional one, not at all depending upon the works of the law, or obedience to it; ſee *Rom.* iv. 14, 16. *Gal.* iii. 18. and this promiſe is *in Chriſt*, in whom all the promiſes are yea and amen; for it was made before the world began, *Tit.* i. 2. when the perſons on whoſe account it was made, were not in actual being; but Chriſt, their head and repreſentative, then exiſted; and to him it was given, and into his hands was it put for them, where it is ſure to all the ſeed; and not only the promiſe, but the life itſelf is in him, and which is here intended. Chriſt, as mediator, aſked it of his Father for all his people, and he gave it to him, where it is hid ſafe and ſecure. Chriſt is the prince or author of life; he is the procuring cauſe of it; he was ſent, and came, that his ſheep might have it; he gave his fleſh, his human nature for it; and by his ſufferings and death removed all obſtructions which ſin had thrown in the way, and opened the way for their enjoyment of it; and he is the giver of it to as many as the Father has given him; nor is it to be had in any other way, or of any other, but of him; and it lies in the knowledge of him, communion with him, and conformity to him. Now it is the buſineſs of Goſpel-miniſters, not to direct perſons to work for life, or to ſeek to obtain eternal life by their own works of righteouſneſs, but to hold forth the word of life, or to ſhew men the way of life and ſalvation by Chriſt alone.

Ver. 2. *To Timothy, my dearly beloved ſon*, &c.] Not in a natural, but in a ſpiritual ſenſe; and not on account of his being an inſtrument of his converſion, but by reaſon of that inſtruction in the doctrines of the Goſpel which he gave him, it being uſual to call diſciples children; and he calls him ſo, becauſe as a ſon, he being young in years, ſerved with him, and under him, as a father, in the Goſpel of Chriſt; for whom he had a very great affection, on account of his having been a companion with him in his travels, and very uſeful to him in the miniſtry, and becauſe of his ſingular and eminent gifts, great grace, religion, and holineſs: *Grace, mercy, and peace*, &c. ſee the note on 1 *Tim.* i. 2.

Ver. 3. *I thank God*, &c.] After the inſcription and ſalutation follows the preface to the Epiſtle; which contains a thankſgiving to God upon *Timothy*'s account, and has a tendency to engage his attention to what he was about to write to him in the body of the Epiſtle. God is the object of praiſe and thankſgiving, both as the God of nature and providence, and as the God of all grace; for every good thing comes from him; and therefore he ought to have the glory of it; nor ſhould any glory, as tho' they had not received it: and he is here deſcribed, as follows, *whom I ſerve from my forefathers with pure conſcience*; the Apoſtle ſerved God in the precepts of the law, as in the hands of Chriſt, and as written upon his heart by the Spirit of God, in which he delighted after the inward man, and which he ſerved with his regenerated mind; and alſo in the preaching of the Goſpel of Chriſt, in which he was very diligent and laborious, faithful and ſucceſsful: and this God, whom he ſerved, was the God of his *forefathers*, of *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, and *Jacob*, and of *Benjamin*, of whoſe tribe he was, and alſo of his more immediate anceſtors. The *Ethiopic* verſion renders it, *from my original*; for tho' he preached the Goſpel of Chriſt, and aſſerted the abrogation of the ceremonial law, yet he worſhipped the one, true, and living God, the God of *Iſrael*, and was not an apoſtate from the true religion, as his enemies would inſinuate: and this ſervice of his was performed with a *pure conſcience:* every man has a conſcience, but the conſcience of every natural man is defiled with ſin; and that is only a pure one, which is ſprinkled and purged with the blood of Chriſt; and whereby a perſon is only fitted to ſerve the living God, without the incumbrance of dead works, and ſlaviſh fear, and with faith and chearfulneſs; and ſuch a conſcience the Apoſtle had, and with ſuch an one he ſerved God. For this refers not to his ſerving of God, and to his conſcience, whilſt a *Phariſee* and a perſecutor; for however moral was his conduct and converſation then, and with what ſincerity and uprightneſs ſoever he behaved, his conſcience was not a pure one. He goes on to obſerve what he thanked God for, *that without ceaſing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day*; that God had laid him upon his heart, and that he had ſuch reaſon to remember him at the throne of grace continually. We learn from hence, that the Apoſtle prayed conſtantly night and day, and if ſo great a man as he ſtood in need of continual prayer, much more we; and that in his prayers he was not unmindful of his friends, tho' at a diſtance from him; and in both theſe he is to be imitated: it becomes us to pray without ceaſing, to pray always, and not faint and give out, to pray every day and night; and to pray for others as well as for ourſelves, for all the ſaints, yea, for our enemies, as well as for our friends.

Ver. 4. *Greatly deſiring to ſee thee*, &c.] In his former Epiſtle he had deſired him to ſtay at *Epheſus*, there being ſome work for him to do, which made it neceſſary he ſhould continue; but now having anſwered the Apoſtle's purpoſe, and he ſtanding in need of him at *Rome*, being without any aſſiſtant there, ſome having left him, and others were left by him in other places, and others were ſent by him elſewhere; and it having been ſome time ſince he ſaw *Timothy*, he longed for a ſight of him: *being mindful of thy tears*; ſhed either at the afflictions and ſufferings of the Apoſtle, of which *Timothy*, being his companion, was an eye-witneſs, and he being of a truly chriſtian ſympathizing ſpirit, wept with thoſe that wept; or at their parting from each other, as in *Acts* xx. 37, 38. *that I may be filled with joy*; at the ſight of him, and not at the remembrance of his tears; for the laſt clauſe is to be read in a parentheſis, and theſe words ſtand not connected with that, but with the preceding part of the text. The Apoſtle intimates, that a ſight of his dearly beloved ſon *Timothy* would fill him with joy amidſt all his troubles and afflictions he endured for the Goſpel: this is an inſtance of hearty, ſincere, and ſtrong affection.

Ver. 5. *When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee*, &c.] This cauſed him to give thanks to God for it, whoſe gift it is, and made him the more deſirous of ſeeing one, who was a true believer, and an *Iſraelite* indeed. This is to be underſtood of the grace of faith, which was implanted in the heart of *Timothy*, by the Spirit of God, and was genuine and ſincere; he believed with the heart unto righteouſneſs; his faith worked by love to God, and Chriſt, and to his people, and was attended with good works: *which dwelt firſt in thy grandmother Lois*; who was his grandmother, not by his father's ſide, who was a *Greek*, but by his mother's ſide; and ſo the *Syriac* verſion renders it, *thy mother's mother*; who, tho' ſhe might not know that the Meſſiah was come in the fleſh, and that Jeſus of *Nazareth* was he, yet believed in the Meſſiah to come, and died in the faith of it, and in a dependance upon righteouſneſs and ſalvation by him; and ſo her faith was of the ſame kind with *Timothy*'s; and which dwelt in her, and continued with her to the laſt: *and thy mother Eunice*; who was a *Jeweſs*, and a believer in Chriſt, *Acts* xvi. 1. tho' her name is a *Greek* one, and ſo is her mother's name; hers ſignifies *good victory*, and is the name of one of the *Nereides*, the daughters of *Oceanus* [a]; and her mother's ſignifies *better*, or *more excellent*. She lived, it ſeems, if her mother did not, to know that Chriſt was come, and that *Jeſus*, the ſon of *Mary*, was he; and ſhe believed in him for righteouſneſs, life, and ſalvation; and in her this faith dwelt and abode to the end. *And I am perſuaded that in thee alſo*; not only that faith was in him, and that that was unfeigned, but that it alſo dwelt, remained, and would continue with him to the end of life; for true faith is an abiding grace, it is a gift of God, that is irrevocable, and without repentance: Chriſt is the author and finiſher of it, and prays that it fail not, whoſe prayers are always heard: it is begun, carried on, and performed by the power of God, and has ſalvation inſeparably connected with it. Now when the ſame faith is ſaid to dwell, firſt in his grandmother, and in his mother, and in him, this is not to be underſtood as if this grace was conveyed from one to another by natural generation; for grace comes not that way, only ſin; men are not born of blood, but of God; but the ſenſe is, that the ſame like precious faith was obtained by one, as by another. This was a rich family-mercy, and deſerved ſpecial notice, as being a thing uncommon, and required a particular thankſgiving; and is deſigned as a motive and encouragement to ſtir up *Timothy* to the exerciſe of that grace, and every other gift, God had beſtowed upon him, as in the following verſe.

Ver. 6. *Wherefore I put thee in remembrance*, &c.] Becauſe of the great affection the Apoſtle had for *Timothy*, and becauſe of that confidence he had of him, that unfeigned faith dwelt in him, as well as becauſe this had had a place in his relations before him; he therefore acts the part of a kind monitor to him, and upon theſe conſiderations, doubts not of ſucceeding in his following admonition: *that thou ſtir up the gift of God which is in thee*; by *the gift* is meant his miniſterial gift; for what qualifies men for the miniſtry, is not any thing natural in them, nor acquired by them, but what is given unto them, and that of God: and this was *in* him; it continued with him; it was not loſt by him, nor taken from him, as gifts may be, when they are not uſed; and yet it ſeems as if there was ſome decline, ſome backwardneſs and indifference as to the exerciſe of it: he might be too remiſs, negligent, and forgetful of it; wherefore the Apoſtle puts him in mind to *ſtir* it up: there is in the word uſed a metaphor taken from coals of fire covered with aſhes, as if almoſt extinct, and need to be blown up into a flame, and a very apt one it is; ſince the gifts of the Spirit, eſpecially his extraordinary ones, ſuch as miniſters in thoſe times had, are compared to fire; ſee *Matt.* iii. 11. *Acts* ii. 3. and theſe may be re-inflamed or increaſed, when they ſeem on the decline, by reading, meditation, prayer, and the frequent exerciſe of them. Agreeable to this the *Arabic* verſion renders it, *that thou kindle the fire of the gift of God which is in thee*; and the rather the Apoſtle took this freedom with *Timothy*, not only becauſe of his ſuperior age and office, but becauſe this gift was thro' his means: *by the putting on of my hands*; tho' not alone, but with the reſt of the preſbytery; ſee the note on 1 *Tim.* iv. 14.

Ver. 7. *For God hath not given us the ſpirit of fear*, &c.] A puſillanimous, cowardly ſpirit, ſo as to be afraid of men or devils, of what they will ſay or do; and ſo as to be diſcouraged in, ſink under, or be deterred from the work of the Lord, the preaching of the Goſpel, oppoſing the errors of falſe teachers, and reproving men for their ſins, and doing other parts of the miniſterial function; ſuch a ſpirit is not from God, and ſuch a fear brings a ſnare: *but of power*; and ſuch is the Spirit of God, who is called *power from on high*, *Luke* xxiv. 49. by which the minds of Chriſt's ſervants are fortified againſt reproaches and perſecutions for his ſake, and are ſtrengthened to reſiſt ſatan's temptations, to endure hardneſs as good ſoldiers of Chriſt, to quit themſelves like men, in oppoſition to falſe teachers, and to do the will and work of God: *and of love*; to God, and Chriſt, and his church, and which is a fruit of the holy Spirit; and ſuch who have it, ſeek not their own eaſe and credit, but the glory of God, the intereſt of Chriſt, and the good of ſouls; and having ſuch a ſpirit, and fired with ſuch love, they are not eaſily intimidated by the adverſary: *and of a ſound mind*; in the principles and doctrines of the Goſpel; and which ſhows itſelf in a prudent conduct and behaviour; in ſobriety, moderation, temperance, purity, and honeſty; all which may be ſignified by the word

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[a] Heſiod. Theogonia, Apollodorus de Deor. Orig. l. 1. p. 5. Vid. Theocrit. Idyll. 13.

here uſed: and thoſe who have ſuch diſpoſitions and qualities from God, will not eaſily give way to the enemies of religion, or decline their duty for fear of them.

Ver. 8. *Be not thou therefore aſhamed of the teſtimony of our Lord,* &c.] Either that teſtimony which Chriſt bore perſonally by his doctrine and miracles, and by his ſufferings and death; or rather the Goſpel ſo called, becauſe it comes from Chriſt, and becauſe it is a teſtimony concerning him; concerning his perſon, his offices, his righteouſneſs, blood, ſacrifice, and ſatisfaction; concerning his obedience, ſufferings, death, reſurrection, aſcenſion, ſeſſion at God's right hand, interceſſion for his people, and ſecond coming to judgment; and concerning life and ſalvation by him: and which no preacher or profeſſor of Chriſt has reaſon to be aſhamed of, it being ſo true in itſelf, ſo great, ſo glorious, and ſo uſeful; and whoever is, Chriſt will be aſhamed of him another day: *nor of me his priſoner*; for *Paul* was now a priſoner at *Rome*, but not for any capital crime, or for any immorality, but for the ſake of Chriſt, and for preaching his Goſpel; wherefore none of his friends had any reaſon to be aſhamed of him; he was ſuffering in a glorious cauſe, and ſetting a noble example to others; it looks as if *Timothy* was ſomewhat blame-worthy in this reſpect. *But be thou partaker of the afflictions of the Goſpel*; the Goſpel is here repreſented as a perſon ſuffering afflictions, and the Apoſtle would have *Timothy* ſuffer them as that did, and along with it; he means thoſe afflictions which come upon men for preaching and profeſſing the Goſpel; for tho' the Goſpel is a Goſpel of peace, yet thro' the corruption and depravity of men, it brings a ſword, diviſion, and trouble. Tribulation ariſes on account of it; and this ſhould be endured patiently, and conſtantly, for the ſake of it: *according to the power of God*; which is only ſufficient to enable perſons to bear them; and is mentioned for the encouragement of *Timothy* and others, to endure them chearfully.

Ver. 9. *Who hath ſaved us, and called* us, *&c.*] And therefore ſhould not be aſhamed of his Goſpel, but ſhould readily partake of the afflictions of it, depending on his power to ſupport under them. There is a ſalvation previous to vocation: there is a temporal ſalvation; a ſpecial providence attends the elect of God, as ſoon as born; God's viſitation in a very ſpecial manner preſerves their ſpirits; they are kept from many imminent dangers, and ſome of them from the groſſer immoralities of life; and there is a chain of providences, as the fixing of their habitations, bringing to ſuch a place, and under ſuch a miniſtry, with various other things, ways, and methods, which lead on to effectual vocation: and there is a preſervation of them in Chriſt Jeſus, antecedent to vocation, *Jude* 1. God had a mind to ſave ſome; he pitched on his own Son to be the ſaviour of them; he put thoſe perſons into his hands, where they are ſafely preſerved; ſo as not to be damned, and everlaſtingly periſh, notwithſtanding their fall in *Adam*, their original corruption, and actual tranſgreſſions, until called by grace: yea, that ſpiritual and eternal ſalvation, which is by Jeſus Chriſt, is before calling; this was reſolved upon from eternity; a council of peace was formed; a covenant of grace was made; a promiſe of life given; perſons were fixed upon to be ſaved; a ſaviour was appointed, and bleſſings of grace were put into his hands; and all according to an eternal purpoſe. Salvation was not only reſolved upon, but the ſcheme of it was contrived from eternity, in a way agreeable to all the divine perfections, in which ſatan is moſt mortified, the creature abaſed, and the elect effectually ſaved; nay, ſalvation is obtained before calling, for Chriſt being called to this work, and having undertook it, was in the fulneſs of time ſent to effect it, and is become the author of it: the thing is done, and all that remain are the application of it, which is in effectual vocation, and the full poſſeſſion of it, which will be in heaven. The calling here ſpoken of is not to an office, nor a mere call by the external miniſtry of the word, but a call by ſpecial grace, to ſpecial privileges, to grace and glory; and is an high and heavenly one, and is here called holy; for it follows, *with an holy calling*. The *Vulgate Latin* and *Ethiopic* verſions read, *with his holy calling*: the author of it is holy; it is a call to holineſs, and the means of it are holy; and in it perſons have principles of grace and holineſs implanted in them; and are influenced to live holy lives and converſations: *not according to our works*; neither ſalvation nor vocation are according to the works of men: not ſalvation; works are not the moving cauſe of it, but the free love and favour of God; nor the procuring cauſe of it, but the Lord Jeſus Chriſt; nor the adjuvant or helping cauſe of it, for his own arm brought ſalvation alone: nor vocation; which muſt be either according to works before, or after; not according to works before calling, for ſuch are not properly good works, being deſtitute of faith in Chriſt, and proceeding neither from a right principle, nor to a right end; not according to works after calling, for as they are after it, they are the fruits of calling grace, and cannot be the cauſe, or rule, and meaſure of it: *but according to his own purpoſe and grace*; ſalvation is according to both: it is according to the purpoſe of God; God reſolved upon the ſalvation of ſome; in purſuance of this reſolution, he ſet up Chriſt as the mediator; and it being neceſſary that he ſhould be man, this was agreed to, and a body was prepared him; the time of his coming was fixed, called the fulneſs of time; and his ſufferings and death, with all the circumſtances of them, were determined by God. And it is according to grace; the reſolution for it, and the contrivance of it are owing to the grace of God; and which alſo appears in the making of a covenant; in ſetting up Chriſt as the mediator of it; in the miſſion of him into this world; and in all the parts and branches of ſalvation: in the choice of perſons to it; in the redemption of them by Chriſt; in their juſtification by his righteouſneſs; in the pardon of their ſins thro' his blood; in their adoption, regeneration, ſanctification, and eternal glory; and the end of it is the glory of the grace of God. Vocation is alſo according to both the purpoſe and grace of God: it is according to his purpoſe; the perſons called are fixed upon by him; whom he predeſtinates he calls; none are called, but whom God purpoſed to call; and for their calling no other reaſon can be aſſigned, but the ſovereign will of God, nor can any other reaſon be given, why others are not called; the time of their vocation is fixed in the decrees of God; and the place where, and means whereby, and occaſion whereof, all are predetermined by him: and this is alſo according to grace; the author of it is the God of all grace; and in it is made the firſt diſcovery of grace to ſinners; nothing out of God could move him to do it, and ſo it is ſovereign grace; it is of ſome men, and not all, and ſo is diſtinguiſhing grace; it is of ſinners, and ſo is free grace; and it is both to grace and glory, and ſo is rich grace: and it is according to grace *which* *was given us in Chriſt Jeſus before the World began*; it is a gift, and a free gift, not at all depending upon any conditions in the creature, and entirely proceeding from the ſovereign will of God; and it was a gift from eternity; there was not only a purpoſe of grace in God's heart, and a promiſe of it ſo early, but there was a real donation of it in eternity: and tho' thoſe to whom it was given, did not then perſonally exiſt, yet Chriſt did, and he exiſted as a covenant-head and repreſentative of his people; and they were in him, as members of him, as repreſented by him, being united to him; and this grace was given to him for them, and to them in him; in whom they were choſen, and in whom they were bleſſed with all ſpiritual bleſſings. The *Ethiopic* verſion reads, *in Chriſt Jeſus, who before the world* was; but without any foundation.

Ver. 10. *But is now made manifeſt by the appearing of our ſaviour Jeſus Chriſt*, &c.] The grace, according to which the elect of God are ſaved and called, tho' it was given to them in Chriſt, before the world was, yet lay hid in the heart of God; in his thoughts, council and covenant; and in Jeſus Chriſt; and in the types, ſhadows, ſacrifices, prophecies, and promiſes of the Old Teſtament; but is now made manifeſt in the clearneſs, freeneſs and abundance of it by the appearance of Chriſt, as a ſaviour in human nature; who is come full of grace and truth, and through whom there is a plentiful exhibition of it to the ſons of men: *who hath aboliſhed death*; the law of ſin and death, which is the cauſe of death; and has deſtroyed him which has the power of it, the devil; he has aboliſhed corporal death with regard to his people, as a penal evil, he has took away its ſting, and removed its curſe, and made it a bleſſing to them; and he has utterly, with reſpect to them, aboliſhed the ſecond death, ſo as that it ſhall have no power over them, or they ever be hurt by it; all which he did by dying, and riſing again: for tho' he died, yet he continued not under the power of death; but roſe again and triumphed over it, as having got the victory of it; and the keys of it are in his hand: *and hath brought life and immortality to light through the goſpel.* Chriſt was the firſt that roſe again from the dead to an immortal life; the path of life was firſt ſhewn to him, and brought to light by him; and tho' the doctrine of the reſurrection of the dead was known by the Old Teſtament ſaints, yet not ſo clearly as it is now revealed in the Goſpel; and in which is ſo fully atteſted the reſurrection of Chriſt, and of many of the ſaints with him, as well as the general reſurrection at the laſt day: and beſides eternal life, which is the free gift of God, lay hid in his purpoſe, promiſe, and covenant, and in his Son Jeſus Chriſt, into whoſe hands it was put; and which he has brought to light in a more clear manner, than ever it was before; by his appearance in human nature, by his perſonal miniſtry, by his death and reſurrection from the dead, and through the Goſpel, as preached by his miniſters; which gives an account of the nature of it, ſhews the way unto it, and points out and deſcribes the perſons that ſhall enjoy it.

Ver. 11. *Whereunto I am appointed a preacher*, &c.] Both from eternity, in the counſel and purpoſe of God, *Acts* ix. 15. and in time, by the church at *Antioch*, and the prophets in it, according to the expreſs order of the Holy Ghoſt, *Act.* xiii. 2. And if ever there was a preacher of the Goſpel, *Paul* was one; he preached purely, powerfully, publickly, conſtantly, boldly, and with all faithfulneſs and integrity: *and an Apoſtle*; that is of the *Gentiles*, as follows, and as he elſewhere ſtiles himſelf, *Rom.* xi. 13. for it does not run ſo ſmooth and eaſy to connect this with the word, Goſpel. In ver. 1. he is called the Apoſtle of Jeſus Chriſt, becauſe he was ſent by him; and here the Apoſtle of the *Gentiles*, becauſe he was ſent to them; and this by the ſame appointment, by which he became a preacher: *and a teacher of the Gentiles*; tho' all the Apoſtles, by their commiſſion, were ſent to teach all nations, or the *Gentiles* in the ſeveral parts of the world, as well as *Jews*; yet the Apoſtle was eminently a teacher of them; his work chiefly lay among them; the Goſpel of the uncircumciſion, or the miniſtration of the Goſpel to the uncircumciſed *Gentiles*, was committed to him; and he was a teacher of them in faith and verity, as in 1 *Tim.* ii. 7. The *Alexandrian* copy only reads, *and a teacher.*

Ver. 12. *For the which cauſe I alſo ſuffer theſe things*, &c.] The preſent impriſonment and bonds in which he now was; theſe, with all the indignities, reproaches, diſtreſſes and perſecutions, came upon him, for the ſake of his being a preacher of the Goſpel; and particularly for his being a teacher of the *Gentiles*: the *Jews* hated him, and perſecuted him, becauſe he preached the Goſpel, and the more becauſe he preached it to the *Gentiles*, that they might be ſaved; and the unbelieving *Gentiles* were ſtirred up againſt him, for introducing a new religion among them, to the deſtruction of their idolatry and ſuperſtition: and theſe ſufferings which he endured were many; and he was appointed to them, as well as to the Goſpel, which he preached. *Nevertheleſs I am not aſhamed*; neither of the Goſpel, and the truths and ordinances of it, for which he ſuffered; but he continued to own and confeſs it, conſtantly, and to preach it boldly; none of theſe things moved him from it: nor of the ſufferings he endured, for the ſake of it; ſince they were not for murder, or theft, or ſedition, or any enormity whatever, but in a good cauſe; wherefore he was ſo far from being aſhamed of them, that he took pleaſure in them, and gloried of them. Nor was he aſhamed of Chriſt, whoſe Goſpel he preached, and for whom he ſuffered; nor of his faith and hope in him. For it follows, *for I know whom I have believed.* A ſpiritual knowledge of Chriſt is neceſſary to faith in him: an unknown Chriſt cannot be the object of faith, tho' an unſeen Chriſt, as to bodily ſight, may be, and is. Knowledge and faith go together: they that truly know Chriſt, believe in him, and the more they know him, the more ſtrongly do they believe in him: ſuch who ſpiritually and ſavingly know Chriſt, have ſeen the glories of his perſon, and the fullneſs of his grace; and they approve of him, as their ſaviour, being every way ſuitable to them, and diſapprove of all others; they love him above all others, and with all their hearts; and they put their truſt in him, and truſt him with all they have; and they know whom they truſt, what an able, willing, ſuitable, and compleat ſaviour he is. This knowledge which they have of him, is not from themſelves, but from the Father, who reveals him to them, and in them; and from himſelf, who gives them an underſtanding that they may know him; and from the ſpirit of wiſdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: and be it more or leſs, it is practical, and leads to the diſcharge of duty, from a principle of love to Chriſt; and is of a ſoul-humbling nature, and appropriates Chriſt to a man's ſelf; and has always ſome degree of certainty in it; and tho' it is imperfect, it is progreſſive; and the leaſt meaſure of it is ſaving, and has eternal life connected with it: and that faith which accompanies it, and terminates on the object known, is the grace, by which a man ſees Chriſt in the riches of his grace; goes to him in a ſenſe of need of him; lays hold upon him as a ſaviour; receives and embraces him; commits its all unto him; truſts him with all; leans and lives upon him, and walks on in him till it receives the end of faith, even eternal ſalvation. *And I am perſuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him againſt that day.* By that which he had committed to him, is meant, not the great treaſure of his labours and ſufferings for Chriſt, as if he had depoſited theſe in Chriſt's hands, in order to be brought forth at the great day of account to his advantage; for tho' his labours and ſufferings were many, yet he always aſcribed the ſtrength by which he endured them, to the grace of God; and he knew they were not worthy to be compared, nor made mention of, with the glory that was to be revealed in him. Rather this may be underſtood of the ſouls of thoſe he had been inſtrumental in the converting of, whom he had commended to Chriſt, hoping to meet them as his joy and crown of rejoicing another day; tho' it ſeems beſt of all to interpret it either of his natural life, the care of which he had committed to Chriſt, and which he knew he was able to preſerve, and would preſerve for uſefulneſs until the day appointed for his death; or rather his precious and immortal ſoul, and the eternal welfare and ſalvation of it: and the act of committing it to Chriſt, deſigns his giving himſelf to him, leaving himſelf with him, truſting in him for eternal life and ſalvation, believing he was able to ſave him to the uttermoſt; even unto the day of death, when he hoped to be with him, which is far better than to be in this world; and unto the day of the reſurrection, when both ſoul and body will be glorified with him; and to the day of judgment, when the crown of righteouſneſs will be received from his hands. And what might induce the Apoſtle, and ſo any other believer, to conclude the ability of Chriſt to keep the ſouls of thoſe that are committed to him, are, his proper deity, he having all the fulneſs of the godhead, or the perfections of deity dwelling in him; his being the creator and upholder of all things; his having accompliſhed the great work of redemption and ſalvation, by his own arm; his mediatorial fullneſs of grace and power; and his being truſted by his father with all the perſons, grace and glory of the elect, to whom he has been faithful. And now the conſideration of all this, as it was a ſupport to the Apoſtle, under all his afflictions, and ſufferings for the goſpel, and in a view of death itſelf, ſo it may be, as it often has been, a relief to believers, under all the ſorrows of this life, and in a proſpect of death and eternity. *Philo* the *Jew* [b] ſpeaks in like manner, as the Apoſtle here of παρακαταθηκη ψυχης, *the depoſitum of the ſoul*; tho' he knew not where to commit it for ſafety, as the Apoſtle did, and every true believer does.

Ver. 13. *Hold faſt the form of ſound words,* &c.] By *words* are meant, not mere words, but doctrines; for the ſervants of the Lord ſhould not ſtrive about words, to no profit, or be too tenacious of them. Indeed when words have long obtained, and have been very uſeful to convey juſt ideas of truth to the mind, they are not to be eaſily parted with, tho' they are not ſyllabically expreſſed in ſcripture, unleſs other and better words can be ſubſtituted in their room; and eſpecially they are to be tenaciouſly abode by, when the apparent deſign by dropping or changing them is, to ſet aſide the truths ſignified by them; ſuch as, trinity, unity, eſſence, perſon, imputed righteouſneſs, ſatisfaction, &c. But here words deſign doctrines, the words of faith and good doctrine, the wholeſome words of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; and which are ſaid to be *ſound*, in oppoſition to the words and doctrines of falſe teachers, which are corrupt and unſound, and are pernicious, and eat as do a canker; and becauſe they are ſo in themſelves; they are not only ſweet and pleaſant, but ſalutary and nouriſhing; they are milk for babes, and meat for ſtrong men; they are food for faith, and nouriſh up to eternal life. The *form* of them either intends the manner of teaching them, which ſhould be in apt and acceptable words, plain and eaſy to be underſtood, and not with the enticing words of mens wiſdom; or a brief ſummary, a compendium of Goſpel truth. It was uſual with both *Jews* and Chriſtians to reduce the principles of their religion into a narrow compaſs, into a ſhort form, or Breviary. The *Jew* had his *form of knowledge, and of the truth in the law,* Rom. ii. 20. which was a rule to himſelf, and an inſtruction to others; and ſuch a form, or *Jewiſh* creed, may be ſeen in *Heb.* vi. 1, 2. The Apoſtle *Paul* gives a ſummary of the Goſpel, which he preached, and which he reduces to two heads; repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, *Acts* xx. 20. and an excellent compendium and abridgment of the Goſpel, and a glorious form of ſound words, we have in *Rom.* viii. 29, 30. and ſuch an one, *Timothy* had heard and received from the Apoſtle, as a *pattern* for him hereafter to preach by, as this word ſignifies; and as it is rendred in 1 *Tim.* i. 16. There ſeems to be an alluſion to painters, who firſt make their outlines, and take a rough-draught before they lay on their colours and beautiful ſtrokes; and which rough-draught and firſt lines are the rule and pattern of their after-work; and which they never exceed, but keep within the compaſs of: ſo there is a ſett of Goſpel-truths, which may be called the analogy or proportion of faith, which are a rule and pattern, as for hearers to judge by, ſo for miniſters to preach according to, 1 *Tim.* vi. 3. *Gal.* i. 8, 9. 2 *John* 9. 10. And ſuch a form or pattern, was the Apoſtle's doctrine to *Timothy*, and which he full well knew: and this form includes the doctrines concerning the trinity of perſons in the Godhead, Father, Son, and Spirit, and the proper deity and diſtinct perſonality of each of them; concerning the everlaſting love of the three perſons to the elect, the covenant of grace, and the tranſactions in it relating to them; their perſonal and eternal election in Chriſt, and his ſuretyſhip engagements for them; the ſtate and condition of men by the fall, and through ſin, as that *Adam*'s ſin is imputed to all his poſterity, and a corrupt nature propagated from him, and that man is altogether impure, and intirely impotent to all that is ſpiritually good; as alſo ſuch doctrines as concern particular redemption by Chriſt, ſatisfaction for ſin by his ſacrifice, free and full pardon by his blood, and juſtification by his imputed righteouſneſs; regeneration and ſanctification by the powerful and efficacious grace of the ſpirit of God; and the final perſeverance of the ſaints to eternal glory, as the free gift of God. And this is a form never to be departed from, but to be *held faſt*, as *Timothy* is exhorted; which ſuppoſes that he had it, as he had, not only in his head, but in his heart; and that there was danger of dropping it through the temptations that ſurrounded him, the reproach and perſecution the Goſpel lay under, and through the ſlight of falſe teachers, who lay in weight to deceive, and to take every opportunity of wringing it out of his hands; and therefore it became him, as he had it, not only to hold it forth, and publiſh it, but to hold it faſt, in oppoſition to any wavering about it, or cowardice in it, or departure from it in any degree. And the argument to hold it faſt follows, *which thou haſt heard of me*; both in private converſation, and in the public miniſtry of the word; and which the Apoſtle had not from men, but by the revelation of Chriſt; and therefore was to be depended upon, and to be abode by, or held faſt, in the manner next directed to: *in faith and love which is in Chriſt Jeſus*; in the exerciſe of faith, and from a principle of love; which two graces always go together, and have Chriſt, as here, for their object: tho' this clauſe may be connected with the word *heard*, and the ſenſe be, either that *Timothy* had heard *Paul* preach theſe ſound doctrines with great faith and faithfulneſs, and with much fervency and affection to Chriſt, and the ſouls of men; or *Timothy* had heard them himſelf, and embraced and mixed them with faith, and received them in love: or it may be read in connexion with *the form of ſound words*; the ſum of which is faith in Chriſt, and love to him; the Goſpel is the doctrine of faith; and it puts men on diſcharging their duty from love to Chriſt.

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[b] Quis rer. Divin. Hæres, p. 498, 499.

Ver. 14. *That good thing which was committed to thee*, &c.] By which he means either his miniſterial work and office, which is a good work, the diſpenſation of which was committed to him, and which it became him ſo to obſerve, as that the miniſtry might not be blamed; or elſe the good and excellent gifts of the ſpirit, which qualified him for the diſcharge of that work, and which were not to be neglected, but to be ſtirred up, exerciſed, and improved, leſt they ſhould be loſt, or took away; or rather the Goſpel, which was committed to his truſt, to preach: and this may be called a good thing, from the author of it, who is good, whence it is named the Goſpel of God, and the Goſpel of Chriſt; and from the matter of it, it conſiſts of good things come by Chriſt, the High-prieſt, and which it publiſhes, ſuch as peace, pardon, righteouſneſs, and eternal ſalvation by him; and from the end and uſe of it, it being both for the glory of God, the magnifying the riches of his grace, and the exaltation of Chriſt; and alſo is the power of God in regeneration and ſanctification unto ſalvation to every one that believes. And it being ſaid to be *committed* to *Timothy*, denotes the excellency of it; that it is a treaſure, as indeed it is a rich one, it contains the riches of grace, even the unſearchable riches of Chriſt, and is more valuable than thouſands of gold and ſilver; and that it is a truſt, and requires faithfulneſs in miniſters, who are the ſtewards of it; and that it is to be accounted for. Wherefore great care ſhould be had in diſpenſing and keeping it: *keep by the Holy Ghoſt*. It ſhould be kept pure and uncorrupt, free from all the adulterations and mixtures of men; and ſafe and ſound, that it be not ſnatched away from the churches by falſe teachers. And whereas the Apoſtle knew, that neither *Timothy*, nor any other, were ſufficient of themſelves, for theſe things, he directs to the keeping of it by the Holy Ghoſt; who makes men overſeers of churches, beſtows gifts upon them, to fit them for their work, and leads them into all the truths of the Goſpel; and under his influence and teachings, and by the aſſiſtance of his grace, are they enabled to diſcharge their truſt, abide by the Goſpel, and perſevere in the miniſtration of it to the end. *Which dwelleth in us*; in all believers, who are the temples of the Holy Ghoſt; and in all the churches, which are built up by him, an habitation for God; and in all the miniſters of the word, to direct, inſtruct, ſupport, and uphold them; and who dwells with them, and continues in them, and that for ever, *John* xiv. 16, 17.

Ver. 15. *This thou knoweſt, that all they which are in Aſia*, &c.] Either thoſe that followed the Apoſtle from *Aſia* to *Rome*; or who came from thence thither, upon buſineſs, and were upon the ſpot when the Apoſtle was in his greateſt troubles, and yet all forſook him and no man ſtood by him; or elſe the churches and miniſters in *Aſia*, that is, a great number of them; for it cannot be ſaid of every miniſter and church, and of all the members of churches there, what follows, *be turned away from me*; were aſhamed of him, becauſe of his chain, and deſpiſed him under his afflictions, and had him in abhorrence and contempt, and revolted from his doctrine; tho' the defection was very general, and the Apoſtle appeals to *Timothy* for the truth of it, as a fact well known to him: *this thou knoweſt*; *Timothy* being at *Epheſus*, which was in *Aſia*; and ſince there was ſo great an apoſtacy in the country, where he was, the above exhortations were very ſeaſonable, to hold faſt the form of ſound words, and keep the good thing committed to him; ſeeing ſo many were falling off from the truth of the Goſpel: *of whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes*; who very likely were miniſters of the word, and who had ſhone for a while, but were now ſtars fallen from heaven, had erred from the faith, and were become apoſtates, and proved men of corrupt minds, and deceivers of the people; and it may be that theſe were more open and infamous, than ſome others, or might be more known to *Timothy*, and therefore are particularly mentioned. They are both of them ſaid to have been of the ſeventy diſciples; ſee the note on *Luke* x. 1. and afterwards followers of *Simon Magus*. The name of the firſt of theſe ſignifies a *fugitive*, and ſuch was he from the cauſe of Chriſt. *Pliny* [c] makes mention of a town in *Aſia*, called *Phygella*, from the fugitives which built it: and the latter ſignifies born of *Mercury*; there was one of the name in *Tertullian*'s time againſt whom he wrote.

Ver. 16. *The Lord give mercy to the houſe of Oneſiphorus*, &c.] Who ſeems to have been one of *Aſia*, and of *Epheſus*, and is an exception from the general apoſtacy, or from thoſe that turned away from the apoſtle; and therefore he prays that the Lord would ſhew mercy to his family; that he would give regenerating grace and mercy to ſuch of them as were without it, or pardoning grace and mercy, or the great mercy of eternal life and ſalvation by Chriſt; and this doubtleſs was a prayer in faith, upon the promiſes of God, and upon inſtances and examples, in which God has remarkably ſhewn mercy to the families of good men, who have faithfully ſerved him, and abode in his intereſt in times of trouble; thus the houſe of *Obed Edom* was bleſſed for the ſake of the ark, that was taken care of by them; the reaſons of this prayer and good wiſhes follow: *for he oft refreſhed me*; both with his Chriſtian viſits, and ſpiritual converſation, which to the Apoſtle, in the heat of his affliction and perſecution, were like a fan in hot weather, cooling and reviving, as the word ſignifies; and alſo by ſupplying him with the neceſſaries of life, as food and raiment, or money to purchaſe them with. He anſwered to his name, which ſignifies, *one that brings profit*: he is ſaid to be one of the ſeventy diſciples; ſee the note on *Luke* x. 1. and afterwards to be biſhop of *Corone*: *and was not aſhamed of my chain*; the *Syriac* verſion adds, *with which I am bound*; in which he lay, or by which he was held, and led by a ſoldier; ſee *Acts* xxviii. 16, 20. *Oneſiphorus* was not aſhamed of the Apoſtle, tho' he was bound with a chain; nor was he aſhamed of the cauſe for which he ſuffered: and the Apoſtle propoſes him, to *Timothy*, as an example worthy of imitation, in thoſe times of defection. See ver. 8.

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[c] Nat. Hiſt. l. 5. c. 29.

Ver. 17. *But when he was in Rome*, &c.] Upon ſome buſineſs or another, where the Apoſtle was a priſoner: *he ſought me out very diligently, and found me*; as there might be many priſons in *Rome*, he went from one to another, till he found him; and was one of thoſe to whom Chriſt will ſay hereafter, *I was in priſon and ye came unto me*, Matt. xxv. 36. or the reaſon of his going from place to place in queſt of him was this; the Apoſtle was not in any particular place of confinement, but had a lodging where he was kept by a ſoldier, and which with ſome difficulty *Oneſiphorus* found out: the manner of his bonds was this; he had a long chain faſtened at one end to his right arm, and at the other to the left arm of the ſoldier that kept him, who conſtantly attended him in this form, wherever he went; and it is poſſible that in this way he might have liberty to go about and viſit his friends; and this might ſtill make it more difficult for *Oneſiphorus* to find him.

Ver. 18. *The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day*, &c.] In return for his diligent ſeeking till he found the Apoſtle. By *mercy*, he means the mercy of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt unto eternal life; or that crown of righteouſneſs and everlaſting glory and happineſs, which will be a grant from the Lord, or a free gift through Jeſus Chriſt; the effect of pure grace and mercy, and not of merit. The Apoſtle does not propoſe to requite him himſelf; he knew it was out of his power; but he had an intereſt in the Lord, and at the throne of grace; and he makes uſe of that in his favour, and prays the Lord that he might find mercy of him: and the meaning is either, that he prayed to God that he might find mercy of him; or he prayed particularly to the Lord Jeſus Chriſt to act the part of a mediator for him, with his father, that he might enjoy eternal life through him; or he prayed to God the Father, that he would grant that he might find mercy at the hands of Jeſus Chriſt his ſon, the judge of quick and dead, who at the great and laſt day, will give the crown of righteouſneſs to all that love him, and his appearance: *and in how many things he miniſtred unto me at Epheſus, thou knoweſt very well*; or *better*. *Timothy* being at *Epheſus*, of which city *Oneſiphorus* ſeems to have been, and that when the Apoſtle was there, he very freely communicated to him, as *Timothy*, who was with him there, knew very well: the Apoſtle does not forget, but remembers former kindneſſes, as well as takes notice of preſent favours, and which ſhews a grateful mind. The phraſe, *unto me*, is not in the *Greek* copies, tho' it is in the *Vulgate Latin* and in all the *oriental* verſions; wherefore the words may be underſtood of the things which *Oneſiphorus* had miniſtred to *Timothy*, and to the church at *Epheſus*, and to the poor ſaints there; which *Timothy* was *better* acquainted with than the Apoſtle could be, he being on the ſpot: and now ſince there were ſo many fallen off, and ſo few that remained hearty and faithful, but one *Oneſiphorus* to all them that were in *Aſia*; the Apoſtle exhorts to firmneſs and conſtancy, in a dependance on the ſpirit and grace of God, as follows.

CHAP. II.

IN this chapter the Apoſtle continues his exhortations to *Timothy*, with reſpect both to his office and his converſation, and cloſes with the character of a miniſter of the Goſpel. The Apoſtle having exhorted *Timothy*, in the former chapter, to abide by the Goſpel, notwithſtanding whatſoever he might ſuffer for it, here points out to him that grace and ſtrength in Chriſt, which he would have him have recourſe unto, to enable him to diſcharge his duty, ver. 1. and that the Goſpel might continue, he adviſes him to take care of a ſucceſſion, and to commit the Goſpel preached by him to others, whoſe qualifications for it are faithfulneſs and aptitude to teach, ver. 2. and in order to animate him to labour diligently in the Goſpel, and ſuffer chearfully for it, he obſerves to him that he was a ſoldier, and muſt endure hardſhips, and not indulge to the eaſe and pleaſures of life; was a runner in a race, and therefore muſt ſtrive before he received the crown; and was as an huſbandman that muſt firſt labour before he partakes of the fruit: which things he would have him ſeriouſly conſider; and deſires that the Lord would give him underſtanding in them, ver. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7. and then with the ſame view, to encourage him to ſuffer for the Goſpel of Chriſt, he puts him in mind of the incarnation and reſurrection of Chriſt, as a ſummary of the Goſpel, and a ſpecimen of what he had heard of him, ver. 8. and inſtances in his own ſufferings for it, the nature, uſe, and end of them, by way of example and imitation, ver. 9. 10. and for the ſame purpoſe mentions ſeveral uſeful ſayings and pithy ſentences, as true and to be depended on, ver. 11, 12, 13. which he would have *Timothy* put his hearers in mind of, and eſpecially thoſe to whom he committed the Goſpel to preach; charging them, in a ſolemn manner, not to ſtrive about words, which is not only unprofitable, but hurtful, ver. 14. and with reſpect to himſelf, he exhorts him to diligence and ſtudy, in interpreting and explaining the word of God, that ſo he might be approved unto God, and not be aſhamed before men, ver. 15. and on the contrary, to avoid falſe doctrines, as being prophane, empty, and mere babble; and as tending to greater impiety; and as being dangerous and threatning, like the ſpreading canker; of which he gives inſtances in *Hymeneus* and *Philetus*, ver. 16, 17. whoſe error was, that the reſurrection was already paſt; and ſucceeded in the ſpreading of it, to the ſubverſion of the faith of ſome, ver. 18. However, for the comfort of real believers, 'tis obſerved, that notwithſtanding ſuch errors, and the ſucceſs of them, the foundation ſtands ſure; God has a certain knowledge of his own people, and will keep them; and therefore it becomes ſuch who either call on the name, or are called by the name of Chriſt, to depart from ſuch evil doctrines, ver. 19. and that ſuch things happening in the world, and in churches, ſhould not be thought ſtrange, the Apoſtle illuſtrates the caſe by a ſimile of a great houſe, which has veſſels of all ſorts in it, and for different uſes and purpoſes, ver. 21, 22. Wherefore to conclude his exhortations to *Timothy*, he adviſes him to flee thoſe luſts which are incident to youth; to follow things that are good, and to avoid fooliſh and unlearned queſtions, which tend to ſtrife, ver. 22, 23. which leads him on to give the character of a ſervant of the Lord, or a preacher of the Goſpel; that he muſt not ſtrive, but be gentle, patient, and meek, in inſtructing adverſaries; for which he ſhould have an aptneſs; and is encouraged to act this part, from the conſideration of ſucceſs under a divine bleſſing; namely, bringing ſuch perſons to repentance, and to own the truth, and the recovery of them out of the ſnare of the devil, ver. 24, 25, 26.

Ver. 1. *Thou therefore my ſon*, &c.] The illative particle *therefore*, ſhews the connexion between this and the preceding chapter; the appellation, *thou my ſon*, expreſſes the Apoſtle's tender affection for *Timothy*, and is the rather uſed to engage his attention to the advice he was about to give him; which is, that ſince he had received the true grace of God, and unfeigned faith dwelt in him; and ſince he had ſuch gifts, qualifying him for the work of the miniſtry; and ſince ſo good a thing as the glorious Goſpel of the bleſſed God was committed to his truſt; and ſince there were ſo many who had departed from it, and ſo few that abode by it, he would have him *be ſtrong in the grace that is in Chriſt Jeſus*; by which may be meant either the free favour and love of God in Chriſt, *Rom.* viii. 39. which is in itſelf always ſtrong, immoveable, and unalterable; and is the ſtrength and ſecurity of the ſaints, tho' they have not always the ſame ſtrong believing views of it; and to be ſtrong in it, is to be rooted and grounded in it, and to have a ſtrong ſenſe and firm perſuaſion of intereſt in it, and that nothing can ſeparate from it: or elſe the Goſpel, which is a declaration of grace, and is in Chriſt, and comes by him; and to be ſtrong in it, is to preach it boldly, to defend it bravely, and courageouſly oppoſe every error and hereſy, and every abettor thereof; and it alſo becomes every private believer to hold it faſt, ſtand faſt in it, abide by it, and earneſtly contend for it; and ſo the phraſe may ſtand oppoſed to תקיף באוריתא or גבר *one ſtrong in the law*, which is ſo often uſed by the *Jews*[d]: or rather by grace is meant the fullneſs of grace which is in Chriſt, for the ſupply of his people; for in that grace which is in him, and not in that which is in themſelves, ſhould their dependance be. It is very agreeable to be ſtrong in grace received, in point of exerciſe, but not in point of contentment; ſo as to reſt ſatisfied with the preſent meaſure of it, without growing in it, and going on to perfection; and much leſs in point of conſolation, ſo as to derive peace and comfort from it; and ſtill leſs in point of truſt and confidence in it; for it is but a creature, tho' a very glorious one, being the workmanſhip of God, and very variable as to its exerciſe, and as yet imperfect; and not that but the object of it is to be truſted in: tho' indeed a perſon's enjoyment of everlaſting glory and happineſs may be ſtrongly concluded from the work of grace which is begun in him; that being an immortal ſeed, and a well of living water ſpringing up into eternal life; and with which, glory is inſeparably connected. But grace in Chriſt is what believers ſhould always have recourſe unto, and exerciſe faith on; and not only believe that there is ſuch a fullneſs of grace in Chriſt, which they have both heard of and ſeen, and which they know is laid up for them, and given to them, and is ſufficient for them; but they ſhould go forth out of themſelves unto it, and draw water with joy out of the full wells of ſalvation in Chriſt: and this grace is of a ſtrengthening nature, both to miniſters of the word, to enable them to fulfil their miniſtry, to bear reproaches, afflictions, and perſecution for the Goſpel, and the infirmities of weak brethren; and to private believers, to ſtrengthen them againſt every corruption, temptation, and ſnare, to exerciſe every grace, and diſcharge every branch of duty.

Ver. 2. *And the things that thou haſt heard of me*, &c.] Meaning the doctrines of the Goſpel, the form of ſound words. The *Arabic* verſion renders it, *the ſecrets*, or *myſteries that thou haſt heard of me*; the myſteries of the grace of God, which he had often heard him diſcourſe of, unfold and explain: *among many witneſſes*; or by them; which ſome underſtand of the teſtimonies out of *Moſes*, and the prophets, with which the Apoſtle confirmed what he delivered; for the doctrines of juſtification, pardon of ſin, *&c.* by Chriſt, were bore witneſs to by the prophets; tho' rather the many perſons who with *Timothy*, heard the Apoſtle preach, and were, and would be ſufficient witneſſes for *Timothy*, on occaſion, that what he preached and committed to others, were the ſame he had heard and received from the Apoſtle *Paul*; unleſs reference ſhould be had here to the time of impoſition of hands upon him, when he received ſome miniſterial gifts, or an increaſe of them; at which time, the Apoſtle might deliver to him the form of doctrine he was to preach, and that in the preſence of the preſbytery, who joined in the action, and ſo were witneſſes of what was ſaid to him: *the ſame commit thou to faithful men*; who not only have received the grace of God, and are true believers in Chriſt, but are men of great uprightneſs and integrity; who having the word of God, will ſpeak it out boldly, and faithfully, and keep back nothing that is profitable, but declare the whole counſel of God, without any mixture or adulteration; for the Goſpel being committed to their truſt, they would become ſtewards, and of ſuch it is required that they be faithful; and therefore this is mentioned as a neceſſary and requiſite qualification in them; and not only ſo, but they muſt be ſuch *who ſhall be able* or ſufficient *to teach others alſo*. No man is ſufficient for theſe things of himſelf, but his ſufficiency is of God; it is he who makes men able miniſters of the word, by giving them gifts ſuitable for ſuch work; ſo that they have a furniture in them, a treaſure in their earthen veſſels, an underſtanding of the ſacred ſcriptures, a gift of explaining them, and a faculty of ſpeaking to edification; and ſo are apt to teach men, to their profit and advantage. The *Ethiopic* verſion renders it, *who are fit to teach the fooliſh*..

Ver. 3. *Thou therefore endure hardneſs*, &c.] Or *afflictions*; as in ch. iv. 5. The ſame word is uſed there as here ,and properly ſignifies, *ſuffer evil*; and means the evil of afflictions, as perſecutions of every kind, loſs of name and goods, ſcourging, impriſonment, and death itſelf, for the ſake of Chriſt and the Goſpel: *as a good ſoldier of Jeſus Chriſt*. Chriſt is the captain of ſalvation, the leader and commander of the people, who are made a willing people in the day of his power; or when he raiſes his forces, and muſters his armies, theſe are voluntiers, who willingly enliſt themſelves into his ſervice, and under his banners fight his battles; and ſuch who manfully behave againſt ſin, ſatan, and the world, are his good ſoldiers; ſuch are all true believers in Chriſt, and particularly the miniſters of

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[d] Targum in Ruth ii. 1. & in Pſ. lxxxii. 1. & cxii. 2. & in Eccl. x. 17. & in Cant. viii. 10. vid. T. Bab. Sota, fol. 14. 1. & Tzeror Hammor, fol. 9. 3.

the word, whoſe miniſtry is a warfare, and who fight the good fight of faith; and beſides the above enemies which they have in common with other ſaints, have to do with falſe teachers, who are wolves in ſheep's clothing.

Ver. 4. *No man that warreth*, &c.] Who is a ſoldier, and gives himſelf up to military ſervice, in a literal ſenſe: the *Vulgate Latin* verſion, without any authority, adds, *to God*; as if the Apoſtle was ſpeaking of a ſpiritual warfare; whereas he is illuſtrating a ſpiritual warfare by a corporal one; and obſerves, that no one that is in a military ſtate, *entangleth himſelf with the affairs of this life*; with civil affairs, in diſtinction from military ones. The *Roman* ſoldiers might not follow any trade or buſineſs of life, or be concerned in huſbandry, or merchandize of any ſort, but were wholly to attend to military exerciſes, and to the orders of their general; for to be employed in any ſecular buſineſs, was reckoned an entangling of them, a taking of them off from, and an hindrance to their military diſcipline: and by this the Apoſtle ſuggeſts that Chriſt's people, his ſoldiers, and eſpecially his miniſters, ſhould not be involved and implicated in worldly affairs and cares; for no man can ſerve two maſters, God and Mammon; but ſhould wholly give up themſelves to the work and ſervice, to which they are called; and be ready to part with all worldly enjoyments, and chearfully ſuffer the loſs of all things, when called to it, for the ſake of Chriſt and his Goſpel: *that he may pleaſe him who hath choſen him to be a ſoldier*; his captain, or general, who has enliſted him, inrolled and regiſtered him among his ſoldiers; whom to pleaſe ſhould be his chief concern; as it ſhould be the principal thing attended to by a chriſtian ſoldier, or miniſter of the Goſpel, not to pleaſe men, nor to pleaſe himſelf, by ſeeking his own eaſe and reſt, his worldly emoluments and advantages, but to pleaſe the Lord Chriſt, in whoſe book his name is written.

Ver. 5. *And if a man alſo ſtrive for maſteries*, &c.] In the *Olympic* games, by running, wreſtling, leaping, &c. *yet is he not crowned*; with a corruptible, fading crown, a crown made of herbs and leaves of trees, as parſly, laurel, &c. *except he ſtrive lawfully*; according to the laws and rules fixed for thoſe exerciſes; ſo no man that calls himſelf a chriſtian, miniſter, or any other, can expect the crown of life, the prize of the high calling of God, except he runs the race ſet before him, in the right way; looking to Chriſt, the mark, preſſing through all difficulties, towards the prize, and holds on and out unto the end.

Ver. 6. *The huſbandman that laboureth*, &c.] In manuring his ground, in plowing, in ſowing, in weeding, in reaping, &c. *muſt be firſt partaker of the fruits*; of his labour, before others; and the deſign may be to obſerve that the miniſters of the word, ought firſt to be partakers of the grace of God, the fruits of the Spirit, and of the Goſpel, and rightly and ſpiritually underſtand it, before they preach it to others; or that ſuch who labour in the word and doctrine, ought in the firſt place to be taken care of, and have a ſufficient maintenance provided for them, 1 *Cor.* ix. 7, 11. or that as they ſhall have in the firſt place ſome ſeals and fruits of their miniſtry, in the converſion of ſouls, ſo they ſhall ſhine in the kingdom of heaven as the brightneſs of the firmament, and as the ſtars for ever and ever. Tho' the words may be rendered, and which ſeems more agreeable to the context, and to the Apoſtle's argument, *the huſbandman muſt firſt labour before he partakes of the fruits*; ſo a miniſter of the Goſpel muſt firſt labour, and endure hardſhips in this life, before he ſits down in the kingdom of heaven, and takes his reſt, and enjoys the crown of glory, which fades not away, which the chief ſhepherd ſhall give unto him.

Ver. 7. *Conſider what I ſay*, &c.] The advice given by the Apoſtle to *Timothy*, to be ſtrong in the grace of Chriſt; to commit the doctrines of the Goſpel to faithful and able men; and to endure hardneſs for the ſake of it: as alſo the characters which he bore as a ſoldier, a runner in a race, or a wreſtler, and an huſbandman; and therefore muſt not expect eaſe and reſt, but war, difficulties, toil, and labour: and likewiſe under what titles Chriſt was to be regarded; as his general, and captain of ſalvation, that commanded him; as the righteous judge, that held the prize and crown for which he was running; and the chief ſhepherd, who would reward all his labours: and moreover, the glorious reward of grace itſelf, he might expect, as eternal life, when he had fought the good fight; the crown of righteouſneſs, when he had finiſhed his courſe, or run his race; and a crown of glory that fades not away, when the chief ſhepherd ſhould appear: and by putting him upon the conſideration of theſe things, he ſuggeſts, that they were matters of moment and importance, and would be of great uſe to him in aſſiſting and encouraging his faith, amidſt all trials and exerciſes; and whereas they were expreſſed in figurative terms, taken from the ſoldier, the runner in a race, and the huſbandman, they might not at firſt view be ſo eaſy to be underſtood; and therefore he would have him think of them, and meditate upon them, and weigh them in his mind; as well as he would not have him take things upon truſt from him, but examine them whether they were right or no; tho' he doubted not but that they would be found to be agreeable to the ſtandard of truth: wherefore he prays as follows, *and the Lord give thee underſtanding in all things*; in all the above things, and in all others; in all the doctrines and myſteries of grace, and in all the rules of conduct in life. No man has of himſelf an underſtanding in ſpiritual things; this is the gift of God; and where it is given there is need of an increaſe of it, and always of ſuch a prayer for it. The *Alexandrian* copy, *Vulgate Latin*, and *Arabic* verſions read, *the Lord will give thee*, &c. and ſo the words are a promiſe, an encouragement to *Timothy*, to conſider well of theſe things; for he might aſſure himſelf, that in ſo doing, God would give him more underſtanding in them.

Ver. 8. *Remember that Jeſus Chriſt of the ſeed of David*, &c.] This is ſaid either as an encouragement to ſuffer hardneſs in the cauſe of Chriſt; ſince he, who tho' he was of the ſeed of *David*, of the blood royal, and heir to his crown, yet ſuffered and died; and whereas he roſe again from the dead, thoſe who ſuffer for his ſake, ſhall riſe alſo, and live and reign with him for ever: or elſe as a ſpecimen of the form of ſound words, or of the things which *Timothy* had heard of the Apoſtle; for this with what follows, is a ſummary of them: Chriſt being of the ſeed of *David*, according to the fleſh, or human nature, is expreſſive of his incarnation; ſhews that he was really come in the fleſh, and was truly man; and that he aſſumed human nature with all its frailties and infirmities, excepting ſin, and was like *David*, a man of ſorrows, and acquainted with griefs; and it includes his whole life, and his righteouſneſs, and obedience to the law of works, and points him out as the true Meſſiah, who was well known to the *Jews* by the name of the ſon of *David*. And now the Apoſtle puts *Timothy* in mind, that he *was raiſed from the dead*; which implies that he died; and ſo includes all the doctrines relating to his death; as that he died to make reconciliation, atonement, and ſatisfaction for the ſins of his people, and to procure peace for them, and the full remiſſion of all their iniquities; and to obtain redemption for them, from ſin, ſatan, the law, and its curſes; as well as it expreſſes his reſurrection from the dead, for their juſtification: and this being his firſt ſtep to glory, has connected with it his aſcenſion to heaven, ſeſſion at the right hand of God, interceſſion for the ſaints, and his ſecond coming to judgment; and is therefore particularly mentioned, becauſe it is an article ſo comprehenſive, and is a fundamental one, and of the greateſt importance to faith, and was what was ſtruck at in thoſe times: the Apoſtle adds, *according to my Goſpel*; meaning not the Goſpel of *Luke*, in which there is a clear account given of the reſurrection of Chriſt, ſaid to be written by him, at the inſtigation, and under the direction of the Apoſtle, and publiſhed with his approbation, as ſome think; but the doctrine of the Goſpel, and which he calls his, not becauſe he was the author, or the ſubject of it; for in theſe reſpects it is the Goſpel of God, and of Chriſt; but becauſe it was committed to him, and he was intruſted with it, and fully and faithfully preached it; and in diſtinction from another Goſpel, that of the falſe teachers; and agreeable to this doctrine, which the Apoſtle every where taught, Chriſt was raiſed from the dead; ſo the *Ethiopic* verſion renders it, *as I have taught*.

Ver. 9. *Wherein I ſuffer trouble as an evil doer*, &c.] As a malefactor, as if guilty of ſome capital crime; as an enemy to the law of *Moſes*, a peſtilent fellow, a mover of ſedition every where, and a ringleader of the ſect of the *Nazarenes*, *Acts* xxiv. 5. The *Ethiopic* verſion renders it, *as a thief*. The *trouble* he ſuffered were reproaches, perſecutions, whipping, beating, ſtoning, impriſonment: for he adds, even *unto bonds*; for he was now a priſoner, and in chains; nor was it the firſt time, he was in priſons frequent; and all this for the ſake of the Goſpel, which he preached, concerning the incarnation, death, and reſurrection of Chriſt: *but the word of God is not bound*; for the Apoſtle, whilſt a priſoner at *Rome*, had the liberty of dwelling by himſelf, in his own hired houſe, tho' held in chains, and guarded by a ſoldier, and of receiving his friends, and of preaching the Goſpel to as many as would come to hear him, *Acts* xxviii. 16, 17, 23, 30, 31. as well as of ſending letters to the churches; for ſeveral of his Epiſtles were written by him when a priſoner, as thoſe to the *Epheſians*, *Philippians*, and *Coloſſians*; and this to *Timothy*, and alſo that to *Philemon*: ſo that the Goſpel was not reſtrained, or the Apoſtle reſtrained from publiſhing it, both by word of mouth, and by writing; which was a great ſupport to him under his troubles. Moreover, the Goſpel was the more ſpread thro' the bonds of the Apoſtle, and met with great ſucceſs; it became known in *Cæſar*'s palace, and was the means of the converſion of ſome of his houſhold; and many of the brethren, through his bonds, became bolder to preach the Goſpel of Chriſt; ſo that it had a free courſe, and was glorified: and ſometimes ſo it is, that perſecution is a means of the greater ſpread of the Goſpel; which was an effect that followed upon the perſecution raiſed againſt the church at *Jeruſalem*, upon the death of *Stephen*, *Acts* viii. 1, 2, 3, 4. And indeed, when God opens an effectual door, none can ſhut it, though there be many adverſaries; and when he gives the word a commiſſion, there is no ſtopping it; when it comes in power, it bears down all before it; it can't be fettered and bound by men, tho' men may be fettered and bound for the ſake of it.

Ver. 10. *Therefore I endure all things for the elects ſake*, &c.] There is a certain number of perſons whom God has choſen in Chriſt from everlaſting unto ſalvation, who ſhall certainly be ſaved; for theſe Jeſus Chriſt ſuffered and died; and on their account is the Goſpel ſent, preached, and publiſhed to the world; for their ſakes are miniſters fitted and qualified for their work, and have their miſſion and commiſſion to perform it, and ſuffer what they do in the execution of it; and ſince it was for the ſake of ſuch, whom God had loved and choſen, that the Apoſtle endured all his reproaches, afflictions, and perſecutions, he was the more chearful under them; and the conſideration of it was a ſupport unto him: *that they may alſo obtain*; as well as himſelf, and other choſen veſſels of ſalvation, who were called by grace already; for the Apoſtle is ſpeaking of ſuch of the elect, who were as yet in a ſtate of nature: *the ſalvation which is in Chriſt Jeſus with eternal glory*; ſalvation is only by Chriſt Jeſus, and in him; and this is only for the elect of God; and it is publiſhed in the Goſpel, that they might obtain it; and in all ages they do obtain it, or enjoy it: the thing itſelf is obtained by Chriſt for them, thro' his obedience, ſufferings, and death; and it is publiſhed in the everlaſting Goſpel, that they might come to the knowledge of it; and in effectual vocation it is brought near by the Spirit of God, and applied unto them; and they have now both a meetneſs for it, and a right unto it, and ſhall fully enjoy it in heaven: for it has *eternal glory*, or *heavenly glory*, as the *Vulgate Latin* and *Ethiopic* verſions read, annexed to it; or rather the full enjoyment of it will conſiſt in an eternal and heavenly glory, which will be put upon the ſaints, both in ſoul and body, and remain to all eternity.

Ver. 11. It is *a faithful ſaying*, &c.] This may refer either to what goes before, that all things, all reproaches and ſufferings, thro' the miniſtration of the Goſpel, are endured for the elects ſake; and that they ſhall certainly obtain ſalvation in Chriſt, and enjoy eternal glory, to which they are predeſtinated: or to what follows, which being of moment and importance, and difficult to be believed, as that death led to life, and ſufferings were the way to the kingdom; the Apoſtle prefaces it in this manner, affirming the truth of it, that it was ſure and certain, and to be believed, and depended on as ſuch. *For if we be dead with* him; with Chriſt, as all his people are, by virtue of union to him; they are dead with him, he and they being one, in a legal ſenſe; when he died, they died with him; being crucified with him, as their head and repreſentative, their old man, their ſins, were alſo crucified with him, being imputed to him, and laid upon him; and thro' the efficacy of his death, they became dead to ſin, both to its damning and governing power, and ſo are planted together in the likeneſs of his death; ſo that as he died unto ſin once, and lives again to die no more, they die unto ſin, and are alive to God, and ſhall live for ever. Moreover, this, agreeable to what follows, may be underſtood of the ſaints dying for Chriſt's ſake, and the Goſpel, whereby they are conformed unto him, and feel the fellowſhip of his ſufferings, and ſo may be ſaid to be dead with him: and ſuch may aſſure themſelves of the truth of what follows, *we ſhall alſo live with* him; as many as were crucified with Chriſt, and buried with him, roſe with him from the dead, and were juſtified in him, as their head and repreſentative; the free gift came on them to juſtification of life; and they that are dead to ſin, thro' the efficacy of his death, live a life of ſanctification, which they have from him, and is maintained and ſupported by him, and is to his glory; and they live a life of communion with him, in whoſe favour is life; and tho' they die, and for his ſake, they ſhall riſe again; and becauſe he lives, they ſhall live alſo, even a life of glory, happineſs, and endleſs pleaſure. And this is part of the faithful ſaying, and to be believed, and is believed by the ſaints; ſee *Rom.* vi. 8. Moreover, ſince the word *him* is not in the original text, and the elect are ſpoken of in the preceding verſe, what if the ſenſe ſhould be this, this is true doctrine, and a certain matter of fact, if we and the elect of God die together in the ſame cauſe, and for the ſake of Chriſt, and the Goſpel, we ſhall live together in everlaſting bliſs and glory?

Ver. 12. *If we ſuffer*, &c.] With him, with Chriſt, as in *Rom.* viii. 17. all the elect ſuffered with Chriſt when he ſuffered; they ſuffered in him the whole penalty of the law, all the righteouſneſs, ſtrictneſs, and ſeverity of it; and they are partakers of the benefits of his ſufferings, as peace, pardon, righteouſneſs, redemption, and everlaſting ſalvation. And ſuch being called by grace, and having made a profeſſion of Chriſt, they ſuffer ſhame and reproach, loſs of credit and reputation, and ſometimes loſs of goods, and corporal puniſhment, and even death itſelf: but tho' they do, and if they ſhould, they may be ſatisfied of the truth of this, *we ſhall alſo reign with* him; they reign with him now in the kingdom of grace; grace reigns in their hearts, where Chriſt, the king of glory, has entered, and has ſet up his throne, and where he dwells by faith, they being made kings and prieſts unto God by him; and they ſhall reign with him in his kingdom here on earth, for the ſpace of a thouſand years; and they ſhall reign with him in glory to all eternity: this is certain, for this kingdom is prepared for them, it is given to them, they are called unto it, and have both a right unto, and meetneſs for it; ſee *Rom.* viii. 17. *if we deny* him, *he alſo will deny us*; there is a denying of Chriſt in words; ſo it is denied by the *Jews* that Chriſt is come in the fleſh, and that Jeſus is the Meſſiah; and ſome that have bore the chriſtian name, tho' very unworthily, have denied his true deity, his real humanity, proper Sonſhip, and the efficacy of his blood, righteouſneſs, and ſacrifice, for pardon, juſtification, and atonement: and there is a denying of him in works; ſo ſome that profeſs to know him, and do own him in his perſon and offices, yet in works deny him; their converſation is not becoming their profeſſion of him; they have the form of godlineſs, but deny the power of it: there is a ſecret and ſilent denying of him, when men are aſhamed of him, and do not confeſs him; and there is an open denying of him, by ſuch who ſet their mouth againſt the heavens, and their tongue walketh throughout the earth; there is a partial denying of Chriſt, which was *Peter*'s caſe, tho' his faith in him, and love to him, were not loſt; and there is a total denying of him, a thorough apoſtacy, and from which there is no recovery; and if there be any ſuch apoſtates among thoſe who have named the name of Chriſt, he will deny them, he will not own them for his another day; he will ſet them at his left hand; he will declare he knows them not, and will baniſh them from his preſence for evermore. This is another branch of the faithful ſaying; this will certainly be the caſe; Chriſt himſelf has ſaid it, *Matt.* x. 33.

Ver. 13. *If we believe not*, yet *he abideth faithful*, &c.] The *Syriac* and *Ethiopic* verſions read, *if we believe not him*. This may be underſtood, either of ſuch who are altogether deſtitute of faith, who do not believe in Chriſt at all; and particularly do not believe what was juſt now ſaid concerning his denying ſuch that deny him, but mock and ſcoff at his coming, and at a future judgment: this unbelief of theirs won't make void his faith or faithfulneſs; ſee *Rom.* iii. 3. he'll abide faithful to his word of threatening; and what he ſays in *Mark* xvi. 16. will be found to be an everlaſting truth: or it may be underſtood of true believers, whoſe faith ſometimes is very low, as to its exerciſe on Chriſt, and with reference to their future glory and happineſs; but Chriſt is faithful to all his covenant-engagements for them, to bring them to glory, and to every word of promiſe concerning their happineſs, and to every branch of the faithful ſaying above-mentioned; and he is ever the ſame in his love to them, and in the efficacy of his blood, righteouſneſs, and ſacrifice; and his ſalvation is an everlaſting and unchangeable one; nor do the ſaints intereſt in it, and ſecurity by it, depend upon their acts of believing, or their frames, but upon the firmneſs and unchangeableneſs of Chriſt, the object of faith. *He cannot deny himſelf*; he can't go contrary to his word; that would be to act contrary to his nature, and perfections, and would be a denying of himſelf, which is not poſſible; wherefore his faithfulneſs will never fail, even tho' the faith of his people does, as to the exerciſe of it.

Ver. 14. *Of theſe things put* them *in remembrance*, &c.] Meaning either his hearers, or thoſe to whom he was to commit the things he had heard of the Apoſtle, and who muſt expect to ſuffer afflictions, and endure hardſhips, for the ſake of Chriſt, and his Goſpel; wherefore to remind them of the above ſayings, might be of uſe and comfort to them. This clauſe is wanting in the *Arabic* verſion. *Charging* them *before the Lord*; the omniſcient God, as in his ſight, as they will anſwer it to him another day; ſee 1 *Tim.* v. 21. and vi. 13. *that they ſtrive not about words*; it became them to ſtrive and contend for the form of ſound words, for the wholeſome words or doctrines of our Lord Jeſus, but not about mere words, and eſpecially ſuch as were *to no profit*; to no advantage to truth, nor to themſelves nor others; were not to edification, to ſpiritual edification, to godly edifying, which is in faith: but *to the ſubverting of the hearers*; the confounding of their minds, miſleading their judgments, and overthrowing their faith; and therefore were not only unprofitable, but hurtful and pernicious, and by all means to be avoided.

Ver. 15. *Study to ſhew thyſelf approved unto God*, &c.] The *Alexandrian* copy reads, *to Chriſt*; ſee *Rom.* xvi. 10. Not unto men, as pleaſing them; for ſuch who ſtudy to pleaſe men, are not the ſervants of Chriſt; and ſometimes thoſe that are approved to and by men, are diſapproved of by God and Chriſt: but unto God, ſhewing all fidelity and uprightneſs; ſpeaking out the Goſpel openly, and freely, with all ſincerity, as in the ſight of God; commending themſelves to him, and to every man's conſcience, by manifeſtation of the truth; and ſuch will hear, well done good and faithful ſervant another day. *A workman that needeth not to be aſhamed*; the miniſtry of the word is a work, and it is a good work; and thoſe that perform it aright are worthy of honour and eſteem; and it requires induſtry, diligence, and application, and for which no man is ſufficient without the grace of God; and thoſe who are employed in it are workmen, workers together with God, and labourers in his vineyard: and ſuch who are faithful and diligent ones, *need not to be aſhamed*; ſuch do not cauſe ſhame, neither in themſelves nor in others, as falſe teachers do, who foam out their own ſhame, and as negligent miniſters of the word, and ſuch whoſe lives are not agreeable to the doctrines they preach; nor have they any reaſon to be aſhamed, neither of the Goſpel, which they preach, nor of their ſufferings, which they endure for the ſake of it, nor of their upright miniſtrations of the word; and as they are not afraid to ſuffer ſhame for the ſake of Chriſt now, they'll not be aſhamed before him at his coming. *Rightly dividing* or *cutting the word of truth*; that is, the ſcriptures of truth, *Dan.* x. 21. which come from the God of truth, are concerning Chriſt, who is the truth, and are dictated and led into by the Spirit of truth, and contain in them nothing but truth: to divide the word, is not merely to divide the text into its proper parts, tho' care ſhould be taken that this be done aright; and ſome think, that the alluſion is to the verſes of the *Hebrew* bible, which are called, פסוקים, *diviſions*, ſections, or cuttings, from the word, פסק, to *cut* or *divide*, being cut or divided one from another; hence thoſe that were employed in the law, and were converſant with the ſacred writings, and exerciſed therein, were called, פוסקים בתורת, *cutters*, or *dividers of the law* [e]; and ſo, בעל פסוק, is one that is well verſed in the bible, and knows every part of it, and readily uſes it, in ſpeaking or writing; and ſuch an one was *Timothy*, ch. iii. 15. tho' I rather think the Apoſtle refers to a wrong way of dividing the ſcriptures by the *Jews*, to which he oppoſes the right dividing of them. They had uſed not only to take away a letter out of one word, and add it to another, and ſo expound the text, but to remove words in it, and make that which went before to go behind, and that which was behind, to go before; and this they call a ſharp knife, which, הותך ומפסיק הכתוב, *cuts and divides the ſcriptures* [f]: but this way, which his countrymen uſed, the Apoſtle would not have *Timothy*, and other Goſpel-miniſters, make uſe of; for this is not rightly to divide, but to mangle and tear in pieces the word of truth. Moreover, to divide the word of truth, or to *cut* it, is to cut it open, and diſſect its ſeveral parts, and ſearch and look into the inſide and bottom of it, for to find out every truth contained in it, and lay them open to others; and may be, as ſome have thought, an alluſion to the cutting open the ſacrifices, and laying the parts of them aright, and in a decent manner: to which may be added, that ſince miniſters of the Goſpel are ſtewards, and who, when wiſe and faithful, give to every one of the houſhold their portion of meat in due ſeaſon; the metaphor may be taken from ſuch; and from maſters and governours of families, who cut up the food, and diſtribute it to each, according to their age and appetite; and ſo the miniſters of the Goſpel are to diſtribute the ſpiritual food of the word, to babes in Chriſt, and to grown chriſtians, according to their capacities, and ſuitable to their caſes and circumſtances, dividing to every one what is proper for him: in ſhort, one that divides the word of truth rightly, is, as the *Vulgate Latin* verſion renders it, one that *rightly handles*; or, as the *Syriac* verſion, that *rightly preaches the word of truth*; who gives the true ſenſe of ſcripture, does not pervert and wreſt it, and take from it, or add to it; who points out the truth in it, and ſhews unto men the way of ſalvation, and plainly and faithfully preaches the Goſpel contained in it, without keeping back any thing that is profitable, but declares the whole counſel of God. This ſame *Greek* word is uſed by the *Septuagint* in *Prov.* iii. 6. and xi. 5. where it anſwers to the *Hebrew* word, ישר, which ſignifies to direct the way, and make it plain; and may here deſign a plain and open interpretation of the word of God: and to anſwer theſe ſeveral characters in the text ſhould be the ſtudious concern of every Goſpel-miniſter; and *ſtudy* is neceſſary thereunto; it requires great care, that a man take heed to himſelf, and to his doctrine; and great induſtry, diligence, and application, and much reading, meditation, and prayer.

Ver. 16. *But ſhun prophane and vain bablings*, &c.] The miniſtry of falſe teachers is mere babbling; a voice, and nothing elſe, as the man ſaid of his nightingale; a ſound of words, but no ſolid matter in them; great ſwelling words of vanity, like large bubbles of water, look big, and make a great noiſe, but have nothing in them; contain nothing but vain, empty, idle, and trifling ſtuff; what is unprofitable and unedifying, yea, what is prophane, contrary to the nature and perfections of God, and not agreeable to the doctrine which is according to godlineſs; and being palmed upon the holy ſcriptures, is a prophanation of them. And all ſuch wicked and empty prate, and babbling, is to be ſhunned, avoided, and diſcouraged, refuſed, and rejected; and, as much as can be, a ſtop ſhould be put to it, both by miniſters and hearers of the word. *For they will increaſe unto more ungodlineſs*; meaning either that ſuch babblings, if uſed and encouraged, will grow more and more prophane and wicked; or the perſons that uſe them, the unruly and vain talkers, will grow more daring, bold, and impudent, will wax worſe and worſe, and from one error will proceed to another, for ſuch ſeldom ſtop; and having abuſed one paſſage of ſcripture, will go on to attack another, and will not ceaſe, till they have wreſted the whole ſcripture to their own deſtruction, and that of others.

Ver. 17. *And their word will eat as doth a canker*, &c.] Or *gangrene*, which gnaws and feeds upon the fleſh, inflames and mortifies as it goes, and ſpreads ſwiftly, and endangers the whole body; and is therefore to be ſpeedily taken notice of, and ſtopped. It is wrongly rendered *canker*, which is a different diſeaſe. "The word *gangrene* is *Greek* [g], "and is derived by ſome authors from the *Paphlagonian gangra*, a goat; it being the character "of a goat to brooze the graſs all around without "ſhifting. It is juſter, perhaps, to derive it from "the *Greek* word, γϱαω, γϱαινω, *manduco*, *conſumo*, I "eat, I conſume. The *gangrene* is a diſeaſe in "the fleſh of the part which it corrupts, con"ſumes and turns black, ſpreading and ſeizing it"ſelf of the adjoining parts, and is rarely cured "without amputation.—— By the microſcrope, a "*gangrene* has been diſcovered to contain an infi"nite number of little worms ingendred in the "morbid fleſh; and which continually producing "new broods, they ſwarm, and over-run the ad"jacent parts: if the grangrene proceed to an utter "ſphacelation (or mortification) and be ſeated in "any of the limbs, or extreme parts, recourſe "muſt be had to the operation of amputation."

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[e] Vid. Fuller Miſcell. Sacra, l. 3. c. 16.

[f] Halichot Olim, port. 4. c. 3. p. 192.

[g] See Chambers's Cyclopædia in the word *gangrene*.

And ſo the errors and hereſies of falſe teachers worm and ſpread, and feed upon the ſouls of men, and eat up the vitals of religion, or what ſeemed to be ſuch, and even deſtroy the very form of godlineſs; and bring deſtruction and death, where'ere they come; and when they get into chriſtian churches, threaten the ruin of them; and therefore are to be oppoſed in time, and thoſe infected with them to be cut off. *Of whom is Hymenæus and Philetus*; theſe were ſome of the principal among the falſe teachers, the chief authors and ſpreaders of error and hereſy: the former of theſe is mentioned before in 1 *Tim.* i. 20. along with *Alexander*, as guilty of blaſphemy, and as delivered up to ſatan for it. *Philetus* is a *Greek* name as well as the other, tho' it is ſometimes found in *Roman* inſcriptions[h]: it is very likely that theſe were both in *Aſia*, and probably in *Epheſus*, or near to it, ſince the Apoſtle mentions them by name to *Timothy*, that he might beware of them.

Ver. 18. *Who concerning the truth have erred*, &c.] That is, the two perſons juſt mentioned; they fell from the truth, wandered and departed from it; they did not keep to the ſcriptures of truth, but deviated from them; they miſſed that mark, and went aſtray into groſs errors and miſtakes; rejected the Goſpel, the word of truth, in general, and particularly in *ſaying, that the reſurrection is paſt already*; and no other is to be expected; or that there was no future reſurrection of the dead: their error was, as ſome think, that there is no other reſurrection than that of parents in their children, who, tho' they die, live in their poſterity; or than the reſurrection of Chriſt, and of the ſaints, that roſe at the ſame time; or rather, that there is no other reſurrection than the ſpiritual one, or regeneration, which is a quickening of dead ſinners, or the reſurrection of them from the death of ſin, to a life of grace; which ſeems to be the trueſt account of their principle, ſeeing this is what has been received and propagated by others ſince: tho' ſome have thought that they gave into the *Palingeneſia* of the *Pythagoreans*, who ſuppoſed that when men die, their ſouls go into other bodies; and that theſe men imagined, that this is all the reſurrection that will be: and others have been of opinion, that their notion was, that whereas the deliverance of the *Jews* out of the *Babyloniſh* captivity, is ſignified by a reſurrection of them, in *Ezek.* xxxvii. that this is the reſurrection they meant was paſt, and no other to be looked for; but that which has been fixed upon ſeems to be the trueſt account: *and overthrow the faith of ſome*; the *Ethiopic* verſion reads, *of many*; that is, of nominal profeſſors of religion; not of true believers, for true faith cannot be overthrown. Hence it follows,

Ver. 19. *Neverthele'ſs, the foundation of God ſtandeth ſure*, &c.] That faith, which is the faith of God's elect, is of the operation of God, and is the gift of his grace, and of which Chriſt is the author and finiſher, is firm and immoveable as a foundation; it is ſolid and ſubſtantial; it is the ſubſtance of things hoped for; and it is permanent and abiding; it ſtands ſure, being ſupported by the power of God, and prevalent mediation of Jeſus Chriſt; and ſo cannot be overthrown by falſe teachers, when an hiſtorical faith, or the faith of temporary believers may: or the doctrine of the reſurrection of the dead is here meant, which was ſaid to be paſt by the above falſe teachers; which is a fundamental doctrine of the Goſpel, without which the preaching of it is vain, and faith is vain; and which is a doctrine of God, of pure revelation; and this will be effected by his power: this ſtands ſure upon the teſtimony of the patriarchs, prophets, and of Chriſt, and his Apoſtles; upon the ſure word and writings both of the Old and New Teſtament; and will ſtand its ground againſt all oppoſition, and will have its certain effect; for the Lord Jeſus knows who are his diſtinctly and perfectly; nor will he loſe them, nor any thing that belongs to them; not their bodies, any more than their ſouls, nor any duſt of theirs, but will raiſe it up at the laſt day. Or elſe the doctrine of eternal election may be here deſigned; which is the foundation of all ſpiritual bleſſings, of faith and of holineſs, of joy and comfort here, and happineſs hereafter, and even of compleat and everlaſting ſalvation; and is of God's laying, and is owing to his ſovereign pleaſure and free rich grace; and ſtands ſure, not on the foot of works, but upon the unchangeable and unfruſtrable will of God; and this ſecures from a final and total deception by falſe teachers: and alſo into the account may be taken the perſons of God's elect themſelves; who are of God's founding, and are as immoveable as the firmeſt foundation whatever, even as rocks and mountains, and ſtand ſure upon the rock of ages, Chriſt Jeſus, and ſhall never periſh; nor can they be deceived by falſe Chriſts and falſe prophets, but will remain ſafe and ſound, when the faith of ever ſo many is ſubverted by them. *Having this ſeal, the Lord knoweth them that are his*: faith is ſealed and enſured to God's elect, by his fore-knowledge and predeſtination of them; ſo that they certainly have it, and ſhall never loſe it: and their election is according to God's fore-knowledge of them; which deſigns not a foreſight of their faith, holineſs, and good works, as the motives of his chuſing them; nor a bare preſcience of their perſons; but ſuch a fore-knowledge as includes ſpecial love to them, which is diſtinguiſhing, unchangeable, and everlaſting; and this being a ſeal affixed to all the elect, ſhews the diſtinguiſhing grace of God in their election, the ſecrecy of it, and its firmneſs and irrevocableneſs, and alſo the ſafety of the choſen ones; things being ſealed, to diſtinguiſh one thing from another, and to keep things ſecret, or to render them firm and authentic. So among the *Jews*, ſeals were uſed in buying and ſelling, that it might be known what was bought, and to confirm the purchaſe[i]. The inference from this comfortable doctrine is, *and let every one that nameth the name of Chriſt*; or *of the Lord*, as the *Alexandrian* copy, and others, the *Complutenſian* edition, the *Vulgate Latin*, *Syriac*, and *Arabic* verſions read; that is, whoever either are called by the name of Chriſt, or chriſtians, or whoever call upon his name: let them *depart from iniquity*; both from doctrinal iniquity, the errors and hereſies of the above falſe teachers, which increaſed to ungodlineſs, and eat as a gangrene, and were the ſubverſion of the faith of ſome; and from all practical iniquity, which thoſe men, and their followers, eſpecially the *Gnoſticks*, were guilty of; and generally ſpeaking, when men make ſhipwrack of faith, they put away a good conſcience: and the Apoſtle may alſo mean, that all ſuch ſhould depart from iniquitous men, from men, whether of bad principles, or practices, or both, and have no fellowſhip with them, it being unworthy of the name by which they were called. Some reference ſeems to be had to *Num.* xvi. 5, 26. and ſo the falſe teachers, and their followers, may be compared to *Korah*, and his company, and the elect of God to *Moſes*, and the Lord's people, who were bid to depart from the tents of thoſe wicked men; and who ſtood

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[h] Vid. Kirchman. de Funer. Roman. l. 3. c. 10. p. 390.

[i] Maimon. Hilchot Mechira, c. 7. §. 6, 7, 8.

firm, ſure, and ſafe, when the earth opened, and ſwallowed up the others.

Ver. 20. *But in a great houſe*, &c.] This ſimile the Apoſtle makes uſe of to ſhow, that it need not ſeem ſtrange, nor ſhould it be diſtreſſing to any one's mind, to hear that men of ſuch wicked principles and practices ſhould be in the church of God, who are before-mentioned; ſince in every great houſe or palace, the houſe of a nobleman, or palace of a king, there is a variety of veſſels of different matter, and for different uſes, and ſome are mean, deſpicable, and diſhonourable; and ſo it is in the church of God: for by this *great houſe*, in the application of the ſimile, is not meant the world, as ſome think; for tho' that is a houſe built by God, who built all things; and is a very large one, and full of inhabitants, comparable to veſſels; and there are in it both good and bad, as always have been; yet it is no ſtartling thing to any man, that there ſhould be bad men in it; rather the wonder is, that there ſhould be any good; but by this houſe is meant the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of truth, 1 *Tim.* iii. 15. ſee the note there. *There are not only veſſels of gold and of ſilver*; perſons who are members of the viſible church, who are comparable to gold and ſilver, for their worth and value, and preciouſneſs in the ſight of Chriſt, who accounts them his jewels, and peculiar treaſure; and for their excellency and uſefulneſs in the church, by reaſon of thoſe differing gifts beſtowed upon them; and for their luſtre and purity, both of doctrine and of life; and for their ſolidity and duration: *but alſo of wood, and of earth*; there are others in a viſible church-ſtate, who are like to dry wood, deſtitute of the grace of God, and are fit matter for ſatan to work upon, and by them raiſe and increaſe the flames of contention and diviſion, and will be fit fuel for everlaſting burnings; and there are others who are ſenſual, and carnal, and worldly, who mind earth, and earthly things, and have no ſpirituality, nor ſpiritual mindedneſs in them: *and ſome to honour*; who are deſigned for honourable ſervice, and behave honourably, and are worthy of honour in the church; are honourable officers, or members in it; and are to the honour of Chriſt, and the Goſpel; and ſhall at laſt enjoy honour, glory, immortality, and eternal life. *And ſome to diſhonour*; who are to the diſreputation of the church, the diſhonour of religion, and ſcandal of the Goſpel; by them God is diſhonoured, his ways evil ſpoken of, his doctrines blaſphemed, and his name reproached; and who are themſelves diſhonourable among men now, and will be covered with ſhame and everlaſting contempt hereafter.

Ver. 21. *If a man therefore purge himſelf from theſe*, &c.] That is, if a man clears himſelf, and keeps himſelf clear from ſuch men, as *Hymenæus* and *Philetus*, who are comparable to wooden and earthen veſſels, and are diſhonourable ones; if he ſhuns their defiling company, and polluting principles; if he keeps clear of their hereſies, and is not carried away with the errors of theſe wicked men, and is not drawn aſide by them into immoral practices, but ſtands faſt in the faith, and departs from iniquity: *he ſhall be a veſſel unto honour*; he will be made manifeſt, and appear to be a veſſel choſen to honour; and will be an honourable member of the church here, and will be honoured by Chriſt hereafter: *ſanctified*; he will appear to be one that is ſet apart by God the Father, and whoſe ſins are purged away by the blood of Chriſt, and who is ſanctified internally by the Spirit of God; for external holineſs ſprings from internal holineſs, and is an evidence of it: *and meet for the maſter's uſe*; the uſe and ſervice of Chriſt, who is the maſter of the houſe; either for the miniſtry of word, the adminiſtration of ordinances, or for ſome ſervice or another, which he calls him to, and employs him in. *And prepared unto every good work*; which an unregenerate man is not; he is to every good work reprobate; he is not capable of performing good works; he is not prepared for them, nor ready at them; but a true believer, one that is regenerated, and ſanctified by the Spirit of God, he is created in Chriſt Jeſus unto good works; and has in the performing of them right principles, aims, and ends, as well as a ſupply of grace, by which he is enabled to do them.

Ver. 22. *Flee alſo youthful luſts*, &c.] Meaning not luſts of uncleanneſs, laſciviouſneſs, and filthineſs; nor any of thoſe follies and vanities which the youthful age uſually luſts and deſires after, to which *Timothy* was not inclined; but ſuch luſts as are apt to prevail with young miniſters of the Goſpel, ſuch as vain-glory, popular applauſe, ſeeking to have the pre-eminence, contentions with, and contempt of others, and the like. *But follow righteouſneſs*; the righteouſneſs of Chriſt; or doing that which is juſt between man and man, and as one man would chuſe another ſhould do to him; or rather integrity and faithfulneſs in the miniſtry of the word, without ſeeking honour from men: *faith*; both as a doctrine and grace; or veracity and truth in preaching the Goſpel, ſtriving for that, and not thro' ambition, and for the pre-eminence: *charity*; or love, to God and Chriſt, and to his people; without which all gifts and works are of no avail; and which will engage a man to bear much, and to hope and believe all things: *peace with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart*; peace is to be purſued and followed after with all men, as much as poſſible, but eſpecially with the ſaints, the true worſhippers of God; who draw nigh to him with true hearts, and call upon him in the ſincerity of their ſouls: great care ſhould be taken that peace be maintained with them; for they have great intereſt at the throne of grace; and God is nigh unto them, and hears their prayers. The *Alexandrian* copy reads, *with all that love the Lord*.

Ver. 23. *But fooliſh and unlearned queſtions avoid*, &c.] Such as have no ſolid wiſdom in them, and are foreign from the Goſpel, the wiſdom of God in a myſtery, and are unuſeful and unedifying; ſuch ought to be avoided, publickly and privately; they ſhould not be ſtarted in the publick miniſtry, nor attended to in private converſation; as being unworthy of the notice of a miniſter of the Goſpel wiſe and learned, and uſeleſs to the church, and to his hearers. *Knowing that they do gender ſtrife*; about words, and contentions, which break the peace of churches, and hinder the profit of ſouls, and the progreſs of the Goſpel.

Ver. 24. *And the ſervant of the Lord muſt not ſtrive*, &c.] By *the ſervant of the Lord* is not meant any believer in common, but a miniſter of the word, as *Timothy* was; ſuch an one ought not to ſtrive about words to no profit, about mere words, and in a litigious, quarrelſome manner, and for maſtery and not truth; tho' he may, and ought to ſtrive for the faith of the Goſpel; this is praiſeworthy in him: *but be gentle unto all men*; not only to troubled minds, and wounded conſciences, by ſuppling them with the precious promiſes and truths of the Goſpel; and to backſliders, by reſtoring them in a ſpirit of meekneſs; but even to thoſe who contradict the truth, and themſelves, by mild and kind inſtructions. *Apt to teach*; ſhewing a willingneſs to inſtruct the ignorant and obſtinate, and making uſe of abilities given for that purpoſe, notwithſtanding all diſcouragements; for it follows, *patient*, or *bearing evil*; not only the infirmities of weak brethren in the church, and the reproaches and perſecutions of prophane men in the world; but alſo the contradictions and oppoſitions of the adverſaries of truth, ſo as not to be be irritated and provoked, or to be diſcouraged, and deſiſt from the defence of the Goſpel.

Ver. 25. *In meekneſs inſtructing thoſe that oppoſe themſelves*, &c.] To the truth; reſiſt it and deny it; or contradict ſome other tenets and principles of theirs, or the ſcriptures, which they themſelves allow to be the word of God, and the rule of faith and practice, and ſo are ſelf-convinced and ſelf-condemned. Theſe are to be inſtructed, being ignorant, and in a tender and gentle manner, tho' very perverſe and obſtinate. *If God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth*: repentance here, deſigns a repentance of errors in principle, a change of mind upon conviction, and ſuch as iſſues in a free and ingenuous confeſſion, and acknowledgment of the truth before oppoſed; and ſuch a repentance is the gift of God: it is he that opens the eyes of the underſtanding, and works conviction in the mind, and leads into all truth, as it is in Jeſus; and induces men to repent of their errors, confeſs their miſtakes, and own the truth; even as repentance of evil practices is not owing to the power of men, nor to the bare influence of means, but to the efficacious grace of God, it being a grant from him. And tho' this is not certain, that God will give repentance to ſuch contradictors and blaſphemers of his Goſpel; yet as it is his will, that all his choſen ones ſhould come to repentance, and that ſome of all ſorts ſhould be ſaved, and come to the knowledge of the truth; and ſeeing theſe things have been brought about under, and by the miniſtry of the word, it is an encouragement to the miniſters of the Goſpel to continue their inſtructions in the manner here directed.

Ver. 26. *And that they may recover themſelves*, &c.] Or *awake*, and come to themſelves, and appear to be ſober, and in their right mind: the metaphor is taken from drunken men, who are over-charged, and are not in their ſenſes, and being ſtupified fall aſleep; and like theſe, are perſons intoxicated with errors and hereſies, who when their minds are enlightened, and they are convinced of their evil tenets, repent of them, come to themſelves, and acknowledge the truth, and ſo eſcape *out of the ſnare of the devil*; for as carnal luſts and pleaſures are the ſnares and nets, in which ſatan, who may be compared to a fowler, catches ſome; ſo errors and hereſies are thoſe with which he enſnares others: *who are taken captive*, or *alive, by him at his will*; ſuch are taken in his nets and ſnares, as creatures are taken alive, by fowlers, and huntſmen; and they are held faſt, and become his captives, and his ſlaves, and do his will, being led by him to whatſoever he pleaſes; he works powerfully in them, and they readily comply with him, and obey his luſts. Tho' ſome underſtand this, not of the will of the devil, but of the will of God; and that the ſenſe is, that ſuch perſons are held captive by ſatan, as long as it is the pleaſure of God, and no longer; when the prey is taken from the mighty, and the lawful captive is delivered; and ſo it is an encouragement to the miniſters of the word, to go on in inſtructing, hoping this may be the caſe. Others connect this phraſe, *to his will*, or *according to his will*, as they differently render it, with the word, *recover*; and then the meaning is, that ſuch repenting of their errors, might eſcape out of the ſnare of ſatan, in which they were taken alive; that ſo they might do the will of God, by profeſſing and holding faſt his truths; or that their repentance, recovery, and eſcape out of ſatan's ſnare, and captivity, are according to the will of God, and his ſovereign good pleaſure.

CHAP. III.

IN this chapter the Apoſtle delivers out a prophecy of the laſt days, ſhewing how perilous the times will be, deſcribing the perſons that will live in them, and what will be their end; and in oppoſition to theſe men, propoſes himſelf an example in doctrine and ſufferings; and encourages *Timothy* to perſevere, and highly commends the ſacred writings. The prophecy begins ver. 1. the deſcription it gives of hypocrites, formal profeſſors, and falſe teachers, that ſhould riſe up in the laſt days, and perilous times ſpoken of, is in ver. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7. And theſe are compared to the magicians of *Egypt* for the corruption of their minds, the badneſs of their principles, and their oppoſition to truth, and for their exit, and the iſſue of things; they will be ſtopped in their progreſs, and their folly expoſed, ver. 8, 9. and as the reverſe of theſe men, the Apoſtle gives an account of his own doctrine, converſation, and ſufferings; which he propoſes to *Timothy* for imitation, as being well known to him, and as alſo the common ſtate of all godly perſons in this life, being a ſuffering one, ver. 10, 11, 12. nor can it be expected that it ſhould be otherwiſe, ſince falſe teachers, who are wicked and deceitful men, grow worſe and worſe, ver. 13. And then the Apoſtle exhorts *Timothy* to abide by, and continue in the doctrines of the Goſpel, from the aſſurance he had of the truth of them, from the conſideration of his having learned them of the Apoſtle, and eſpecially from their agreement with the holy ſcriptures, which he had knowledge of from a child, ver. 14, 15. which ſcriptures are commended, partly from the uſeful effect of them, making men wiſe unto ſalvation; and chiefly from the author of them, being by the inſpiration of God; and alſo from the profitableneſs of them, both for doctrine and manners, and eſpecially to furniſh a Goſpel-miniſter for the work he is called unto, ver. 15, 16, 17.

Ver. 1. *This know alſo*, &c.] That not only men of bad principles and practices are in the churches now, as before deſcribed in the preceding chapter, but that in ſucceeding ages there would be worſe men, if poſſible, and the times would be ſtill worſe; this the Apoſtle had, and delivered by a ſpirit of prophecy, and informed *Timothy*, and others of it, that he and they might be prepared for ſuch events, and fortified againſt them: *that in the laſt days perilous times ſhall come*; or *hard* and difficult times to live in; not by reaſon of outward calamities, as badneſs of trade, ſcarcity of proviſions, the ravages of the ſword, *&c.* but by reaſon of the wickedneſs of men, and that not of the prophane world, but of profeſſors of religion; for they are the perſons afterwards deſcribed, who will make the times they live in difficult to others, to live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly; the days will be evil, becauſe of theſe evil men: or they will be *troubleſome* times, very afflicting and diſtreſſing to pious minds; as the places and times, and men and cuſtoms of them were to *Lot*, *David*, *Iſaiah*, and others: and alſo *dangerous* ones to the ſouls of men; who will be beguiled by their fair ſpeeches, and ſpecious pretences, to follow their pernicious ways, which will bring deſtruction upon them; their doctrines will eat as a gangrene, and their evil communications will corrupt good manners, before obſerved. And theſe times will be *in the laſt days* of the apoſtolic age, and onward to the end of the world: the *Jews* generally underſtand by this phraſe, when uſed in the Old Teſtament, the days of the Meſſiah; and which are the laſt days of the world, in compariſon of the times before the law, from *Adam* to *Moſes*, and under the law, from thence to Chriſt; and even in the times of the Apoſtles, at leaſt towards the cloſe of them, great numbers of men roſe up under the chriſtian name, to whom the following characters well agree, as the *Gnoſticks*, and others; and who paved the way for the man of ſin, the *Romiſh* antichriſt, whoſe prieſts and votaries are here likewiſe deſcribed to the life: ſo that theſe laſt days may take in the general defection and apoſtacy of the church of *Rome*, as well as thoſe times, which followed the Apoſtles, and thoſe which will uſher in the ſecond coming of Chriſt. The *Ethiopic* verſion renders it, *in the latter days will come an evil*, or *bad year*.

Ver. 2. *For men ſhall be lovers of their ownſelves*, &c.] Not in a good ſenſe, as men may be, and as ſuch are, who love their neighbours as themſelves, and do that to others they would have done to themſelves; and who take all prudent and lawful care to preſerve the life and health of their bodies, and ſeek in a right way the ſalvation of their immortal ſouls: but in a bad ſenſe, as ſuch may be ſaid to be, who only love themſelves; their love to God, and Chriſt, and to the ſaints, being only in pretence, not in reality; and who do all they do in a religious way, from a principle of ſelf-love, and to ſelfiſh and mercernary ends; either to gain glory and applauſe from men, or to merit ſomething for themſelves at the hands of God, without any view to the glory of God, the honour and intereſt of Chriſt, and the good of others; and aſcribe all they have and do to themſelves, to their induſtry, diligence, power, free-will, worth, and merit, and not to the grace of God: and this character may be ſeen in the principles and practices of the church of *Rome*, in their doctrines of merit and free-will, in works of ſupererogation, *&c.* *Covetous*; lovers of ſilver, greedy of filthy lucre, doing nothing but for money; every one looking for his gain from his quarter; making merchandize of the ſouls of men; and which are reckoned among the wares of *Babylon*, the *Romiſh* antichriſt, *Rev.* xviii. 13. No penny, no pater-noſter. *Boaſters*; of their wealth and riches, of their honour and grandeur; *I ſit a queen*, &c. *Rev.* xviii. 7. of their numbers, of their holineſs, of the infallibility of their popes, of their having the true knowledge, and certain ſenſe of the ſcriptures, and of having all power in heaven and in earth. *Proud*; as have been the popes of *Rome*; exalting themſelves above all that is called God, above all princes, kings, and emperors of the earth; depoſing one, excommunicating another, treading upon their necks, obliging them to hold their ſtirrups whilſt they mounted their horſes; the pride of the popes, cardinals, prieſts, and the whole clergy of the church of *Rome*, is notorious. *Blaſphemers*; of God, and of his Son Jeſus Chriſt; ſitting in the temple as God, as antichriſt does, ſhewing himſelf that he is God; aſſuming that to himſelf which belongs to God only, which is to forgive ſin; calling himſelf Chriſt's vicar on earth; taking upon him to enact new laws, and to diſpenſe with the laws of God, and Chriſt; and has a mouth ſpeaking great things, and blaſphemies againſt God, his name, his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven, 2 *Theſſ.* ii. 4. *Rev.* xiii. 5, 6. *Diſobedient to parents*; as many of the votaries of the antichriſtian church have been; who have withdrew themſelves from under the care of their parents, and their fortunes too out of their hands, when they have been in their power; and have ſhut themſelves up in cloyſters, monaſteries, and nunneries, without the leave and conſent, or knowledge of their parents. *Unthankful*; to God, for what is enjoyed by them, aſcribing all to themſelves, and to their merit and good works; and to men, to the princes of the earth, by whom they were firſt raiſed to, and ſupported in their dignity; as the popes of *Rome* were by the *Roman* emperors, and whom they in return tyrannized over, and dethroned at pleaſure. *Unholy*; notwithſtanding his holineſs the pope at the head of them their holy father, and holy mother church, and holy prieſts, and holy orders they talk of; yet are without the fear of God, or any regard to him, living moſt unholy lives and converſations, *Dan.* xi. 37.

Ver. 3. *Without natural affection*, &c.] To parents, or children, or wife; parents thruſting their children into religious houſes, cloyſters, *&c.* againſt their wills; children leaving their parents without their knowledge or conſent; married biſhops and prieſts being obliged to quit their wives, and declare their children ſpurious; with many other ſuch unnatural actions. *Truce-breakers*; or covenant-breakers; ſtirring up princes to break thro' their treaties and covenants with one another; diſſolving the allegiance of ſubjects to their ſovereigns, and moving them to rebellion againſt them; looſing the marriage-bond between huſband and wife; making void all oaths, contracts, and agreements among men, which ſtand in the way of their deſigns; teaching that no faith is to be kept with hereticks. *Falſe accuſers*; or devils, being like ſatan, the accuſer of the brethren, charging all that depart from their communion with ſchiſm and hereſy. *Incontinent*; tho' they pretend to the gift of continency, yet give themſelves up to all laſciviouſneſs, and work all uncleanneſs with greedineſs; or *intemperate* in eating and drinking, indulging themſelves in rioting and drunkenneſs: *ſhe hath lived deliciouſly*, *Rev.* xviii. 7. *Fierce*; like beaſts of prey; ſuch was *Rome* pagan, in the times of the ten perſecutions; and ſuch has been *Rome* papal, exerciſing the greateſt cruelties and barbarities on the ſaints, being drunk with their blood. *Deſpiſers of thoſe that are good*; or *without love to good*; both to good works, to which they are reprobate, notwithſtanding all their pretenſions to them, and bluſter about them; and to good men, whom they hate.

Ver. 4. *Traitors*, &c.] To their princes and ſovereigns, whoſe deaths they have contrived and compaſſed, and whom they have aſſaſſinated and murdered; and have been betrayers of the ſecrets of perſons, which they have come at by auricular confeſſion to them; and of their beſt and neareſt friends, to preſerve and ſecure themſelves. *Heady*; raſh, daring, bold, and impudent, fit to ſay and do any thing, tho' ever ſo vile and wicked. *High-minded*; puffed and ſwelled up with a vain conceit of themſelves, and ſpeaking great ſwelling words of vanity: *lovers of pleaſure more than lovers of God*; lovers of ſinful pleaſures, or the pleaſures of ſin, which are but for a ſeaſon, and not God; ſerving divers luſts, and pleaſures, and not God; making a God of their belly; ſenſual idolaters, delighting themſelves in their carnal luſts, and not in the ſervice of God.

Ver. 5. *Having a form of godlineſs*, &c.] Either a mere external ſhew of religion, pretending great piety and holineſs, being outwardly righteous before men, having the maſk and vizor of godlineſs; or elſe a plan of doctrine, a form of ſound words, a ſcheme of truths, which men may have without partaking of the grace of God; and which, with reſpect to the doctrine of the Trinity, the church of *Rome* has; or elſe the ſcriptures of truth, which the members of that church have, and profeſs to hold to, maintain and preſerve; and which contains doctrines according to godlineſs, and tend to a godly life and godly edification: *but denying the power thereof*; tho' in words they profeſs religion and godlineſs, the fear of God, and the pure worſhip of him, yet in works they deny all; and tho' they may have a ſett of notions in their heads, yet they feel nothing of the power of them on their hearts; and are ſtrangers to experimental religion, and powerful godlineſs: or tho' they profeſs the ſcriptures to be the word of God, yet they deny the uſe, the power, and efficacy of them; they deny the uſe of them to the laity, and affirm that they are not a ſufficient rule of faith and practice, without their unwritten traditions; and that they are not able to make men wiſe, or give them a true knowledge of what is to be believed and done, without them; and that the ſenſe of them is not to be underſtood by private men, but depends upon the infallible judgment of the church or pope: *from ſuch turn away*; have no fellowſhip with them, depart from their communion, withdraw from them, and come out from among them: this paſſage ſufficently juſtifies the reformed churches in their ſeparation from the church of *Rome*.

Ver. 6. *For of this ſort are they which creep into houſes*, &c.] Privily and unawares, in a clandeſtine manner, and inſinuate themſelves into families, by fawning and flattering, and under ſpecious pretences to knowledge and virtue. The *Syriac* verſion uſes a word, from whence comes, חולדא, *Chulda*, which ſignifies *a weaſel*; ſuggeſting, that their entrance into houſes was like to the way of that creature, which is ſometimes covered, and ſometimes open: there was alſo a gate of the temple, which was called *Huldah*; whether there is any alluſion in the word to that, may be enquired [k]. *And lead captive ſilly women*; the coming of antichriſt is after the working of ſatan; as ſatan attacked the woman, and not the man, and beguiled *Eve* and not *Adam*, ſo theſe his inſtruments and emiſſaries, work themſelves into the affections of the weaker veſſel, and into the weaker ſort of women, as the diminutive word here uſed ſignifies; and gain upon them, inſtil their principles into them, attach them to their intereſts, captivate them to them, and lead them as they pleaſe: *laden with ſins*; covered with them, full of them, and ſo ready to receive any ſett of principles that would encourage them to continue in them; or elſe were preſſed down with a ſenſe of them, their conſciences being awakened, and they under ſome concern on account of them, and ſo fit perſons for ſuch deceivers to gain upon, by pretending to great ſanctity and religion, and by providing them with pardons and indulgences, and putting them upon pennance, *&c.* tho' the former ſenſe ſeems moſt agreeable, and is confirmed by what follows, *led away with divers luſts*. The *Alexandrian* copy adds, *and pleaſures*; that is, ſinful ones; tho' this may be underſtood, not of unclean luſts, but of the itch and deſire after new teachers, and new doctrines, and practices, which prevail in weak women, and by which they are governed and led away.

Ver. 7. *Ever learning*, &c.] Some new notion and practice or another: *and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth*; partly becauſe of the teachers, which they heap up to themſelves, who are unapt to teach, are blind and ignorant guides, and know not the truth, but are enemies to it, and reſiſt it; and partly becauſe of themſelves, the ſins they are laden, and the luſts they are led away with, which hinder them from coming to the knowledge of the truth.

Ver. 8. *Now as Jannes and Jambres withſtood Moſes*, &c.] Theſe were not *Jews*, who roſe up and oppoſed *Moſes*, as *Dathan* and *Abiram* did, as ſome have thought; but *Egyptian* magicians, the chief of thoſe that *Pharoah* ſent for, when *Moſes* and *Aaron* came before him, and wrought miracles; and who did in like manner by their inchantments, *Exod.* vii. 11. upon which place the *Targum* of *Jonathan* has theſe words: "and *Pharoah* called the "wiſe men and the magicians; and *Janis* and *Jambres*, the magicians of the *Egyptians* did ſo by "the enchantments of their divinations." And the ſame *paraphraſt* on *Exod.* i. 15. calls them by the ſame names; and this ſhows from whence the Apoſtle had theſe names, which are not mentioned in any place in the Old Teſtament; namely, from the traditions and records of the *Jews*, with which he was well acquainted: there is no need to ſay he had this account by divine revelation, for ſome of the heathens had knowledge of this ſtory ſome ſuch way. *Numenius*, the philoſopher, ſpeaks of *Jannes* and *Jambres* as *Egyptian* ſcribes, and famous for their ſkill in the magic art; and who oppoſed themſelves to *Moſes* when the *Jews* were driven out of *Egypt* [l]. *Pliny* alſo makes mention of *Jamne* and *Jotape* as magicians; tho' he wrongly calls them *Jews*, and places *Moſes* with them [m], as *Jannes* likewiſe is by *Apuleius* [n]. It is commonly ſaid by the *Jews* [o], that theſe were the two ſons of *Balaam*, and they are ſaid to be the chief of the magicians of *Egypt* [p]; the latter of theſe is called in the *Vulgate Latin* verſion *Mambres*; and in ſome *Jewiſh* writers his name is *Mamre* [q], by whom alſo the former is called *Jochane* or *John*; and indeed *Joannes*, *Jannes*, and *John*, are the ſame name; and *R. Gedaliah* [r] ſays, that their names in other languages are *John* and *Ambroſe*, which is not unlikely. Mention is made of the ſons of *Jambri* in 1 *Maccab.* ix. 36. whom *Joſephus* [s] calls the ſons of *Amaræus*. Theſe are ſaid to be the perſons that told *Pharaoh*, that a child ſhould be born among the *Iſraelites*, by whom the whole land of *Egypt* ſhould be deſtroyed, and which was the reaſon of *Pharoah*'s giving ſuch a charge to the *Hebrew* midwives[t]; alſo the making of the golden calf is aſcribed to them[u]; for, according to the *Jews*, they afterwards became proſelytes; but theſe things are not to be depended on: however, certain it is, that they withſtood *Moſes* by their inchantments, and hardened *Pharaoh*'s heart, ſo that, for a while, he would not let the children of *Iſrael* go. Now between theſe magicians, and the *Papiſts* before deſcribed, there is a very great agreement; as theſe men were *Egyptians*, ſo the *Papiſts* may be called, ſince *Rome* is ſpiritually called *Sodom* and *Egypt*, *Rev.* xi. 8. as the one were, ſo the other are idolaters, who worſhip devils, idols of gold, ſilver, braſs, ſtone, and wood, *Rev.* ix. 20. and both ſorcerers, uſing the magic art, *Rev.* ix. 21. and they both pretended to miracles; tho' what they did were no other than lying wonders, 2 *Theſſ.* ii. 9. *Rev.* xiii. 13, 14. and both agreed to keep the people of God in bondage, as much, and as long as they could: and particularly, as the magicians of *Egypt* withſtood *Moſes*, *ſo do theſe alſo reſiſt the truth*; the truth of one God, by their worſhipping of images; and of one mediator, by making uſe of angels, and ſaints departed, to intercede with God for them; and of juſtification by the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, by introducing the doctrine of works, of merit, and ſupererogation; and of pardon and cleanſing by the blood of Chriſt, and atonement by his ſacrifice, by their pardons, indulgences, pennance, purgatory, and the ſacrifice of the maſs; yea, they reſiſt the ſcriptures of truth, not allowing them to be a ſufficient rule without their unwritten traditions, and even Chriſt, who is truth itſelf, in all his offices, prophetic, prieſtly, and kingly. *Men of corrupt minds*; of bad principles, holding antichriſtian tenets, derogatory to the grace of God, and glory of Chriſt; giving heed to ſeducing ſpirits, and doctrines of devils; like *Jannes* and *Jambres*, who were given to magic arts, and were under the influence of ſatan: *reprobate concerning the faith*; men of no judgment in the doctrine of faith; who have not their ſenſes exerciſed to diſcern good and evil, to try things that differ, and approve the more excellent, but call good evil, and evil good: or as thoſe who are diſobedient and wicked in their lives, are ſaid to be to every good work reprobate, *Tit.* i. 16. ſo theſe are ſaid to be reprobate to the faith; that is, to have no liking of it, or value for it, but deſpiſe it, hate it, and reject it; and upon that account, as they are like reprobate ſilver, whom God has rejected, they ought to be rejected by men.

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[k] Vid. L. Empereur in Miſn. Middot, c. 1. §. 3.

[l] Apud Euſeb. Præparat. Evangel. l. 9. p. 411.

[m] Nat. Hiſt. l. 30. c. 1.

[n] Apolog. p. 248.

[o] Targum Jon. in Num. xxii. 22. & Zohar in Num. fol. 78. 3. & Chronicon Moſis, fol. 6. 2.

[p] Targum Jon. in Exod. i. 15. & vii. 11. & Zohar in Exod. fol. 75. 1.

[q] T. Bab. Menachot, fol. 85. 1. Midraſh Shemot Rabba, §. 9. fol. 97. 3. & Aruch. in voce.

[r] Shalſhaleth Hakabala, fol. 7. 1.

[s] Antiq. l. 13. c. 1. §. 2.

Ver. 9. *But they ſhall proceed no further*, &c.] They may proceed to more ungodlineſs, and wax worſe and worſe in error; but they ſhall proceed no further than the magicians of *Egypt*, who did lying wonders, hardened *Pharaoh*'s heart, and deceived him and the *Egyptians*; but could not deſtroy the *Iſraelites*, nor hinder their departure out of *Egypt*, when their time was come: ſo theſe wicked men do falſe miracles, harden the popes of *Rome*, and deceive the nations ſubject to them; but they can't deceive the elect of God, nor deſtroy the church of God, againſt which the gates of hell cannot prevail; nor could they hinder the reformation, or the departure of the Lord's people out of *Babylon*. *For their folly ſhall be manifeſt unto all* men, *as theirs alſo was*; as the folly of *Jannes* and *Jambres* was, when *Aaron*'s rod devoured theirs; and when they could not produce lice, but was obliged to own to *Pharaoh*, that that plague was the finger of God; and when they could not ſtand before *Moſes*, becauſe of the boil that was upon them, *Exod.* vii. 12. and viii. 18, 19. and ix. 11. And ſo the *Arabic* verſion renders it, *as is manifeſt the folly*, or *madneſs of theſe two*; and it is notorious in how many inſtances the frauds, impoſtures, tricks, and villanies of the church of *Rome*, and its votaries, have been detected and expoſed; which have been the means of hindering them from proceeding any further than they have. The *Alexandrian* copy reads, *their underſtanding*; that which they pretended to have of divine things.

Ver. 10. *But thou haſt fully known my doctrine*, &c.] This, with what follows, is ſaid in oppoſition to the characters, principles, and practices of the above wicked men, and for the imitation and encouragement of *Timothy*, and of others, whether miniſters or private believers: the Apoſtle calls the doctrine he delivered, *my doctrine*; not becauſe he was the author of it, or that it was a ſcheme of principles formed and contrived by him; but becauſe it was the doctrine which he had received from God, which was given him to preach, and which he did preach purely and faithfully; otherwiſe it was the doctrine of Chriſt, and the ſame with that which was preached by the reſt of the Apoſtles; and which was the doctrine of the ſcriptures, and was according to godlineſs; and as preached by him, was all of a-piece, and without any adulteration, or mixture, and was open and manifeſt, and well known to *Timothy*, and others; for he uſed no hidden things of diſhoneſty, nor did he conceal his principles, or keep back any thing that was profitable. And as well known was his *manner of life*; both his civil life, how he ſpent his time, not in eaſe and idleneſs, but oftentimes in labour with his own hands; nor did he live in a ſenſual and voluptuous manner, but frequently was in hunger, and thirſt, and nakedneſs; and likewiſe his religious life, and converſation, not only in the church, which was ſpent in the miniſtry of the word, and ordinances; but in the world, which, by the grace of God, was in ſimplicity and godly ſincerity, in a very juſt, holy, and unblameable manner: his life was agreeable to his doctrine, and ornamental to his profeſſion: and even the ſecrets of his mind, his views, his aims and ends in all he did, which are ſignified by his *purpoſe*, were open and manifeſt; and which were not to obtain glory and applauſe from men, nor to gather wealth and riches for himſelf; but that God might be glorified in the ſalvation of men; that Chriſt might be magnified both in his life and death; that his Goſpel might be ſpread, his kingdom be enlarged, and that many ſouls might be converted and brought to the knowledge of him; and hence he became all things to all, that he might gain ſome. And as the doctrine of *faith*, embraced, profeſſed, and preached by him, was well known, ſo no leſs conſpicuous was the grace of faith in him, with reſpect to his intereſt in God's everlaſting love, in ſalvation by Jeſus Chriſt, and in eternal glory and happineſs; of which he had a full aſſurance, and which remained conſtant and firm in him to the end. Unleſs, rather his faithfulneſs in the diſcharge of his miniſterial work ſhould be here deſigned, for which he was very remarkable; as alſo for his *long-ſuffering* both towards thoſe that were without, the open enemies and perſecutors of the Goſpel, and towards them that were within, the brethren, whoſe infirmities he bore; and alſo for the ſucceſs of the Goſpel, as the huſbandman has long patience, and waits long for the former and latter rain: to which is added *charity*; which ſuffers long, and is kind; and may include his love to God, to Chriſt, and to the ſouls of men; which was very great, and particularly to his countrymen, the *Jews*, and alſo to the *Gentiles*; and eſpecially to the churches he was more immediately concerned with, and even to all the ſaints: this is left out in the *Alexandrian* copy: it follows, *patience*; in bearing all indignities, reproaches, afflictions, and perſecutions for the ſake of Chriſt and his Goſpel; by which he was not in the leaſt moved, but perſevered with great courage and conſtancy to the end.

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[t] Targum Jon. in Exod. i. 15.

[u] Zohar in Exod. fol. 75. 1. & in Num. fol. 78. 3. Shalſheleth, ib.

Ver. 11. *Perſecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch*, &c.] In *Piſidia*; where the *Jews* that contradicted and blaſphemed his doctrine, and envied his ſucceſs, ſtirred up the chief of the city, both men and women againſt him, and *Barnabas*; who perſecuted them, and expelled them out of their coaſts, *Acts* xiii. 45, 50. and alſo at *Iconium*; where both *Jews* and *Gentiles* made an aſſault upon them, to uſe them ill, and ſtone them, *Acts* xiv. 5. and likewiſe at *Lyſtra*; where the Apoſtle was ſtoned, and drawn out of the city, and left for dead, *Acts* xiv. 19. And theſe inſtances are the rather mentioned becauſe they were done in thoſe parts, where *Timothy* had lived, *Acts* xvi. 1. and ſo knew the truth of theſe things, not only from the Apoſtle's mouth, but from the teſtimonies of others; and perhaps he might have been a witneſs to ſome of them himſelf: *what perſecutions I endured*; not only in the above places, but elſewhere; ſee a detail of them in 2 *Cor.* xi. 23—28. *but out of them all the Lord delivered me*; ſee 2 *Cor.* i. 10. 2 *Tim.* iv. 17, 18. this he ſays to the glory of the grace and power of God, to whom he aſcribes all his deliverances; and for the encouragement of *Timothy*, and other ſaints, under ſufferings, who may hope and believe, that the Lord will deliver them in his own time and way, *Pſ.* xxxiv. 19.

Ver. 12. *Yea and all that will live godly in Chriſt Jeſus*, &c.] All that live according to the will of God revealed in his word; and to the glory of God, as the end of all their actions; and which the grace of God in the Goſpel, and in their own hearts teaches them; and who have the principles of a godly life from Chriſt, and derive the freſh ſupplies of grace and life from him, to maintain it; in whom their life is hid, and who live by faith upon him; all ſuch that live, and that *will* live ſo, are deſirous of living after this manner; in whom God has wrought in them both to will and to do, and are concerned when it is otherwiſe with them: theſe *ſhall ſuffer perſecution*; it is the will of God, and the appointment of heaven; Chriſt has foretold it, that ſo it ſhall be; and he the head has ſuffered it himſelf, and it is neceſſary that his members ſhould, that they may be conformed unto him; it is the way Chriſt himſelf went to glory, and through many tribulations his people muſt enter the kingdom; and this is the common lot and certain caſe of all the ſaints, in one ſhape or another; for tho' all do not ſuffer confiſcation of goods, beating, ſcourging, impriſonment, or a violent death; yet all are more or leſs afflicted and diſtreſſed by wicked men, and are ſubject to their reproaches and revilings, which are a branch of perſecution; and that for profeſſing Chriſt, and living a godly life in him, and under his influence: and ſince ſuch ſuffer as chriſtians, and not as evil doers; and this is the common condition of the people of God in this world, it ſhould not be thought ſtrange, but be chearfully endured; to encourage to which, is the Apoſtle's view in this paſſage.

Ver. 13. *But evil men and ſeducers ſhall wax worſe and worſe*, &c.] By *evil men* are meant, not ſinful men in common, as all are by nature and practice; nor only open prophane ſinners, but rather wicked men under a form of godlineſs, as before; and who are full of wickedneſs and malice againſt truly godly perſons, even as the devil himſelf, of whom the ſame word is uſed, when he is called the wicked one; and this is a reaſon why true profeſſors of religion muſt expect perſecution, ſeeing as there ever were, ſo there ever will be ſuch ſort of men, who will not grow better, but worſe and worſe. The word for *ſeducers*, ſignifies ſorcerers, inchanters, a ſort of juglers; and as the other, it well ſuits with the eccleſiaſticks of the church of *Rome*, who pretend to miracles, and do lying wonders, and by their ſorceries deceive all nations, *Rev.* xviii. 23. and theſe *ſhall wax worſe and worſe*; in principle and in practice, in ungodlineſs, and in error, in wickedneſs and malice againſt the ſaints, and in the arts of deceiving; ſo the church of *Rome* is never to be expected to be better, but worſe; at the time of the fall of *Babylon* ſhe will be an habitation of *devils*, the hold of every foul ſpirit, and the cage of every unclean and hateful bird, *Rev.* xviii. 2. *deceiving*; not God, but themſelves and others, even all nations, excepting the elect of God; which they do by their good words and fair ſpeeches, and by their ſhew of devotion and religion, and by their pretended miracles and lying wonders: *and deceived*; by the old ſerpent, the devil, under whoſe power and influence they are, in whoſe ſnare they are taken, and by whom they are led captive, and will at laſt ſhare the ſame fate with himſelf, and be caſt into the ſame lake of fire and brimſtone.

Ver. 14. *But continue thou in the things*, &c.] That is, in the doctrines of the Goſpel, and not be moved away from them, either through the malice or perſecutions, or the cunning ſleight of men that lie in wait to deceive; and which is an exhortation ſuitable to the godly in all ages: and what follow are ſo many reaſons enforcing it: *which thou haſt learned*; not merely in a theoretical way, as arts and ſciences are learned, but in a ſpiritual and experimental manner; a comfortable knowledge and experience of which, he had attained unto; and were not like thoſe in ver. 7. who had been ever learning, and yet could not come to the knowledge of the truth: and ſince therefore he had learned the truths of the Goſpel, and had attained to a good underſtanding of them, it was his duty, as it is the duty of all ſuch to abide by them: *and haſt been aſſured of*; the doctrines of the Goſpel are certain things; they are truths without controverſy; there is a full aſſurance of underſtanding of them, which men may arrive unto, and which miniſters ſhould, ſince they are to affirm them with certainty. Scepticiſm is very unbecoming one that calls himſelf a miniſter of the Goſpel; and when a man is aſſured of the truth and reality of Goſpel doctrines, it would be ſhameful in him to drop them, or depart from them: *knowing of whom thou haſt learned them*. The Apoſtle means himſelf, tho' he modeſtly forbears the mention of himſelf: and it is another argument why *Timothy* ſhould continue ſtedfaſtly in the doctrines of the Goſpel, ſeeing he had learned them of ſo great an Apoſtle of Chriſt; whoſe miſſion, as ſuch, was abundantly confirmed, by miracles and ſucceſs, and who had received theſe doctrines by immediate revelation from Chriſt; ſo that it was all one as if *Timothy* had learned them from Chriſt himſelf. The *Alexandrian* copy reads the word *whom*, in the plural number, as if the Apoſtle referred to more teachers of *Timothy* than himſelf; however, he doubtleſs was the principal one.

Ver. 15. *And that from a child thou haſt known the holy ſcriptures*, &c.] And therefore muſt know that the doctrines he had learned were agreeable to them; and ſo is another reaſon why he ſhould continue in them. The *Jews* very early learned their children the holy ſcripture. *Philo* the *Jew* ſays[w], εκ πρωτης ηλικιας, *from their very infancy*; a phraſe pretty much the ſame with this here uſed. It is a maxim with the *Jews*,[x] that when a child was five years of age, it was proper to teach him the ſcriptures. *Timothy*'s mother being a *Jeweſs*, trained him up betimes in the knowledge of theſe writings, with which he became very converſant, and under divine influence and aſſiſtance, arrived to a large underſtanding of them; and it is a practice that highly becomes chriſtian parents; it is one part of the nurture and admonition of the Lord they ſhould bring up their children in: the Wiſe Man's advice in *Prov.* xxii. 6. is very good. From hence the Apoſtle takes occaſion to enter into a commendation of the ſacred writings; and here, from the nature and character of them, calls them the *holy ſcriptures*; to diſtinguiſh them from prophane writings; and that becauſe the author of them is the holy Spirit of God; and even the amanuenſes of him, and the penmen of them were holy men of God; the matter of them is holy, both law and Goſpel; and the end of writing them, is to promote holineſs; the precepts, promiſes, and doctrines contained in them are calculated for that purpoſe; and even the account they give of the ſins and failings of others, are for the admonition of men: and next theſe ſcriptures are commended from the efficacy of them: *which are able to make thee wiſe unto ſalvation.* Men are not wiſe of themſelves; they are naturally without an underſtanding of ſpiritual things; and the things of the ſpirit of God cannot be known by natural men, becauſe they are ſpiritually diſcerned; particularly they are not wiſe in the buſineſs of ſalvation, of which either they are inſenſible themſelves, and negligent; or fooliſhly build their hopes of it upon their civility, morality, legal righteouſneſs, or an outward profeſſion of religion: but the ſcriptures are able to make men wiſe and knowing in this reſpect; for the goſpel is one part of the ſcriptures, which is the Goſpel of ſalvation, and ſhews unto men the way of ſalvation. The ſcriptures teſtify largely of Chriſt, the ſaviour; and give an ample account both of him, who is the able, willing, ſuitable, compleat, and only ſaviour, and of the ſalvation which is wrought by him; and deſcribe the perſons who do, and ſhall enjoy it: not that the bare reading of the ſcriptures, or the hearing of them expounded, are able to make men wiſe in this way; but theſe, when accompanied with the ſpirit of wiſdom and revelation in the knowledge of Chriſt are; when he who endited the ſcriptures removes the veil from their eyes, opens their underſtandings, and gives them light and knowlege in them: and then may perſons be ſaid to be wiſe unto ſalvation, when they not only have a ſcheme of it in their heads, but are in their hearts ſenſible of their need of it, and know that there is ſalvation in no other but in Chriſt; and when they look to him for it, to his righteouſneſs for juſtification, to his blood for peace, pardon, and cleanſing, to his ſacrifice for atonement, and to his fulneſs of grace for a continual ſupply, and to him for eternal life and glory; when they rejoice in him and his ſalvation, and give him all the glory of it: the Apoſtle adds, *through faith which is in Chriſt Jeſus*; wiſdom to ſalvation lies not in the knowledge of the law, the *Jew* boaſted of; nor in the works of it, at leaſt, not in a truſt and confidence in them for ſalvation; for by them there is no juſtification before God, nor acceptance with him, nor ſalvation: but true wiſdem to ſalvation lies in faith, which is a ſpiritual knowledge of Chriſt, and a holy confidence in him; and that ſalvation which the ſcriptures make men wiſe unto, is received and enjoyed through that faith, which has Chriſt for its author and object; which comes from him, and centers in him, and is a looking to him for eternal life.

Ver. 16. *All ſcripture is given by inſpiration of God*, &c.] That is, all holy ſcripture; for of that only the Apoſtle is ſpeaking, and he means the whole of it; not only the books of the Old Teſtament, but of the New, the greateſt part of which was now written; for this Second Epiſtle to *Timothy* is by ſome thought to be the laſt of *Paul*'s epiſtles; and this alſo will hold good of what was to be written; for all is inſpired by God, or breathed by him: the ſcriptures are the breath of God, the word of God and not men; they are *written by the ſpirit*, as the *Syriac* verſion renders it; or *by the ſpirit of God*, as the *Ethiopic* verſion. The ſcriptures are here commended, from the divine authority of them; and which is atteſted and confirmed by various arguments; as the majeſty and loftineſs of their ſtyle, which in many places is inimitable by men; the ſublimity of the matter contained in them, which tranſcends all human underſtanding and capacity ever to have attained unto and diſcovered; as the Trinity of perſons in the Godhead, the incarnation of Chriſt, the reſurrection of the dead, *&c.* The purity and holineſs of them before obſerved, ſhew them to be the word of him that is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity; as alſo their harmony and agreement, tho' wrote by different perſons, in different places, and ages, and at ſundry times, and in divers manners; what ſeeming inconſiſtencies are obſerved in them, may with labour and induſtry, by divine aſſiſtance, be reconciled. The predictions of future events in them, as particularly concerning *Joſiah* and *Cyrus*, by name, long before they were born, and eſpecially concerning Jeſus Chriſt, and which have had their accompliſhment, and many others in the New Teſtament both by Chriſt and his Apoſtles, are a proof that they could not be the writings of men, but muſt have the omniſcient God for their author; the impartiality of the writers of them, in not concealing the mean extract of ſome of them, the ſins of others before converſion, and even their ſins and failings afterwards, as well as thoſe of their neareſt relations and deareſt friends, ſtrengthens the proof of their divine authority; to which may be added, the wonderful preſervation of them, through all the changes and declenſions of the *Jewiſh* church and ſtate, to whom the books of the Old Teſtament were committed; and notwithſtanding the violence and malice of heathen perſecutors, particularly *Diocleſian*, who ſought to deſtroy every copy of the ſcriptures, and publiſhed an edict for that purpoſe, and notwithſtanding the numbers of hereticks, and who have

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[w] De Legat. ad Caium, p. 1022.

[x] Pirke Abot, c. 5. §. 21.

been in power; as alſo the apoſtacy of the church of *Rome*; and yet theſe writings have been preſerved, and kept pure and incorrupt, which is not the caſe of other writings; nor are there any of ſuch antiquity as the oldeſt of theſe: to which may be ſubjoined, the teſtimony of God himſelf; his outward teſtimony by miracles, wrought by *Moſes* and the prophets, concerned in the writings of the Old Teſtament, and by the Apoſtles in the New; and his internal teſtimony, which is the efficacy of theſe ſcriptures on the hearts of men; the reading and hearing of which, having been owned for the converſion, comfort and edification of thouſands and thouſands, and ten thouſand times ten thouſand: and is *profitable for doctrine*; for the diſcovering, illuſtrating and confirming any doctrine concerning God, the being, perſons, and perfections of God; concerning the creation and fall of man; concerning the perſon and offices of Chriſt, redemption by him, juſtification by his righteouſneſs, pardon by his blood, reconciliation and atonement by his ſacrifice, and eternal life through him, with many others. The ſcripture is profitable for miniſters to fetch doctrine from, and eſtabliſh it by; and for hearers to try and prove it by: *for reproof*; of errors and hereſies; this is the ſword of the Spirit, which cuts all down. There never was, nor is, nor can be any error or hereſy broached in the world, but there is a ſufficient refutation of it in the ſcriptures; which may be profitably uſed for that purpoſe, as it often has been by Chriſt and his Apoſtles, and others ſince in all ages: *for correction*; of vice; there being no ſin, but the evil nature of it is ſhewn, its wicked tendency is expoſed, and the ſad effects and conſequences of it are pointed out in theſe writings: *for inſtruction in righteouſneſs*; in every branch of duty incumbent upon men; whether with reſpect to God, or one another; for there is no duty men are obliged unto, but the nature, uſe, and excellency of it, are here ſhewn: the ſcriptures are a perfect rule of faith and practice; and thus they are commended from the uſefulneſs and profitableneſs of them.

Ver. 17. *That the man of God may be perfect*, &c.] By *the man of God*, may be meant, every one that in a ſpecial relation belongs to God; who is choſen by God the father, redeemed by the Son, and called by the Spirit; but more eſpecially a miniſter of the Goſpel; for as it was uſual to call a prophet under the Old Teſtament by this name, it ſeems to be transferred from thence to a miniſter of the New Teſtament, ſee 1 *Tim.* vi. 11. and the deſign of the ſcriptures, and the end of writing them are, that both preachers of the word, and hearers of it, might have a perfect knowledge of the will of God; that the former might be a compleat miniſter of the Goſpel, and that nothing might be wanting for the information of the latter: *thoroughly furniſhed unto all good works*, or *every good work*; particularly to the work of the miniſtry, which is a good one; and to every part and branch of it, a thorough furniture for which lies in the holy ſcriptures; from whence as ſcribes well inſtructed in the kingdom of heaven, do Goſpel miniſters bring forth things new and old, both for delight and profit: tho' this may be alſo applied to all good works in common, which the ſcriptures point unto, give directions about, as well as ſhew where ſtrength is to be had to perform them.

CHAP. IV.

IN this chapter the Apoſtle charges *Timothy* to perform his office as an Evangeliſt, with great diligence, conſtancy, and faithfulneſs, with reaſons for it; gives ſome hints of ſeveral particular perſons mentioned, which made him very deſirous that *Timothy* would come quickly to him; relates how things were with him when he made his firſt defence at *Rome*; and concludes the epiſtle with ſalutations, and his uſual bleſſing. The charge is made in the moſt ſolemn manner in the ſight of God, and of Chriſt, as judge of quick and dead; and directs to the ſeveral parts of the miniſterial work, and the manner in which they ſhould be performed, ver. 1, 2. The reaſon of which charge is, becauſe the time was haſtening on, that ſound doctrine would not be endured, and men would depart from the truth to fables and falſe teachers, ver. 3, 4. Wherefore the Apoſtle repeats his charge and exhortation to *Timothy*, tho' in other words, to be vigilant, patient, courageous and faithful in the diſcharge of his office, ver. 5. adding a freſh reaſon moving to it, taken from the Apoſtle's death being at hand; which is expreſſed by a ſacrifice, and by a departure out of the world, ver. 6. which leads him to give an account of his paſt conduct in fighting the good fight, finiſhing his courſe, and keeping the faith, ver. 7. and of his firm belief of eternal glory and happineſs, ver. 8. and next, he deſires *Timothy* to uſe all diligence to come quickly to him, ver. 9. his reaſons for which were, becauſe he had ſcarce any body with him: one had forſook him through love of the world; another was gone to *Theſſalonica*; a third, to *Galatia*, and a fourth to *Dalmatia*; only *Luke* the Evangeliſt was with him; and as for *Tychicus*, he had ſent him to *Epheſus*: he therefore deſires he would bring *Mark* with him, and his cloak, books, and parchments he had left at *Troas*, ver. 10, 11, 12, 13. and then takes notice of perſons that had uſed him ill, particularly *Alexander* the copper-ſmith; he wiſhes juſtice might be done him; and adviſes *Timothy* to beware of him, becauſe of his oppoſition to the doctrines of the Goſpel, ver. 14, 15. and alſo of others that neglected him, who forſook him when he defended himſelf: however, he prays that this might not be charged upon them; and obſerves the goodneſs of God in ſtanding by him and delivering him; and expreſſes his faith and confidence that he ſhould be delivered and preſerved ſafe to eternal glory, ver. 16, 17, 18. and next follow the Apoſtle's ſalutations of ſome perſons at *Epheſus*, and an account of two others, one at *Corinth*, and another at *Miletum*; and a repetition of his requeſt to *Timothy*, to come quickly to him, and before winter; and then ſome ſalutations of perſons at *Rome*, ſent by *Timothy*; and the whole is concluded with the Apoſtle's uſual benediction, ver. 19, 20, 21, 22.

Ver. 1. *I charge thee therefore before God*, &c.] Whoſe word the ſcriptures are, and by whom they are inſpired; who had made *Timothy* an able miniſter of the New Teſtament, and to whom he was accountable for his miniſtry: *and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt*; who is equal with God, and beſtows miniſterial gifts on men, and from whom *Timothy* had his; whoſe Goſpel he preached; in whoſe cauſe he was imbarked; and before whom he muſt appear, to give an account of his miniſtry, talents, and ſouls under his care: *who ſhall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom*; it is certain there will be a general judgment; the day is appointed, and Chriſt is ordained the judge of all men; all judgment is committed to him, and he is ready to exerciſe it; for which he is abundantly qualified, being God omniſcient and omnipotent; and which he will execute in the moſt righteous and impartial manner. The perſons that will be judged by him are, *the quick and the dead*; by which are meant, not the different parts of men, their ſouls which are living and immortal, and their bodies which die and will be raiſed from the dead, tho' they will be judged in their whole perſons; nor the different ſorts of men, as good men, who are made alive by the ſpirit and grace of God, and evil men, who are dead in treſpaſſes and ſins, and die in their ſins; tho' this is a truth that God will judge both the righteous and the wicked: but rather by the *quick*, are meant, ſuch as will be found alive at Chriſt's coming; and by the *dead*, ſuch as having been dead, will be raiſed by him; and in ſhort, the characters include all mentioned; who muſt all ſtand before the judgment-ſeat of Chriſt. The time when this will be, is, *at his appearing and his kingdom*; which may be conſidered as an *Hendyadis*, expreſſive of one and the ſame thing; and ſo the *Syriac* verſion renders it, *at the revelation of his kingdom*; or as two things, the one as antecedent and preparatory to the other; the former refers to the appearance of Chriſt at the laſt day. He appeared frequently to the Old Teſtament ſaints in an human form; and he really appeared in human nature in the fulneſs of time; and after his reſurrection to his Apoſtles and others, and even after his aſcenſion to ſome; and he appears in a ſpiritual manner to believers in all ages; but to them that look for him, he will appear a ſecond time in perſon, in a moſt glorious manner: for the preſent he is received up into heaven, where he is as it were hid, and is unſeen to corporeal eyes; but in his due time he will be manifeſted in his own and his father's glory, and in the glory of his angels; and this appearance will be greatly to the advantage of the ſaints, who will then appear in glory, and be like him, and ſee him as he is, and hence they look for it, and love it; and at this time will be the judgment, and then will the kingdom of Chriſt take place. Chriſt has a kingdom now, and ever had, which is not of this world, but is of a ſpiritual nature, and which will be more manifeſt in the latter day, by the ſpread of the Goſpel, the numerous inſtances of converſion, and the revival of powerful religion and godlineſs, which we commonly call the ſpiritual reign of Chriſt; but the kingdom here deſigned, is the perſonal reign of Chriſt, for a thouſand years; at the beginning of which will be the judgment of the ſaints, who having the crown of righteouſneſs given them by the judge, will reign with him as kings and prieſts; and at the end of this period will be the judgment of the wicked. The charge made before theſe two divine perſons, God and his ſon Jeſus Chriſt, follows.

Ver. 2. *Preach the word*, &c.] Either Chriſt the eſſential word, who is the ſum and ſubſtance of the Goſpel miniſtry; or the word of truth and faith, the Goſpel of ſalvation, the word of righteouſneſs, peace, and reconciliation by Chriſt; which is to be preached, or publiſhed, in like manner as heralds proclaim the will of their princes; openly, publickly, and with a loud voice, without adding to it, or taking from it; ſpeaking out the whole, and keeping back no part of it; and that with all courage and boldneſs: ſome copies read, *the word of God*; and the *Ethiopic* verſion, *his word*; that is, the word of Chriſt: *be inſtant in ſeaſon, out of ſeaſon*; that is, be conſtant and aſſiduous in the work of the miniſtry; be always and wholly in it, either preparing for it, or performing it; or doing thoſe things which are annexed to it, or follow upon it; redeem time, and take every opportunity of diſpenſing the myſteries of grace, as a faithful ſteward of them; not only make uſe of the common and ſtated ſeaſons for the miniſtration of the word and ordinances, but embrace every other that offers; make uſe not only of thoſe ſeaſons which may ſeem commodious and advantageous both to preacher and hearer, and promiſe uſefulneſs and ſucceſs, but even ſuch as may ſeem incommodious and diſadvantageous to fleſh and blood; ſuch as times of perſecution and oppoſition; but none of theſe things ſhould deter and move from the preaching of the Goſpel. Several parts of the miniſterial function to be inſiſted on and attended to, are next mentioned, as being within the ſolemn charge given before God and Chriſt: *reprove*; errors, and men for their errors and hereſies; make uſe of convincing arguments taken out of the ſcriptures, which are profitable for reproof of this kind; and which reproof ſometimes is to be given with ſharpneſs, as the caſe requires, that men may be ſound in the faith. *Rebuke*; or chide for ſin; ſome privately, others more publickly, according to the nature and circumſtances of the offence; ſome more gently, others more roughly, as is needful. *Exhort*; to all the duties of religion reſpecting God and man; to ſhew love, and to do good works; to hold faſt the profeſſion of faith, and walk as becomes the Goſpel of Chriſt; and to perſevere in faith and holineſs: or *comfort*, as the word may be rendered; for as the miniſters of the Goſpel are in ſome caſes to be *Boanergeſſes*, ſons of thunder, ſo in other caſes they ſhould be *Barnabaſſes*, ſons of conſolation; and comfort diſtreſſed minds, by preaching the comfortable doctrines of peace, pardon, righteouſneſs and ſalvation by Jeſus Chriſt: *with all long-ſuffering*; or patience. The ſucceſs of the Goſpel miniſtry ſhould be patiently waited for, as huſbandmen do for the fruits of the earth. Thoſe that give into error, and oppoſe themſelves to the truth, ſhould be inſtructed in meekneſs; and thoſe who are overtaken in a fault ſhould be gently rebuked, and reſtored in ſuch a ſpirit; and every exhortation ſhould be preſſed as perſons are able to bear it: *and doctrine*; in a way that is inſtructive and teaching, and in agreement with the doctrine of the ſcriptures, which are profitable for that purpoſe.

Ver. 3. *For the time will come*, &c.] This is a reaſon of the ſolemn charge above given: the time referred to was future, when the Apoſtle wrote, but quickly came on; and the characters of it have appeared more or leſs in all ages ſince; and in none more than in ours: *when they will not endure ſound doctrine*; the Goſpel which contains the wholeſome words of Chriſt, and is ſound itſelf, having no corruption in it, and ſalutary in its effects to the ſouls of men; and yet ſuch is the depravity of ſome men, both in principles and practice, that they cannot receive it, nor bear to hear it, turn their backs on it, expreſs their indignation at it, and treat it, not only with neglect, but with ridicule and contempt: *but after their own luſts ſhall they heap to themſelves teachers*; not being content with the miniſtry of one man only, or of a few, tho' of their own ſort; but muſt follow many, and have heaps of them; which ſeems to expreſs not only the number of falſe teachers which they accumulate to themſelves, but the confuſed and indiſcreet choice they make of them: and that after their own luſts; chuſing to hear ſuch as either indulge them in their ſinful luſts and pleaſures; or are agreeable to their private corrupt ſentiments, in oppoſition to the generally received doctrine of faith. It is a bleſſing to have paſtors and teachers after God's heart, and who preach according to the word of God; theſe feed men with knowledge and underſtanding, *Jer.* iii. 15. but it is a curſe upon a people, when they are left to chuſe teachers after their hearts luſts: *having itching ears*; always deſirous of new things, as the *Athenians* of old; or loving to have their ears ſcratched and tickled with ſmooth things, that are pleaſing and agreeable to natural men, and carnal minds; as the purity of human nature, the power of man's free-will, the excellency of his righteouſneſs, and the merit of his works, and the like; ſee *Iſ.* xxx. 9, 10. Now, this being the caſe, ſhould not diſcourage, but rather animate the miniſters of the Goſpel to preach it; for ſhould they deſiſt, in all likelihood the Goſpel would ſoon be gone.

Ver. 4. *And they ſhall turn away their ears from the truth*, &c.] The ſolid truths of the Goſpel, not being able to bear the hearing of them: *and ſhall be turned unto fables*; things idle, trifling, uſeleſs, and unprofitable; and which are no better than old wives fables: ſome reſpect may be had either to *Jewiſh* fables, or to the fabulous mythologies of the *Gentiles*, or of the *Gnoſtics*, and others; but in general, it includes every thing that is vain, empty and ſenſeleſs; and this is to be conſidered as a juſt judgment upon them; that ſince they like not to retain the knowledge of the truth, but turn away their ears from it, God gives them up to a reprobate mind, a mind void of ſenſe and judgment, to attend to things idle and fabulous.

Ver. 5. *But watch thou in all things*, &c.] Relating to himſelf, his doctrine, and converſation; and to others, to feed the flock of God under his care, to know the ſtate of them, and care for them; to give the time of night, and notice of approaching danger, and ſee the laws of Chriſt put in execution; either in alluſion to ſhepherds, who watch over their flocks night and day; or to watchmen that are upon the walls of cities, or go about them; or to the prieſts and Levites in the temple: *endure afflictions*; the *Alexandrian* copy adds, *as a good ſoldier of Jeſus Chriſt*, as in ch. ii. 3. meaning reproaches and perſecutions for the ſake of the Goſpel, from without, and all trials and exerciſes from within, through the infirmities and ill conduct of the ſaints themſelves; all which are to be endured patiently, chearfully, and courageouſly; ſo as not to be moved by them, to deſiſt from the work of the miniſtry: *do the work of an evangeliſt*; which may deſign either an officer, then in the church, diſtinct from apoſtles and prophets on the one hand, and paſtors and teachers on the other; and was below the former, and above the latter; and was aiding and aſſiſting to the Apoſtles, and ſuch an one *Timothy* may be thought to be: or it may intend a preacher of the Goſpel in common; and to do the work of ſuch an one is not to read lectures of morality, or to preach up juſtification and ſalvation by the works of the law; or to mix law and Goſpel together, and confound them both; but to preach peace, pardon, righteouſneſs, life, and ſalvation alone by Jeſus Chriſt, and through the free grace of God: *make full proof of thy miniſtry*; the work of the miniſtry, which lies in preaching the Goſpel, and adminiſtring ordinances, and doing all the duties belonging to it, which is to fulfil it, or diſcharge it; and which gives full proof of a man's being a true and faithful miniſter of the word; particularly when he diligently and conſtantly attends to his work; ſeeks not his own things, but the things of Chriſt; chearfully and patiently ſuffers for Chriſt and his Goſpel, and lives an agreeable life and converſation.

Ver. 6. *For I am now ready to be offered*, &c.] Or *poured out*, as a libation, or a drink-offering; or as the blood was poured out at the bottom of the altar; which is expreſſive of martyrdom, and ſhews that the Apoſtle knew what death he ſhould die; for which he was habitually ready: and this ſacrifice of himſelf was not to atone for ſin, his own, or others; Chriſt's death was the only ſacrifice for ſin, and that is a compleat one, and needs no other to be added to it; but this was in the cauſe of Chriſt, and for the confirmation of the Goſpel, and the faith of the ſaints in it: ſo covenants have been confirmed by libations or drink-offerings of wine; and this was an offering acceptable unto God, in whoſe ſight the death of his ſaints is precious; as the wine in the drink-offering is ſaid to chear God, that is, to be acceptable to him: *and the time of my departure is at hand*; death is not an annihilation of man, neither of his body, nor of his ſoul; the one at death returns to duſt, and the other to God that gave it: death is a diſſolution of ſoul and body, or a diſſolving of the union that is between them, and a reſolution of the body into its firſt principles; hence the *Syriac* verſion renders it, *the time in which I ſhall be diſſolved*; and the *Vulgate Latin* verſion, *the time of my reſolution*. Death analyſes men, and reduces them to their firſt original earth; it is a removing of perſons from one place and ſtate to another; from an houſe of clay, from this earthly houſe of our tabernacle, to an houſe not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, to everlaſting habitations, and manſions in Chriſt's father's houſe. This phraſe, *a departure*, is an eaſy repreſentation of death, and ſuppoſes an exiſtence after it; ſee the note on *Phil.* i. 23. Now there is a *time* for this; ſaints are not to continue here always; this is a ſtate of pilgrimage, and a time of ſojourning, and which is fixed and ſettled: the time for going out of this world, as well as for coming into it, is determined by God, beyond which there is no paſſing; the number of mens days, months, and years, is with him; and the Apoſtle knew partly from his age, and partly from his ſituation, being in bonds at *Rome*, and it may be by divine revelation, that his time of removing out of this world was very near; and which he mentions, to ſtir up *Timothy* to diligence, ſince he would not have him long with him, to give him counſel and advice, to admoniſh him, or ſet him an example.

Ver. 7. *I have fought a good fight*, &c.] The fight of faith; the ſame as in 1 *Tim.* vi. 12. ſee the note there: *I have finiſhed my courſe*, or race; the race of life ſet before him, his courſe of years; his days were extinct, the grave was ready for him, and he for that; his laſt ſands were dropping, and he was juſt going the way of all fleſh; or elſe he means, the courſe of his miniſtry, which he deſired to finiſh with joy, and was now finiſhing; ſee *Acts* xiii. 25. and xx. 24. he was now got to the end of his line, to *Rome*, where he was to be a martyr for Chriſt, *Acts* xxiii. 11. ſo that he now concluded his work was done, and his warfare accompliſhed: *I have kept the faith*; by which he means, not ſo much the grace of faith, that was kept by Chriſt, the object, author and finiſher of it, and through his effectual grace and powerful interceſſion; but rather the profeſſion of faith, which he had held faſt without wavering; and chiefly the doctrine of faith, which was committed to his truſt, which he had kept pure and uncorrupt againſt all oppoſition; unleſs his faithfulneſs and integrity in the miniſterial work ſhould be thought rather to be intended; and which ſenſe is favoured by the *Syriac* and *Ethiopic* verſions, which render it, *I have kept my faith*; or have been faithful to my truſt, as a good ſteward of the myſteries of God; not concealing and keeping back any thing that was profitable, but declaring the whole counſel of God; and now what remained for him was the crown of righteouſneſs; and this he ſays for the comfort and encouragement and imitation of *Timothy* and others. The phraſe ſeems to be *Jewiſh*; it is ſaid[y] by the *Jews*, that he that does not keep the feaſt of unleavened bread, is as he who does not נטיר מהימנותא *keep the faith* of the holy bleſſed God.

Ver. 8. *Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteouſneſs*, &c.] The happineſs of the future ſtate of the ſaints is ſignified by a *crown*, on account of the glory and excellency of it; and in perfect agreement with the character of the ſaints, as kings; and who are raiſed to ſit among princes, and to inherit the throne of glory, and have a kingdom prepared for them: and this is called a crown *of righteouſneſs*, becauſe it comes through the righteouſneſs of Chriſt; it is that which gives a right unto it, and without which it cannot be enjoyed; and becauſe it is obtained and poſſeſſed in a righteous way, and not by force and uſurpation, as crowns ſometimes are: it is God the father's free gift unto his children, what they are born heirs unto, and have a meetneſs for, through regenerating and ſanctifying grace, and have a legal title to it through the righteouſneſs of Chriſt. Moreover, this may be expreſſive of the perfect holineſs and righteouſneſs of the heavenly ſtate, and of the ſaints in it, wherein will dwell none but righteous perſons, and who will be intirely without ſin. And this happineſs ſignified by a crown, is *laid up*; in the covenant of grace for the ſaints, which is ordered in all things and ſure; and in Chriſt, in whoſe hands their perſons are, and their grace is, and with him alſo is their life of glory hid and ſecured: and this alſo is laid up in heaven, and reſerved there, and that *for me*, and thee; for particular perſons, for all the veſſels of mercy, for all that are choſen in Chriſt Jeſus, and redeemed by his blood, and ſanctified by his ſpirit: *which the Lord, the righteous judge ſhall give me at that day*. By *the Lord*, is meant the Lord Jeſus Chriſt; as is evident from his character, as a a judge, for the father judgeth no man; and from mention being made hereafter of his appearing: Chriſt is ordained *judge* of quick and dead, for which he is abundantly qualified, and a *righteous* one he will be; he is righteous as God, and as man, and as mediator in the diſcharge of all his offices, and ſo he will be as a judge, in the adminiſtration of that office; righteouſneſs will be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulneſs the girdle of his reins; and from Chriſt, under this character, the Apoſtle expected to receive all his future glory and happineſs; and that both in a way of gift, as a free grace gift from him, and through him, and in a way of righteouſneſs; and this ſeems to be a *Jewiſh* way of ſpeaking. One of the ſeptuagint interpreters whom *Ptolomy* king of *Egypt* ſent for from *Judea*, to tranſlate the law of *Moſes* into *Greek*, in anſwer to a queſtion put to him by the king, uſes this phraſe of ϛεφανος δικαιοσυνης, *a crown of righteouſneſs*; and which he repreſents as the gift of God[z]: *at that day*; either at the day of death, the time of his diſſolution, which was at hand; or at the day of the reſurrection, and of the laſt judgment, when Chriſt will appear under the above character: and the Apoſtle further obſerves, to the comfort and encouragement of *Timothy*, and others, that this happineſs was not intended and prepared for himſelf only, but for others: *and not to me only, but unto all them alſo that love his appearing*; that is, his appearing at his ſecond coming; which is to be loved, and ſo looked for by the ſaints, not only becauſe it will be glorious in itſelf, in its attendants and conſequences, but will be of great advantage to the ſaints; Chriſt will appear unto ſalvation to them, and ſo to their joy; they will appear with him in glory, and be like him, and enjoy the everlaſting viſion of him. The devils believe this appearance of Chriſt, but tremble at it; wicked men will behold him, and fear; ſaints know, believe, and love both Chriſt and his appearing; and ſuch will wear that crown: the *Ethiopic* verſion renders it, *who love him at his coming*; all that love him now, will love him then.

Ver. 9. *Do thy diligence to come ſhortly unto me*.] From *Epheſus*, where *Timothy* was, to *Rome*, where the Apoſtle was; and this requeſt did not ariſe purely from a deſire of ſeeing *Timothy*, as in ch. i. 4. but rather becauſe he had ſome things to ſay to him, relating to the care of the churches, and the good of the intereſt of Chriſt, which he choſe not to write with ink and paper; and he deſires the rather that he would uſe diligence, and haſten his coming to him; partly becauſe winter was coming on, when travelling would not be ſo ſafe and comfortable, ver. 21. and partly becauſe the time of his death was at hand, ver. 7. and alſo becauſe he was almoſt alone.

Ver. 10. *For Demas hath forſaken me*, &c.] Of this perſon, ſee the note on *Col*. iv. 14. It does not appear by what is ſaid in this clauſe, and in the following, that he entirely apoſtatized; he might forſake the Apoſtle, and yet not forſake Chriſt and his intereſt, or make ſhipwreck of faith and a good conſcience: his faith might be right, tho' low, and his love ſincere, tho' not fervent; and through a fear of perſecution, and loſs of life, he might be tempted to leave the Apoſtle, and withdraw from *Rome*, for his own ſafety; which tho' it was far from being commendable in him, yet may be accounted for in this ſtate of frailty and imperfection, conſiſtent with the grace of God; and it ſhould ſeem that he afterwards was delivered from this temptation, and returned to the Apoſtle, *Col*. iv. 14. *Philem*. 24. for when thoſe epiſtles were written, both *Timothy* and *Mark*, who are here wrote for, ver. 9, 11. were with the Apoſtle, *Col*. i. 1. and *Philem*. i. and eſpecially he ought to be thought very well of after all this, if *Demas* is only a contraction of *Demetrius*, and he is the ſame who is ſo much commended many years after this, in 3 *John* v. 12. *having loved this preſent world*; not the ſins and corruptions of the world, the luſt of the fleſh, the luſt of the eyes, and the pride of life; ſuch a love is inconſiſtent with the love of the father and the grace of God; nor an immoderate love of worldly ſubſtance, or of money, which is the root of all evil; but a love of life, or of a longer life in this preſent world; he was deſirous of living longer in

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[y] Zohar in Exod. fol. 51. 2.

[z] Ariſteæ Hiſt. 72. Interpr. p. 91. Ed. Oxon.

this world, and choſe not to hazard his life by ſtaying with the Apoſtle, a priſoner at *Rome*; and therefore left him, and provided for his own ſafety and ſecurity: *and is departed unto Theſſalonica*; which perhaps was his native country; and however he was at a ſufficient diſtance from *Rome*, where he might judge himſelf ſafe; and if he was a worldly and earthly-minded man, this was a fit place for him, being a place of trade and buſineſs: and this doubtleſs gave riſe to a tradition, that he afterwards became a prieſt of the idol gods among the *Theſſalonians*. *Epiphanius*[a] places him among the hereticks *Ebion* and *Cerinthus*, as if he was one of them. *Creſcens to Galatia*; he might not depart on the ſame account as *Demas*, but might be ſent by the Apoſtle to *Galatia*, to viſit the churches there, to ſet things in order, and eſtabliſh them in the faith, and bring an account of their ſtate. *Epiphanius*[b], inſtead of *Galatia*, reads *Gallia*, or *France*; and ſo does *Euſebius*[c] and the *Ethiopic* verſion; and *Jerom* aſſerts[d], that *Creſcens* preached in *France*, and was there buried; though others ſay he was biſhop of *Chalcedon* in *Galatia*, and put him among the ſeventy diſciples; ſee the note on *Luke* x. 1. The *Syriac* verſion calls him *Criſpus*, and the *Arabic* verſion *Priſcus*. *Titus to Dalmatia*; who *Titus* was is well known; the place he went to, *Dalmatia*, is a country in *Europe*, a part of *Illyricum*, where the Apoſtle had preached, *Rom.* xv. 19. ſee the note there. *Pliny* ſays[e], that part of *Pannonia*, which lies to the *Adriatic* ſea, was called *Dalmatia*; it had its name from *Dalmius*, a city in it. The *Alexandrian* copy reads *Dermatia*. Here the Apoſtle had doubtleſs been uſeful for the converſion of ſouls, and planting of churches, and therefore ſent *Titus* thither, to aſſiſt them in their ſtate and condition, and bring him an account of them. For in the *ſecond* and *third* centuries we read of churches in *Dalmatia*; and likewiſe in the *fourth* century; for there were biſhops from *Dalmatia* in the ſynod at *Sardica*; and in the *fifth* century, *Glycerius* was biſhop of *Salo*, a city in this country; and in the *ſixth* century, one *Malchus* was biſhop of the *Dalmatian* church[f].

Ver. 11. *Only Luke is with me*, &c.] The beloved phyſician, who wrote the Goſpel that bears his name, and the *Acts of the Apoſtles*, and was a conſtant companion of *Paul*'s in his travels and ſufferings: *take Mark, and bring him with thee*; who might be at *Epheſus*, or ſomewhere in *Timothy*'s way, as he came to *Rome*. This ſeems to be the ſame with *John Mark* of *Jeruſalem*, the ſon of *Mary*, the ſiſter of *Barnabas*, and who was with *Paul* and *Barnabas* in their travels, and who parted from them at *Pamphylia*; on whoſe account, and for that reaſon there was ſo great a difference between *Paul* and *Barnabas*, as to ſeparate upon it; but now the Apoſtle had entertained a better opinion of him, and was reconciled unto him, and was very deſirous of his company and aſſiſtance; and which he had, *Col.* iv. 10. *Philem.* 24. *For he is profitable to me for the miniſtry*; that is, of the Goſpel, to aſſiſt in preaching it.

Ver. 12. *And Tychicus have I ſent to Epheſus.*] To ſupply the place of *Timothy*, whilſt he came to *Rome*, and continued there: ſo careful was the Apoſtle of the church there, that they might not be without the miniſtry of the word during his abſence; ſee *Eph.* vi. 20, 21.

Ver. 13. *The cloak that I left at Troas with Carpus*, &c.] About the word here rendered a *cloak*, interpreters are not agreed: ſome take it for a garment, and about this they differ; ſome would have it to be a dignified robe, ſuch as the *Roman conſuls* and *ſenators* of *Rome* wore; which is not likely, this being not ſuitable to the Apoſtle's character, ſtate, and circumſtances. Others take it to be a coarſer and meaner garment, wore in cold and rainy weather, to preſerve from the inclemencies of it; and winter now coming on, ver. 21. the Apoſtle ſends for it; which he perhaps had left at *Troas* in the ſummer ſeaſon, as he came: but others take it to be a kind of deſk or ſcrutore, to put papers in, or a cheſt for books, a book-preſs; and ſo the *Syriac* verſion renders it; and which agrees with what follows. *Jerom* underſtands it of a book itſelf, of the *Hebrew* volume of the *Pentateuch*[g]. *Troas*, where this cloak, or book-preſs, or book was, was a city in *Aſia Minor*, that ſtood upon, or near the ſame place where old *Troy* ſtood, and from whence it ſeems to have had its name, and lay in *Timothy*'s way from *Epheſus* to *Rome*; ſee the note on *Acts* xvi. 8. and xx. 7. and as for *Carpus*, he was *Paul*'s hoſt when he was at *Troas*. Some make him to be firſt biſhop of *Laodicea*, and then of *Crete*; he is reckoned among the ſeventy diſciples, and is ſaid to be biſhop of *Berytus* in *Thrace*; ſee the note on *Luke* x. 1. *When thou comeſt, bring* with thee; he would have him call for it at *Troas* as he came by, and bring it with him: *and the books*; that were in it, or were there, beſides the *Hebrew Pentateuch*: the Apoſtle was a great reader of books, of various ſorts, both *Gentile* and *Jewiſh*, as appears by his citations out of the Heathen poets, and his acquaintance with *Jewiſh* records, *Acts* xvii. 28. 1 *Cor.* xv. 33. *Tit.* i. 12. 2 *Tim.* iii. 8. And tho' he was now grown old, and near his exit, yet was mindful and careful of his books, and deſirous of having them to read; and herein ſet an example to *Timothy* and others, and enforced the exhortation he gave him, 1 *Tim.* iv. 13. But *eſpecially the parchments*; which might contain his own writings he had a mind to reviſe before his death, and commit into the hands of proper perſons; or ſome obſervations which he had made in his travels, concerning perſons and things; tho' it is moſt likely that theſe were the books of the Old Teſtament, which were written on parchments, and rolled up together; and hence they are called the volume of the book; and theſe the Apoſtle had a ſpecial regard for, that whatever was neglected, he deſired that theſe might not, but be carefully brought unto him.

Ver. 14. *Alexander the copperſmith did me much evil*, &c.] This ſeems to be the ſame perſon that was at *Epheſus* in the tumult, when the Apoſtle was there, *Acts* xx. 33, 34. and whom he afterwards delivered to ſatan, along with *Hymenæus*, for blaſphemy, 1 *Tim.* i. 20. It is very likely he had lately been at *Rome*, tho' now returned to *Epheſus*, and had done great injury to the Apoſtle's character, and had reproached and reviled him as a man of bad principles and practices; his buſineſs is mentioned, to diſtinguiſh him from any other of that name, and to ſhew the inſolence of the man, that tho' he was an illiterate perſon, and in ſuch a mean ſtation of life, yet took upon him to reſiſt the Apoſtle and his doctrine. *The Lord reward him according to his works*; which may be conſidered either as an imprecation upon him, as knowing him to be a wicked blaſphemer, and a reprobate perſon; and which aroſe, not from private reſentment, and on account of the private injury he had done to him; but from a pure zeal for the glory of God, and the honour of his name, without mingling his own ſpirit and paſſions with it: or as a prophecy, or declaration of what would be; and ſo the *Alexandrian* copy, and the *Vulgate Latin* and *Syriac* verſions read, *the Lord will render to him*, &c.

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[a] Contra Hæreſ. Hæreſ. 51.
[b] Ibid.
[c] Hiſt. Eccl. l. 3. c. 4.
[d] Catalog. Script. Eccleſ. §. 13. p. 90.
[e] Nat. Hiſt. l. 3. c. 25.
[f] Hiſt. Eccleſ. Magdeburg. cent. 2. c. 2. p. 4. cent. 3. c. 2. p. 4. cent. 4. c. 2. p. 6. c. 9. p. 425. cent. 5. c. 2. p. 7. cent. 6. c. 2. p. 8.
[g] Epiſt. ad Damaſ. qu. 2. p. 12. tom. 3.

Ver. 15. *Of whom be thou ware alſo*, &c.] For he was now at *Epheſus*; and ſince he was ſuch a malicious, ill-natured, and troubleſome perſon, as well as a blaſphemer, an heretick, and had been delivered up to ſatan, it was very adviſeable to ſhun his company, and have no converſation with him, and be upon the guard againſt him, that he might have no opportunity of doing hurt to him, or to the church at *Epheſus*: *for he hath greatly withſtood our words*; or doctrines; the truths of the Goſpel preached by *Paul* and *Timothy*, which he oppoſed himſelf to, and reſiſted with all his might, and endeavoured to confute and overthrow; and wherein he was deficient in argument, he made up with railing and blaſphemy; and this was the true reaſon of the Apoſtle's imprecations on him, and why he would have *Timothy* beware of him, and avoid him, and not the perſonal injury he had done him.

Ver. 16. *At my firſt anſwer no man ſtood with me*, &c.] Meaning, that when he made his firſt defence againſt the charges laid unto him in one of the courts of judicature in *Rome*, no man appeared in his cauſe, to ſpeak to his character, to be a witneſs for him, or plead his cauſe: *but all men forſook me*; all his friends, all that came with him from *Judea*, or from *Aſia*; ſee chap. i. 15. being timorous of coming into danger, and of the loſs of their lives; as the diſciples of Chriſt were, when he was apprehended, who all at that time forſook him and fled: I pray God *that it may not be laid to their charge*; that this ſin may not be imputed to them, or they be puniſhed for it, but that it might be pardoned; ſo differently does he expreſs himſelf on the account of theſe, than on the account of the copperſmith; he ſinning thro' malice, wilfully and obſtinately, theſe thro' ſurprize, temptation, and weakneſs.

Ver. 17. *Notwithſtanding the Lord ſtood with me*, &c.] Either perſonally appearing to him, as in *Acts* xxiii. 11. or by the miniſtry of an angel, *Acts* xxvii. 23, 24. or elſe by granting him his gracious preſence, which was what Chriſt had not, when he was forſaken by his diſciples: the preſence of God or Chriſt is more than all friends whatever, and is often enjoyed by the believer, when they drop him; and is a bulwark againſt all enemies and fears of them; if God is with him, and on his ſide, tho' friends fail, and enemies rage, he has nothing to fear: *and ſtrengthened me*; inwardly with ſtrength in his ſoul, with might in his inward man, unto all long-ſuffering with joyfulneſs: he was weak in himſelf, and could do nothing without Chriſt; Chriſt was his ſtrength, in him it lay, and to him he looked for it; of which he often had experience, and now afreſh: he ſtrengthened him to plead his own cauſe, to make his defence without fear; he gave him preſence of mind, boldneſs, courage, and intrepidity, freedom of thought and expreſſion; and put it into his heart what he ſhould ſay, and gave him a mouth and wiſdom, which his adverſaries could not reſiſt. All which he takes notice of with thankfulneſs, admiring the divine goodneſs to him, and taking nothing to himſelf: and the end of this was, *that by me the preaching might be fully known*; that is, that the doctrine of the Goſpel, preached by him, might be made fully known by him; as to the author and original of it, to be of God, and not of men; and as to the matter of it, to be ſpiritual, and not concerning the things of the world; and as to the effects and conſequences of it, to have no tendency to raiſe ſedition and diſturbances in commonwealths, but, on the contrary, promote peace and love: *and* that *all the Gentiles might hear*; in *Cæſar*'s palace, or in the courts of judicature at *Rome*, and all over *Rome*, and from thence in other parts of the empire, what a Goſpel it was that was preached by the Apoſtle; and if not by his perſonal miniſtry, at leaſt by his Epiſtles he afterwards wrote in priſon: however, the effect of his defence, the Lord being with him, and ſtrengthening him, was his deliverance: *and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion*; from death he was threatened with, which, like a lion, gaped upon him to devour him; or from ſatan the roaring lion, who deſired to have had him, and ſought to have intimidated him, and brought him to have denied his Lord, to have deſerted his cauſe, and blaſphemed his name; or elſe from *Nero* the *Roman* emperor, ſo called from his power and fierceneſs. So *Tiberius* is called by *Marſyas*, *Agrippa*'s freeman, when he brought the news of his death to his maſter [g]; and *Ahaſuerus* by *Eſther* [h]; and *Nero* himſelf is called a civil beaſt by *Apollonius Tyanæus* [i]; though ſome think that not *Nero*, but *Helius*, whom he had appointed governour in his room, he being at this time in *Greece*, is here meant, before whom *Paul* was tried, and out of whoſe hands he was delivered.

Ver. 18. *And the Lord ſhall deliver me from every evil work*, &c.] From wicked and unreaſonable men, and all their attempts upon him, and from all afflictions by them; not but that he expected afflictions as long as he was in the world, but he knew that God would ſupport him under them; and in his own time and way deliver out of them; and at laſt entirely by death, when he ſhould be no more attended with them; and from all the temptations of ſatan, and his evil deſigns upon him, and from ſin and iniquity; not that he expected to live free of ſatan's temptations, or without ſin, but he believed that he ſhould be kept from ſinking under the former, and from being under the dominion of the latter; and ſhould not be left to deny his Lord, deſert his cauſe, blaſpheme his name, and apoſtatize from him: *and will preſerve me unto his heavenly kingdom*; the ultimate glory and happineſs of the ſaints in heaven; ſo called, both becauſe of its nature and place, and to diſtinguiſh it from the church, which is Chriſt's kingdom in this world, tho' it is not of it; and from his perſonal reign with his ſaints on earth, for the ſpace of a thouſand years; whereas this will be for ever: and unto this the Apoſtle believed he ſhould be preſerved, as all the ſaints will be, notwithſtanding the perſecutions of the world, the temptations of ſatan, and their own corruptions; for they are ſecured in an everlaſting covenant, and in the hands of Chriſt; and have not only angels to encamp about them, and ſalvation, as walls and bulwarks to them, but God himſelf is a wall of fire around them, and they are kept by his power unto ſalvation: and beſides, this heavenly kingdom is prepared for them, and given to them; they are choſen to be heirs and poſſeſſors of it; they are called unto it, and Chriſt is gone to receive it in their name, to prepare it for them, and will come again and introduce them into it: *to whom be glory for ever and ever, Amen*; of the preſent deliverance, and of all others he had, or ſhould receive, as well as of the proviſion of the heavenly kingdom for him, and of his preſervation to it.

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[g] Joſeph. Antiq. l. 18. c. 7. § 10.

[h] Apocryph. Eſther xiv. 13.

[i] Philoſtrat. Vit. Apollon. l. 4. c. 12.

Ver. 19. *Salute Priſca and Aquila*, &c.] The ſame with *Priſcilla* and *Aquila*; and ſo the *Complutenſian* edition, and ſome copies read here; who were of the ſame occupation with the Apoſtle, and with whom he wrought at *Corinth*, and whom he left at *Epheſus*; and who ſeem by this ſalutation to have continued there, *Acts* xviii. 2, 3, 18, 19. *And the houſhold of Oneſiphorus*; who alſo lived at *Epheſus*, and whoſe kindneſs to the Apoſtle, when he was at *Rome*, is before mentioned, ch. i. 16, 17, 18.

Ver. 20. *Eraſtus abode at Corinth*, &c.] He was chamberlain of that city, *Rom.* xvi. 23. who being ſent along with *Timothy* into *Macedonia*, *Acts* xix. 22. very probably went from thence into *Achaia*, to *Corinth*, his native place, where he ſtaid. *But Trophimus have I left at Miletum ſick. Trophimus* was an *Aſian*, of the city of *Epheſus*, the ſame that is ſpoken of in *Acts* xx. 4. and xxi. 29. Some ſay he ſuffered martyrdom the ſame day the Apoſtle *Paul* did; but others ſay, that after that time he was biſhop of *Arles* in *France*. This man went with the Apoſtle into *Aſia*, and from thence to *Jeruſalem*, and came along with him in his voyage to *Rome*, but falling ſick by the way, was left at *Miletum*. Some, inſtead of *Miletum*, would read *Melita*, that being the iſland, *Paul*, and the ſhip's company, eſcaped to, when they were ſhipwracked, *Acts* xxviii. 1. here it is ſuppoſed *Trophimus* was left ſick. Others have obſerved, that there was a city called *Miletus* in the iſland of *Crete*, under which *Paul* ſailed, *Acts* xxvii. 7. ſee *Plin.* l. 4. c. 12. and is the place intended; but there is no need to ſuppoſe either of theſe; no doubt *Miletum*, near to *Epheſus*, is meant; and as the Apoſtle ſailed by the coaſt of *Aſia*, *Acts* xxvii. 7. on which ſhore *Miletum* was, there's no difficulty in ſuppoſing him put aſhore there. The *Alexandrian* copy reads *Melotus*.

Ver. 21. *Do thy diligence to come before winter*, &c.] When travelling would not be ſo ſafe and comfortable: the Apoſtle conſults *Timothy*'s good, as well as his own advantage. *Eubulus greeteth thee. Euſebius*[k] makes mention of one of this name of *Manganæa*, who ſuffered martyrdom with one *Adrian* at *Ceſarea*; but he can't be thought to be the ſame with this, ſince he ſuffered in the times of *Diocleſian*. *And Pudens, and Linus, and Claudia*; the firſt of theſe is ſaid to be a perſon of figure at *Rome*, and of the ſenatory order, and the father of two pious virgins, *Praxis* and *Pudentiana*. He is put among the ſeventy diſciples; ſee the note on *Luke* x. 1. Mention is made by *Pliny* the younger[l], of *Servilius Pudens*, a *Roman*; and *Martial*, a poet of thoſe times, ſpeaks[m] of the marriage of *Pudens* and *Claudia*, and of *Aulus Pudens*. *Linus* is ſaid to be the firſt biſhop of *Rome* after the martyrdom of *Peter* and *Paul*[n]. Tho' ſome will have it, that he was biſhop of *Rome* in the time of *Peter*, and that he, and one *Cletus*, were co-paſtors with *Peter*; and *Platina*, who wrote the lives of the popes, firſt makes *Peter* to conſecrate *Clement* his ſucceſſor, and to commend the chair, and the church of God, to him, and yet afterwards places *Linus*, and not *Clement*, as his immediate ſucceſſor; yea, puts *Cletus* alſo before *Clement*; ſo much are the *Papiſts* at a loſs about, and ſo little account can they give of the boaſted ſucceſſion of their popes from *Peter*, that they are not agreed about his immediate ſucceſſor. This *Linus* is ſaid to be born at *Volterra* in *Tuſcany*, and to be of the family of the *Moors*, whoſe father was one *Herculaneus*, who ſent him at twenty-two years of age to *Rome*, for the ſake of his ſtudies; at which time, as is pretended, *Peter* came thither, by whom he was converted, and with whom he continued as a fellow-helper in the Goſpel. He is moreover ſaid to be biſhop of *Rome* ten years, (*Platina* ſays eleven) three months, and twelve days, and to have ſuffered martyrdom under *Saturninus* the conſul, whoſe daughter he had delivered from a diabolical poſſeſſion, and was buried in the *Vatican*. He is reckoned among the ſeventy diſciples of Chriſt, but very wrongly; ſee the note on *Luke* x. 1. The name is a *Latin* one, and is often mentioned by *Martial* the poet. And *Claudia* is the name of a woman, very likely of conſiderable note. Some think ſhe was the wife of *Pudens*, the ſame *Martial* ſpeaks of, and is ſaid to be a *Briton*. *And all the brethren*; that is, of the church of *Rome*, theſe all ſent greeting to *Timothy*.

Ver. 22. *The Lord Jeſus Chriſt be with thy Spirit*, &c.] To counſel and adviſe in every difficult matter; to comfort under every diſtreſs; to ſupply with all grace in every time of need; and to ſtrengthen and fit for every part and branch of duty. *Grace be with you, Amen*; which is the Apoſtle's common ſalutation in all his Epiſtles. The *Syriac* verſion renders it, *grace be with thee*; but the *Greek* copies read in the plural, *with you*; which ſhows that the Epiſtle was deſigned for the uſe of the whole church, as well as of *Timothy*. The ſubſcription follows, which is not in many ancient copies, and is not to be depended on.

The ſecond Epiſtle unto Timotheus; ſo far is right; this is certainly the ſecond Epiſtle to *Timothy*: *ordained the firſt biſhop of the church of the Epheſians*; this is omitted in the *Syriac* verſion; nor is it likely, much leſs certain, that he ever was biſhop of *Epheſus*, or ordained as a biſhop of any place, but was rather an Evangeliſt, ch. iv. 5. *was written from Rome*: this is evident from his being a priſoner, when he wrote it, ch. i. 8. And yet in the *Alexandrian* copy it is ſaid to be written from *Laodicea*: *when Paul was brought before Nero the ſecond time*; but whether he was before *Nero* at all is a queſtion, or only before a *Roman* governour or judge.

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[k] Eccl. Hiſt. l. 8. de Martyr. Paleſtin. c. 11.

[l] L. 10. Ep. 10.

[m] Epigram. l. 4. Ep. 10. 23. l. 6. Ep. 45. l. 7. Ep. 10.

[n] Irenæus adv. Hæreſ. l. 3. c. 3. Euſeb. Eccl. Hiſt. l. 3. c. 2, 4. & l. 5. c. 6.

AN
EXPOSITION, &c.

The Epiſtle of PAUL to TITUS.

T*ITUS*, to whom this Epiſtle is inſcribed, was a *Greek*, an uncircumciſed *Gentile*, and ſo remained; nor did the Apoſtle circumciſe him, as he did *Timothy*, when he became his companion; nor did the Apoſtles at *Jeruſalem* oblige him to be circumciſed, when *Paul* took him with *Barnabas* along with him thither, *Gal.* ii. 1, 3. He was a man of great grace, and large gifts, and very dear to the Apoſtle: he calls him his brother, his partner, and fellow-helper, and ſays he walked in the ſame ſpirit, and in the ſame ſteps, 2 *Cor.* ii. 13. and viii. 23. and xii. 18. He was employed by the Apoſtle much, and ſent into various parts, on different occaſions: he ſent him to *Corinth* to finiſh there the collection for the poor ſaints at *Jeruſalem*, 2 *Cor.* viii. 6, 16, 17. and to *Dalmatia*, to know the ſtate of the ſaints there, and to confirm them in the faith, 2 *Tim.* iv. 10. As he was a *Greek*, ſo his name is a *Greek* name, yet uſed among the *Romans*, as *Titus Veſpaſian*, and others [a]; and among the *Jews*, ſo we read of *R. Chijah bar* טיטס, *Titas* [b], and of *R. Judah ben Titas* [c]: when and where this Epiſtle was written, is not very eaſy to determine; ſome think it was written between the firſt and ſecond time the Apoſtle was in bonds at *Rome*; and certain it is, that he was not in bonds when he wrote it, for he deſires *Titus* to meet him at *Nicopolis*, ch. iii. 12. from whence ſome have ſuppoſed it to be written, as the ſubſcription ſhows; but others think it was wrote much earlier, and when the Apoſtle was at *Epheſus*, towards the cloſe of his three years ſtay there, before he went into *Macedonia*; but it ſeems rather, that it was written when he returned from *Macedonia* into *Greece*: he left *Titus* at *Crete*, and ſtaying in *Greece* three months, he intended to have ſailed to *Syria*, but was prevented by the *Jews* lying in wait for him, upon which he ſteered his courſe to *Macedonia* again; and as he was going there, or when there, writes this letter to *Titus*, to come to him at *Nicopolis*. The occaſion of it was partly the *judaizing* preachers, and falſe teachers, that got into that iſland, and were corrupting the principles of the people; and partly the unbecoming converſation and practices of ſome profeſſors of religion: and whereas the Apoſtle had left *Titus* in *Crete*, to finiſh what he had begun, and to put the churches in order, and ſee that they had proper officers, particularly paſtors over them, that they might be taken care of, both with reſpect to doctrine and practice; the deſign of this Epiſtle is to lay before *Titus* the ſeveral qualifications of a paſtor, which might be an inſtruction to him, and to the churches, in the choice and ordination of them; and to ſtir him up to zeal and diligence in refuting falſe teachers, and dealing with hereticks; and to put him upon exhorting the ſaints to the diſcharge of their duty, in every branch of it, from the beſt principles, by arguments taken from the grace of God, and the doctrines of it. This Epiſtle is ſuppoſed to be written about the year 55.

CHAP. I.

THIS chapter contains the inſcription of the Epiſtle, the Apoſtle's ſalutation and preface to it; an account of the qualifications of an elder, or paſtor of a church; a deſcription of falſe teachers; and a charge to *Titus* to rebuke the *Cretians* for their errors and immoralities. The inſcription and ſalutation are in ver. 1, 2, 3, 4. in which the writer of the Epiſtle is deſcribed by his name and office; by the faith and hope he had; and by the miniſtration of the Goſpel, committed to him by the order of Chriſt: and the perſon to whom it is written, is mentioned by name; and is deſcribed by the ſpiritual relation he ſtood in to the Apoſtle, and to whom he wiſhes grace, mercy, and peace: the preface to the Epiſtle is in ver. 5. which gives the reaſon of the Apoſtle's leaving *Titus* in *Crete*, which was to ſet things in order there, and to ordain elders in all the churches; which leads him to point at the neceſſary qualifications of them for his direction; ſome of which reſpect their moral life and converſation, and others their doctrine, and are in ver. 6, 7, 8, 9. and on occaſion of the latter, and which

[a] Vid. Martial. Epigram, l. 1. ep. 18. l. 7. ep. 48.

[b] T. Hieroſ. Trumot, c. 8. fol. 45. 3.

[c] Ib. Biccurim, fol. 65. 4. & Succa, fol. 55. 4.

which is a reaſon why the elders ſhould be ſound in the faith, and hold it faſt, the Apoſtle takes notice of the falſe teachers that were in *Crete*, whom he deſcribes by their noiſy, vain, and deceitful talk; by their being pernicious and hurtful to whole families; and by their covetouſneſs and ſenſuality, which is confirmed by a teſtimony out of one of the *Cretian* poets, ver. 10, 11, 12. wherefore he charges *Titus* ſharply to rebuke either theſe falſe teachers, or thoſe they had corrupted, that they regard ſound doctrine, and not *Jewiſh* fables, and the commandments of erroneous men, ver. 13, 14. and inſtances in things forbidden in the law of *Moſes* as unclean, which were not now to be attended to by thoſe who were pure in heart, and ſound in faith, to whom all things were pure and lawful; and as for others that were impure, whoſe minds and conſciences were defiled, and were unbelieving, nothing was pure to them, ver. 15. and who are further deſcribed as profeſſors in words, of the true knowledge of God, and yet practically were deniers of him; and as abominable in their nature and actions, diſobedient to law and Goſpel, and unfit for any good work whatever, ver. 16.

Ver. 1. *Paul a ſervant of God*, &c.] So *James* ſtiles himſelf, *Jam.* i. 1. and others of the Apoſtles, as *Peter* and *Jude*, call themſelves the ſervants of Jeſus Chriſt; and as does the Apoſtle *Paul* alſo; and both ſeem to be eſteemed by them as high characters and titles of honour, by which they choſe to be deſcribed and known. *Paul*, before his converſion, was a ſervant of ſin, of divers luſts and pleaſures, and which he owns in this Epiſtle, ch. iii. 3. but being called by grace, he became free from the vaſſalage of ſin, and became a ſervant of God, and of righteouſneſs; and henceforward, from a principle of grace, and being conſtrained by love, ſerved the Lord, and yielded obedience to his commands and ordinances, with all readineſs and chearfulneſs: though this character belongs to him in a higher ſenſe than it does to believers in common; and reſpects his miniſterial ſervice, or his ſerving God in the Goſpel of his Son; in which he, and others, were eminently the ſervants of the moſt high God, whoſe buſineſs greatly lay in ſhewing unto men the way of ſalvation. *And an Apoſtle of Jeſus Chriſt*; conſtituted, qualified, and ſent by him to preach his Goſpel; and who had his miſſion, commiſſion, and doctrine from him; and was an ambaſſador of his, who perſonated him, and preached him; and had a power of working miracles to confirm his miſſion and miniſtry; and ſo had all the ſigns and proofs of an Apoſtle in him; ſee the note on *Rom.* i. 1. *And according to the faith of God's elect*; which may either denote the agreement there was between the miniſtry of the Apoſtle, and the faith of the choice and eminent ſaints of God, under the former diſpenſation; he ſaying no other things than 622. what *Moſes*, and the prophets did; and laying no other foundation of ſalvation than they did, and which is therefore called the foundation of the Apoſtles and prophets; and directing ſouls to the righteouſneſs, ſacrifice, and blood of Chr[illegible], the Lamb ſlain from the foundation of the world, to which the faith of Old Teſtament ſaints looked, and by whoſe grace they were juſtified, pardoned, and ſaved, as we are: or elſe the way and manner in which he became an Apoſtle; it was *by*, *in*, or *through the faith of God's elect*, as the *Syriac* verſion renders it; he was choſen of God, and brought as ſuch to believe in Chriſt, and then called to be an Apoſtle: or rather this may regard the end of his Apoſtleſhip, and be rendered, *unto the faith of God's elect*; that is, either he was appointed an Apoſtle, to preach the doctrine of faith, which once he deſtroyed, and which is but one, and is common to all the elect, and what is commonly received, and embraced by the elect of God, in all ages; or to be a means and inſtrument of bringing the elect of God to that faith in Chriſt, which is peculiar to them; ſee *Rom.* i. 5. and x. 17. There are ſome perſons who are ſtiled *the elect of God*; theſe are not all men, ſome are veſſels of wrath fitted to deſtruction, ungodly men fore-ordained to condemnation, and given up to believe a lye, that they might be damned; nor the *Jews* only, nor all of them, for though, as a nation, they were choſen, above all others, to many outward privileges, yet they were not all choſen to ſpecial grace, and eternal glory; only a remnant, according to the election of grace: but theſe are ſome of both, *Jews* and *Gentiles*; ſome of every kindred, tongue, people, and nation; theſe were choſen in Chriſt from eternity, and are the peculiar objects of the affection and care of God, whom he calls, juſtifies, and glorifies: and there is a ſpecial *faith* that belongs to theſe; which is a ſpiritual looking to Chriſt, a going to him, a laying hold and leaning on him, and truſting in him for ſalvation; and this faith is peculiar to the elect of God; all men have it not, and thoſe that have it, have it thro' the free gift of God; nor is it given to any but to the choſen ones. The reaſon why the *Jews* did not believe in Chriſt was, becauſe they were not of this number, *John* x. 26. And this faith is ſecured and made ſure to them by their election; they are choſen to it, and thro' it to ſalvation; they believe in conſequence, and by vertue of it; and certainly obtain it in all ages, as well as righteouſneſs, life, and ſalvation; and it is that by which they are known to be the elect of God: and the Apoſtle mentions it in this form, and manner, to diſtinguiſh it from other faith; the faith of devils, and of reprobates, and the hiſtorical and temporal faith of hypocrites, and nominal profeſſors. *And the acknowledging of the truth*; by which is meant the Goſpel, often called the truth, and the word of truth; in diſtinction from that which was ſhadowy, the ceremonies of the law; and in oppoſition to that which is falſe, it being from the God of truth, concerning Chriſt, who is the truth; and containing nothing but truth, and what is led into by the Spirit of truth. Now to preach, ſpread, and defend this, was the Apoſtle conſtituted in his office as ſuch; and which he did preach with all clearneſs and faithfulneſs, to bring ſouls to a ſpiritual and experimental knowledge of it, and ſo to an acknowledgment, a public owning and profeſſing of it: *which is after godlineſs*; the Goſpel is a doctrine according to godlineſs; the truths of it have an influence, both on internal and external godlineſs; they direct to, and promote the worſhip and fear of God, and a religious, righteous, ſober, and godly life and converſation.

Ver. 2. *In hope of eternal life*, &c.] Or *for the hope of eternal life*; in order to bring ſouls to the hope of it: this is another end of the Goſpel-miniſtry, as to bring God's elect to faith in Chriſt, and to the knowledge and acknowledgment of the truth, as it is in Jeſus, ſo to the hope of eternal glory and happineſs: in a ſtate of nature, they are without the grace of hope, or any true ground and foundation of it; and tho' it is the gift of God's grace, and is implanted in the ſoul by the Spirit of God in regeneration; yet the Goſpel is the means of producing it at firſt, as well as afterwards of encouraging and increaſing it; for in it, Chriſt the foundation of hope, is propoſed, and ſet forth before awakened and convinced ſinners: the object of this hope is *eternal life*; not any thing now ſeen and enjoyed, for that is not hope; not any thing in this preſent life, but ſomething future; a life of perfect bliſs and happineſs with Chriſt to all eternity; which is a hope laid up in heaven, an inheritance reſerved there; a life which is ſecured in the hands of Chriſt, which he has a power to give, and does give to all his ſheep, and is the gift of God thro' him: and of which it is further ſaid, *which God, that cannot lye, promiſed before the world began*; eternal life is a *promiſe*, and ſo of free grace, and not by the works of the law, which is inconſiſtent with a promiſe: it is the promiſe of *God*, who is faithful to his word, and *cannot lye*; being the God of truth, that can neither deceive, nor be deceived: this does not contradict his omnipotence, but argues the perfection of his nature, which cannot admit of any thing that implies weakneſs and mutation: and this promiſe was made before the world was, as early as the choice of God's elect in Chriſt, and the gift of grace to them in him; as early as the covenant was made with him, and he was ſet up as the mediator of it; who was preſent to receive this promiſe as their head and repreſentative for them, and to whom it was made as federally conſidered in him, and in whom it was ſecured for them; ſee 2 *Tim.* i. 1.

Ver. 3. *But hath in due times manifeſted his word,* &c.] Either Chriſt, his eſſential Word; or the word of truth, the Goſpel of ſalvation; or rather his word of promiſe of eternal life in Chriſt Jeſus: *thro' preaching*; thro' the miniſtry of the word by the Apoſtles; in which Chriſt is revealed in the glory of his perſon, and the fulneſs of his grace, and in the efficacy of his blood, righteouſneſs, and ſacrifice; and in which the Goſpel, that was ordained before the world was, and is the fellowſhip of the myſtery which was hid in God, is publiſhed; and in which the promiſe of eternal life, which lay in God's heart, in the covenant of grace, and in the hands of Chriſt, and which with Chriſt, and his Goſpel, were hid under the dark types, ſhadows, and ſacrifices of the law, is clearly made known: *in due times*; appointed by God, agreed on between the Father and the Son, and ſuitable to the ſtate, caſe, and condition of men; when the law of *Moſes*, and the light of nature, legal ſacrifices, and moral power, had been ſufficiently tried, the one in the *Jewiſh*, the other in the *Gentile* world; and after that the Son of God was become incarnate, which was in the fulneſs of time; and when he had ſuffered for the ungodly, which was in due time; ſee 1 *Tim.* ii. 6. *Which is committed unto me*; that is, which preaching or miniſtry of the word, the Goſpel, and the diſpenſation of it, which, as a truſt, was depoſited in the hands of the Apoſtle, and of which he was a faithful ſteward: *according to the commandment of God our Saviour*; either God the Father, ſo called, ch. iii. 4. compared with ver. 6. and who is the ſaviour of all men in a providential way, and of all the elect in a way of ſpecial grace, by his Son Jeſus Chriſt; and by whom the Apoſtle was appointed and ſeparated to the preaching of the Goſpel; and by whom this was committed to his truſt: or rather the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who is truly and properly God, the great God, and our Saviour, ch. ii. 13. and who is the only Saviour of loſt ſinners; and he it was that perſonally appeared to *Paul*, and made him a miniſter of the word, committed the Goſpel to him, and gave him a commandment, and orders to preach it among the *Gentiles*, *Acts* xxvi. 15, 16, 17, 18.

Ver. 4. *To Titus* mine *own ſon after the common faith*, &c.] Not in a natural, but in a ſpiritual ſenſe; the Apoſtle being the inſtrument of his converſion, as he was of the converſion of *Oneſimus*, and of many of the *Corinthians*, and therefore is ſaid to beget them, *Philem.* ver. 10. 1 *Cor.* iv. 15. and ſo was their ſpiritual father, and they his children: *Titus* was, in this ſenſe, his *own ſon*, or a true ſon, a legitimate one; a true convert; one really born again; a ſincere believer, an *Iſraelite* indeed: and this he was *after the common faith*; either the doctrine of faith, which is but one, and is common to all the ſaints; or the grace of faith, which tho' different in degrees, yet is alike precious faith in all; the ſame for nature, kind, object, operation, and effects: and this phraſe is uſed to ſhow in what ſenſe *Titus* was ſon to the Apoſtle; as he was a believer, and no otherwiſe. *Grace, mercy, and peace*, &c. which is the Apoſtle's uſual ſalutation; ſee 1 *Tim.* i. 2. The word *mercy* is left out in the *Claromontane* copy, and in the *Vulgate Latin*, *Syriac*, and *Ethiopic* verſions.

Ver. 5. *For this cauſe left I thee in Crete*, &c.] Not in his voyage to *Rome*, *Acts* xxvii. 7. but rather when he came from *Macedonia* into *Greece*, *Acts* xx. 2. *Crete* is an iſland in the *Mediterranean* ſea, now called *Candy*; ſee the note on *Acts* ii. 11. Here *Paul* preached the Goſpel to the converſion of many; but not having time to finiſh what he begun, left *Titus* here for that purpoſe: *that thou ſhouldſt ſet in order the things that are wanting*; that is, form the young converts into Goſpel order, into a regular Goſpel church-ſtate; ſettle a proper diſcipline among them; inſtruct them more largely into the doctrines of the Goſpel; and correct their manners, and direct them in every thing, both with reſpect to faith and practice: *and ordain elders in every city*; for this iſland, though it was not above fifty miles in breadth, and two hundred and ſeventy in length, yet had an hundred cities in it[d]; and it ſeems as if the Goſpel had been preached in moſt, if not all of them, and churches were formed: however, in as many of them as there were churches, the Apoſtle would have *Titus* ſee to it, and take care, that they had proper officers fixed in them, particularly elders, paſtors, or overſeers, to preach the Goſpel, and adminiſter the ordinances to them, to watch over them in the Lord, and put the laws of Chriſt's houſe in execution, and keep up a ſtrict diſcipline in it, according to the will of God. What *Titus* was to do in this affair, was to put the churches upon looking out, and chuſing from among themſelves proper perſons for ſuch ſervice, and to direct, aſſiſt, and preſide at the elections and ordinations of them; for we are not to ſuppoſe, that the ordination of elders was the ſole act of *Titus*, or alone reſided in him; but in like manner as *Paul* and *Barnabas* ordained elders in every church, by the ſuffrages of the people, ſignified by the ſtretching out of their hands; in which they directed, preſided, and alſo aſſiſted in prayer, with faſting, *Acts* xiv. 23. *as I had appointed thee*; when he left him at *Crete*; when he gave him orders and inſtructions, both with reſpect to the perſons, and their qualifications, whom he would have ordained, and with reſpect to the manner in which it ſhould be done: the former of theſe he repeats in the following verſes. From all which it clearly appears, that there were churches in *Crete*, and paſtors placed over thoſe churches; very probably the *Cretes*, who were at *Jeruſalem* on the day of *Pentecoſt*, *Acts* ii. 11. and heard *Peter*'s ſermon, and were converted by him, ſome of them returning to their own country, might firſt bring the Goſpel to this iſland, and lay the foundation of a Goſpel church-ſtate here. It ſeems by what is ſaid in this text, that the Apoſtle *Paul* was in this iſland himſelf, and preached the Goſpel, and after him *Titus*, whom he left behind; and if any credit is to be given to the ſubſcription of this Epiſtle, he was the firſt biſhop of the church in it: and it is certain, that in the *ſecond* century there were churches in this iſland, particularly at *Gortyna*, and other places, to whom *Dionyſius* [e], biſhop of *Corinth*, wrote letters, in which he greatly extols *Philip* their biſhop; and in another letter of his to the *Gnoſſians*, or to the church at *Gnoſſus*, another city in *Crete*, he makes mention of *Pinytus* as their biſhop, and whom he commends for his orthodox faith, great knowledge of divine things, and care of his flock; and both theſe lived in the times of the emperors *Antoninus Verus* and *Commodus* [f]; which churches, no doubt, continued in the *third* century, ſince in the *fourth* we read of biſhops ſent from *Crete* to the ſynod at *Sardica*: and in the *fifth* century, a biſhop of *Gortyna* in *Crete* is reckoned among the biſhops in the council of *Chalcedon*: and in the *ſixth* century *Theodorus*, biſhop of the ſame place, ſubſcribed in the fifth ſynod at *Conſtantinople*: and in the *ſeventh* century, *Paul* archbiſhop of *Crete*, *Baſil* biſhop of *Gortyna*, with ſeveral other biſhops of churches in the iſland, were preſent at the ſixth ſynod at *Conſtantinople*: and in the *eighth* century, as appears from the acts of the *Nicene* ſynod, *Helias* was biſhop of *Crete*, *Anaſtaſius* biſhop of *Gnoſſus*, a city in it, and *Melito*, *Leontius* and *Galatas* biſhops of other places in the ſame iſland: and in the *ninth* century, a biſhop of *Gortyna*, in defence of the cauſe of Chriſt, became a martyr [g]; ſo far churches, and biſhops, bearing the chriſtian name, are to be traced in this iſland.

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[d] Plin. l. 4. c. 12. Mela, l. 2, c. 14. Solin, c. 16.

Ver. 6. *If any be blameleſs*, &c.] In his outward life and converſation, not chargeable with any notorious crime; ſee the note on 1 *Tim.* iii. 2. *the huſband of one wife*; ſee the note as before: *having faithful children*; legitimate ones, born in lawful wedlock, in the ſame ſenſe as ſuch are called *godly* and *holy*, in *Mal.* ii. 15. 1 *Cor.* vii. 14. for by *faithful children* cannot be meant converted ones, or true believers in Chriſt; for it is not in the power of men to make their children ſuch; and their not being ſo, can never be an objection to their being elders, if otherwiſe qualified; at moſt the phraſe can only intend, that they ſhould be brought up in the faith, in the principles, doctrines, and ways of chriſtianity, or in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. *Not accuſed of riot*; or chargeable with ſins of uncleanneſs and intemperance, with rioting and drunkenneſs, chambering and wantonneſs; or with ſuch crimes as *Eli*'s ſons were guilty of, from which they were not reſtrained by their father, and therefore the prieſthood was removed from the family: *or unruly*; not ſubject, but diſobedient to their parents; ſee the notes on 1 *Tim.* iii. 4, 5.

Ver. 7. *For a biſhop muſt be blameleſs*, &c.] This ſhows that a biſhop and an elder is the ſame; and the *Syriac* verſion here renders it, *an elder*; the character or qualification neceſſary to him, is the ſame as before, and in like manner to be underſtood; unleſs it ſhould more particularly refer to his faithfulneſs in the diſcharge of his office: ſince it follows, *as the ſteward of God*; one appointed by God over his houſhold and family, the church, to give to every one their portion of meat in due ſeaſon; one that diſpenſes the manifold grace, or various doctrines of the grace of God, and myſteries of Chriſt; and of ſuch an one it is required, that he be faithful, both to his Lord and maſter, to the truſt committed to him, and to the perſons under his care. *Not ſelf-willed*; not doing things in the worſhip and houſe of God, in the miniſtry of the word, and adminiſtration of ordinances, according to his own will, but according to the will of God, revealed in his word; otherwiſe what he does will come under the name of will-worſhip: or obſtinate, ſtubborn, and inflexible, conceited of his own ſenſe and judgment, and reſolute to have his own will and way in all things relating to the affairs of God's houſe. The word ſignifies one that is pleaſed with himſelf, has an over-weening opinion of himſelf, is proud and haughty, and deſpiſes others: *not ſoon angry*; but ſlow to wrath, which ſhows a man to be a man of underſtanding, and fit to teach others, which an angry man is not. It is a ſaying of *R. Hillell* [h], that "neither one that is "aſhamed (to aſk queſtions) learns well, nor one "that is *angry* teaches well." And the *Jews* ſay [i], that "the law is not rightly explained but by one "that is not angry." Hence, that direction [k], "for ever let a man be meek as *Hillell*, and not "angry as *Shammai*;" who were two of their principal doctors, the heads of their ſchools, in the times of Chriſt: a man that rules his own ſpirit, and has the command of his temper, and paſſions, is fit to govern in the church of God. *Not given to wine, no ſtriker, not given to filthy lucre*; ſee the notes on 1 *Tim.* iii. 3.

Ver. 8. *But a lover of hoſpitality*, &c.] See the note on 1 *Tim.* iii. 2. *a lover of good men*, or *of good*; the *Syriac* verſion renders it, *of good things*; as prayer, preaching, reading, meditation, ſpiritual converſation, and every religious exerciſe: or *of good men*; for ſuch an elder or biſhop has chiefly to do and converſe with; and if he is not a lover of them, their company will be diſagreeable to him, and he will be of no advantage to them; and if he does not love the ſouls of men, he will not naturally care for their ſtate, or be concerned for their good. *Sober*; in body, uſing moderation in diet and dreſs; and in mind, being prudent, modeſt, and humble, and thinking ſoberly of himſelf, and others, as he ought. *Juſt*; righteous in his dealings with men, giving to every one their due; upright and ſincere in his converſation with the ſaints; and faithful in his counſel, admonitions, and reproofs. *Holy*; devout towards God, conſtant in all religious exerciſes in the cloſet, family, and church; and living ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly in the world. *Temperate*; in eating and drinking; continent from the luſts of the fleſh; and even abſtaining from thoſe things which might be lawfully uſed, though inexpedient, for the ſake of the weak, the peace of the church, and the glory of God.

Ver. 9. *Holding faſt the faithful word*, &c.] The doctrine of the Goſpel, ſo called becauſe it is true, and to be believed; it is the word of truth, and truth itſelf, and contains nothing but truth; and becauſe it never deceived any that gave credit to its doctrines, and its promiſes; and becauſe it is pure, unmixed, and unadulterated, and is the ſincere milk of the word; and becauſe in it is a glorious diſplay of the faithfulneſs of God, to his perfections, to his holineſs and juſtice, to his law, and to his covenant, word, and oath; and of the faithfulneſs of Chriſt, to him that appointed him, and to his covenant-engagements, and which has appeared in the diſcharge of his ſeveral offices: and this is not only to be held forth by the elder, but to be held faſt, and tenaciouſly abode by; in oppoſition to all wavering about it, departure from it, dropping or concealing any part of it, and puſillanimity concerning it; whatever temptations there may be to the contrary, through popular applauſe on the one hand, and reproaches and perſecutions on the other; and tho' there may be many that may endeavour to wring it out of his hands; ſee 2 *Tim.* i. 13. *as he hath been taught*; or *according to doctrine*; that is, according to the doctrine of the ſcriptures, Chriſt, and his Apoſtles; according to the doctrine that lies in the ſcriptures, that was delivered by Chriſt, and preached by his Apoſtles; whatever is according to that ſhould be held faſt: or *which is for doctrine*; which tends to teach, inſtruct, and edify the minds of men, that ought to be conſtantly abode by: or as the elder himſelf has been taught, not by men, in a theoretical way, as logic, rhetoric, and other arts and ſciences are taught; for ſuch who are only taught the faithful word in this way, are not likely to hold it faſt, in a time of temptation; but as he has been taught it experimentally by the Spirit of God; and ſuch an one, who has not only the knowledge of it in his head, but the experience of it in his heart, will hold it, and hold it faſt againſt all oppoſition: *that he may be able, by ſound doctrine, both to exhort and to convince the gainſayers*; ſound doctrine is the faithful word, the wholeſome words of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, which being retained, qualify an elder to diſcharge the following branches of his office; to *exhort* the members of churches to their duty, according to their age, ſex, ſtate, and condition, as in ch. ii. to which the doctrines of grace influence and engage; or to *comfort* them, as the word alſo ſignifies, and the *Alexandrian* copy reads, *to comfort them in all tribulation*; and this is one conſiderable part of the elder's work, to comfort ſouls under affliction, whether of body or mind; and ſound doctrines, or the doctrines of the Goſpel, are wonderfully ſuited to ſuch a purpoſe: and the other part of his work is, *to convince gainſayers*; ſuch who reſiſt the truth, oppoſe themſelves to it, cavil at it, and object againſt it; theſe are to be refuted, and convinced by the ſcriptures, and arguments taken from them, as the *Jews* were by *Apollos*, *Acts* xviii. 28. and nothing is ſo powerful to do it, as ſound doctrine, and holding faſt the faithful word.

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[e] Apud Euſeb. Eccl. Hiſt. l. 3. c. 24.

[f] Sophronius in Hieron. Catalog. Script. Eccl. c. 38, 40.

[g] Hiſt. Eccl. Magdeburg. cent. 4. c. 2. p. 5. c. 9. p. 425. cent. 5. c 2. p. 6. cent. 6. c. 2. p. 6. cent. 7. c. 2. p. 4. c. 10. p. 255. cent. 8. c. 2. p. 6. cent. 9. c. 2. p. 4.

[h] Pirke Abot, c. 2. §. 5.

[i] Buxtorf. Lex. Talmud. col. 2086.

[k] T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 30. 2.

Ver. 10. *For there are many unruly*, &c.] Perſons who are not ſubject to the law of God, or Goſpel of Chriſt; whoſe ſpirits are not ſubject to the prophets; and who will not ſubmit themſelves to them that have the rule over them, nor attend to the admonitions of the church, nor be brought into any regularity and order; and there were many of this ſort, who were not ſent forth by Chriſt, or his churches, but went forth of themſelves, and were corrupters of the word; and therefore Chriſt's miniſters ought to hold faſt the faithful word, and convince ſuch oppoſers by ſound doctrine: *and vain talkers*; who deliver out in their diſcourſes empty, trifling, ſuperficial, and frivolous things; which have no ſolidity and ſubſtance in them, nor do they tend to edification; only great ſwelling words of vanity, vain jangling and babbling about things to no profit. *And deceivers*; both of themſelves and others; who lie in wait to deceive, and are deceitful workers; and by their good words, and fair ſpeeches, deceive the hearts of the ſimple; and ſo are dangerous perſons, and of pernicious conſequence: *eſpecially they of the circumciſion*; or *of the Jews*, as the *Ethiopic* verſion renders it; that is, not the unbelieving *Jews*, but ſuch as profeſſed chriſtianity, judaizing chriſtians, who joined *Moſes* and Chriſt, and blended the law and goſpel together; who taught that circumciſion, and the obſervance of other ceremonies of the law, were neceſſary to juſtification and ſalvation; and hereby did a great deal of miſchief among the churches.

Ver. 11. *Whoſe mouths muſt be ſtopped*, &c.] Or they be ſilenced, by reaſons and arguments fetched out of the word of God; as were the *Sadducees* and *Phariſees* by Chriſt, ſo that they durſt aſk him no more queſtions; and as the *Jews* at *Damaſcus* were by *Saul*, who confounded them, proving in the cleareſt and ſtrongeſt manner, that Jeſus was the very Chriſt: *who ſubvert whole houſes*; into which they creep; that is, whole families, whoſe principles they corrupt, whoſe faith they overthrow, and carry them away with their own errors; and therefore, ſince this was the caſe not of a ſingle perſon, or of a few, but of whole families, it was high time to attempt to convince them, and ſtop their mouths, that they might proceed no further: *teaching things which they ought not*; which were not agreeable to the perfections of God, to the ſcriptures of truth, to ſound doctrine, and which were hurtful and pernicious to the ſouls of men: and that only *for filthy lucre's ſake*; having no regard to the glory of God, the honour and intereſt of Chriſt, or the good of immortal ſouls; only ſeeking to gain popular applauſe and honour from men, and to gather and increaſe wordly ſubſtance. Covetouſneſs was a ſin which the *Cretians* were remarkably guilty of[l].

Ver. 12. *One of themſelves, even a prophet of their own*, &c.] This was *Epimenides*, in whoſe poems ſtand the words here cited; the Apoſtle rightly calls him *one of themſelves*, ſince he was a *Cretian* by birth, of the city of *Gnoſſus*; it is reported of him, that being ſent by his father to his ſheep in the field, he by the way, at noon, turned aſide into a cave, and ſlept fifty-ſeven years[m]: and he is very properly called a *prophet* of their own; for in *Crete Jupiter* had his prophets[n], and he might be one of them: the prieſts among the heathens were called prophets; ſo *Baal*'s prieſts are called the prophets of *Baal*, and the prophets of the groves, 1 *Kings* xviii. 19. Beſides, *Epimenides* was thought to be inſpired by the gods: he is is called by *Apuleius*[o], a famous fortune-teller; and is ſaid by *Laertius*[p] to be very ſkilful in divination, and to have foretold many things which came to paſs; and by the *Grecians* was ſuppoſed to be very dear to the gods: ſo *Balaam*, the ſoothſayer and diviner, is called a prophet, 2 *Pet.* ii. 16. Add to this, that the paſſage next cited, ſtands in a poem of this writer, intitled, *concerning oracles*; and it is eaſy to obſerve, that poets in common were uſually called *vates*, or prophets; ſo that the Apoſtle ſpeaks here with great propriety. Now concerning the inhabitants of *Crete*, *Epimenides*, a native of the place, and a perſon of great character and repute among them, *ſaid, the Cretians* are *always liars:* lying is a ſin common to human nature, and appears in men as early, or earlier than any other; and all men are guilty of it, at one time or another; but all are not habitually liars, as it ſeems theſe *Cretians* were: lying was a governing vice among them; they were not only guilty of it in ſome particular inſtances, but always; not only for ſaying that *Jupiter*'s ſepulchre was with them, when it was the ſepulchre of *Minos* his ſon, which they had fraudulently obliterated; and for which [q] *Callimachus* charges them with lying, and uſes theſe very words of *Epimenides*; though he aſſigns a different reaſon from that now given, which is, that *Jupiter* died not, but always exiſts, and therefore his ſepulchre could not be with them: but this ſingle inſtance was not ſufficient to faſten ſuch a character upon them; it was a ſin they were addicted to: ſome countries are diſtinguiſhed by their vices; ſome for pride; ſome for levity, vanity, and inconſtancy; ſome for boaſting and bragging; ſome for covetouſneſs; ſome for idleneſs; ſome for effeminacy; ſome for hypocriſy and deceit; and others, as the *Cretians*, it ſeems, for lying; this was their national ſin [r]; and this is ſaid by others, as well as *Epimenides*. *Crete* is, by *Ovid* [s], called, *mendax Creta*, lying *Crete*. Hence, with the *Grecians*, to *cretize*, is proverbially uſed for to lye; this is a ſin, than which nothing makes a man more like the devil, or more infamous among men, or more abominable to God. The *Ethiopic* verſion, inſtead of *Cretes*, or *Cretians*, reads *hypocrites*. Other characters of them, from the ſame heathen poet, follow, *evil beaſts, ſlow bellies*; by *evil beaſts* are meant beaſts of prey, ſavage and miſchievous ones; ſee *Gen.* xxxvii. 20, 33. and are ſo called, to diſtinguiſh them from other beaſts, as ſheep, and the like, which are not ſo; and perhaps *Crete* might abound with ſuch evil beaſts; for the *Cretians* are ſaid [t] to excel in hunting; and to theſe they themſelves are compared, by one of their own prophets, for their cruelty, and ſavage diſpoſition: ſo cruel perſecutors are compared to beaſts, 1 *Cor.* xv. 32. and the falſe teachers, the Apoſtle has reſpect to in citing this paſſage, were cruel, if not to the bodies, yet to the ſouls of men, whom they poiſoned and deſtroyed. And the *Cretians* are called, by the poet, *ſlow bellies*; partly for their intemperance, their gluttony and drunkenneſs; which ſuited with the falſe teachers, whoſe God was their belly, and which they ſerved, and not the Lord Jeſus; and partly for their ſloth and idleneſs, eating the bread of others without working.

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[l] Cornel. Nepos, l. 23. c. 9.

[m] Laert. l. 1. Vita Epimenidis.

[n] Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 4. c. 17.

[o] Floridá, §. 15.

[p] Ibid.

Ver. 13. *This witneſs is true,* &c.] The Apoſtle confirms what the poet had ſaid; he knew it to be fact from his own experience, and by the obſervation he had made when in the iſland: he does not ſay, that all that *Epimenides* had ſaid, in the poem referred to, was true; but this character, which he had given of the *Cretians*, and which he cites, and uſes to a good purpoſe; from whence it may be obſerved, that the writings of the heathen poets may be read with profit, and be uſed to advantage, if carefully and prudently attended to; for what is truth, let it come from whom, or by what means it will, ought to be received. *Wherefore rebuke them ſharply*; not merely upon the teſtimony of the poet, but upon the confirmation of it by the Apoſtle; and not becauſe of theſe general and national characters, but becauſe theſe things perſonally and particularly belonged to the perſons before deſcribed; whom the Apoſtle would have rebuked, both for their bad principles, teaching things that they ought not; and for their immoralities, their lying and deceit, their intemperance, luxury, and idleneſs, things very unbecoming the chriſtian name; and therefore ſince their offences were of an heinous nature, and they lived in them, and were hardened and obſtinate, and were like to have a bad influence on others, they muſt be rebuked *ſharply:* rebukes ought to be given according to the nature of offences, and the circumſtances of them, and the offenders; ſome are to be given privately, others publickly; ſome ſhould be reproved with gentleneſs and meekneſs, and be uſed in a tender and compaſſionate way; others more roughly, tho' never in a wrathful and paſſionate manner, yet with ſome degree of ſeverity, at leaſt with great plainneſs and faithfulneſs; laying open the nature of the evils guilty of in all their aggravated circumſtances, without ſparing them in the leaſt; doing, as ſurgeons do by wounds, though they take the knife, and uſe it gently, yet cut deep, to the quick, and go to the bottom of the wound, and lay it open: and ſo the phraſe may be rendered here, *rebuke them cuttingly*; cut them to the quick, and ſpare them not; deal not with them as *Eli* with his ſons, 1 *Sam.* ii. 23. but ſpeak out, and expoſe their crimes, ſeverely reprove them, that others may fear: and *that they may be ſound in the faith*; that they may be recovered from their errors, to the acknowledgment of the truth; that they may receive the ſound doctrine of faith, the wholeſome words of Chriſt, and ſpeak the things which become them, and uſe ſound ſpeech, which cannot be condemned; and that they may be turned from their evil practices, and appear to be ſound, as in the doctrine, ſo in the grace of faith; or that that by their works may appear to be genuine, true, and unfeigned; and that they may be ſtrong and robuſt, hale and healthful, and not weak and ſickly in the profeſſion of their faith. Rebukes being to perſons infected with bad principles and practices, like phyſic to ſickly conſtitutions, a means of removing the cauſes of diſorder; and in rebukes, admonitions, and cenſures, this always ought to be the end propoſed, the good of the perſons rebuked, admoniſhed, and cenſured.

Ver. 14. *Not giving heed to Jewiſh fables,* &c.] Concerning God himſelf, the angels, and the creation of man; concerning the giving of the law at mount *Sinai*; concerning the Meſſiah, and his earthly kingdom, and the feaſt that will be made for the righteous in his days, which will conſiſt of fleſh, fiſh, and fowl, *Behemoth*, *Leviathan*, and *Zuz*, and of wine kept in the grape from the foundation of the world; and concerning the rolling of the dead thro' the caverns of the earth at the reſurrection, with a multitude of other things which were traditionally received. *And commandments of men*; the traditions of the elders, which the *Jews* charged the diſciples of Chriſt with the tranſgreſſion of; and he, on the other hand, very juſtly reproached them with breaking the commands of God, by attending to them, *Matt.* xv. Theſe were the laws and traditions of the fathers, which the Apoſtle *Paul* was brought up in, and was zealous of, before his converſion, *Acts* xxii. 3. *Gal.* i. 14. and which theſe *judaizing* preachers and profeſſors, he here has reſpect to, were fond of, tho' they were made by men, *that turn from the truth*; or *hate* it, as the *Syriac* verſion renders it; who were enemies unto it, as *Hillell* and *Shammai*, the heads of the traditional doctors, and as the *Jews*, and their *Rabbins* in general were; and therefore their commandments, of all men, ſhould not be given heed to, by thoſe that bear the chriſtian name.

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[q] Hymn. 1. in Jovem, v. 8.

[r] Alex. ab Alex. l. 4. c. 13.

[s] De Arte Amandi, l. 1.

[t] Alex. ab Alex. ib.

Ver. 15. *Unto the pure all things are pure*, &c.] The Apoſtle having made mention of *Jewiſh* fables, and the traditions of the elders, takes notice of ſome darling notions, that theſe *judaizing* chriſtians had imbibed or retained; that there were ſome things, which being touched, or handled, or taſted, occaſioned uncleanneſs, and which the Apoſtle denies to them that are *pure*; by whom are meant, not ſuch who are ſo in their own eyes, who yet may not be cleanſed from their filthineſs; nor do any become pure thro' ceremonial, moral, or evangelical performances, done by them; they are only pure, who are juſtified from all ſin by Chriſt's righteouſneſs, and are clean thro' the word or ſentence of abſolution ſpoken by him; and who are waſhed from their ſins in his blood, and have that ſprinkled upon their conſciences, by which they are purged and cleanſed from all ſin; and who have the clean water of ſanctifying grace ſprinkled upon them, and have clean hearts, and right ſpirits created in them; and whoſe hearts are purified by faith, and have true principles of grace and holineſs formed in them; whoſe graces are pure and genuine, their faith is unfeigned, their love is without diſſimulation, and their hope without hypocriſy; and who, in conſequence of all this, love pureneſs of heart, ſpeak the pure language of *Canaan*, hold the myſtery of the faith in a pure conſcience, and follow after purity of life and converſation: to theſe *all things are pure*; whatever they touch, or handle, or eat, nothing can defile them; for it is not what enters into man, that can pollute him; nor is any creature unclean of itſelf, but good, and to be received with thankſgiving; ſee *Matt.* xv. 11. *Rom.* xiv. 14. 1 *Tim.* iv. 3, 4, 5. *But unto them that are defiled and unbelieving* is *nothing pure*; all mankind are *defiled* with ſin; they are altogether become filthy; there is none good, no, not one; and all of them, or that belong to them, are unclean; the members of their body, and the powers and faculties of their ſoul, their mind and conſcience, underſtanding, will, and affections; there is no place clean: they are originally ſo, from their firſt conception and birth; and they are actually defiled by their own evil thoughts, words, and doings: ſome are openly impure, like the dog and the ſwine, who wallow in their impieties, ſuch are the prophane part of the world; others are more ſecretly ſo, as thoſe of a phariſaical complexion, nominal chriſtians, and formal profeſſors; and ſuch the Apoſtle has here in view: and who, notwithſtanding their profeſſion of the chriſtian religion, were *unbelieving*; they had not true faith in Chriſt, tho' they profeſſed it; they were not indeed unbelieving, as the *Jews*, who rejected Jeſus as the Meſſiah; yet they did not purely and cordially embrace the doctrines of the Goſpel, nor yield a ſpiritual and chearful ſubjection to the ordinances of it; but were for mixing the ceremonies of the law with the inſtitutions of Chriſt: and to theſe were *nothing pure*; right and lawful to be done, or not done, even in the caſe ſuppoſed, about eating things forbidden by the ceremonial law; to eat them would be to eat with offence, to their own conſciences, on their principles, and ſo be evil, *Rom.* xiv. 20. and to abſtain from them on account of laws not in force, would be ſuperſtition and will-worſhip, and ſo criminal, *Col.* ii. 21, 22, 23. There is nothing that defiled perſons can do, but what is unclean; as are their perſons, ſo are their offerings and works, *Hagg.* ii. 14. and being deſtitute of true faith, whatever they do is ſin, and not any thing they do can be acceptable and well-pleaſing to God, *Rom.* xiv. 23. *Heb.* xi. 6. There were ſome things among the *Jews*, which were prohibited to them that were defiled, and were free to them that were pure: thus, for inſtance [u], "the fleſh of the moſt "holy things, and the fleſh of thoſe which are "lightly holy, boiled with fleſh of delight, (or "common fleſh) are forbidden, לטמאים, *to the defiled*, but are free, לטהורים, *to the pure*." Which one of their commentators [w] thus explains; "the "fleſh of the moſt holy things is forbidden to "ſtrangers, tho' pure; the fleſh of things lightly "holy is free to ſtrangers that are *pure*, but forbidden to them that are *defiled*." Whether there may be any alluſion to this, may be conſidered: however, the reaſon the Apoſtle gives why nothing is pure to the impure, is, becauſe of the pollution of the ſuperior powers and faculties of their ſoul, *but even their mind and conſcience is defiled*; there is nothing in them, or that belongs to them, that is pure; their mind or underſtanding, which conceives and judges of things, and forms notions of them; and the conſcience, which draws concluſions from them, are both defiled with ſin; and what then muſt the thoughts, the words and actions of ſuch perſons be? it matters not what they do, or abſtain from, what they touch, taſte, or handle, or if they do not, they ſin in all they do.

Ver. 16. *They profeſs that they know God*, &c.] That there is a God; that there is but one, only, true, and living God, the God of *Iſrael*, as profeſſed by the *Jews*; and that this God is Father, Son, and Spirit, as believed by the Chriſtians; for the perſons the Apoſtle ſpeaks of were *judaizing* Chriſtians. Yet this knowledge was but notional; it lay in theory and profeſſion only; they had not a ſpiritual, experimental knowledge of God in Chriſt, which only has eternal life connected with it: *but in works they deny* him. The *Syriac*, *Arabic*, and *Ethiopic* verſions read, *in their own works*; they were not profeſſed, but practical atheiſts; they owned there was a God, and boaſted of their knowledge of him; but their lives and converſations ſhowed that they had no true knowledge of him, and that the fear of him was not before their eyes; theſe gave the lye to their profeſſion; they practically denied that faith they profeſſed to hold, and the power of godlineſs, of which they had the form. *Being abominable*; in the ſight of God, however eſteemed by men; and notwithſtanding the vizor and maſk of ſanctity and religion they put on, which could not ſkreen them from the omniſcience of God, who will one day declare he knows them not, and will bid them depart from him, being workers of iniquity. *And diſobedient*; to God; to his law, and Goſpel; to his miniſters and churches; and even to parents and civil magiſtrates; for of this caſt were the falſe teachers, and their followers, as may be learned from many paſſages. *And unto every good work reprobate*; or *unaccuſtomed*, unuſed to them, as the *Arabic* verſion renders it; or rather *without judgment*, and underſtanding, concerning them: there was no good in them, nor was it in them to do good; to do good they had no knowledge, nor any inclination; they were unfit for it, and had not a capacity to perform it; they were not good themſelves, and therefore could not do good; the tree muſt firſt be made good, 'ere its fruit will be good; they were without Chriſt, and without his ſpirit, and grace, without which no man can do any thing that is ſpiritually good; they had no true faith, and therefore what they did was ſinful; they had neither right principles, from which, nor right ends to which they acted, and therefore were not qualified for the performance of good works; which require that men ſhould be good men, created in Chriſt Jeſus, be believers in him, and have principles of truth and love, and views to the glory of God.

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[u] Miſn. Orla, c. 2. §. 17.

[w] Bartenora, in ib.

CHAP. II.

IN this chapter the Apoſtle exhorts ~~Timothy~~ Titus to the diſcharge of his office with reſpect to all ſorts of perſons, of every age, ſex, and condition, he was concerned with, giving reaſons for it, taken from the nature of the Goſpel of Chriſt: he exhorts him in general to inſiſt in his public miniſtry on thoſe things, which were agreeable to ſound doctrine, ver. 1. and particularly what became aged men, and aged women, and young men, and young women, ver. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. in all which, both with reſpect to doctrine and practice, he deſires him to be a pattern to them, that ſo even his very adverſaries may be aſhamed, having nothing evil to ſay of him, ver. 7, 8. And next he charges him to exhort ſervants to obey their maſters, and ſeek to pleaſe them, and not contradict them, and to be faithful to them; that ſo the doctrine of God their ſaviour, profeſſed by them, might be adorned in all things, ver. 9, 10. And the reaſons why the Apoſtle would have duty urged on perſons of every age, ſex, and ſtate, are taken from the nature of the Goſpel being a doctrine of grace and ſalvation, which was preached to all ſorts of perſons, ver. 11. and from the efficacy of it, in teaching men to deny ſin, and live a holy life and converſation, ver. 12. and from an expectation of eternal glory and happineſs at the appearance of Chriſt, which the Goſpel encourages to, ver. 13. and from the end of Chriſt's giving himſelf for his people, and redeeming them from ſin, the ſum and ſubſtance of the Goſpel, which was, that they might be purified, and be zealous of good works, ver. 14. and theſe exhortations were to be delivered by *Titus* with authority, and in ſuch a manner, that he might not be deſpiſed, ver. 15.

Ver. 1. *But ſpeak thou the things which become ſound doctrine.*] Concerning ſound doctrine, and the form of it, ſee the note on 2 *Tim.* i. 13. The things which become it are a good life and converſation, the various duties incumbent on profeſſors of religion, according to their different ſtation, age, and ſex, which are obſerved in ſome following verſes; theſe become the Goſpel of Chriſt, and are ornamental to the doctrine of God our ſaviour; and theſe are to be ſpoken of by the miniſters of Chriſt, in their proper places, and at proper times; who ought not to be dumb, and keep ſilence at any time, but eſpecially when there are many unruly and vain talkers: ſound doctrine ought to be ſpoken out openly and publickly, fully and faithfully, with great plainneſs and evidence, that it may be underſtood and known by all; and with much certainty, without heſitation, as being, without controverſy, undoubted truth; and with all boldneſs, not fearing men, or ſeeking to pleaſe them; and it ſhould be conſtantly and continually ſpoken, in ſeaſon, and out of ſeaſon; and care ſhould be taken that it be ſpoken conſiſtently, and in an uniform manner, that there be no claſhing and contradiction; and the duties of religion, which become ſound doctrine, ſhould be ſet in their true light, and proper place, as fruits of the grace of God, and to glorify him; theſe ſhould be ſpoken out plainly, frequently inſiſted upon, and warmly and zealouſly urged, as being decent things, for the honour of God, the recommending of religion, the good of mankind, and the ſervice of one another: as particularly,

Ver. 2. *That the aged men be ſober*, &c.] Or *vigilant*, and watchful over themſelves, their conduct and converſation, leſt being evil, it ſhould be drawn into an example by younger perſons: this is to be underſtood not of men in office, of preſbyters or elders; for their characters are deſcribed in the preceding chapter; but of men in years, of ancient men, that are profeſſors of religion, and members of churches: who ſhould alſo be *grave*; in their behaviour, ſpeech, and dreſs; levity of converſation, frothy language, and airy dreſs, are very unbecoming aged perſons: and who ought to be *temperate*; in eating and drinking, eſpecially the latter, to which old age is moſt addicted; and care ſhould be taken that they be not over-charged with it, and that day overtake them unawares, ſince they are upon the brink and borders of eternity: the word is rendered *diſcreet* in ver. 5. and *ſober* in 1 *Tim.* iii. 2. and both are characters ſuitable to men in years. *Sound in faith, in charity, in patience*; tho' they may be unhealthful in their bodies, and become decrepit through age, they ſhould be ſound in their minds; in the doctrine of faith, leſt they ſhould lead others into error; and their faith in Chriſt ſhould appear to be right and genuine; and their love to God, to Chriſt, and to his people, ſhould be real and ſincere, and be taken off from the things of the world, of time and ſenſe; an affection for which is an evil that frequently cleaves to old age: and patience ſhould have its perfect work; not only to bear the infirmities of body, brought on by age; but whatſoever ſufferings they may be called unto for the ſake of Chriſt, and his Goſpel, in their laſt days; and to run out the race that is ſet before them.

Ver. 3. *And the aged women likewiſe*, &c.] Speak alſo to them the things which become their profeſſion, and what is right for them to be, and do: theſe aged women deſign not perſons in office, who were ancient widows, and had ſome care of the poor; or preſbytereſſes, as ſome call them, the wives of preſbyters or elders, as being diſtinct from deaconneſſes; but godly women in years, who are to be inſtructed and exhorted: *that* they be *in behaviour as becometh holineſs*; or *holy women*, ſanctified by the Spirit of God; and who are prieſteſſes unto God, as the word may ſignify, being made ſo by Chriſt unto the Father, as men are made kings and prieſts by him; ſuch ought to be in their clothing, and in their ſpeech, and in the whole of their conduct and converſation, as become the character which they bear, and the profeſſion they make: *not falſe accuſers*; of the brethren, and ſiſters, which is to act the part of the devil; and indeed, the ſame word is here uſed which is commonly given to him; not raiſing falſe reports of, bringing falſe charges againſt members of churches, and ſo making differences and diviſions among them. *Not given to much wine*; or ſerving it, or being enſlaved by it, which is very ſcandalous in any, eſpecially in the female ſex, and yet was what was too common in the Eaſtern countries. *Teachers of good things*; both by example and by inſtruction, but in their own houſes privately; for they were not ſuffered to teach publickly, or to ſpeak in the church; theſe ſhould be teachers, not of old wives fables, of ſuperſtitious cuſtoms, rites, and ceremonies, of the intrigues of love, and of things filthy and obſcene, which are too often handed down to poſterity by ſuch perſons; but of things that are ſolid and ſubſtantial, uſeful and improving, honeſt and honourable, chaſte and pure. Particularly,

Ver. 4. *That they may teach the young women to be ſober*, &c.] Or to be chaſte, modeſt, and temperate; or to be wiſe and prudent in their conduct to their huſbands, and in the management of family affairs, who have had a large experience of theſe things before them. *To love their huſbands*; to help and aſſiſt them all they can; to ſeek their honour and intereſt; to endeavour to pleaſe them in all things; to ſecure peace, harmony, and union; to carry it affectionately to them, and ſympathize with them in all afflictions and diſtreſſes; for this is not ſo much ſaid in oppoſition to placing their affections on other men, and to the defilement of the marriage-bed, as to moroſeneſs and ill-nature. *To love their children*; not with a fond, fooliſh, looſe, and ungoverned affection; but ſo as to ſeek their real good, and not only their temporal, but ſpiritual and eternal welfare; to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; and to uſe and keep proper diſcipline and government over them; for otherwiſe, amidſt all the fondneſs of natural affection, a parent may be ſaid to hate a child, *Prov.* xiii. 24.

Ver. 5. To be *diſcreet*, &c.] Or temperate in eating and drinking, ſo the word is rendered in ver. 2. or to be ſober both in body and mind; or to be wiſe and prudent in the whole of their conduct, both at home and abroad: *chaſte*; in body, in affection, words and actions, having their love pure and ſingle to their own huſbands, keeping their marriage-bed undefiled. *Keepers at home*; minding their own family affairs, not gadding abroad, and inſpecting into, and buſying themſelves about other peoples matters. This is ſaid in oppoſition to what women are prone unto. It is reckoned among the properties of women, by the *Jews*, that they are, יוצאניות, *gadders abroad*[x]: they have ſome rules about womens keeping at home; they ſay[y], “a woman may go to her father's houſe to viſit him, and to the houſe of “mourning, and to the houſe of feaſting, to re“turn a kindneſs to her friends, or to her near re“lations——but it is a reproach to a woman to “go out daily; now ſhe is without, now ſhe is in “the ſtreets; and a huſband ought to reſtrain his “wife from it, and not ſuffer her to go abroad “but about once a month, or twice a month, upon “neceſſity; for there is nothing more beautiful for “a woman, than to abide in the corner of her “houſe; for ſo it is written, *Pſ.* xlv. 13. *the* “*king's daughter is all glorious within.*” And this they ſay[z] is what is meant by the woman's being an help-meet for man, that whilſt he is abroad about his buſineſs, ſhe is, יושבת בבית, *ſitting at home*, and keeping his houſe; and this they obſerve is the glory and honour of the woman. The paſſage in *Iſ.* xliv. 13. concerning an image being made *after the figure of a man, according to the beauty of a man, that it may remain in the houſe*, is by the *Targum* thus paraphraſed: “according to the likeneſs of a man, “according to the praiſe of a woman, to abide in “the houſe.” Upon which *Kimchi* has this note, “it is the glory of a woman to continue at home, “and not go abroad.” The tortoiſe, which carries its houſe upon its back, and very rarely ſhows its head, or looks out of it, was, with the ancients, an emblem of a good houſewife. Theſe alſo ſhould be inſtructed to be *good* or *kind* to their ſervants, and beneficent to the poor, and to ſtrangers, towards whom, very often, women are apt to be ſtrait-handed, and not ſo generous and liberal as they ſhould be: *obedient to their own huſbands*; ſee the notes on *Eph.* v. 22, 24. *that the word of God be not blaſphemed*; by unbelieving huſbands, who, by the ill conduct of their wives, would be provoked to ſpeak ill of the Goſpel, as if that taught diſaffection and diſobedience to them.

Ver. 6. *Young men likewiſe exhort to be ſober-minded.*] Temperate, chaſte, modeſt, moderate, wiſe, and prudent in all things: this is ſaid to *Titus*, as being his province to inſtruct and exhort the young men; as it were proper and convenient for aged women to teach the young women how they ſhould behave and conduct themſelves.

Ver. 7. *In all things ſhewing thyſelf a pattern of good works*, &c.] It was not enough for *Titus*, and ſo neither for any other Goſpel-miniſter, to deliver out ſound doctrine, and to exhort perſons of different ages and ſexes to the things which become it, but he ſhould thro' the whole of his converſation be a pattern of every good work unto them; for they that are the ſhepherds of the flock, are not only to feed them with knowledge, and with underſtanding, but to be enſamples to them, as well as they who are under their care ought to walk, as they have them for an example; ſee 1 *Tim.* iv. 12. *In doctrine*, ſhewing *incorruptneſs*, *gravity*, *ſincerity*; the Apoſtle here either returns again to his advice about doctrine, that it ſhould be delivered out pure and incorrupt, free from error and hereſy, and every mixture and invention of man's; and with all gravity of ſpeech and countenance, without levity in expreſſion, and airineſs of geſture; and that it be the ſincere milk of the word that is given forth, and that with all integrity and uprightneſs of ſoul: or elſe this refers to the life and converſation of the teacher, as anſwering to his doctrine, and going along with it; and the ſenſe is, in, or with doctrine, along with the doctrine preached, let the converſation be pure and incorrupt, free from the pollutions of the world, and from any governing vice; and let it be attended with gravity in word, geſture, look, and dreſs; and with all ſincerity, faithfulneſs, and ſimplicity, in all our dealings, either with the ſaints, or with the men of the world.

Ver. 8. *Sound ſpeech that cannot be condemned*, &c.] In the public miniſtry, the wholeſome words of our Lord Jeſus ſhould be uſed, and the doctrines of the Goſpel be expreſſed, as near as can be, in the words which the Holy Ghoſt teacheth, and not in the enticing words of man's wiſdom; ſuch ſpeech or language ſhould be choſen, that is plain, eaſy, and acceptable, and conveys juſt ideas of things; and which being agreeable to the ſcriptures of truth, and the analogy of faith, cannot be juſtly found fault with: or this may refer to private converſation, in which no rotten ſpeech, or corrupt communication ſhould proceed out of the mouth; nothing but what is pure, ſound, graceful, and edifying; no filthineſs, nor fooliſh talking and jeſting, which are not convenient, and are rightly condemned. *That he that is of the contrary part may be aſhamed*; that is, that he who is on the other ſide of the queſtion, who oppoſes the truths of the Goſpel, and is an adverſary to them; whether he be an heathen philoſopher, or a *Jewiſh Rabbi*, or a *judaizing* teacher, or an heretical man, under the chriſtian name, may be put to ſhame and confuſion; partly on account of that incorruptneſs in doctrine and converſation, which he obſerves in the true and faithful miniſters of the word, and is wanting in himſelf; and ſo being convinced, may be converted and brought to repentance, and to the acknowledgment of the truth; and partly on the account of the falſe charges and accuſations brought by him againſt ſuch: *having no evil thing to ſay of you*; whether with reſpect to doctrine or practice. The *Vulgate Latin* verſion, and all the *Oriental* verſions, read *us*, inſtead of *you*. The whole body is reproached for the ſake of one or more.

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[x] Bereſhith Rabba, §. 45. fol. 40. 3.

[y] Maimon. Hilchot Iſhot, c. 13. §. 11.

[z] Tzeror Hammor, fol. 5. 4.

Ver. 9. Exhort *ſervants to be obedient to their own maſters*, &c.] And not others, whether they be believers or unbelievers, gentle or froward, all their lawful commands ought to be obeyed; ſee the note on *Eph.* vi. 5. and *to pleaſe* them *well in all things*; not only to obey and ſerve them, and do what they order, but to ſeek and endeavour to do it in ſuch a way, as may be grateful, acceptable, and well-pleaſing to them, whereby an intereſt in their affection, eſteem, and commendation, may be gained: and this ſhould be done always, and in all things, that are not contrary to a good conſcience, and to the chriſtian religion, and to the laws of God and nature. Or *that they may be well pleaſed in all things*; that is, be ſatisfied and contented with ſuch things as they have, and in their ſtate and condition as ſervants, and chearfully abide in the calling wherein they are called: *not anſwering again*; replying to their maſters orders, or complaints, either in a pert, or ſaucy, or grumbling manner; an evil very incident to ſervants, and which greatly provokes.

Ver. 10. *Not purloining*, &c.] Or ſtealing, embezzling their maſter's ſubſtance, taking away, and making uſe of what is their property, keeping back part of money or goods committed to their truſt: the word is uſed in the caſe of *Ananias* and *Sapphira*, *Acts* v. 2. *but ſhewing all good fidelity*; approving themſelves to be faithful ſervants in every thing they are intruſted with: *that they may adorn the doctrine of God our ſaviour in all things*; Chriſt is our alone ſaviour, and he is truly and properly God, and ſo fit and able to be a ſaviour; and the Goſpel is his doctrine, not only what he himſelf preached, when on earth, but it is a doctrine concerning him; concerning his deity, and the dignity of his perſon, and concerning his office as mediator, and the great ſalvation by him; and which are ſo many reaſons why it ſhould be adorned by a ſuitable life and converſation; for this is what becomes the Goſpel of Chriſt, throws a beauty upon it, and is ornamental to it; and in this way the doctrine of Chriſt may be, and ought to be, adorned by ſervants, as well as others: to adorn the Goſpel, is firſt to believe and receive it, then to profeſs it, and hold faſt that profeſſion, and walk worthy of it. Two of *Stephens*'s copies read, *in*, or *among all men*.

Ver. 11. *For the grace of God that bringeth ſalvation*, &c.] By which is meant, not the free love and favour of God, which lies in his own heart; 1 for tho' that is productive of ſalvation, and is the ſource and ſpring of it, and what brings it forth, and is far from encouraging licentiouſneſs, but inſtructs in real piety, and conſtrains to obedience to the will of God; yet this does not appear, nor has it been, nor is it made manifeſt unto all men, but is peculiar to the Lord's own people: nor does 2 it deſign the grace of God wrought in the hearts of believers; for tho' ſalvation is ſtrictly connected with it, and it powerfully influences the lives and converſations of ſuch, who are partakers of it; yet it has not appeared to, nor in all men; all men have not faith, nor hope, nor love, nor any other graces of the Spirit: but by the grace of God is 3 intended the doctrine of grace, the Goſpel of the grace of God; called ſo, becauſe it is a declaration of the grace of God, and of ſalvation by it; and is the means, in the hand of the Spirit, of conveying grace to the heart, and implanting it in it; in which ſenſe the phraſe is uſed in *Acts* xx. 24. 2 *Cor.* vi. 1. *Heb.* xii. 15. and this is called the Goſpel of ſalvation, the word of ſalvation, and ſalvation itſelf, and ſo may be ſaid to bring it; it brings 1 1 and publiſhes the good news of it; it ſhews unto 2 2 men the way of ſalvation; it gives an account of 3 3 the ſaviour himſelf, that he is the great God, and ſo fit to be a ſaviour; that he was appointed by God 4 4 the Father to be his ſalvation; that he was ſent, and 5 5 came to work out ſalvation; and that he is become 6 6 the author of it; and that he is the only ſaviour, 7 7 and an able, willing, and compleat one: it gives an account of the ſalvation itſelf; that it is the ſal- 1 vation of the ſoul; that it is a great one, and in- 2 cludes both grace and glory; that it is everlaſting, 3 and all of free grace; and it points out the perſons who are intereſted in it, and ſhall enjoy it, even all thoſe that are choſen to it, and are redeemed, reconciled, and juſtified by the blood of Chriſt, and are brought to believe in him: and the Goſpel not only brings the news of all this to the ear, in the external miniſtration of it; but it brings it to the heart, and is the power of God unto ſalvation, when it comes, not in word only, but in power, and in the Holy Ghoſt; or when it comes under the powerful influences and application of the Spirit of God. Some read this clauſe thus, *that bringeth ſalvation to all men*; to which agrees the *Syriac* verſion, which renders it, מחיה כל, *that quickeneth*, or *ſaveth all*; and ſo the *Arabic* verſion: but then this cannot be underſtood of every individual perſon; for the Goſpel has not brought ſalvation to every one in any ſenſe, not even in the external miniſtry of it; there have been multitudes who have never ſo much as heard the outward ſound of ſalvation by Jeſus Chriſt, and fewer ſtill who have had an application of it to their ſouls by the Spirit of God; to many to whom it has come, it has been an hidden Goſpel, and the ſavour of death unto death: it follows indeed, *hath appeared to all men*; which ſuppoſes it to have been hid, as it was, in the thoughts, purpoſes, and counſels of God; and in Jeſus Chriſt, in whom all the treaſures of wiſdom and knowledge are hid; and in the covenant of grace, of which the Goſpel is a tranſcript; and in the types and ſhadows of the ceremonial law: it was in ſome meaſure hid from angels, who deſire to look into it, and from the Old Teſtament ſaints, to whom it was not known as it is now, by the Apoſtles and prophets; and it was entirely hid from the *Gentiles*, the times of whoſe ignorance God overlooked: and it ſuggeſts, that it now appeared or ſhone out more clearly, and more largely, The Goſpel had been like a candle lighted up in one part of the world, only in *Judea*, but now it ſhone out like the ſun in its meridian glory, and appeared to all men; not to every individual perſon; it has neither ſhined upon, nor in every one: it did not in the Apoſtle's time, when it appeared the moſt illuſtrious, and ſhone out the moſt extenſively, as well as the moſt clearly; nor has it in ages ſince, nor does it in ours; there are multitudes who know nothing of it, and are neither under its form nor power: but this is to be underſtood of all ſorts of men, of every nation, of every age and ſex, of every ſtate and condition, high and low, rich and poor, bond and free, maſters and ſervants; which ſenſe well agrees with the context, ver. 2, 3, 4, 6, 9, 10. and the words are a reaſon why the Apoſtle would have duty urged on all ſorts of perſons, becauſe the Goſpel was now preached to all; and it had reached the hearts of all ſorts of men; particularly the *Gentiles* may be intended, from whom the Goſpel was before hid, and who ſat in darkneſs, and in the ſhadow of death; but now the great light ſhined upon them, and the Goſpel was no more confined to one people only, but was preached to every creature under heaven, or to the whole creation; namely, to the *Gentiles*, purſuant to the commiſſion in *Mark* xvi. 15.

Ver. 12. *Teaching us*, &c.] Not all men, to whom the Goſpel appears in its outward miniſtry; for there are many who externally receive the Goſpel, and profeſs it, who are never influentially taught by it to deny ſin, or love holineſs of life; they profeſs in words to know it, but in works deny it; they have a form of godlineſs, but deny its power: but the perſons effectually taught by the Goſpel are the *us*, to whom it was come, not in word only, but in power; and ſo taught them, not only doctrinally, but with efficacy, both negative and poſitive holineſs, as follows: *that denying ungodlineſs and worldly luſts*; all impiety, or ſin more immediately againſt God; or which is a violation of the firſt table of the law, as idolatry, will-worſhip, ſuperſtition, perjury, and the like; and all ſinful luſts, as the luſt of the fleſh, the luſt of the eye, and the pride of life; which fill the world, and are reigning luſts in it, and which are common to the men of the world; and they are under the power of: to *deny* theſe, is to abhor and deteſt them, and to abſtain from them, and have nothing to do with them: and this leſſon of ſelf-denial, or of the denial of ſinful ſelf, the Goſpel teaches, and urges upon the moſt powerful motives and arguments; and when attended by the Spirit of God, does it effectually: ſo that *we ſhould live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly in this preſent world*; not only *temperately*, but *wiſely* and prudently, as children of the light, on whom, and into whom the Goſpel has ſhined; and *righteouſly* among men, giving to every man his due, and dealing with all according to the rules of equity and juſtice; as being made new men, created unto righteouſneſs, and true holineſs; and as being dead to ſin, thro' the death of Chriſt, and ſo living unto righteouſneſs, or in a righteous manner; and as being juſtified by the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, revealed in the Goſpel: and *godly*; in a godly manner, according to the word of God, and agreeable to the will of God; and in all godly exerciſes, both public and private, and to the glory of God: and that as long as *in this preſent world*; which lies in wickedneſs, and in which there are ſo many ſtrong temptations to a contrary way of living. The Goſpel then is no licentious doctrine; it is according to godlineſs, and teaches and promotes it; it is an holy faith, yea, a moſt holy faith; wherefore it is a vile ſlander to charge it with leading to looſeneſs of life and converſation.

Ver. 13. *Looking for that bleſſed hope*, &c.] Not the grace of hope; tho' that being a good hope through grace, and a hope of bleſſedneſs, may be called a bleſſed hope; yet this the ſaints have already implanted in their hearts in regeneration, and can't be ſaid to look for it: rather Chriſt, the object and ground of hope, who is our hope, and Chriſt in us the hope of glory, who is bleſſed for evermore; and in the enjoyment of whom the happineſs of the ſaints hereafter will greatly conſiſt; and whom they look for, and expect from heaven, and who is expreſly mentioned in the next clauſe: but as this may be ſomething diſtinct from that, it may be beſt, by this bleſſed hope, to underſtand the thing hoped for, eternal glory and happineſs; called elſewhere the hope of righteouſneſs, and the hope laid up in heaven, *Gal.* v. 5. *Col.* i. 5. and which will lie in the beatific viſion of God and Chriſt; in a perfect knowledge of them, in communion with them, and conformity to them; and in the ſociety of angels and glorified ſaints; and in a freedom from all evil, outward and inward, and in the poſſeſſion of all good: and to be looking for this, is to be deſiring it with the heart and affections ſet upon it, longing to be in the enjoyment of it, and yet waiting patiently in the exerciſe of faith and hope; for looking includes all the three graces, faith, hope, and love; and particularly the former, which is always attended with the latter; for it is ſuch a looking for this bleſſedneſs, as that a man firmly believes he ſhall partake of it: and there is good reaſon for a regenerate man ſo to look for it; ſince it is his Father's gift of free grace, and is laid up for him; Chriſt is gone to prepare it by his preſence, mediation, and interceſſion; yea, he is gone, as the forerunner, to take poſſeſſion of it in his name: this man is begotten again to a lively hope of it; he is called by the grace of God unto it; he is a child of God, and ſo an heir of it; he has a right unto it, thro' the juſtifying righteouſneſs of Chriſt, and has a meetneſs for it thro' the ſanctifying grace of the Spirit; and who is in him as the earneſt and pledge of it: now ſuch a firm expectation of the heavenly glory does the Goſpel, the doctrine of the grace of God, teach, direct, and encourage to; for theſe words muſt be read in connexion with the preceding, as a further inſtruction of the Goſpel, as well as what follows: *and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our ſaviour Jeſus Chriſt*; not two divine perſons, only one, are here intended; for the word rendered *appearing*, is never uſed of God the Father, only of the ſecond perſon; and the prepoſitive article is not ſet before the word *Saviour*, as it would, if two diſtinct perſons were deſigned; and the copulative *and* is exegetical, and may be rendered thus, *and the glorious appearing of the great God, even our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt*; who, in the next verſe, is ſaid to give himſelf for the redemption of his people: ſo that here is a very illuſtrious proof of the true and proper deity of Chriſt, who will appear at his ſecond coming, for of that appearance are the words to be underſtood, as the great God, in all the glories and perfections of his divine nature; as well as a ſaviour, which is mentioned to ſhow that he will appear to the ſalvation of his people, which he will then put them in the full poſſeſſion of; and that the brightneſs of his divine majeſty will not make them afraid: and this appearance will be a glorious one; for Chriſt will

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come in his own glory, in the glory of his deity, particularly his omniſcience and omnipotence will be very conſpicuous; and in his glory as mediator, which will be beheld by all the ſaints; and in his glory as a judge, inveſted with power and authority from his Father, which will be terrible to ſinners; and in the glory of his human nature, with which it is now crowned; and in his Father's glory, in the ſame he had with him before the world was, and which is the ſame with his, and in that which he'll receive from him as man and mediator, and as the judge of the whole earth; and in the glory of his holy angels, being attended with all his mighty ones: to which may be added, that ſaints will be raiſed from the dead, and with the living ones appear with Chriſt in glory, and make up the bride, the lamb's wife, having the glory of God upon her: ſo that this will be a grand appearance indeed. Now this the Goſpel directs, and inſtructs believers to look for, to love, to haſten to, moſt earneſtly deſire, and yet patiently wait for, moſt firmly believing that it will be: and this the ſaints have reaſon to look for, with longing deſire and affection, and with pleaſure, ſince it will not only be glorious in itſelf, but advantageous to them; they'll then be glorified with Chriſt, and be for ever with him.

Ver. 14. *Who gave himſelf for us*, &c.] Not another, or another's, but himſelf; not merely his own things, but his own ſelf; not the world, and the riches of it, not gold and ſilver, and ſuch like corruptible things, as the price of redemption; not the cattle on a thouſand hills for ſacrifice; not men nor angels, but himſelf; all that belong to him, all that is near and dear, his name, fame, credit, and reputation; his time, ſtrength, and ſervice; all the comforts of life, and life itſelf; his whole manhood, ſoul and body, and that as in union with his divine perſon; which he gave into the hands of men, and of juſtice, and to death itſelf, to be a ranſom-price of his people, and for a propitiation and ſacrifice for their ſins, to be paid and offered in their room and ſtead: not for all mankind, but for many; for us, for all the elect of God, for the church; and who are repreſented when he gave himſelf, or died for them, as ungodly, ſinners, and enemies: this was a free and voluntary gift, and is an unſpeakable one; who can ſay all that is contained in this word *himſelf?* it is an inſtance of the greateſt love, of love that paſſeth knowledge; God, becauſe he could ſwear by no greater, ſwore by himſelf; and Chriſt, becauſe he could give no greater gift, nor any greater inſtance of his love, gave himſelf, for the following ends and purpoſes: *that he might redeem us from all iniquity:* ſin brings into bondage and ſlavery, redemption is a deliverance from it; ſin binds guilt upon the ſinner, and lays him under obligation to puniſhment, and renders him liable to the curſe and condemnation of the law; Chriſt was made ſin, and a curſe for his people, that he might redeem them from both, and deliver them from the puniſhment due to ſin; which he has done by bearing it in his own body on the tree, whereby he has redeemed them from all iniquity, that ſo it ſhall not be their ruin, or they come into condemnation on account of it; even from original ſin, and from all actual tranſgreſſions; from all which his blood cleanſes, and his righteouſneſs juſtifies, and which God, for his ſake, freely and fully forgives. Chriſt was called to this work by his Father, to which he agreed; and the plan of redemption being drawn in the everlaſting council, and the whole adjuſted and fixed in the covenant of peace; promiſes and propheſies were given out of it, and in the fulneſs of time Chriſt was ſent, and came to effect it; and he has obtained eternal redemption for us, thro' the price of his own blood, which could have never been wrought out by any creature; and wherein all the divine perfections are glorified; and is a plenteous and compleat one; it includes in it, or connects with it, the bleſſings of juſtification, peace, pardon, adoption, and eternal life. It follows as another end of Chriſt's giving himſelf, or what is a branch of redemption, or conſequent upon it, *and purify unto himſelf a peculiar people, zealous of good works*; all mankind are filthy and unclean by nature, in all the powers and faculties of their ſouls; nor can they cleanſe themſelves from their impurity of fleſh and ſpirit, by any thing that they can do; Chriſt has a peculiar people among theſe, a church whom he loves, and for whom he has given himſelf, that he might ſanctify and cleanſe them from their ſins; which he has done by ſhedding his blood for them, and waſhing them in it, which cleanſes from all ſin: and he has purified them unto himſelf, for his own uſe and ſervice, for his pleaſure and delight, and to his glory; that they might be a proper habitation for him now; and that they might be made ready for him, to have the marriage between him and them conſummated; and that they might be preſented to himſelf a glorious church, without ſpot or wrinkle, and be with him, both in the new *Jeruſalem* ſtate, into which nothing that defiles, or is defiled, enters, and in heaven, to all eternity. Now theſe people, for whom Chriſt has given himſelf, and whom he has redeemed and purifies, are a *peculiar people*; for whom Chriſt has a peculiar love, in whom he takes a peculiar delight, and to whom he grants peculiar nearneſs to himſelf, and beſtows peculiar bleſſings on them, and makes peculiar proviſions for them, both for time and eternity; theſe are Chriſt's own, his poſſeſſion, his ſubſtance, what he has a ſpecial right to by his Father's gift, his own purchaſe, and the conqueſt of his grace; and they are a diſtinct and ſeparate people from all others, in election, redemption, effectual vocation, and in Chriſt's interceſſion, and will be in the reſurrection-morn, at the day of judgment, and to all eternity; and they are, as the word alſo ſignifies, an excellent and valuable people; they are Chriſt's portion and inheritance; they are his peculiar treaſure, his jewels, whom, as ſuch, he values and takes care of. The *Syriac* verſion renders it, *a new people*. And they who are redeemed and purified by Chriſt, through the power of his grace upon them, become a people *zealous of good works*; not in order to their juſtification and ſalvation, but in obedience to the will of God, and to teſtify their ſubjection and gratitude to him, and for his honour and glory, and for the credit of religion, and the good of men. Theſe not only perform them, but perform them from principles of truth and love, and with a zeal for the glory of God, and the honour of his Goſpel; and with an holy emulation of one another, ſtriving to go before, and excel each other in the performance of them.

Ver. 15. *Theſe things ſpeak and exhort*, &c.] Sound doctrine, the doctrine of grace, the doctrines of ſalvation and redemption by Chriſt, of peace, pardon, and cleanſing by his blood; theſe ſpeak out clearly, plainly, publickly, boldly, and faithfully: and the things which become ſound doctrine; the duties of religion ſuitable to every age and ſex, a denying of ungodlineſs and worldly luſts, a ſober, righteous, and godly life and converſation, exhort unto; and encourage the ſaints to be zealous of good works, and comfort them with the expectation of the bleſſed hope, and glorious appearance of Chriſt. *And rebuke with all authority*; ſuch as imbibe errors and hereſies, or indulge to vice and wickedneſs, with the authority both of Chriſt and his church, in the name of the one, and by the order and vote of the other, that the reproof may come with the greater weight; and in a grave and ſolemn manner, ſuitable to the dignity of the miniſterial office and character, and with that ſharpneſs and ſeverity the offence requires. *Let no man deſpiſe thee*; as negligent in the diſcharge of his office, or as doing it in a puſillanimous manner, or as behaving in his life and converſation unworthy of the character he bore, and ſo is a direction to himſelf; or elſe it may be conſidered as deſigned for the churches in *Crete*, and the profeſſors of religion, and to be an inſtruction to them, to value *Titus*, and treat him with reſpect, and not with contempt; which ſhews, that this Epiſtle was not written to *Titus* only, or for his own uſe, but for the ſervice of others. The *Ethiopic* verſion reads, *let no man deceive thee.*

CHAP. III.

IN this chapter the Apoſtle exhorts *Titus* to preſs various duties incumbent on Chriſtians, with arguments engaging to them; gives him ſome directions about dealing with hereticks, and ſome inſtructions about private matters, and particular perſons, and cloſes it with ſalutations. And firſt, he charges him to put his hearers in mind of their duty, to be ſubject to civil magiſtrates, and readily perform whatever is right and proper for them to do; and to abſtain from blaſpheming and brawling, and to exerciſe gentleneſs and meekneſs to all men, ver. 1, 2. The arguments inducing thereunto, are taken partly from their former ſtate and condition, whilſt unregenerate, when they were as ignorant, and as wicked as other men, they are exhorted to behave well to; and partly from the conſideration of the ſalvation they were now partakers of, ver. 3, 4. which leads on the Apoſtle to give an account of its cauſes and means: the moving cauſe of it is the love and mercy of God; the way and means in which it is brought about, are not works of righteouſneſs done by men, but the regenerating and renewing grace of the Spirit, which is plentifully beſtowed thro' Jeſus Chriſt the ſaviour, and juſtification by the free grace of God, by vertue of which men become heirs unto, and have an hope of eternal life, ver. 4, 5, 6, 7. which ſeveral bleſſings of grace ſhould be conſtantly inſiſted on in the miniſtry of the word, in order to engage believers carefully to perform good works; and becauſe ſuch doctrines are good in themſelves, and profitable to men; whereas queſtions, genealogies, contentions, and ſtrivings about the law, are fooliſh, vain, and unprofitable, and to be avoided, ver. 8, 9. wherefore an heretical man ſhould be rejected from all chriſtian converſation and communion, after he has been admoniſhed at leaſt twice, ſeeing he is off of the foundation, has ſinned, and is ſelf condemned, ver. 10, 11. Next the Apoſtle deſires *Titus* to meet him at *Nicopolis*, where his deſign was to paſs the winter, upon ſending two miniſtring brethren to *Crete*, who are mentioned by name, ver. 12. and that he would accommodate two others, who are alſo named, with every thing convenient for their journey, ver. 13. and charges him to exhort the brethren under his care to learn to be diligent and induſtrious in the performance of good works, which have their neceſſary uſes, and prevent unfruitfulneſs, ver. 13, 14. And the Epiſtle is concluded with ſalutations, and the Apoſtle's uſual benediction, ver. 15.

Ver. 1. *Put them in mind to be ſubject to principalities and powers*, &c.] Not angels, good or bad, which are ſometimes ſo called, but men in high places; the higher powers ordained of God, as the Apoſtle elſewhere calls them; and which the Apoſtle *Peter* diſtinguiſhes into the king as ſupreme, and into governours under him: the *Roman* emperor and ſenate, the conſuls, and proconſuls, deputies and governours of provinces and iſlands, are here meant; particularly ſuch who were appointed over the iſland of *Crete*. Now the reaſons why the Apoſtle exhorts *Titus* to put in remembrance thoſe that were under his care, to yield a chearful ſubjection to their ſuperiors, were, becauſe the *Jews*, from whom the Chriſtians were not diſtinguiſhed by the *Romans*, were reckoned a turbulent and ſeditious people; which character they obtained, partly thro' the principles of the *Scribes* and *Phariſees*, which they at leaſt privately entertained, as not to give tribute to *Cæſar*, or be under any heathen yoke; and partly thro' the inſurrections that had been made by *Judas* of *Galilee*, and *Theudas*, and others; and beſides, there were many *Jews* in the iſland of *Crete*, and the *Cretians* themſelves were prone to mutiny and rebellion: to which may be added, that the falſe teachers, and *judaizing* preachers, that had got among them, deſpiſed dominion, and were not afraid to ſpeak evil of dignities, according to the characters which both *Peter* and *Jude* give of them, and taught the ſaints to abuſe their chriſtian liberty, and uſe it for a cloak of maliciouſneſs, to the great ſcandal of the chriſtian religion. *To obey magiſtrates*; inferior ones; in all things that are according to the laws of God, and right reaſon, that do not contradict what God has commanded, or break in upon the rights and dictates of conſcience; in all things of a civil nature, and which are for the good of ſociety, and do not affect religion, and the worſhip of God: hence it follows, *to be ready to every good work*; which may be taken in a limited and reſtrained ſenſe, and deſign every good work enjoined by the civil magiſtrate; and all right and lawful obedience that belongs to him, as giving to *Cæſar* the things that are *Cæſar*'s, tribute, cuſtom, fear, and honour to whom they are due; and which ſhould be done readily and chearfully: or it may be underſtood more comprehenſively of good works in general, which wicked men are reprobate to, and unfit for; and which they that are ſanctified are meet for, and ready to; tho' this may not only intend their capacity, fitneſs, and qualifications, for the performance of good works, but their alacrity, promptitude, and forwardneſs unto them.

Ver. 2. *To ſpeak evil of no man*, &c.] As not of one another, ſo not of the men of the world, to the prejudice of their names and characters, which are tender things, and ought to be gently touched; nor of magiſtrates, principalities, and powers, of perſons in dignity and authority, which the falſe teachers were not afraid to ſpeak evil of, and by their principles and practices, taught others to do the ſame: *to be* *no brawlers*; or *fighters*, either by blows or words; not litigious and quarrelſome, wrangling and ſtriving, about things to no profit, and to the detriment and diſturbance of civil government, churches, neighbourhood, and families; which is very unbecoming the followers of Jeſus, who ſtrove not, nor cried, nor was his voice heard in the ſtreets. But *gentle, ſhewing all meekneſs to all men*; yeilding and giving way, rather chuſing to ſuffer wrong than to brawl, contend and litigate a point; taking the advice of Chriſt in *Matt.* v. 39, 40, 41. carrying it in a meek and humble manner to men of all ranks and degrees, whether ſuperior or inferior, rich or poor, bond or free, *Jews* or *Gentiles*, members of the church, or men of the world.

Ver. 3. *For we ourſelves alſo were ſometimes fooliſh*, &c.] Nothing has a greater tendency to promote humility, and check pride in the ſaints, than to reflect upon their paſt ſtate and condition, what they themſelves once were; and this is a reaſon why magiſtrates, tho' evil men, ſhould be obeyed in things good and lawful, and why no man ſhould be ſpoken evil of, and why every man ſhould be treated in a gentle manner, and uſed with mildneſs and meekneſs; ſince the Apoſtle himſelf, and *Titus*, and other ſaints, whom he deſigned this as an inſtruction for, were formerly in their unregenerate ſtate, juſt ſuch perſons themſelves; and therefore ſhould not glory over them, and treat them in a contemptuous manner: and beſides, the ſame grace that had made a difference in them, could make one in theſe alſo, and which might be made in God's own time: and particularly, whereas they obſerved great ignorance in theſe men, they ſhould conſider that they alſo had been *fooliſh*, and without underſtanding of things, divine and ſpiritual, and neither knew their own ſtate and condition, nor the way of ſalvation by Chriſt; yea the Apoſtle himſelf, tho' he had a zeal for God, yet not according to knowledge; he did not know luſt, nor the exceeding ſinfulneſs of ſin, until he was enlightned by the Spirit of God; he was ignorant of the righteouſneſs of God, and went about to eſtabliſh his own, which he imagined to be blameleſs; and thought he ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jeſus: *diſobedient*; both to the law of God, and Goſpel of Chriſt; diſbelieving the truths of the Goſpel, and unſubjected to the ordinances of it, notwithſtanding the evidence with which they came, and the miracles by which they were confirmed. *Deceived*; by the old ſerpent ſatan, who deceives the whole world; and by an evil heart of unbelief, as well as by falſe teachers and leaders; and ſo, as the word ſignifies, were wandering about in darkneſs and ignorance, and were as ſheep going aſtray, until they were returned unto the ſhepherd and biſhop of ſouls. *Serving divers luſts and pleaſures*; the luſts of the fleſh are many and various, which promiſe pleaſure to them that obey them, tho' that is but imaginary, and very ſhort-lived, and which ſubjects perſons to bondage and ſlavery; for ſuch who indulge to theſe things, are overcome by them, led captive, and brought into bondage, and are the ſervants of ſin, vaſſals and ſlaves to their own corruptions; and ſuch theſe ſaints had been, here ſpoken of: *living in malice and envy*; they had not only malice and envy in their hearts againſt their fellow-creatures, but practiſed it in their lives; yea, their lives were a continued ſeries of malice and envy; particularly this was true of the Apoſtle, who haled men and women out of their houſes, and committed them to priſon; breathed out ſlaughter and threatenings againſt the ſaints; was exceeding mad againſt them, perſecuted them to ſtrange cities, and compelled them to blaſpheme, and gave his vote for puniſhing them with death. *Hateful, and hating one another*; abominable in the ſight of God, as conſidered in themſelves, and on account of their nature and practices; and to be abhorred by all good men; and who by their continual feuds, quarrels, and animoſities among themſelves, ſhewed an hatred, an abhorrence of one another.

Ver. 4. *But after that*, &c.] After all this ſeries and courſe of wickedneſs; notwithſtanding all this fooliſhneſs, diſobedience, deception, bondage to ſin, envy, malice, and malignity; or *when* all this was, as the word may be rendered, amidſt all this iniquity; when theſe perſons were in the full carier of ſin, and ſo had done no preparatory works, or had any previous qualifications and diſpoſitions for the grace of God: *the kindneſs and love of God our ſaviour toward man appeared*; unto them; and the *Ethiopic* verſion adds, *unto us*. The Apoſtle takes the advantage of the above character of himſelf, and others in their former ſtate, to ſet off and magnify the grace of God in their converſion; ſo contraries, as black and white, illuſtrate each other. By *God our ſaviour* is not meant the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, tho' he is commonly deſigned by our ſaviour, and is ſeveral times called God our ſaviour in this Epiſtle; ſee ch. i. 3. and ii. 10, 13. and who is truly God, and the only ſaviour of loſt ſinners; and whoſe kindneſs and love towards them has appeared in many inſtances; as in his ſuretiſhip-undertakings for them, in his aſſumption of their nature, and in his ſuffering and dying in their room and ſtead: and yet it appears from ver. 6. that God our ſaviour here, is diſtinguiſhed from Jeſus Chriſt our ſaviour there; and therefore here muſt be underſtood of God the Father; who contrived the ſcheme of ſalvation, appointed Chriſt to be his ſalvation, and made a covenant with him, in which it is ſecured, and ſent him in time to obtain it, and thro' his blood, righteouſneſs, and ſacrifice, ſaves all his people: it is his kindneſs and love to men that is here ſpoken of; and which deſigns not his general and providential goodneſs and kindneſs, which extends to the whole human nature, and to all the individuals of it; but his ſpecial love and grace ſhown in his kindneſs in Chriſt Jeſus; that goodwill to men the angels ſung of at Chriſt's incarnation; or that free favour and love of God towards elect men, which is ſovereign and ſpecial, from everlaſting to everlaſting, unchangeable and unſpeakable, which is better than life; the excellency of which cannot be expreſſed, and which has ſhown itſelf in various inſtances: it is ſaid to have *appeared*; becauſe it was hid from all eternity in the heart of God, in the thoughts of his heart, in his purpoſes, counſel, and covenant, and has been made manifeſt in time; particularly, it has broke forth and ſhewed itſelf in the miſſion of Chriſt into this world, and in redemption and ſalvation by him; wherein God has manifeſted and commended his love, and ſhewn forth the exceeding riches of his grace; and alſo in effectual vocation, which being a time of life, is a time of love, and is owing to the great love of God, and is a fruit and evidence of his everlaſting and unchangeable love; and it is this inſtance and appearance of it, which is here meant, ſince it follows the account of the ſtate and condition of the ſaints by nature; and is what was made to them when in this ſtate, by which means they were brought out of it.

Ver. 5. *Not by works of righteouſneſs which we have done*, &c.] The great inſtance of the kindneſs and love of God our ſaviour is ſalvation; which the Apoſtle denies that it is brought about by any works, even the beſt works of men; for *works of righteouſneſs* are works done according to a righteous law, and in obedience to it; and in a righteous manner, from right principles of grace, in faith, and with a view to the glory of God; or otherwiſe they are not righteous actions, or works of righteouſneſs; wherefore not works before, but after converſion, are here meant; for works before converſion are not properly works of righteouſneſs: beſides, theſe are ſuch which *we* have done, who formerly were as before deſcribed, but now are regenerated and renewed by the Holy Ghoſt, and created in Chriſt Jeſus unto good works. Now ſalvation, neither in whole, nor in part, is by theſe, either as cauſes, conditions, or means; ſee the note on 2 *Tim.* i. 9. מעשים צדקה, *works of righteouſneſs*, is a *Jewiſh* phraſe uſed for righteous, or good works[z]: *but according to his mercy he ſaved us*; the mercy of God is natural and eſſential to him, but the actings and exerciſe of it, towards this, or the other objects, are ſovereign and free, and according to his will; the effects of it are many, he is rich and abundant in it; and they are channelled in, and flow forth thro' the blood and righteouſneſs of Chriſt; and this is the moving cauſe of ſalvation: this moved God to make a covenant with his Son, the bleſſings of which are the ſure mercies of *David*, and in which God is merciful to the ſins and unrighteouſneſſes of his people; it is owing to the tender mercy of God, that Chriſt, the day-ſpring from on high, has viſited the earth; and the glory of it is very conſpicuous in the affair of redemption by him; the pardon of ſin is according to the multitude of God's tender mercies; and regeneration ſprings from the abundance of it; and even eternal life is the effect of it. Now according to this God has *ſaved* his people; ſalvation is not only a thing determined, and reſolved on in the mind of God, but is actually and compleatly accompliſhed by Jeſus Chriſt, and an application of it is made to the ſaints in effectual calling; and becauſe of the certain enjoyment of the whole of it, even eternal glory, the ſaints are ſaid to be ſaved already; as they are alſo in faith and hope, as well as in Chriſt, their head and repreſentative; ſee the note on *Eph.* ii. 8. It follows, as the means of ſalvation, *by the waſhing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghoſt*; by the former is meant, not the ordinance of water baptiſm; for that is never expreſſed by waſhing, nor is it the cauſe or means of regeneration; the cauſe being the Spirit of God, and the means the word of God: and beſides, perſons ought to be regenerated before they are baptized; and they may be baptized, and yet not regenerated, as *Simon Magus*; nor is it a ſaving ordinance, or a point of ſalvation; nor can it be oppoſed to works of righteouſneſs, as this waſhing is; for that itſelf is a work of righteouſneſs; ſee *Matt.* iii. 15. and if perſons were ſaved by that, they would be ſaved by a work of righteouſneſs, contrary to the text itſelf: but regenerating grace is meant, or a being born of water, and of the Spirit; that is, of the grace of the Spirit, comparable to water for its purity and cleanſing virtue: hence ſuch who are regenerated and ſanctified, are ſaid to be waſhed and cleanſed, having their hearts purified by faith, and their conſciences purged from ſin by the blood of Chriſt: by the latter, *the renewing of the Holy Ghoſt* is meant, either the fruit and effect of the former, even newneſs of life and converſation, under the influence of the Holy Spirit; or elſe the gradual increaſe and progreſs of the work of grace upon the ſoul, renewed day by day in the ſpirit of the mind, by the Holy Ghoſt; or rather it means the ſame thing with regeneration, and is added partly as explanative of the waſhing of regeneration, ſhewing that that is no other than the new creature, the new man, the new heart, and new ſpirit, formed in the ſoul, in effectual vocation; and partly to obſerve that the Holy Ghoſt is the author of it. Now it is in this way God ſaves his people, namely, by regenerating and renewing them; in this is the firſt appearance and diſcovery of the love of God to them; this is their open paſſage into a ſtate of grace, and without this there is no entrance into glory; this is the foundation of all grace and good works, and by which ſaints appear to be heirs of the heavenly inheritance.

Ver. 6. *Which he ſhed on us abundantly*, &c.] Or *richly*; either which love he ſhed abroad in the hearts of thoſe whom he regenerated and renewed by his Spirit; or which water of regeneration, that is grace, comparable to water, he plentifully ſhed, and cauſed to abound where ſin had done; or rather *whom*, or which holy Spirit, with his gifts and graces, ſuch as faith, hope, and love, and every other, he poured forth in great abundance on them; ſee *Iſ.* xliv. 3. 1 *Tim.* i. 14. *through Jeſus Chriſt our ſaviour*; the love and kindneſs of God the Father our ſaviour, comes thro' him; the mercy of God ſtreams thro' him; the ſalvation itſelf is by, and thro' him; the grace communicated in regeneration and renovation is out of his fulneſs; the Spirit himſelf is given forth from him; and every ſupply of grace, by which the work is carried on, comes out of his hands; and every thing wrought in us, that is well-pleaſing in the ſight of God, is through him; and even the gift of God, eternal life itſelf.

Ver. 7. *That being juſtified by his grace*, &c.] This is another way and means, as well as regeneration, by which God ſaves his people; for he ſaves no unjuſtified ones; no unrighteous perſons ſhall inherit the kingdom of heaven; ſuch as are without the wedding-garment, and robe of Chriſt's righteouſneſs, ſhall be caſt into outer darkneſs: whom God ſaves, he juſtifies by the righteouſneſs of his Son; and whomſover he juſtifies, them he ſaves. The juſtification here ſpoken of is a declarative one, which takes place in regeneration; and which, that is in order to, as here expreſſed, *that being juſtified*: regeneration does not juſtify any, but makes the juſtified to appear to be ſuch; juſtification is an act of God's gracious will conceived in his mind from eternity, by which he wills not to impute ſin to his people, but to Chriſt their ſurety; and that they ſhould be accounted righteous thro' the righteouſneſs of his Son; in which act of his will the whole eſſence of juſtification in his ſight lies: this was pronounced on Chriſt, as their head and repreſentative at his reſurrection, when he, as ſuch, was juſtified, acquitted, and diſcharged, and they in him; and this is declared in the conſcience of a ſinner, by the Spirit of God, at his regeneration, when he paſſes from death to life; and this declaration is here intended, and which is the ſame with juſtification by faith; and is here ſaid to be by the grace of God, as juſtification in every view is, and ſtands oppoſed to works of righteouſneſs done by men, by which no man can be juſtified in the ſight of God; in what ſenſe juſtification is by the free grace of God, ſee the note on *Rom.* iii. 24. *We ſhould be made heirs according to the hope of eternal*

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[z] Seder Tephillot, Ed. Amſterdam, fol. 46. 2.

nal life; or *according to hope we ſhould be made heirs of eternal life*. Eternal life is an inheritance, and ſo is not acquired by labour and induſtry, nor purchaſed, but is a free gift; it is a bequeſt of God the Father to his children, of his own free goodwill and pleaſure; and it belongs only to children; they only are heirs, and they become ſuch by adopting grace; neither regeneration, nor juſtification, make them the children of God, and heirs of the grace of life, but make them appear to be ſo: God, by his gracious act of adoption, puts them among the children, and gives them the goodly heritage; and this adoption lies in eternal predeſtination in Chriſt, in whom the inheritance is obtained on that account, *Eph*. i. 5, 11. Regeneration ſhows them to be the adopted ones, and gives them the nature of children, and a meetneſs for the inheritance; and juſtification gives them a right unto it, upon the foot of juſtice, and opens a way for their enjoyment of it, conſiſtent with the juſtice and holineſs of God; ſee *Gal*. iv, 4, 5. wherefore ſuch as are waſhed with the waſhing of regeneration, and are renewed in the ſpirit of their minds, and juſtified by the grace of God; theſe are manifeſtly heirs of eternal life, of ſalvation, of a kingdom and glory, of all things, even of God himſelf, who is their portion, and exceeding great reward; and ſuch in regeneration are begotten to a lively hope of it, and by this they are ſaved, *Rom*. viii. 24. And thus the Apoſtle makes regeneration by the free mercy of God, and juſtification by his grace, and ſpecial adoption, and heirſhip, with a good hope thro' grace, the way and means in which God ſaves his people, who were like others by nature, and brings them to the enjoyment of eternal happineſs.

Ver. 8. This is a *faithful ſaying*, &c.] Meaning the whole of what is before expreſſed, concerning the ſtate and condition of God's elect by nature; the appearance of the love and kindneſs of God to them in effectual vocation; the ſalvation of them, according to the mercy of God, and not by works of righteouſneſs; regeneration, and renovation by the Spirit of God, in which ſuch an abundance of grace is communicated; and juſtification by the free grace of God, as God's way of ſalvation; and by which men are made to appear to be heirs of eternal life, and to have hope of it: now all, and each of this is a faithful ſaying, is true doctrine, and to be believed, profeſſed, and publiſhed: wherefore it follows, *and theſe things I will that thou affirm conſtantly*; that is, the above doctrines; the *Arabic* verſion renders it, *I will that thou be firm in theſe things*; and the *Syriac* and *Ethiopic* verſions, *I will that thou confirmeſt them*: the ſenſe of the Apoſtle is, that he would have *Titus* be aſſured of thoſe truths himſelf; be at a point about them, and without any doubt or heſitation concerning them; and abide firm and conſtant in them, and ſpeak of them with certainty, boldneſs, and confidence to others; and endeavour to confirm and eſtabliſh them in them: for which purpoſe he would have them be frequently inculcated and inſiſted on; and that with this further view, *that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works*; for ἱνα, *that*, does not deſign the ſubject-matter of the charge, or what the Apoſtle would have conſtantly affirmed, but the end, and final event and iſſue of it; and nothing can more ſtrongly engage to a ſtudious concern for the performance of good works, than the frequent inſiſting upon the above doctrines of grace: by *good works* are meant, not merely honeſt trades, and the lawful occupations and buſineſſes of life, which ſhould be carefully attended to, and diligently followed, in order to be uſeful and profitable to themſelves, their families, and others; but every good work, every branch of duty, moral, civil, and religious: to *maintain* theſe according to the ſignification of the word uſed, is to excel in them; to out-do others; to go before others, by way of example, and ſo to provoke to love and to good works; and to make them the employment and buſineſs of mens lives; for which there ſhould be a thoughtfulneſs, a carefulneſs, a ſtudious concern, eſpecially in thoſe who *have believed in God*; who are regenerated and renewed by the Spirit of God, and are juſtified by faith in the righteouſneſs of Chriſt; who believe in him for peace, pardon, righteouſneſs, life, and ſalvation: theſe are under great obligations to perform good works; the love of Chriſt ſhould conſtrain them to them; and they are the only perſons that are capable of doing them well, for they are ſanctified, and made meet, and ready for every good work; they are created in Chriſt Jeſus to them; they have the ſpirit of Chriſt in them, and the ſtrength of Chriſt with them, without which they can't be performed well; and they have faith in Chriſt, without which it is impoſſible to pleaſe God. *Theſe things are good and profitable unto men*; which is to be underſtood not of good works, tho' theſe are good in themſelves, and profitable to men in their effects; being done among them, and before them, they ſet them an example of doing good likewiſe, when evil communications corrupt good manners; and many of them iſſue in their temporal good, profit, and advantage: but rather the doctrines of the Goſpel are here deſigned, which are before briefly treated of, and are ſaid to be a faithful ſaying; and which the Apoſtle would have affirmed with certainty and conſtancy, in order to engage believers to the performance of good works; and that for this reaſon, becauſe theſe doctrines are *good*, excellent, valuable, and precious, comparable to gold, ſilver, and precious ſtones: the author, matter, end, and uſe of them are good; they come from God; they are concerning Jeſus Chriſt, and his grace; they contain good tidings of good things; and are exceeding uſeful to influence faith, hope, love, and a chearful obedience to the will of God: they are *profitable* in the hands of the Spirit of God for conviction, converſion, comfort, and edification; for the quickening and enlightening of dead and dark ſinners; for the reviving, eſtabliſhing, and building up of the ſaints; they are the wholeſome words of Chriſt, and are according to godlineſs, and are nouriſhing, when other doctrines eat as a canker: and this ſenſe is confirmed, not only by what goes before, but by what follows after in the next verſe; where inſipid notions and controverſies are oppoſed unto them, as unprofitable and vain.

Ver. 9. *But avoid fooliſh queſtions*, &c.] Such as were ſtarted in the ſchools of the *Jews*; ſee 2 *Tim*. ii. 23. *and genealogies*; of their elders, *Rabbins*, and doctors, by whom their traditions are handed down from one to another, in fixing which they greatly laboured; ſee 1 *Tim*. i. 4. *and contentions and ſtrivings about the law*; the rites and ceremonies of it, and about the ſenſe of it, and its various precepts, as litigated in the ſchools of *Hillell* and *Shammai*, the one giving it one way, and the other another; and what one declared to be free according to the law, the other declared forbidden; which occaſioned great contentions and quarrels between the followers of the one, and of the other, as both the *Miſna* and *Talmud* ſhew: and agreeable to this ſenſe, the

Syriac verſion renders it, *the contentions and ſtrifes of the ſcribes*; the *Jewiſh* doctors, who were ſome on the ſide of *Hillell*, and others on the ſide of *Shammai*; as well as went into parties and ſtrifes among themſelves, and oftentimes about mere trifles; things of no manner of importance: wherefore it follows, *for they are unprofitable and vain*; empty things, of no manner of uſe, to inform the judgment, improve the mind, or influence the life and converſation.

Ver. 10. *A man that is an heretick*, &c.] An heretick, according to the notation of the word, is either one, that makes choice of an opinion upon his own judgment, contrary to the generally received ſenſe of the churches of Chriſt, and prefers it to theirs, and obſtinately perſiſts in it; ſeparates from them, forms a party, and ſets himſelf at the head of them, whom he has drawn into the ſame way of thinking with himſelf: or he is one that removes and takes away a fundamental doctrine of chriſtianity, which affects particularly the doctrine of the Trinity, the deity, and perſonality of Father, Son, and Spirit, and eſpecially the doctrines relating to the perſon, office, and grace of Chriſt; one that brings in, or receives damnable doctrines; ſpeaks or profeſſes perverſe things, and draws away diſciples after him; or is among ſuch diſciples: for tho' ſchiſm and hereſy do differ, and every ſchiſmatick may not be an heretick, yet every heretick is a ſchiſmatick; he makes a rent in the doctrine of Chriſt, and makes parties and diviſions in his church; and ſuch are not always to be contended and diſputed with, but to be avoided and rejected: *after the firſt and ſecond admonition reject*; have nothing to do with him; have no ſociety with him; admit him not to private converſation; and eject him from church communion, after he has been publickly admoniſhed twice by the order of the church; for this is not to be underſtood of private admonition, by a particular perſon or perſons; as in the caſe of private offences, *Matt.* xviii. 15, 16. but of publick admonition, in the name of the church. An admonition with the *Jews* did not continue leſs than ſeven days[a]; ſome ſay[b] thirty; that is, there were ſo many days before it was out, or between one and another.

Ver. 11. *Knowing that he that is ſuch is ſubverted*, &c.] Or overturned, and demoliſhed; he is like an edifice, that is not only decaying, and falling, but is entirely everted, and pulled down; ſo that there is no hopes of a reſtoration or recovery; he is in a deſperate condition, having oppoſed the perſon, or office, or ſacrifice of Chriſt; having either trodden the Son of God under foot, or counted his blood common, or done deſpight unto the Spirit of grace; in either of which caſes there is no more ſacrifice for ſin: *and ſinneth*; not practically, but doctrinally, and wilfully after he has received the knowledge of the truth; by denying the truth he received, in which he continues, notwithſtanding the evidence of the word of God is againſt him; and notwithſtanding the arguments taken from it by the miniſters of the Goſpel, to convince him; and notwithſtanding the admonitions of the church to recover him out of the ſnare of the devil: *being condemned of himſelf*; not that an heretick is one that is convinced in his own conſcience, that he is in an error, and that that is a truth which he oppoſes; and yet he obſtinately perſiſts in the one, and continues to ſet himſelf againſt the other; for then, none but an hypocrite, that conceals his true ſentiment, can be an heretick; nor can any man be known to be one unleſs he accuſes himſelf; ſince no man can know the heart of another; and it would be impracticable in a church to deal with hereticks, or reject and excommunicate them: but either the meaning is, that he is ſuch an one, who by his own practice has condemned himſelf; for whereas he has ſeparated himſelf not only from the faith of the church, but from the church itſelf; by ſo doing, he practically condemns himſelf, or judges himſelf unworthy of the communion of the church, and ſo juſtifies the church in their rejection and excluſion of him: or rather, an heretick is one who having profeſſed chriſtianity, and received the ſcriptures as the only rule of faith and practice, and ſtill profeſſes to abide by the ſame, and that all doctrine is to be tried by them, and to be approved or condemned as that agrees or diſagrees with them, ſtands condemned by thoſe ſcriptures, which he himſelf allows, to be the rule of deciſion and determination; and ſo may be ſaid to be ſelf-condemned.

Ver. 12. *When I ſhall ſend Artemas unto thee, or Tychicus*, &c.] Theſe were both of them miniſters of the Goſpel; there is no mention of *Artemas* any where elſe; ſome ſay he was one of the ſeventy diſciples, and that he was afterwards biſhop of *Lyſtra*; but theſe are uncertain things; ſee the note on *Luke* x. 1. the name is a contraction of *Artemidorus*. *Tychicus* is often ſpoken of; and a very great character is given of him by the Apoſtle, in *Eph.* vi. 21. *be diligent to come unto me to Nicopolis*; which was a city, not in *Epirus*, but in *Thrace*, ſituated by the river *Neſſus*, and had its name from a victory obtained there: hither the Apoſtle would have *Titus* come to him, after one or other of the above miniſters were come to *Crete*; for as the Apoſtle had the care of all the churches upon him, he would not remove a miniſter from one place to another, without making a proviſion in their room: his reaſons for having *Titus* come to him, might be either to know the ſtate of the churches in *Crete*; or becauſe he ſtood in need of his aſſiſtance; or to ſend him elſewhere: *for I have determined there to winter*; that is, to continue there all the winter; not without labour, but to preach the Goſpel, and adminiſter the ordinances to the ſaints there: and whereas he ſays *there*; this ſhews that this epiſtle was not written from thence, as the ſubſcription aſſerts; for then he would have ſaid *here*, and not *there*.

Ver. 13. *Bring Zenas the lawyer*, &c.] Whether he was brought up to the civil law, either among the *Greeks* or *Romans*, is not certain; it may be he was a *Jewiſh* lawyer, or ſcribe, an interpreter of *Moſes*'s law among the *Jews*; for with them a lawyer and a ſcribe were one and the ſame, as appears from *Matt.* xxii. 35. compared with *Mar.* xii. 28. and the *Syriac* verſion here calls him *a ſcribe*, and the *Ethiopic* verſion *a ſcribe of the city*; which looks as if it was a civil office he bore; but however, be he what he will, he ſeems to have been now a preacher of the Goſpel, being joined with *Apollos*, who certainly was one: he is ſaid to have been one of the ſeventy diſciples of Chriſt, and afterwards biſhop of *Dioſpolis*; ſee the note on *Luke* x. 1. his name is the contraction of *Zenodorus*: him the Apoſtle would have *Titus* bring, *and Apollos, on their journey diligently*; who was a *Jew* born at *Alexandria*, an eloquent man, and mighty in the ſcriptures; who had preached at *Corinth*, but was now at *Crete*; and whom the Apoſtle, with *Zenas* would have provided with every thing neceſſary for their journey: *that nothing be wanting unto them*; which might be proper for them in their travels, to make them comfortable, and their journey pleaſant and eaſy.

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[a] T. Bab. Moed Katon, fol. 16. 1.

[b] Bereſhit Rabba, §. 33. fol. 28. 3.

Ver. 14. *And let ours alſo learn to maintain good works*, &c.] By which are not only meant honeſt trades, as ſome chuſe to render the words: it is true, that a trade is a work; and an honeſt lawful employment of life is a good work; and which ought to be maintained, attended to, and followed, and to be learnt, in order to be followed. The *Jews* ſay, that he that does not learn his ſon a trade, it is all one as if he taught him to rob or ſteal; hence their doctors were brought up to trades; ſee the note on *Mark* vi. 3. as was the Apoſtle *Paul*, tho' he had an education under *Gamaliel*; and ſuch an one is to be learned and maintained for neceſſary uſes, for the good of a man's ſelf, and for the ſupply of his family; for the aſſiſtance of others that are in need; for the ſupport of the Goſpel, and the intereſt of Chriſt; and for the relief of poor ſaints; that ſuch may not be unfruitful and uſeleſs, in commonwealths, neighbourhoods, churches, and families. The *Jews* ſay[c], "there are four things "which a man ſhould conſtantly attend to with all "his might, and they are theſe; the law, *good* "*works*, prayer, ודרך ארץ and *the way of the earth*, "or *buſineſs*; if a tradeſman, to his trade; if a "merchant, to his merchandize; if a man of war, "to war." But tho' this may be part of the ſenſe of theſe words, it is not the whole of it; nor are acts of beneficence to the poor of Chriſt, to the houſhold of faith, to ſtrangers and miniſters, to whom good is eſpecially to be done, only intended; tho' they may be taken into the account, in agreement with the context; but all good works in general, which are done in conformity to the revealed will of God, in faith, from a principle of love, and with a view to the glory of God, are meant: to maintain them, is to endeavour to outdo others in them, not only the men of the world, but one another; and to ſet examples of them to others, and to provoke one another, by an holy emulation to them; and to be conſtant in the performance of them: and which believers may *learn* partly from the ſcriptures, which contain what is the good and perfect will of God; theſe ſhew what are good works, and direct unto them, and furniſh the man of God for them; and alſo the grace-part of the ſcripture, the doctrines of the grace of God, teach to deny ſin, and to live ſober, righteous, and godly lives; and from the examples of the Apoſtles and followers of Chriſt; and above all from Chriſt himſelf, the great pattern and exemplar of good works: and this leſſon of good works is to be learnt by *ours*; meaning not only thoſe of the ſame function, who were in the ſame office, miniſters of the Goſpel, as were the Apoſtle and *Titus*; but all that believed in God, who were of the ſame chriſtian community, and ſociety, profeſſors of the ſame religion, and partakers of the ſame grace; and were not only nominally, but really of the ſame number, even of the number of God's elect, the redeemed from among men, the family of Chriſt, ſharers in the common faith, and heirs of the grace of life; who lie under the greateſt obligations to learn to do good works: *for neceſſary uſes*; not to make their peace with God, or to atone for their ſins, or to procure the pardon of them, or to cleanſe them from them, or for their juſtification before God, or to obtain ſalvation and eternal life; but to glorify God, teſtify their ſubjection to him, and gratitude for mercies received; to ſhew forth their faith to men; to adorn the doctrine of Chriſt, and a profeſſion of it; to recommend religion to others; to ſtop the mouths of gainſayers, and put to ſilence the ignorance of fooliſh men: and *that they be not unfruitful*; in them, and in the knowledge of Chriſt; good works are the fruits of the Spirit, and of his grace; they are fruits of righteouſneſs; and ſuch as are without them are like trees without fruit, uſeleſs and unprofitable.

Ver. 15. *All that are with me ſalute thee*, &c.] All the Apoſtles, fellow-labourers, and the miniſters of the Goſpel that were with him; and all the members of the church where he was, ſent their chriſtian ſalutation to *Titus*; he being a perſon greatly eſteemed, and whoſe praiſe was in all the churches: *greet them that love us in the faith*; not merely as men, as their countrymen, as related to them in the fleſh; or on account of any external things, but as believers; becauſe of the doctrine of faith, profeſſed and preached; and becauſe of the grace of faith obtained and poſſeſſed; or who love us faithfully, ſincerely, and uprightly, from their hearts, and not in word and tongue only: *grace be with you all, amen*; which is the common concluding ſalutation in all *Paul*'s epiſtles. This ſhews that this epiſtle was not deſigned for *Titus* only, but for the ſaints at *Crete*. *It was written to Titus the firſt biſhop of the church of the Cretians.* But this ſubſcription, as many others, is not to be depended upon; it is not very likely that *Titus* was biſhop of this church at all; ſince his ſtay there was but ſhort, nor indeed elſewhere, ſeeing he was an evangeliſt; tho' this is aſſerted both by *Euſebius*[d], and *Sophronius*[e], who adds, that he died and was buried here: and what follows, that it was written *from Nicapolis of Macedonia*, does not ſeem to be juſt, as may be concluded from ver. 12. Many learned men think it was written from *Coloſſe*, or ſome neighbouring place; tho' when he wrote his epiſtle to the *Coloſſians* it looks as if he had never been there before: the *Syriac* verſion adds, *ſent by the hands of Zenas and Apollos*; which is not unlikely, ſince he deſires they might be accommodated by *Titus*, with what was neceſſary for the remaining part of their journey, ver. 13.

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[c] T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 32. 2. & Gloſſ. in ib.

[d] Eccl. Hiſt. l. 3. c. 4.

[e] In Hieron. Eccl. Script. Catalog. §. 12.

AN

AN EXPOSITION, &c.

The Epiſtle of PAUL to PHILEMON.

THIS epiſtle was written by the Apoſtle *Paul*, when a priſoner at *Rome*, as appears from its inſcription and ſubſcription; and ſeems to have been written at the ſame time, in the year 60, and ſent by the ſame hand as the epiſtle to the *Coloſſians*; ſeeing the ſame perſons were with the Apoſtle at the writing of both, and ſend their chriſtian ſalutations in the one, as in the other; compare ver. 23, 24. with *Col.* iv. 10, 12, 14. and *Archippus*, the miniſter in *Coloſſe*, is made mention of in both, *Philem.* ver. 2. *Col.* iv. 17. and it is very probable that *Philemon*, to whom it was written, was a *Coloſſian*, ſince *Oneſimus*, his ſervant, on whoſe account, and by whom it was ſent, is ſaid to be one of the *Coloſſians*, Col. iv. 9. *Philemon* is ſaid to be one of the ſeventy Diſciples, and afterwards biſhop of *Gaza*; ſee the note on *Luke* x. 1. The occaſion of the epiſtle was this; *Philemon*'s ſervant, *Oneſimus*, having either embezzled his maſter's goods, or robbed him, ran away from him, and fled to *Rome*, where the Apoſtle was a priſoner in chains, in his own hired houſe, under the cuſtody of a ſoldier, and where he received all that came, and preached the Goſpel to them, *Acts* xxviii. 30. and among thoſe that went to hear him, this fugitive ſervant was one, and was converted under his miniſtry; and who not only received the grace of God, but had ſuch gifts beſtowed on him as qualified him to be a preacher of the word. Now the Deſign of this epiſtle is to reconcile *Philemon* to his ſervant, and to intreat him to receive him again, not only as a ſervant, but as a brother in Chriſt; and the moſt proper and prudent methods and arguments are uſed to engage him to it. The epiſtle, tho' it is a familiar one, and ſhort, is very inſtructive; it ſhews great humility in the Apoſtle, and that he did not think it below him to be concerned in doing ſuch an office as to reconcile a maſter to his ſervant, and which is worthy of imitation; as alſo it teaches the right that maſters have over their ſervants, which is not loſt by their becoming chriſtians, and even miniſters of the Goſpel; and that recompence ſhould be made unto them for injuries done by them; it likewiſe diſplays the riches of the grace of God, in the converſion of ſuch a vile creature; and the wonderful providence of God in over-ruling that which was ſinful in itſelf, running away from his maſter, to the greateſt good, even the converſion of him; and is an inſtance of ſurpriſing grace: and from hence may be learned, that there is ſalvation in Chriſt for the chief of ſinners; and that the converſion of them is not to be deſpaired of. The authority of this epiſtle was not queſtioned by the antient writers, and ſtands always in their catalogues of the canon of the ſcripture; and *Marcion* the heretick, who either rejected, or changed, or mutilated the reſt of the epiſtles, could not lay his hands on this, becauſe of the brevity of it, as *Tertullian*[a], and *Jerom*[b] obſerve.

THIS Epiſtle has an inſcription, ſalutation, and preface, the ſame with others, which are in ver. 1, 2, 3, 4. the principal view of it is to perſuade *Philemon* to receive his ſervant *Oneſimus*; the arguments uſed are taken from the general character he had for love to the ſaints, and people of God, and therefore it was hoped he would act up to it in this inſtance, ver. 5, 6, 7. from the conſideration of the perſon who made the ſuit to him, who could have uſed authority, but choſe rather to intreat him in love; and alſo of his age, and the condition in which he was, a priſoner of Jeſus Chriſt, ver. 8, 9. from the ſpiritual relation *Oneſimus* was in to the Apoſtle, who had begotten him in his bonds, ver. 10. from the preſent uſefulneſs of him, both to *Philemon* and the Apoſtle, who before was uſeleſs, ver. 11. from the ſtrong affection the Apoſtle had for him, being as his own bowels, ver. 12. from his unwillingneſs to do any thing without his conſent, tho' he could have detained him upon the foot of equity and juſtice, to have ſerved him in his ſtead, ver. 13, 14. from the over-ruling providence of God, which had ſo ordered it, that he ſhould depart from him for a time, that he might be received for ever, ver. 15. from the character under which he could now be received, not as a ſervant, but as a beloved brother, ver. 16. from the partnerſhip and aſſociation in which the Apoſtle and *Philemon* were, ver. 17. from the aſſurance he gave him of repaying him whatever his ſervant owed him, and making good whatever he had injured him in, ver. 18, 19. and from that pleaſure, delight, and refreſhment he ſhould have, ſhould he receive him, ver. 20. And, upon the whole, the Apoſtle expreſſes his confidence that he would grant his requeſt, obey his commands, and even do more than he had mentioned to him, ver. 21. And then gives him ſome hope of his being delivered from priſon, thro' the prayers of *Philemon*, and others, and of ſeeing him ſhortly; and therefore deſires he would prepare a lodging for him, ver. 22. and cloſes with the ſalutations of ſeveral friends to him, mentioned by name, with their characters, ver. 23, 24. and with his own common ſalutation, ver. 25.

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[a] Adverſ. Marcion. l. 5. c. 21.

[b] Proœm. in Philem.

Ver. 1. *Paul a priſoner of Jeſus Chriſt*, &c.] Not made a priſoner by Chriſt, tho' he was apprehended, laid hold on, and detained by Chriſt as a priſoner of hope, at his converſion; but this is not intended here: but he was a priſoner at *Rome* for the ſake of Chriſt, on account of profeſſing him, and preaching in his name; his bonds were for the ſake of the Goſpel of Chriſt; and therefore they are in this epiſtle called, the bonds of the Goſpel. He was not a priſoner for any capital crime, and therefore had no reaſon to be aſhamed of his chain, nor was he; but rather gloried in it, as his taking this title and character to himſelf, and prefixing it to this epiſtle ſhews; and which he chuſes to make uſe of rather than that of a ſervant of God, or an Apoſtle of Chriſt, as he elſewhere does, that he might not by conſtraint, or authority, but by love, move the pity and compaſſion of *Philemon* to grant his requeſt, and receive his ſervant; which, ſhould he deny, would be to add affliction to his bonds: and that this is his view in the choice of this character, is manifeſt from ver. 8, 9. *and Timothy* our *brother*, not according to the fleſh, or as being of the ſame country, for he was the countryman of neither of them; nor only on account of his being a regenerate man, born of God, a child of God, and of the ſame family; but chiefly becauſe he was of the ſame function, was a miniſter of the Goſpel: him the Apoſtle joins with himſelf in the epiſtle, and ſo in the requeſt, becauſe he might be well known to *Philemon*, and be much reſpected by him; and to ſhew that they were united in this affair, and both deſired this favour of him; hoping that by their joint application it would be obtained: *unto Philemon our dearly beloved and fellow labourer*; the name of *Philemon* is *Greek*; there was a *Greek* poet of this name, and a *Greek* hiſtorian that *Pliny* made uſe of in compiling his hiſtory: there is indeed mention made in the *Jewiſh* writings[a], of a *Rabbi* whoſe name was פלימו *Philemo*; but this our *Philemon* ſeems to have been an inhabitant of *Coloſſe*, and rather to have been a *Gentile* than a *Jew*; he was a rich and hoſpitable man, and greatly reſpected, and therefore here called, *our dearly beloved*; that is, dearly beloved by the Apoſtle and *Timothy*, not only as being a believer, but as being alſo generous and uſeful in his ſtation, and likewiſe as he was a miniſter of the Goſpel; for ſo the next phraſe, *and fellow labourer*, ſeems to import; for tho' ſuch are ſometimes ſaid to be labourers and fellow helpers with the Apoſtle, who aſſiſted in carrying on the intereſt of Chriſt, with their purſes, and prayers, and private converſation; yet as it is uſed in this ſame epiſtle, of ſuch who were in the work of the miniſtry, ver. 24. it is very probable it is ſo to be underſtood here: and now tho' theſe expreſſions of affection and reſpect were without diſſimulation; nor were they mere compliments; yet the intention of them was to work upon the mind of *Philemon*, to reconcile him to his ſervant; ſuggeſting, that as he had an intereſt in the affections of the Apoſtle and others, this would be a means of eſtabliſhing it, and would be acting agreeable to his character, as a miniſter of the Goſpel.

Ver. 2. *And to our beloved Apphia*, &c.] The *Alexandrian* copy reads, *to ſiſter Apphia*; and the *Vulgate Latin* verſion, *to the beloved ſiſter Apphia*; for this is a woman's name; and it is thought that ſhe was the wife of *Philemon*, ſince ſhe is placed next to him, and before *Archippus*, a miniſter of the word; and very prudently is ſhe wrote to, and juſtly commended, in order to engage her to uſe her intereſt with her huſband to receive his ſervant again, who otherwiſe might have ſtood againſt it, and been a very great hindrance to a reconciliation: this clauſe is wanting in the *Ethiopic* verſion: *and Archippus our fellow ſoldier*; that this *Archippus* was a preacher of the Goſpel at *Coloſſe*, is manifeſt from *Col.* iv. 17. wherefore the Apoſtle ſtiles him a fellow ſoldier; for tho' this character belongs to private chriſtians, who are enliſted as voluntiers under Chriſt, the captain of ſalvation, and fight under his banners, againſt ſin, ſatan, and the world, being accoutred with the whole armour of God, and are more than conquerors through Chriſt that has loved them; yet it very eminently belongs to the miniſters of the Goſpel, who are more eſpecially called upon, to endure hardneſs, as good ſoldiers of Chriſt; to war a good warfare, to fight the good fight of faith; and beſides the above enemies common to all believers, to engage with falſe teachers, and earneſtly contend for the faith of the Goſpel, that ſo it may continue with the ſaints. Now this man was in the ſame company, and in the ſame ſervice, engaged in the ſame common cauſe, againſt the ſame enemies, and under the ſame captain, and was expecting the ſame crown of immortality and glory, and therefore he calls him his fellow ſoldier; and he wiſely inſcribes his epiſtle to him, that he might make uſe of the intereſt he had in *Philemon*, and his wife, to bring this matter to bear, the Apoſtle writes about: *and to the church in thy houſe*; not in the houſe of *Archippus*, but in the houſe of *Philemon*; and deſigns not the church at *Coloſſe*, as tho' it met at his houſe; but his own family, which for the great piety and religion which were among them, and for the good order and decorum in which they were kept, were like a church of themſelves: and here again the Apoſtle acts the wiſe part, in order to gain his point, by taking notice of them, who might ſome of them have been injured or affronted by *Oneſimus*, when with them; and ſo entertained ſome reſentment againſt him, and might put a bar in the way of his reception into the family again.

Ver. 3. *Grace to you and peace from God*, &c.] Which is the ſame form of ſalutation uſed in the other epiſtles; ſee the note on *Rom.* i. 7. for tho' this epiſtle is but a very ſmall one, yet it is introduced in the ſame form as the larger epiſtles are; and has an inſcription in the former verſe, a ſalutation in this, and a preface in the three following.

Ver. 4. *I thank my God*, &c.] Meaning on account of *Philemon*, for the grace beſtowed upon him, heareafter mentioned; ſee the note on *Rom.* i. 8. *making mention of thee always in my prayers*; as he did of other ſaints, *Rom.* i. 9. *Eph.* i. 16. *Phil.* i. 3, 4. *Col.* i. 3. 1 *Theſſ.* i. 2. the Apoſtle was a man much in prayer, frequent at the throne of grace; and he prayed not for himſelf only, but for all the ſaints, for all the churches and miniſters of the Goſpel; whom he not only bore upon his mind and heart, but made mention of them, it may be by name; however, he remembred them, and put up petitions, with thankſgivings for them; and ſo he did for *Philemon*; and which he takes notice of with the ſame view as before: the word, *always*, is ſo placed in the original text, as to be put either to his thanks to God, or his prayers, and may be true of both; the *Syriac* and *Arabic* verſions join it to the former; and the *Vulgate Latin*, and the *Ethiopic* verſions place it to the latter.

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[a] T. Bab. Sota, fol. 4. 1. & Menachot. fol. 37. 1. & Juchaſin. fol. 101. 1. 108. 1. & 159. 2.

Ver. 5. *Hearing of thy love and faith*, &c.] Thoſe two ſpring from the free favour and love of God, and are the pure gifts of his grace; and therefore thanks are to be given for them to God; nor are they to be aſcribed to the power and will of man; they are the fruits of the ſpirit of God; and are the principal ingredients in ſanctification, which is entirely his work; and they are in all regenerate perſons; and are the evidences of regeneration; by which it is known that men are paſſed from death to life; and they always go together, and are inſeparable from each other: there cannot be true faith where love is wanting, for faith works by love; and there cannot be real love, where there is not faith; they only love the ſaints aright, who love them in the faith, and becauſe of it; and theſe graces are viſible, and to be known by their fruits, whereby they come to be heard of, and talked of, as theſe in *Philemon* were. Faith in the heart is confeſſed by the mouth; and love, both to Chriſt and to his people, ſhews itſelf, as well as faith, in works of righteouſneſs. Sometimes faith is put before love, it being a leading grace, and the great receiver of all the bleſſings of grace; and here love is placed before faith, becauſe of its being more excellent on account of its continuance and duration; or there may be no deſign at all in it; but rather, as ſometimes one, and ſometimes another is mentioned firſt, it ſhows that they are upon an equal foot, and both have their proper place and uſefulneſs; the objects of them follow: *which thou haſt toward the Lord Jeſus, and toward all ſaints*; which are either to be conſidered as equally objects of the ſame grace, or as diſtinct ones; that is, either that Chriſt is the object both of faith and love, and the ſaints are the object, both of faith and love; or elſe theſe graces are to be diſtinguiſhed by their reſpective objects; as that faith is toward Chriſt, and love toward all the ſaints: that Chriſt is both the object of faith and love, is certain; nor is there any difficulty to conſider him as ſuch; faith is equally to be exerciſed on him, as on God the Father; and he is indeed the immediate object of faith, and by whom men believe in God; and he is to be loved, and is loved by his people above all things, and at all times, and in ſincerity: and that the ſaints are the objects of the love of all truly gracious ſouls, is a plain caſe; but the greater difficulty is, how they ſhould be the objects of their faith; and yet there are inſtances of this, *Exod.* xiv. 31. 2 *Chron.* xx. 20. and indeed, true love believes all things, and hopes all things, 1 *Cor.* xiii. 7. But it ſeems better to divide theſe objects according to the different graces, and to conſider faith as being towards our Lord Jeſus; which is a looking towards Chriſt, a moving towards him, a laying hold upon him, and embracing him, a ſtaying and leaning on him, a living upon him, and walking in him; and which in *Philemon* might be a ſtrong one, as well as unfeigned, and operative: and love may be conſidered as being toward all ſaints; for tho' all men are, in a ſenſe, to be loved, and kindneſs to be ſhown to them, and that even to enemies, yet more eſpecially the ſaints; who are ſet apart by God the Father, whoſe ſins are expiated by the blood of Chriſt, and who are internally ſanctified by the Spirit, and are enabled to live ſoberly and righteouſly: and all of theſe are the objects of love, whether rich or poor, greater or leſſer believers, of meaner or larger abilities; for they are all equally loved by God, redeemed by Chriſt, and regenerated by his Spirit; are juſtified by his righteouſneſs, are all the children and heirs of God, and are called in one hope of their calling; and love to them ſhould be unfeigned, fervent, active, and laborious, and as Chriſt has loved us; and ſuch was *Philemon*'s love, as well as it was univerſal: and this diſtribution of theſe graces to their reſpective objects, may be confirmed from a parallel place in *Col.* i. 4. which Epiſtle was written and ſent at the ſame time with this.

Ver. 6. *That the communication of thy faith*, &c.] The grace of faith itſelf can't be communicated from one to another; a believing parent can't communicate it to his children, nor a maſter to his ſervants, nor a miniſter to his hearers; but an account of it, of its actings and exerciſes, of the joy of it, and of the peace a ſoul is filled with thro' believing, may be given to the mutual comfort and edification of ſaints; and it may be ſhewn forth to others by the fruits of it, works of righteouſneſs: but here it ſeems to deſign acts of beneficence, communicating to the neceſſities of others, as flowing from faith; and theſe words are to be connected with ver. 4. as a part of the Apoſtle's prayers, as what is contained in the preceding verſe is the matter of his thankſgiving. And his prayer is, that ſuch a communication of good things, which ſprings from faith, *may be effectual*; to anſwer ſome very good purpoſes, the good of others, and the ſervice of the intereſt of Chriſt, and the glory of God; or, as the *Vulgate Latin* verſion reads, only by the change of one letter, that it *may be evident*; to which the *Syriac* verſion ſeems to incline, rendering it, that it *may be fruitful in works*; or ſhew itſelf in fruits of righteouſneſs, in works of mercy and kindneſs; and the Apoſtle's ſenſe is, that it might be more and more ſo: *by the acknowledging of every good thing that is in you in Chriſt Jeſus*; the meaning is, that every good thing that is in the ſaints, or among them, ſhould be acknowledged to come to them in and through Chriſt Jeſus, in whom all fulneſs of grace dwells, and from whom all is imparted; and that every good thing that is communicated, or done in faith, which is effectual to any good purpoſe, ſhould be owned as done by the grace and ſtrength of Chriſt, and be done to his ſaints, as if done to himſelf, and be directed to his glory: the phraſe, *in you*, reſpects not *Philemon* only, but *Apphia*, *Archippus*, and the church in *Philemon*'s houſe; the *Arabic* verſion reads, *in us*.

Ver. 7. *For we have great joy and conſolation in thy love*, &c.] In the expreſſions and acts of it to the poor ſaints; for which reaſon the Apoſtle gives thanks for it before; and it is a pleaſure and comfort to an ingenuous mind, though it is not in his power to do good to the poor ſaints himſelf, to ſee that others have both abilities, and a heart to relieve them: *becauſe the bowels of the ſaints are refreſhed by thee, brother*; meaning, not only that their bellies were filled with food, for the phraſe is uſed in ver. 20. where that cannot be intended; but their hearts were filled with gladneſs, the load upon their ſpirits, the preſſures upon their minds were removed, and they had an inward pleaſure in their ſouls, and reſt, refreſhment, and comfort, thro the liberal communications of *Philemon* to them; who did what he did chearfully, that ſo it did their ſouls good, as well as their bodies; and in doing which, he acted the part of a brother in Chriſt.

Ver. 8. *Wherefore tho' I might be much bold in Chriſt,* &c.] Or uſe much freedom of ſpeech in the name of Chriſt, as an ambaſſador of his, and great authority as his Apoſtle, which was given him for edification: *to enjoin thee that which is convenient*; which became him as a believer in Chriſt, and a miniſter of the Goſpel; which was his duty, and was obligatory upon him, agreeable to the doctrines of Chriſt; who taught men to love their enemies, to be reconciled to their brethren, that had offended them, eſpecially when they repented; and therefore it was fit and proper he ſhould receive his ſervant again, ſince God had called him by his grace, and had given him repentance for his ſins: upon this foot the Apoſtle could have commanded him, as he did in other caſes, 2 *Theſſ.* iii. 6, 12. but he choſe not to addreſs him in an authoritative way, but by way of intreaty, as follows.

Ver. 9. *Yet for love's ſake I rather beſeech* thee, &c.] Either for the ſake of the great love which the Apoſtle bore to *Philemon*, being, as he calls him, his dearly beloved, he took this method; or becauſe of *Philemon*'s great love to all the ſaints before mentioned, he was encouraged to proceed in this manner, hoping on that account to have ſucceſs; or it may be, it was for the ſake of that love with which God had loved him, and which he puts him in mind of, to engage him to grant his requeſt; that ſeeing God the Father had loved him, and choſen him in Chriſt; and Chriſt had loved him, and redeemed him by his blood; and the Holy Spirit had loved him, and ſanctified him by his grace, that therefore he would receive his ſervant again for the ſake of this love; who alſo was the object of it; ſee *Rom.* xv. 30. The *Alexandrian* copy reads, *for*, or *through neceſſity*, as if neceſſity obliged him to this requeſt. *Being ſuch an one as Paul the aged*; or *the elder*; meaning either in office, which he might mention with this view, that his requeſt might have the greater weight and influence; or elſe in years, and which he might obſerve, partly to move compaſſion in *Philemon*, and that he might not grieve him in his old age, as he would, ſhould he deny his requeſt; and partly to ſuggeſt to him, that the advice he was about to give him, to receive his ſervant, did not come from a raw young man, but from one well ſtricken in years, with whom were wiſdom and underſtanding; and therefore not to be treated with neglect or contempt: how old the Apoſtle was at this time, is not certain; he could not be leſs than ſixty years of age, or he would not have called himſelf an old man; for no man was ſo called by the *Jews*, but he that was at the age of ſixty [b]. Some editions of the *Vulgate Latin* verſion, as that of the *London Polyglot* bible, read, *ſeeing thou art ſuch an one as Paul the aged*; as if *Philemon* was an old man, as the Apoſtle was, and therefore he would not lay his commands upon him, as an ancient man might upon a young man, but rather intreat him as equal to him in years: but then it follows, which does not appear to be true of *Philemon*, or that he was in the like caſe, *and now alſo a priſoner of Jeſus Chriſt*; which is obſerved with the ſame view as in ver. 1. ſee the note there.

Ver. 10. *I beſeech thee for my ſon Oneſimus*, &c.] Now he comes to the requeſt itſelf, and mentions by name the perſon on whoſe account he makes it, and whom he calls his ſon; not merely becauſe of his affection to him, but becauſe he really was his ſpiritual father; he had been the happy inſtrument of his converſion, and he was his ſon according to the common faith, or in a ſpiritual ſenſe: hence it follows, *whom I have begotten in my bonds*; which is to be underſtood of a begetting again, or of regeneration; not as if the Apoſtle was the efficient cauſe of it, as the nature of it ſhows, it being expreſſed by mens being born from above; by their being quickened, when dead in treſpaſſes and ſins; by being made new creatures, and transformed in the renewing of their minds; by Chriſt being formed in them, and by a partaking of the divine nature; and who is ſufficient for theſe things? beſides, it is expreſly denied to be of man, but is always aſcribed to God, Father, Son, and Spirit; but as being the inſtrument and means of it, thro' the preaching of the Goſpel, the word of truth, by which God of his own will, and by the power of his grace, regenerated this perſon: and this is ſaid to be done *in* his *bonds*; by which it appears, that the word of God was not bound, but had a free courſe, and was glorified, and the bonds of the Apoſtle were the means of the ſpread of it; and that it was attended with great power, to the converſion of ſouls: and this circumſtance is mentioned to engage *Philemon* to regard the intreaty of the Apoſtle; he had been the inſtrument of begetting many ſouls to Chriſt; but this man was begotten by him in his bonds, when he was a priſoner, and ſo was peculiarly dear to him.

Ver. 11. *Which in time paſt was to thee unprofitable*, &c.] Yea, injurious and hurtful; one that was an eye-ſervant, that loitered away his time, and ſet an ill example to fellow-ſervants; and not only ſo, but embezzled his maſter's goods, and robbed him, and run away from him. So every man, in his ſtate of unregeneracy, is an unprofitable man, *Rom.* iii. 12. unprofitable to God, to men, and to themſelves; their ſins will not profit them, tho' they may promiſe them liberty and pleaſure; nor will their riches, ſhould they loſe their own ſouls; nor their own righteouſneſs, in the buſineſs of juſtification and ſalvation; nor even an outward profeſſion of religion: yea, they are not only ſaid to be unprofitable, but are repreſented as good for nothing; hence they are compared to diſhonourable and unſerviceable veſſels; to briars and thorns, and the earth which brings them; to the ſalt that has loſt its ſavour, and is fit neither for the land, nor for the dunghil; to rotten figs, to chaff, and droſs of metals: yea, they are hurtful and injurious, to themſelves, on whom they bring ruin and deſtruction; to others, to wicked men, whom they more and more corrupt, and harden in ſin; and to good men, whom they grieve; and alſo to the intereſt and glory of God, whoſe laws they tranſgreſs, and againſt whom they ſin, affront his juſtice, and provoke the eyes of his glory. *But now profitable to thee and to me*; that is, he was now likely to be ſo, to be profitable to *Philemon*, as a ſervant, and to the Apoſtle as a miniſtring brother. Some think there is in this an alluſion to his name *Oneſimus*, which ſignifies *profitable*; before he did not anſwer to his name, but now he was a true *Oneſimus*, really a profitable perſon; grace of an unprofitable man, makes a profitable one. Such an one is profitable to himſelf; his godlineſs is gain unto him, it having both the promiſe of this life, and of that which is to come; and he is profitable to others, if he has gifts qualifying him for the public work of the miniſtry, as *Oneſimus* ſeems to have had; then he is made and becomes very uſeful to many for conviction, converſion, comfort, and edification; and if only a private believer, he is often profitable to others, by relating the work of God upon his ſoul; he is ſerviceable to the intereſt of Chriſt, for the ſupport of the miniſtry, and ſupply of the poor; he is uſeful by his good examples, and prayers, in the neighbourhood, town, city, or nation, in which he dwells. This argument from profit, the Apoſtle knew would be an engaging one.

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[b] Pirke Abot, c. 5. §. 21.

Ver. 12. *Whom I have ſent again*, &c.] From *Rome* to *Coloſſe*, or to *Philemon*, where-ever he was, along with this Epiſtle: *thou therefore receive him that is mine own bowels*; meaning his ſon, who, in a ſpiritual ſenſe, came out of his bowels, to whom he ſtood in the relation of a ſpiritual father; ſo the *Syriac* verſion renders it, *as my ſon, ſo receive him*; ſee *Gen.* xv. 4. 2 *Sam.* xvi. 11. and for whom he had a moſt ſtrong affection, and tender regard; his bowels earned for him, and he ſuggeſts by this expreſſion, that ſhould he reject him, it would give him the utmoſt pain and uneaſineſs; and he ſhould be obliged to cry out, as the prophet *Jeremy* did, *my bowels, my bowels, I am pained at the very heart*, *Jer.* iv. 19. wherefore he entreats him to receive him again into his houſe, and family, into his ſervice, and into his heart and affections, where the Apoſtle had received him.

Ver. 13. *Whom I would have retained with me*, &c.] At *Rome*, where the Apoſtle was a priſoner: *that in thy ſtead he might have miniſtred unto me in the bonds of the Goſpel*; the Apoſtle was in bonds, not for any crime, for any immorality he had been guilty of, but for the ſake of the Goſpel, for profeſſing and preaching that; for this he was an ambaſſador in bonds, as he elſewhere ſays, *Eph.* vi. 20. Now he would have kept *Oneſimus* with him, either to have waited upon him, in his bonds, and to have provided for him the neceſſaries of life; or to have aſſiſted him in the miniſtration of the word, in the room of *Philemon*, who had he been there, would have been employed in ſuch ſervice; ſo that if the Apoſtle had retained him, he would have been acting not for himſelf, but in the room of his maſter, and doing what he ſhould have done, had he been on the ſpot. This the Apoſtle obſerves to prevent an objection, that might have been made; that ſince *Oneſimus* was become ſo profitable to him, why did he ſend him back? why did he not keep him for his own ſervice? this he obviates and removes, by ſignifying he ſhould have done it, but for the following reaſon.

Ver. 14. *But without thy mind would I do nothing*, &c.] Which ſhows great modeſty and humility in the Apoſtle, that tho' as ſuch he had an authority, which he could have uſed, as well as had underſtanding and judgment how to have uſed it without conſulting *Philemon*, or having his ſenſe of this affair, yet choſe to conſult him: and it alſo ſhows the ſtrict regard the Apoſtle had to equity and juſtice, that he would do nothing with another man's ſervant without his conſent; he would not ſeem to alienate, or engroſs another man's right and property, whatever power he might have, as an Apoſtle, to have retained *Oneſimus* as a miniſter to him. *That thy benefit ſhould not be as it were of neceſſity, but willingly*; that is, that his goodneſs in forgiving his ſervant, and renouncing all claim and property in him, and admitting him to continue in the ſervice of the Apoſtle, might not look like a forced thing; but that it might appear to be a voluntary action, when he ſhould of himſelf return him, after he had been thus ſent to him, and received by him.

Ver. 15. *For perhaps he therefore departed for a ſeaſon*, &c.] The Apoſtle in this clauſe ſeems to ſoften this buſineſs of *Oneſimus* in running away from his maſter; he calls it not a running away, but a departure, an abſence from him, and that but for a little while; and ſuggeſts, that the hand of God might be in it; that there was an over-ruling providence that attended it, ſuch as was in *Joſeph's* going down into *Egypt*; and that this ſeparation of *Oneſimus* from his maſter, for a ſhort time, was in order that they ſhould come together again, and never part more, as follows: *that thou ſhouldſt receive him for ever*; or during life, referring to the law in *Exod.* xxi. 6. or to all eternity, ſince they were in the ſame ſpiritual relation, partakers of the ſame grace, and had a right to the ſame heavenly inheritance, and ſhould be together with Chriſt for evermore.

Ver. 16. *Not now as a ſervant*, &c.] That is, not only as a ſervant, for a ſervant he was, and was to be received as ſuch; his call by grace had not diſſolved the civil relation that was between him and his maſter, tho' it had added to it ſomething that was above it, and greater than it: *but above a ſervant*; in a higher condition, as the *Arabic* verſion renders it, than a ſervant; not barely conſidered in that relation, but as being in one much preferable to it: *a brother beloved, ſpecially to me*; a brother in Chriſt, and to be beloved on that account, as he was eſpecially by the Apoſtle, who had been the inſtrument of his converſion; ſee *Col.* iv. 9. *But how much more unto thee, both in the fleſh and in the Lord*; both in a natural and civil ſenſe, as being of the ſame nation and country, and as being part of his family, his ſervant, and now become an uſeful and profitable one; and, in a ſpiritual ſenſe, being in the Lord, belonging to the Lord Jeſus, to that family which is named of him, being a fellow-citizen with the ſaints, and of the houſhold of God, and therefore muſt be doubly dear to him.

Ver. 17. *If thou count me therefore a partner*, &c.] A companion and friend, who reckon each other's affairs and intereſt their own: the word anſwers to חבר, a word often uſed in *Talmudic* writings, for an aſſociate of the doctors or wiſe men: here it may mean alſo a partner both in grace, and in the miniſtry; one that ſhared in the ſame gifts and graces of the Spirit of God, and one that was to be a partaker of the inheritance with the ſaints in light: now if *Philemon* reckoned the Apoſtle ſuch an one, as he doubtleſs did, as being engaged in the ſame common cauſe, and a partaker of the ſame common faith, and intereſted in the ſame common ſalvation; then he intreats him on account of *Oneſimus*, in the following manner, *receive him as myſelf*; intimating, that he was as dear to him as himſelf; that he loved him as his own ſoul; and that he ſhould take whatever reſpect and affection were ſhown to him, as done to himſelf; and that he would have him receive him into his houſe, his heart and affections, as he would receive him the Apoſtle himſelf, ſhould he come to him.

Ver. 18. *If he hath wronged thee*, &c.] By ſquandring away his time, ſpoiling his work, or corrupting his fellow-ſervants: *or oweth* thee *ought*; by embezzling his maſter's goods, robbing him of his money, and running away from his ſervice: *put that on mine account*; ſignifying that he would be anſwerable for all, and make good all debts and damages.

Ver. 19. *I Paul have written it, with mine own hand*, &c.] Meaning either this Epiſtle, which being ſhort, he uſed no *amanuenſis*, but wrote it all himſelf, and which might be taken as an engagement to do what he promiſed; or elſe a bill, a promiſſory note, written with his own hand, which he ſent along with *Oneſimus*, by which he laid himſelf under obligation to give *Philemon* full ſatisfaction in every thing, in which he had been injured by his ſervant; adding, *I will repay it:* this was not an ironical expreſſion, nor a piece of vanity in the Apoſtle; he ſpoke ſeriouſly, and heartily, and meant what he ſaid; and though his circumſtances were often ſo mean, that he was forced to work with his own hands to miniſter to his neceſſities; yet ſuch was his intereſt in the churches, and ſuch their obligation to him, on account of his perſonal and uſeful miniſtrations to them, that he could eaſily raiſe a ſum of money among them, upon any emergent occaſion; ſo that *Philemon* had a good ſurety, and paymaſter of the Apoſtle: and this ſhows his great humility to be a bondſman for a ſervant, and to make good damages and debts, brought on in a ſcandalous manner; as alſo that ſuretiſhip in ſome caſes is lawful, tho' it ought to be cautiouſly, and for very good reaſons, entred into: and this engagement of the Apoſtle for *Oneſimus*, bears ſome reſemblance with, and may ſerve to illuſtrate the ſuretiſhip of Chriſt, for his people, they, and *Oneſimus*, being much in a like condition; as he was an unprofitable and run-away ſervant, ſo they are all gone out of the way, and together become unprofitable; and Chriſt engaged with his Father to bring them back again, and ſet them before him; and by his ſufferings and death has brought them nigh, which were afar off: as he had wronged his maſter and was indebted to him, ſo they have injured the law of God, affronted his juſtice, and incurred his diſpleaſure; and having owed to him more than ten thouſand talents, and having nothing to pay, Chriſt engaged to ſatisfy law and juſtice, to make reconciliation for them, and pay all their debts; all which he has accordingly done; their ſins have been placed to his account, imputed to him, and charged upon him; and he has bore them, and the puniſhment due to them, and ſo has ſatisfied for them, and reſtored that which he took not away. *Albeit I do not ſay to thee, how thou oweſt unto me, even thine own ſelf beſides*; having reſpect to his converſion, which he was the happy inſtrument of; the Apoſtle was his ſpiritual father, and he was his ſon, according to the common faith; he had been the inſtrument of ſaving his ſoul from death; he had been the means of that in the hand of God, which all his riches, and the riches of his friends and relations, could never have procured: the ſalvation of his ſoul, his better part, was inſtrumentally owing to him, and ſo his whole ſelf; and therefore, what favour might he not aſk of him? and what was it he could, or ſhould, deny him? this the Apoſtle introduces in a very artificial manner, and does not inſiſt upon it, but ſuggeſts, that ſhould he forgive the injuries and debts, he had took upon him to make ſatisfaction for, it would not be an equivalent to the debt he owed to him. From hence may be obſerved, how greatly obliged regenerated perſons are to thoſe, who have been the means and inſtruments of their converſion.

Ver. 20. *Yea, brother, let me have joy of thee in the Lord*, &c.] Tho' the Apoſtle was his ſpiritual father, having been the inſtrument of his converſion, yet he calls him his brother, as being a partaker of the ſame grace, and a miniſter of the ſame Goſpel; and intimates to him, that ſhould he grant his requeſt, and receive his ſervant again, it would give him great joy and pleaſure, and that not of a carnal, but of a ſpiritual kind, even joy in the Lord; he ſhould rejoice in the preſence of the Lord, and before him, concerning him; he ſhould rejoice in his faith in the Lord, and love for him, and obedience to him; all which would be diſcovered in ſuch a conduct: the *Syriac* verſion renders it, as an aſſurance to himſelf, *I ſhall be refreſhed by thee in our Lord*; not doubting, but that he would gratify him, in the thing he aſked of him, which would be a refreſhment to him; the *Vulgate Latin* verſion renders it, *may I enjoy thee in the Lord*; meaning not his company and preſence, either in this world, or in the world to come; but that he might enjoy or receive the favour from him he had petitioned him for, for the Lord's ſake; the *Arabic* verſion renders it, as a reaſon why he ſhould do it, *I have been profitable to thee in the Lord*; confirming what he had ſaid before, that he owed himſelf to him; he having been uſeful to him in bringing him to the knowledge of Chriſt, and faith in him; and the *Ethiopic* verſion refers it to a promiſe, *I will repay in our Lord*; in ſpiritual things in our Lord, if not in things temporal: *refreſh my bowels in the Lord*; or *in Chriſt*, as the *Alexandrian* copy, the *Syriac* and *Ethiopic* verſions read; and by his *bowels*, he either means *Oneſimus*, as in ver. 12. who, in a ſpiritual ſenſe, came forth out of his bowels; or elſe himſelf, his ſoul, his ſpirit, his inward parts; and ſo the *Ethiopic* verſion renders it, *refreſh my ſoul*; and the ſenſe is, that he deſired in the Lord, and for his ſake, that he would receive *Oneſimus* again, which would give him an inward pleaſure, and refreſh his ſpirit; and indeed he intimates, that nothing could be more chearing and reviving to him.

Ver. 21. *Having confidence in thy obedience*, &c.] In his obedience of faith to Chriſt, and his Goſpel; he having been made willing in the day of his power to ſerve him, as well as to be ſaved by him; and being conſtrained by his love, and the Spirit of Chriſt having wrought in him both to will, and to do of his good pleaſure: *I wrote unto thee, knowing that thou wilt alſo do more than I ſay*; the knowledge the Apoſtle had of *Philemon*'s chearful obedience to Chriſt in all the parts of duty, encouraged him to write to him, on this head; believing that he would even do more than he had deſired of him.

Ver. 22. *But withal prepare me alſo a lodging*, &c.] Not that the Apoſtle expected or deſired any grand apartment to be fitted up for him; a room with ſuch furniture as the *Shunamite* provided for the man of God, was ſufficient for him, and what he would have been entirely contented with; but his view in this was, to let *Philemon* know, that he hoped to be releaſed from his bonds, and that he might expect to ſee him; and this he hinted to him, in order to ſtir him up to receive his ſervant ſooner, and the more readily; who otherwiſe might have been indifferent to it, and negligent of it, thinking he ſhould never ſee the Apoſtle's face any more. *For I truſt, that thro' your prayers, I ſhall be given you*; to miniſter in the Goſpel again among them: the Apoſtle was a man of prayer himſelf, and he had a very great regard to the prayers of others, and often deſired an intereſt in them; that he might perform his miniſterial work as it ſhould be; that he might have ſucceſs in it; and that he might be delivered from the unbelieving *Jews*, and from wicked and unreaſonable men; and he had ſome ſecret hope and truſt in his own mind, that thro' the prayers of the ſaints, he ſhould be delivered from his bonds, and go up and down preaching the Goſpel as heretofore: he doubtleſs was accquainted with the caſe of *Peter*, for whom prayer was made inceſſantly by the church, when in priſon, and he had deliverance; however, he knew that the prayers of the ſaints availed much with God; but whether this hope and expectation of his were anſwered, is a matter of doubt and queſtion: ſome think he was releaſed, and went into ſeveral parts, and preached the Goſpel, and then was taken up again, and committed to priſon, and ſuffered under *Nero*, ſome years after; and others think not.

Ver. 23. *There ſalute thee Epaphras*, &c.] Who was a *Coloſſian*, and miniſter of the church at *Coloſſe*, and ſo might be well known to *Philemon*, who ſeems to to have been of the ſame place and church; ſee *Col.* i. 7. and iv. 12, 13. his name is omitted in the *Ethiopic* verſion: *my fellow priſoner in Chriſt Jeſus*; this good man, and miniſter of Chriſt, might have been ſent by the *Coloſſians*, as *Epaphroditus* was by the *Philippians*, to the Apoſtle at *Rome*, to pay him a viſit, and comfort and aſſiſt him under his afflictions; and ſtaying and preaching the Goſpel there, was committed to priſon, or was laid in bonds, as the Apoſtle was, and upon the ſame account; namely, for the ſake of Chriſt, and his Goſpel. For by this time *Nero* began to perſecute the chriſtians, which he did in the better and more moderate part of his reign; for among ſeveral things for which he is commended by the hiſtorian [b], this is one; "*Afflicti ſuppliciis chriſtiani, genus hominum ſuperſtitionis novæ ac maleficæ*; the chriſtians were puniſhed, a ſort of men of a new and bad religion:" and *Epaphras* being at *Rome*, when this perſecution broke out, was taken up and put in priſon, as were alſo *Ariſtarchus*, *Col.* iv. 10. and *Timothy*, *Heb.* xiii. 23.

Ver. 24. *Marcus*, *Ariſtarchus*, *Demas*, *Lucas*, &c.] *Marcus* was *Barnabas*'s ſiſter's ſon, the ſon of that *Mary*, in whoſe houſe the church met, and prayed for *Peter* when in priſon; whoſe name was *John Mark*, whom *Saul* and *Barnabas* took along with them to *Antioch*, and from thence, in their travels, to other parts; but he leaving them at *Pamphylia*, was the occaſion of a contention between *Saul* and *Barnabas* afterwards, when returned to *Antioch*; the latter inſiſting on his going with them again, and the former refuſing it on account of his departure from them; which contention roſe ſo high as to part upon it, *Acts* xii. 12, 25. and xiii. 5, 13. and xv. 37, 38, 39. tho' after this the Apoſtle was reconciled to him; he approving himſelf to be a faithful and uſeful miniſter of the Goſpel; and therefore he deſires *Timothy* to bring him along with him, 2 *Tim.* iv. 11. and if this Epiſtle was wrote after that, he was now come to him; however, he was now with him, whether before or after: *Ariſtarchus* was a *Macedonian* of *Theſſalonica*; or very likely the Apoſtle had been the inſtrument of converting him there, and who followed him from thence, and attended him wherever he went; he was with him in the uproar raiſed by *Demetrius* at *Epheſus*, and accompanied him into *Aſia*; went with him in his voyage to *Rome*, and was now a fellow-priſoner there, *Acts* xix. 29. and xx. 4. and xxvii. 2. *Col.* iv. 10. *Demas* is the ſame with him, who is mentioned in 2 *Tim.* iv. 10. and if this Epiſtle is later than that, it ſhould ſeem that he was reſtored from his fall, and was returned to the Apoſtle. *Lucas* is the ſame with *Luke* the Evangeliſt, the beloved phyſician, the brother whoſe praiſe was in all the churches, and a conſtant companion of the Apoſtle, in his travels; and who wrote the book called, *The Acts of the Apoſtles*: theſe the Apoſtle ſtiles, *my fellow-labourers*, being all miniſters of the Goſpel; and this ſhows the Apoſtle's great humility, ſo to call them, when they were far from being on an equal foot with him in office, gifts, or uſefulneſs: and the chriſtian ſalutations of theſe perſons are ſent to *Philemon*, with this view, to engage him the more to attend to the Apoſtle's requeſt, in which they all joined.

Ver. 25. *The grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt be with your ſpirit. Amen.*] Not with his ſpirit only, but with the ſpirit of *Apphia* and *Archippus*, to whom alſo the Epiſtle was ſent; and therefore the word is in in the plural number; and the *Syriac* verſion adds pertinently enough, *my brethren*: the ſalutation is the ſame as in all the Epiſtles; the form of it agrees with *Gal.* vi. 18. the ſubſcription of the Epiſtle is, *written from Rome, to Philemon, by Oneſimus, a ſervant*; that is, it was written by the Apoſtle *Paul*, when at *Rome*, and ſent to *Philemon* by the hands of *Oneſimus*, who was his ſervant, and upon whoſe account the letter was written.

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[b] Suetonius in Vita Neronis, c. 16.

AN
EXPOSITION, &c.

The Epiſtle of PAUL the Apoſtle to the HEBREWS.

THAT this Epiſtle was written very early appears from hence, that it was imitated by *Clement* of *Rome*, in his Epiſtle to the *Corinthians*, who took whole ſentences out of it; and therefore it could not be a new work, as *Euſebius*[a] obſerves: it has been denied to be authentic by ſome hereticks, as the *Marcionites* and *Arrians*, but has been generally received as ſuch by the orthodox: ſome indeed doubted of it, becauſe it was not received by the *Roman* church, as an Epiſtle of the Apoſtle *Paul*[b]; tho' others, who have thought it was not his, as *Origen*, yet looked upon it as genuine[c]. It has been aſcribed to different perſons, as to *Barnabas*, to *Apollos*, to *Luke* the Evangeliſt, and to *Clement* of *Rome*, but without any juſt reaſon. *Clement* of *Alexandria*, a very ancient writer, aſſerts it to be the Apoſtle *Paul*'s[d]; and his name ſtands in the title of it, in all *R. Stephens*'s exemplars, and in all *Beza*'s copies, excepting one, and ſo it does in the *Vulgate Latin* and *Arabic* verſions; and that it is his, is highly probable from the agreement there is between this, and other Epiſtles of his; compare ch. i. 2, 3. with *Col.* i. 15, 16. and ch. v. 12, 13, 14. with 1 *Cor.* iii. 1, 2. and ch. xii. 1. with 1 *Cor.* ix. 24. and ch. xiii. 7, 17. with 1 *Theſſ.* v. 11, 12. and ch. xiii. 9. with *Eph.* iv. 14. and ch. xiii. 18. with 2 *Cor.* i. 12. and ch. xiii. 20. with *Rom.* xv. 13. and xvi. 20. 1 *Theſſ.* v. 23. and many other places; and alſo from the order and method of it, firſt treating of doctrines, and then proceeding to practical exhortations, which is the common form of *Paul*'s Epiſtles: to which may be added various circumſtances; as that it was written from *Italy*, where *Paul* was a priſoner; and the mention the author of it makes of his bonds, and of *Timothy*, as well known unto him, who was *Paul*'s companion; beſides, the token of his Epiſtles appears in this, namely, his uſual ſalutation to the churches; ſee ch. xiii. 23, 24, 25. But above all, the teſtimony of the Apoſtle *Peter* is greatly in favour of its being his, 2 *Pet.* iii. 15, 16. from whence it clearly appears, that the Apoſtle *Paul* did write an Epiſtle to the *Hebrews*; for to them *Peter* wrote; ſee 1 *Pet.* i. 1. 2 *Pet.* iii. 1. and what Epiſtle could it be but this? and what *Peter* refers to is to be found in it; ſee ch. x. 25, 36, 37. and which is written with great wiſdom; in none of *Paul*'s Epiſtles is there a greater diſcovery of his knowledge of divine myſteries, than in this; and in it alſo are things hard to be underſtood, ch. v. 11. The common objections to its being his are, its not bearing his name, the diverſity of its ſtile, and the author of it ſeeming to be not an Apoſtle, but a diſciple of the Apoſtle's: as to his not ſetting his name to it, the reaſons might be, becauſe he was the Apoſtle of the *Gentiles*, and not ſo much of the *Jews*; and becauſe of the prejudice of the *Jews* againſt him, both believers and unbelievers; wherefore had his name been to it, it might have prevented the uſefulneſs of it to the one, and have ſtirred up the rage of the other: as to the difference of ſtile, different ſubjects require a different ſtile; and yet in many things there is a likeneſs, as before obſerved; and as to the author's not being an Apoſtle, which is concluded from ch. ii. 3. the word *us* there is to be underſtood of the believing *Hebrews*, the diſciples of the Apoſtle, and not incluſive of the author, by a figurative way of ſpeaking often uſed by *Paul*; and beſides, the Apoſtle received a confirmation of the Goſpel from *Ananias*, who might have been an hearer of Chriſt, tho' he was at firſt taught it by Chriſt himſelf; add to this, that whoever was the writer of it, it was written before the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, and when ſeveral of the Apoſtles were living, and therefore he could never deſign by thoſe words to put himſelf in a ſucceeding generation. The perſons to whom this Epiſtle was written were *Hebrews*, or *Jews*; ſo called, as ſome think, from the name of *Abraham*, the father of them; or, as others, from his paſſing over the river *Euphrates*, when he came out of *Chaldea* into *Paleſtine*. So *Abram* the *Hebrew*, in *Gen.* xiv. 13. is by the *Septuagint* rendered, περάτης, *one that paſſes over*, taking it to come from the word עבר, which ſignifies to *paſs over*; with this compare *Joſh.* xxiv. 3. and this is the opinion of ſome of the *Jewiſh Rabbins*[e]; tho' it ſeems rather that they were called

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[a] Eccl. Hiſt. l. 3. c. 38.
[b] Ib. c. 3. & l. 6. c. 20.
[c] Ib. l. 6. c. 25.
[d] Ib. c. 14.
[e] Bereſhit Rabba, §. 42. fol. 37. 3. Jarchi in Gen. x. 21. & xiv. 13.

ſo from *Heber*, who lived at the time of the confuſion of languages; ſee *Gen.* x. 21. *Numb.* xxiv. 24. And this is the ſenſe of many *Jewiſh* writers, ancient and modern, of *Joſephus*[f], of *Jonathan ben Uzziel*[g], of *R. Nehemiah*[h], of *Aben Ezra*[i], and *Kimchi*[k], and others; ſee the note on 2 *Cor.* xi. 22. And theſe were the *Hebrews* that dwelt in the land of *Judea*, and particularly at *Jeruſalem*; nor were they the unbelieving inhabitants of thoſe parts, but believers in Chriſt, who were embodied in a Goſpel church-ſtate. It was a tradition of the antients[l], that this Epiſtle was written originally in *Hebrew*, and was tranſlated into *Greek*, either by *Luke* the Evangeliſt, or by *Clement* of *Rome*. But for this there is no foundation; no *Hebrew* copy can be produced; *Munſter*'s edition of it in *Hebrew*, is a tranſlation from the *Greek*, in which it was, no doubt, originally written, that being the common language, and well known to the *Jews*; and which appears from the citations in it out of the Old Teſtament, which are made, not from the *Hebrew* text, but from the *Greek* verſion; and beſides, had it been wrote in *Hebrew*, the writer would not have interpreted the *Hebrew* words, *Melchizedek* and *Salem*, as he does, in ch. vii. 2. The time of its writing was before the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, which in this book is ſignified by the coming of the Lord, and the day approaching; and after *Timothy* was releaſed from priſon, and ſome time within the two years of his own impriſonment at *Rome*, when he hoped for a releaſe, as his Epiſtles to the *Philippians*, and to *Philemon* ſhow. Dr. *Lightfoot* places it in the year 62, and in the eighth of *Nero*. And the occaſion and deſign of it is, to ſet forth the ſuperior excellency of Chriſt to angels and men, to *Moſes*, to *Joſhua*, to *Aaron*, and his ſons, and the preferableneſs of his prieſthood and ſacrifice, to the *Levitical* prieſthood, and its ſacrifices; to teach the *Hebrews* the true knowledge of the myſteries of their law; to point out to them the deſign, uſe, and abrogation of its ceremonies; and to prepare them for what afflictions and perſecutions they would be called to endure for Chriſt; and to exhort them to perſeverance, and to ſtrengthen them againſt apoſtacy, as well as to inſtruct them in the various duties of religion.

CHAP. I.

THE intention of this Epiſtle being to demonſtrate the ſuperior excellency of the Goſpel revelation to the legal one, the Apoſtle begins with the divine author of it, in which they both agree, and obſerves that in other things they differ. The revelation under the law was made in times paſt, the Goſpel revelation in theſe laſt days; the former was made to the *Jewiſh* fathers, that were of old, the latter to the then preſent Apoſtles; the one was was made at ſundry times, and divers manners, the other was made at once, and in one way; the one was made by the prophets of the Lord, the other by his own ſon, ver. 1, 2. and therefore the latter muſt be the more excellent; in proof of which the author enlarges on the character of the Son of God, with reſpect to his perſon, office, and glory; ſhewing that he is heir of all things, the maker of the worlds, of the ſame nature and glory with his Father; is omnipotent, and upholds all things by the word of his power; is the high-prieſt of his people, who has made ſatisfaction for their ſins, and purged them from them, and is now at the right hand of God, ver. 2, 3. He goes on to prove that he is more excellent than the angels, by a variety of arguments, and theſe ſupported by teſtimonies from the ſcriptures; as that he has a more excellent name than any of them, being called the Son of God, ver. 4, 5. which is proved from *Pſ.* ii. 7. 2 *Sam.* vii. 12—16. that he is the object of the worſhip of angels, ver. 6. which is required of them, *Pſ.* xcvii. 7. that he is their maker and creator, ver. 7. which appears from *Pſ.* civ. 4. that he has an everlaſting kingdom, is a righteous king, and is richly anointed above his fellows, ver. 8, 9. which is the ſenſe of ſome paſſages in *Pſ.* xlv. 6, 7. and that he is the founder and former of the heavens, and of the earth, and will endure when they ſhall not, ver. 10, 11, 12. which is confirmed by teſtimonies out of *Pſ.* cii. 25, 26, 27. that he ſits at the right hand of God, where none of the angels were ever admitted, ver. 13. as is clear from *Pſ.* cx. 1. and beſides, the angels, as they are miniſters made by him, they are ſent out from him to wait on his people, the heirs of ſalvation, and miniſter to them, and therefore he muſt be greater than they, ver. 14.

Ver. 1. *God who at ſundry times, and in divers manners*, &c.] The Apoſtle begins the Epiſtle with an account of the revelation God has made of his mind and will in former times; the author of this revelation is God, not eſſentially, but perſonally conſidered, even God the Father, as diſtinguiſhed from his Son in the next verſe; for the revelation under the Old Teſtament is divine, as well as that under the New; in this they both agree, in whatſoever elſe they differ: and this revelation was made at ſeveral times, at different ſeaſons, and to different perſons; and conſiſted of a variety of things relating to doctrine and worſhip, and concerning the Meſſiah, his perſon and office; of whom, at different times, there were gradual diſcoveries made, both before and after the giving of the law, from the beginning of the world, or the giving forth of the firſt promiſe, and in the times of the patriarchs, of *Moſes*, *David*, *Iſaiah*, and other prophets: and this was delivered in various manners; ſometimes by angels; ſometimes in a dream; at other times by a viſion; and ſometimes by *Urim* and *Thummim*: and this he *ſpake in time paſt unto the fathers by the prophets*; by *Moſes*, and other ſucceeding prophets, as *David*, *Iſaiah*, *Jeremy*, *Micah*, *Zechariah*, *Malachi*, and others; who were ſent to the *Jewiſh* fathers, the anceſtors of the people of the *Jews*, to whom they propheſied and declared the will of God, as they were moved and inſpired by the Holy Ghoſt: and the Apoſtle ſuggeſts, by this way of ſpeaking, that it was a long time ſince God ſpake to this people; for prophecy had ceaſed ever ſince the times of *Malachi*, for the ſpace of three hundred years; and this time paſt includes the whole Old Teſtament diſpenſation, from the beginning to the end of it, or of prophecy in it.

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[f] Antiq. l. 1. c. 6. §. 4.

[g] Targum in Gen. x. 21.

[h] In Bereſhit Rabba, §. 42. fol. 37. 3.

[i] In Gen. x. 21. & in Jonam, 1. 9.

[k] Sepher Shoraſhim, rad. עבר.

[l] Euſeb. Eccl. Hiſt. l. 6. c. 14. Hieronymi Catalog. Script. Eccl. §. 15. fol. 91. tom. 1.

Ver. 2. *Hath in theſe laſt days ſpoken unto us by his ſon,* &c.] This is the Goſpel revelation, or the revelation in the Goſpel diſpenſation; which tho' it comes from the ſame author the other does, yet in many things differs from it, and is preferable to it; and indeed the general deſign of this Epiſtle is to ſhew the ſuperior excellency of the one to the other; the former was delivered out in time paſt, but this *in theſe laſt days:* the *Alexandrian* copy, the *Complutenſian* edition, and ſeveral other copies, read, *in the laſt of theſe days*; perfectly agreeable to the phraſe, באחרית הימים, uſed in *Gen.* xlix. 1. *Num.* xxiv. 14. *Iſ.* ii. 2. to which the Apoſtle refers, and in which places, the days of the Meſſiah are intended; and it is a rule with the *Jews* [m], that where-ever the phraſe, *the laſt days*, is mentioned, the days of the Meſſiah are deſigned: and they are to be underſtood not of the laſt days of the natural world, but of the *Jewiſh* world and ſtate; indeed, the times of the Meſſiah, or Goſpel-diſpenſation, may be called the laſt days of the natural world, according to the tradition of the houſe of *Elias*; which teaches, that the duration of the world will be ſix thouſand years, and divides it into three parts, the laſt of which is aſſigned to the Meſſiah, thus; two thouſand years void, (or without the law) two thouſand years the law, and two thouſand years the days of the Meſſiah [n]: but it is beſt to underſtand this of the laſt days of the *Moſaic* œconomy, or *Jewiſh* diſpenſation; for the Meſſiah was to come before the *Jewiſh* civil and church-ſtates were diſſolved; before the ſceptre departed from *Judah*, and before the ſecond temple was deſtroyed; and he was to come at the end, or toward the cloſe of both theſe ſtates; and which is called the end, or ends of the world, *Hab.* ii. 3. *Heb.* ix. 26. 1 *Cor.* x. 11. and quickly after Jeſus, the true Meſſiah was come, an end was put to both theſe: from whence it may be obſerved, that the Meſſiah muſt be come; that the *Moſaic* œconomy, and *Jewiſh* worſhip, will never be reſtored again; that the Goſpel revelation being made in the laſt days, ought to be regarded the more, it being the laſt revelation God will ever make. Moreover, this differs from the former in this reſpect, that was made to the fathers, this *to us*; meaning either the Apoſtles in particular, or the *Jews* in general, to whom the Apoſtle is writing: this ſhows that the Goſpel revelation was firſt made to the *Jews*; and it being made to them perſonally, they were under great obligation to regard it; and that God had not caſt off his people; and that tho' he had greatly indulged their fathers, he had ſhowed greater favour to them, having provided ſome better thing for them: and there is a difference between theſe two revelations in the manner in which they were made; the former was at ſundry times, and in divers manners, the latter was made at once, and in one way; that was delivered out in parts, and by piece-meal, this the whole together; the whole mind and will of God, all his counſel, all that Chriſt heard of the Father; it is the faith that was once, and at once, delivered to the ſaints; and it has been given out in one way, by the preaching of the word: to which may be added, that formerly God ſpoke by many perſons, by the prophets, but now by one only, *by his ſon*; who is ſo not by creation, nor by adoption, nor by office, but by nature; being his own ſon, his proper ſon, begotten of him, of the ſame nature with him, and equal to him; and ſo infinitely preferable to the prophets: he is a ſon, and not a ſervant, in whom the Father is, and he in the Father, and in whom the Spirit is without meaſure; and God is ſaid to ſpeak by him, or in him, becauſe he was now incarnate; and what he ſays from God ſhould be attended to, both on account of the dignity of his perſon, as the Son of God, and becauſe of the authority he came with as mediator: *whom he hath appointed heir of all things*; which muſt be underſtood of him not as God, and creator; for as ſuch he has a right to all things; all that the Father has are his; the kingdom of nature and providence belongs to him, he being the former and maker of all things; but as mediator, who has all things committed to him, to ſubſerve the ends of his office; and has a kingdom appointed him, and which he will deliver up again: the word *all* may refer either to perſons or things; to perſons, not angels, good or bad, tho' both are ſubject to him, yet neither are called his inheritance; but elect men, who are his portion, and the lot of his inheritance; and to things relating to theſe perſons, and for their uſe and ſervice, in time, and to all eternity; as all temporal things, and all ſpiritual ones, the bleſſings and promiſes of the covenant of grace, the gifts and graces of the Spirit, and eternal glory and happineſs, the ſaints inheritance, who are joint-heirs with Chriſt. *By whom alſo he made the worlds*; this is ſaid in agreement with the notions of the *Jews*, and their way of ſpeaking, who make mention of three worlds, which they call, the upper world, (the habitation of God) the middle world, (the air) and the lower world [o], (the earth); and ſometimes they call them the world of angels, (where they dwell) the world of orbs, (where the ſun, moon, and ſtars are) and the world below [p], (on which we live); and it is frequent in their writings, and prayer-books [q], to call God, רבון כל העולמים, *Lord of all worlds*; ſee the note on ch. xi. 3. Theſe God made by his Son, not as an inſtrument, but as an efficient cauſe with him; for by him were all things made, whether viſible or inviſible; and the prepoſition *by* does not always denote inſtrumentality, but ſometimes efficiency; and is uſed of God the Father himſelf, and in this Epiſtle, ch. ii. 10.

Ver. 3. *Who being the brightneſs of* his *glory*, &c.] Or *of glory*; of God the Father, the God of glory, and who is glory itſelf; ſo called on account of his glorious nature and perfections; and becauſe of the glorious manifeſtations of them in his works of creation and providence, and in the various diſpenſations of his grace, and eſpecially in his Son; and becauſe he is the author of all glory, in the creatures, in the whole world, in Chriſt, as man and mediator, and in his own people. Now Chriſt is *the brightneſs* of this, as he is God; he has the ſame glorious nature and perfections, and the ſame glorious names, as Jehovah, the Lord of glory, &c. and the ſame glory, homage, and worſhip given him: the alluſion is to the ſun, and its beam or ray; ſo ſome render it, *the ray of his glory*; and may lead us to obſerve, that the Father and the Son are of the ſame nature, as the ſun and its ray; and that the one is not before the other, and yet diſtinct from each other, and cannot be divided or ſeparated one from another: ſo the phraſe, זין יקריה, *the brightneſs of his glory*, is uſed of the

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[m] Kimchi & Aben Ezra in Iſ. ii. 2.

[n] T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 97. 1.

[o] Tzeror Hammor, fol. 1. 4. & 3. 2, 3. Caphtor, fol. 79. 1.

[p] Tzeror Hammor, fol. 83. 2. Caphtor, fol. 90. 1.

[q] Seder Tephillot, fol. 5. 2. & 40. 2. Ed. Amſtelod.

divine being, in the *Chaldee* paraphraſes [r]; ſee *Wiſdom* vii. 26. *And the expreſs image of his perſon*; this intends much the ſame as the other phraſe; namely, equality and ſameneſs of nature, and diſtinction of perſons; for if the Father is God, Chriſt muſt be ſo too; and if he is a perſon, his Son muſt be ſo likewiſe, or he can't be the expreſs image and character of him; ſee the note on *Col.* i. 15. *And upholding all things by the word of his power*; the *Syriac* verſion renders it, *by the power of his word*, to the ſame ſenſe, only inverting the words. The *Targumiſt* on 2 *Chron.* ii. 6. uſes a phraſe very much like this, of God, whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain; becauſe, adds he, סביל כלא בדרע גבורתיה, *he bears*, or *ſuſtains all things by the arm of his power*: and the words are to be underſtood not of the Father, upholding all things by his eſſential and powerful word, his Son; but of the Son himſelf, who upholds all creatures he has made; bears up the pillars of the univerſe; preſerves every creature in its being, and ſupports it, and ſupplies it with the neceſſaries of life; rules and governs all, and providentially orders and diſpoſes of all things in the world, and that by his all-powerful will; which makes it manifeſt, that he is truly and properly God, and a very fit perſon to be a prieſt, as follows: *when he had by himſelf purged our ſins*; the *Arabic* and *Ethiopic* verſions ſeem to refer this to God the Father, as if he, by Chriſt, made the expiation of ſin, and then cauſed him to ſit down at his right hand; but it belongs to the Son himſelf, who of himſelf, and by himſelf alone, and by the ſacrifice of himſelf, made atonement for the ſins of his people; which is meant by the purgation of them: he took their ſins upon himſelf, and bore them, and removed them far away, and utterly aboliſhed them, which the prieſts under the law could not do: and when he had ſo done, he *ſat down on the right hand of the majeſty on high*; by *majeſty* is meant God the Father, to whom majeſty belongs; who is clothed with it, and which is before him: and his *right hand* deſigns his power, greatneſs, and glory, and is expreſſive of the high honour Chriſt, as man, is poſſeſſed of; for his ſitting here denotes the glorious exaltation of him in human nature, after his ſufferings, and death, and reſurrection from the dead; and ſhows that he had done his work, and was accepted, and was now enjoying reſt and eaſe, honour and glory, in which he will continue; and the place of his ſeſſion, as well as of the habitation of God, at whoſe right hand he ſits, is *on high*, in the higheſt heavens.

Ver. 4. *Being made ſo much better than the angels*, &c.] Chriſt is ſo much better than the angels, as the creator, than the creature; as an independent being, than a dependent one; as he that bleſſes, than he that is bleſſed; as he that is worſhipped, than he that worſhips; as a king, than his ſubjects; as a maſter, than his ſervants; and as he that ſends, than he that is ſent: and Chriſt may be ſaid to be *made* ſo, when he was manifeſted and declared to be ſo; and he was actually preferr'd to them, and exalted above them in human nature, after he had expiated the ſins of his people, and when he was ſet down at the right hand of God, as in the latter part of the preceding verſe, with which theſe words ſtand connected; for in his ſtate of humiliation, and thro' his ſufferings and death, he was made lower than they; but when he was riſen from the dead, and aſcended to heaven, he was placed at the right hand of God, where none of them ever was, or ever will be: beſides, the phraſe, *being made*, ſignifies no more than that *he was*; and ſo the *Syriac* verſion renders it, *and he was ſo much better than the angels*; and ſo the *Ethiopic* verſion, *he is ſo much better*: and this is obſerved, to prove him to be more excellent than any creature, ſince he is preferr'd to the moſt excellent of creatures; and to ſhow, that the Goſpel diſpenſation is ſuperior to the legal diſpenſation, which was introduced by the miniſtration of angels; and to take off the *Jews* from the worſhip of angels, to which they were prone: and this doctrine of his could not be well denied by them, ſince it was the faith of the *Jewiſh* church, that the Meſſiah ſhould be preferr'd to the angels; for in their ancient writings they ſay of him, he ſhall be exalted above *Abraham*, he ſhall be lifted up above *Moſes*, and be higher than the miniſtring angels [s]: and that he is above them, appears from what follows, *as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they*; which is that of the Son of God, a name peculiar to him; and which belongs to him in ſuch a ſenſe, as it does not to angels, as is evident from the following verſe: and tho' this name is not founded on his office, as mediator, but ariſes from his nature and relation to God; yet he was declared to be the Son of God, and it was made manifeſt, that this name of right belonged to him, upon the diſcharge of his office, at his reſurrection and aſcenſion to heaven; and therefore he is ſaid to obtain it by inheritance; or he appeared to inherit it of right, and that it was his poſſeſſion for evermore.

Ver. 5. *For unto which of the angels ſaid he at any time*, &c.] That is, he never ſaid to any of the angels, what he has ſaid to Chriſt; namely, what follows, *thou art my ſon, this day have I begotten thee*: for tho' angels are called the ſons of God, *Job* i. 6. and ii. 1. and xxxviii. 7. yet are never ſaid to be begotten by him; or, with his clauſe annexed to it, *this day have I begotten thee*; nor are they ever ſo called in a proper ſenſe, or in ſuch ſenſe as Chriſt is: this is ſaid to Chriſt, and of him, in *Pſ.* ii. 7. and that agreeable to the ſenſe of the *Jewiſh* church at this time, or the Apoſtle would never have produced it to the *Hebrews* in ſuch a manner; and not only the whole pſalm in general, but this verſe in particular, is owned by *Jewiſh* writers [t], both ancient and modern, to belong to the Meſſiah. Chriſt is the ſon of God, not by creation, nor by adoption, nor by office, but by nature; he is the true, proper, natural, and eternal Son of God; and as ſuch is owned and declared by Jehovah the Father, in theſe words; the foundation of which relation lies in the begetting of him; which refers not to his nature, either divine or human: not to his divine nature, which is common with the Father and Spirit; wherefore if his was begotten, theirs muſt be alſo, being the ſame undivided nature, common to all three; much leſs to his human nature, in which he is never ſaid to be begotten, but always to be made, and with reſpect to which he is without father: nor to his office, as mediator, in which he is not a ſon, but a ſervant; beſides, he was a ſon, previous to his being a prophet, prieſt, and king; and his office is not the foundation of his ſonſhip, but his ſonſhip is the foundation of his office, or by which that is ſupported, and which fits him for the performance of it: but it has reſpect to his divine perſon; for as in human generation, perſon begets perſon, and like begets like, ſo it is in divine generation; tho'

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[r] Targum in 2 Sam. xxii. 13. & in Cant. v. 10.

[s] Tanchuma apud Hulſ. p. 321.

[t] Zohar in Num. fol. 82. 2. Maimon. in Miſn. Sanhedrin, c. 11. 1. & Abarbinel, Maſhmiah Jeſhuah, fol. 37. 4. & 38. 1.

tho' care muſt be taken to remove all imperfection from it, as diviſibility and multiplication of eſſence, priority and poſteriority, dependance, and the like; nor can the modus, or manner of it, be conceived, or explained by us: the date of it, *to-day*, deſigns eternity, as in *Iſ.* xliii. 13. which is one continued day, an everlaſting now; and this may be applied to any time and caſe, in which Chriſt is declared to be the Son of God; as at his incarnation, his baptiſm, his transfiguration on the mount, and his reſurrection from the dead, as it is in *Acts* xiii. 33. ſee *Rom.* i. 4. and at his aſcenſion to heaven, when he was made Lord and Chriſt, and his divine ſonſhip more manifeſtly appeared; which ſeems to be the time, and caſe, more eſpecially referred to here. *And again, I will be to him a father, and he ſhall be to me a ſon*; which words are taken from 2 *Sam.* vii. 14. and the ſenſe is, not that he ſhould be his ſon by adoption; or that he would be inſtead of a father to him; or that he ſhould be as dear to him as a ſon is to a father; but that he was really and properly ſo; and he would make it manifeſt, and own him as ſuch, as he did at *Jordan*'s river, upon the mount, and at his reſurrection and aſcenſion; tho' the words are ſpoken of *Solomon*, as a type of Chriſt, they properly belong to the antitype, who is greater than *Solomon*.

Ver. 6. *And again, when he bringeth the firſt-begotten into the world*, &c.] By *the firſt-begotten* is meant Chriſt. This is a name given him in the Old Teſtament, and is what the *Hebrews* were acquainted with, and therefore the Apoſtle uſes it; it is in *Pſ.* lxxxix. 27. from whence it ſeems to be taken here, and which the ancient *Jews* [u] acknowledge is to be underſtood of the Meſſiah; who, as the Son of God, is the only-begotten of the Father, and was begotten from eternity, as before declared, and before any creature had a being, and therefore called the firſt-born of every creature, *Col.* i. 15. and is ſometimes ſtiled the firſt-begotten from the dead; he roſe the firſt in time, and is the firſt in cauſality and dignity: and he may be called the firſt-born, with reſpect to the ſaints, who are of the ſame nature with him, and are partakers of the divine nature, and are adopted into the family of God, tho' they are not in the ſame claſs of ſonſhip with him; and the bringing of him into the world may refer to his ſecond coming, for this ſeems agreeable from the natural order of the words, which may be rendered, *when he ſhall bring again*, &c. that is, a ſecond time, and from *Pſ.* xcvii. from whence the following words are cited; and from the glory he ſhall then have from the angels, who will come with him, and miniſter to him; and not to his reſurrection from the dead, when he was exalted above angels, principalities, and powers; tho' as we read the words, they ſeem to regard his firſt coming into this habitable world, at his incarnation and birth, when he was attended with angels, and worſhipped by them, according to the order of God the Father, as follows: *he ſaith, and let all the angels of God worſhip him*; theſe words are cited from *Pſ.* xcvii. 7. where the angels are called *Elohim*, Gods. So *Aben Ezra* on the place obſerves, that there are ſome (meaning their doctors) who ſay, that *all the Gods* are the angels; and *Kimchi* ſays, that the words are not imperative, but are in the paſt tenſe, inſtead of the future, *all the angels have worſhipped him*; that is, they ſhall worſhip him; as they have done, ſo they will do. According to our verſion, they are called upon to worſhip God's firſt-born, his only-begotten ſon, with a religious worſhip and adoration, even *all* of them, not one excepted; which ſhows, that Chriſt, as the firſt-begotten, is the Lord God, for he only is to be ſerved and worſhipped; and that if angels are to worſhip him, men ought; and that angels are not to be worſhipped, and that Chriſt is preferable to them; and the the whole ſets forth the excellency and dignity of his perſon. *Philo* the *Jew* [w] often calls the Logos, or Word of God, his firſt-begotten.

Ver. 7. *And of the angels he ſaith*, &c.] Or *to the angels*, as in the following verſe, *to the ſon*, which ſtands oppoſed to this; and the words ſaid to them, or of them, are found in *Pſ.* civ. 4. *who maketh his angels ſpirits, and his miniſters a flame of fire:* this cannot be underſtood of the wind and lightning, and of God's making theſe his meſſengers and miniſters to do his will; for ſuch a ſenſe is not ſuitable to the ſcope of the pſalm, from whence they are taken, nor to the order of the words in which they ſtand; for it is not ſaid, he makes ſpirits, or winds his angels, and flaming fire his miniſters, but the reverſe; and is contrary to the deſign of the Apoſtle in citing them, which is to ſhew the ſuperiority of Chriſt to angels, of whom it is ſaid, that they are made ſpirits: they are *ſpirits*, created ones, and ſo differ from God the creator; they are incorporeal ones, and ſo differ from men; they are immaterial, and ſo die not; they are ſpiritual ſubſtances ſubſiſting in themſelves: and they are *made* ſuch by God the Father, and by the Son the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, within the ſix days of the creation, and all at once; for it is not to be ſuppoſed, that the Lord is daily making them; and this proves the Son to be God, as well as more excellent than the angels; unleſs this is to be underſtood of the daily diſpoſal of them in providence, in cauſing winds, thunder, lightning, and the like. Some chuſe to ſupply the word with *as*, and read, *who maketh his angels* as *winds*; for inviſibility, velocity, power, and penetration: *and his miniſters* as *a flame of fire*; and theſe are the ſame with the angels, for they are miniſters to God; they attend his preſence; are ready to perform any ſervice for him; they ſing his praiſe, and are his chariots in which he rides: and they are miniſters to Chriſt; they attended at his incarnation; were ſolicitous for his preſervation, miniſtred to him in diſtreſs, aſſiſted at his reſurrection, and accompanied him in his aſcenſion, and will be with him at his ſecond coming: and they are as a flame of fire, ſo called from their great power, force, and ſwiftneſs; and from their burning love, and flaming zeal, hence named *Seraphim*; and becauſe they are ſometimes the executioners of God's wrath, and will deſcend in flaming fire, when Chriſt ſhall be revealed from heaven: angels ſometimes appear in fiery forms; the chariots and horſes of fire, by which *Elijah* was carried up to heaven, were no other than angels, in ſuch forms: ſo the *Jews* [x] ſay of the angels, "all the angels, their " horſes are horſes of *fire*, and their chariots *fire*, " and their bows *fire*, and their ſpears *fire*, and all " their inſtruments of war *fire*." And they have a notion, that an angel is half water, and half fire [y].

Ver. 8. *But unto the ſon*, he ſaith, &c.] What he does not to angels, and which ſets him infinitely above them; which ſhows him to be a prince and king, and not a ſervant, or miniſter; and which even aſcribes deity to him: *thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever*; this, with what follows in this verſe, and the next, is taken out of *Pſ.* xlv. 6, 7. which pſalm is not ſpoken of *Solomon*, to whom many things in it will not agree; he was not fairer than other men; nor was he a warrior; nor was his throne for ever and ever; and much leſs a divine perſon, and the object of worſhip; but the Meſſiah, and ſo the ancient *Jews* underſtand it: the *Targum* applies it to him, and mentions him by name in ver. 2. and ſome of their modern writers[z] affirm, it is ſaid of the Meſſiah; tho' *Aben Ezra* ſeems doubtful about it, ſaying, it is ſpoken concerning *David*, or *Meſſiah* his ſon, whoſe name is ſo, *Ezek.* xxxvii. 25. Deity is here aſcribed to the Son of God; he is expreſly called God; for the words will not bear to be rendered, *thy throne is the throne of God*, or *thy throne is God*; or be ſupplied thus, *God ſhall eſtabliſh thy throne:* nor are the words an apoſtrophe to the Father, but are ſpoken to the king, the ſubject of the pſalm, who is diſtinguiſhed from God the Father, being bleſſed and anointed by him; and this is put out of all doubt by the Apoſtle, who ſays they are addreſſed *to the Son*, who is not a created God, nor God by office, but by nature; for tho' the word *Elohim* is ſometimes uſed of thoſe who are not Gods by nature; yet being here uſed abſolutely, and the attributes of eternity, and moſt perfect righteouſneſs, being aſcribed to the perſon ſo called, prove him to be the true God; and this is the reaſon why his throne is everlaſting, and his ſceptre righteous, and why he ſhould be worſhipped, ſerved, and obeyed. Dominion and duration of it are given to him; his throne denotes his kingly power, and government; which is general, over angels, good and bad; over men, righteous and wicked, even the greateſt among them, the kings and princes of the earth; and ſpecial, over his church and people; and which is adminiſtred by his Spirit and grace in the hearts of his ſaints; and by his word and ordinances in his churches; and by his powerful protection of them from their enemies; and will be in a glorious manner in the latter day, and in heaven to all eternity; for his throne is for ever, and on it he'll ſit for ever: his kingdom is an everlaſting kingdom; he'll have no ſucceſſor in it, nor can his government be ſubverted; and tho' he will deliver up the kingdom to the Father, it will not ceaſe. *A ſceptre of righteouſneſs* is *the ſceptre of thy kingdom*; the ſceptre is an enſign of royalty; and a ſceptre of righteouſneſs, or rightneſs, is expreſſive of the juſtice of government; the *Syriac* verſion renders it, *a ſceptre ſtretched out*; which is a ſceptre of mercy, as the inſtance of *Ahaſuerus* ſtretching out his ſceptre to *Eſther* ſhews; and ſuch is the Goſpel of Chriſt, which holds forth and declares the mercy, grace, and love of God to men thro' Chriſt; and which may be called a ſceptre of righteouſneſs, ſince it reveals and directs to the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, and encourages to works of righteouſneſs; but here it deſigns the righteous adminiſtration of Chriſt's kingly office; for juſt and true are, have been, and ever will be his ways, as king of ſaints.

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[u] Shemot Rabba, §. 19. fol. 104. 4.

[w] De Agricultura, p. 195. De Confuſ. Ling. p. 329, 341. De Somniis, p. 597.

[x] Sepher Jetzirah, p. 16. Ed. Rittangel.

[y] T. Hieroſ. Roſhhaſhana, fol. 58. 1.

Ver. 9. *Thou haſt loved righteouſneſs, and hated iniquity*, &c.] Chriſt loves righteous perſons and righteous works, faithfulneſs and integrity, and a juſt adminiſtration of government, every thing that is holy, juſt, and good; which has appeared in the whole courſe of his life on earth, in working out a righteouſneſs for his people, and in encouraging righteouſneſs in them, which he leads them in the way of; and his love of juſtice will ſtill more appear at the laſt day, when he will judge the world in righteouſneſs, and give the crown of righteouſneſs to proper perſons: and he hates iniquity; or *unrighteouſneſs*, as the *Alexandrian* copy, and another read; as being contrary to his nature, both as God and man, and to the righteous law of God; which has appeared by his inveighing againſt it, and dehorting from it; by his ſeverity exerciſed towards delinquents; by his ſuffering for it, and aboliſhing of it; and by chaſtizing his own people on account of it; and his abhorrence of it will ſtill more appear at the day of judgment, when all workers of iniquity, profeſſors and prophane, will be bid to depart from him: *therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladneſs above thy fellows*; the anointer is the God of Chriſt; that is, God the Father, who is the God of Chriſt, as man; and is ſo called, becauſe he prepared and formed the human nature of Chriſt, and ſupported it under all its ſufferings, and has glorified it; and as ſuch Chriſt prayed unto him, believed in him, loved him, and obeyed him: the anointed is the Son of God, the Son ſpoken to, and is called God in the preceding verſe; tho' he is not anointed as God, but as mediator, to be prophet, and prieſt, and king: what he is anointed with is not material oil, but ſpiritual, the Holy Ghoſt, as it is explained in *Acts* x. 38. called the oil of gladneſs, in alluſion to the uſe of oil at feaſts and weddings, for the delight and refreſhment of the gueſts; and becauſe of the ſpiritual effects of joy and gladneſs, both on Chriſt, as man, and on his people. Now Chriſt was anointed as mediator from all eternity; that is, he was inveſted with his office as ſuch; and at his conception and birth he was filled with the Holy Ghoſt; who alſo deſcended on him at his baptiſm, after which he went about doing good, and healing diſeaſes; but here it ſeems to refer to the time of his aſcenſion, when he was declared to be Lord and Chriſt, the anointed one; and received gifts for men, the fulneſs of the Spirit without meaſure, and with which he was anointed above *his fellows:* by whom are meant, not the angels, nor the kings and princes of the earth; but the ſaints, who are ſo called, becauſe they are of the ſame nature, and are of the ſame family, and are partakers of the ſame Spirit, and grace; and having received the unction from him, are alſo kings, prieſts, and prophets, and will be companions with him to all eternity. Now the reaſon of his being anointed, or exalted, and made Lord and Chriſt, is, becauſe he loves righteouſneſs; ſee *Phil.* ii. 7, 8. or rather, becauſe he is anointed with the Holy Spirit without meaſure, therefore he loves righteouſneſs; for the words may be rendered, *thou loveſt righteouſneſs —— becauſe God, thy God, hath anointed thee.*

Ver. 10. *And thou, Lord, in the beginning haſt laid the foundation of the earth*, &c.] The perſon here addreſſed, as the Lord or Jehovah, and as the maker of the heavens and the earth, is the ſame with the Son ſpoken to, and of, before; for the words are a continuation of the ſpeech to him, tho' they are taken from another pſalm, from *Pſ.* cii. 25, 26, 27. The phraſe, *thou Lord*, is taken from ver. 12. and is the ſame with, *O my God*, ver. 24. and whereas it is there ſaid, *of old*, and here, *in the beginning*, the ſenſe is the ſame; and agreeable to the *Septuagint*, and the Apoſtle, *Jarchi* interprets it by, מתחילה, *at*, or *from the beginning*; and ſo the *Targum* paraphraſes it, מן שרויא *from the beginning*,

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[z] Kimchi & R. Sol. ben Melech in loc. & R. Abraham Seba, Tzeror Hammor, fol. 49. 2.

ginning, that the creatures were created, *&c.* that is, in the beginning of the creation, which is the Apoſtle's meaning; and ſhews the eternity of Chriſt, the Lord, the creator of the earth, who muſt exiſt before the foundation of the world; and confutes the notion of the eternity of the world: and the founding of it, ſhows that the earth is the lower part of the creation; and denotes the ſtability of it; and points out the wiſdom of the creator in laying ſuch a foundation; and proves the deity of Chriſt, by whom that, and all things in it, were made: *the heavens are the works of thine hands*; there are more heavens than one; there are the airy heaven, and the ſtarry heaven, and the heaven of heavens, the third heaven; and they were created in the beginning, as the earth was, *Gen.* i. 1. and are the immediate work of Chriſt; they were made by himſelf, not by the means of angels, who were not in being till theſe were made; nor by any intermediate help which he could not have, and which he did not need: the phraſe is expreſſive of the power of Chriſt in making the upper parts of the creation, and of his wiſdom in garniſhing them, in which there is a wonderful diſplay of his glory; and the whole ſerves to ſet forth the dignity and excellency of his perſon.

Ver. 11. *They ſhall periſh*, &c.] That is, the heavens and the earth; not as to the ſubſtance of them, but as to the quality of them; the preſent form and faſhion of them ſhall paſs away; the curſe will be removed from them, and they will be renewed and purified, but the ſubſtance of them will continue; otherwiſe there would be no place, either for the righteous or the wicked. *But thou remaineſt*; without any change or alteration, neither in his natures; divine or human, as God or man, nor in his office as mediator; as a prieſt, he has an unchangeable prieſthood, and ever lives to make interceſſion; as a king, his kingdom is an everlaſting one, and of it there will be no end; and as a prophet, he'll be the everlaſting light of his people. *They all ſhall wax old as doth a garment*; garments in time wax old, and loſe their beauty and uſefulneſs, unleſs when a miracle is wrought, as in the caſe of the children of *Iſrael* in the wilderneſs. Now the heavens, and the light thereof, are as a garment and a curtain, *Pſ.* civ. 2. and theſe, together with the earth, will in time come to their end of uſefulneſs, in the preſent form of them; ſee *Iſ.* li. 6.

Ver. 12. *And as a veſture ſhalt thou fold them up*, &c.] In order to lay them aſide, and make no uſe of them in the manner they now are; juſt as clothes, when they are grown old, or out of faſhion, are folded up, and laid aſide from uſe at preſent, or are put into another form. In the *Hebrew* text it is, *as a veſture ſhalt thou change them*; but the ſenſe is the ſame, for a garment is changed by folding it, or turning it; agreeable to which *Jarchi* interprets the *Hebrew* phraſe thus, "as a man turns his garment to put it off;" the *Vulgate Latin* verſion reads as the *Hebrew* does, and one of the manuſcripts of *New College, Oxford*. *And they ſhall be changed*; as to their form and uſe, not as to their being; for a change, and an annihilation, are two things: *but thou art the ſame, and thy years ſhall not fail*; which is expreſſive of the immutability of Chriſt, in his nature and perfections, in his perſon and offices, in the virtue of his blood, righteouſneſs, and ſacrifice; and of his duration or continuance, in oppoſition to the fading and tranſitory nature of the heavens and earth, and of all outward enjoyments: and this may ſerve to take off the heart from the one, and ſet it upon the other; and to ſtrengthen our faith in Chriſt, and encourage us to expect a continuance of bleſſings from him; all ſupplies of grace now, and eternal glory hereafter.

Ver. 13. *But to which of the angels ſaid he at any time*, &c.] That is, he never ſaid to any of them in his council, or covenant; he never deſigned to give them any ſuch honour, as hereafter expreſſed; he never promiſed it to them, or beſtowed it on them; he never called up any of them to ſo high a place, or to ſuch a dignity: *ſit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footſtool*; yet this he ſaid to his Son, *Pſ.* cx. 1. for to him, the Meſſiah, are they ſpoken, and have had their fulfilment in him; ſee the note on *Matt.* xxii. 44. and therefore he muſt be greater than the angels.

Ver. 14. *Are they not all miniſtring ſpirits*, &c.] Servants to God, to Chriſt, and to his people, and therefore muſt be inferior to the Son of God. The phraſe is *Rabbinical*; frequent mention is made in *Jewiſh* writings [a] of, מלאכי השרת, *the angels of miniſtry*, or *the miniſtring angels*; this is their common appellation with the *Jews*; and the Apoſtle writing to ſuch, uſes a like phraſe, well known to them, and appeals to them, if the angels were not ſuch ſpirits. *Sent forth to miniſter for them who ſhall be the heirs of ſalvation?* the perſons they miniſter to, and for, are thoſe, *who ſhall be the heirs of ſalvation*; that is, of eternal glory, which will be poſſeſſed by the ſaints, as an inheritance: hence it belongs to children, being bequeathed to them by their father, and comes to them thro' the death of Chriſt, of which the Spirit is the earneſt; and this ſhows, that it is not of works, and that it is of an eternal duration, and takes in all kind of happineſs: and of this the ſaints are heirs now; and ſo the *Ethiopic* verſion renders it, *who are heirs of ſalvation*; nor ſhould it be rendered, *who ſhall be heirs*, but rather, *who ſhall inherit ſalvation*; for this character reſpects not their heirſhip, but their actual inheriting of ſalvation: and the miniſtry of angels to, and for them, lies in things temporal and ſpiritual, or what concern both their bodies and their ſouls; in things temporal, in which they have often been aſſiſting, as in providing food for their bodies, in curing their diſeaſes, in directing and preſerving them in journies, in ſaving and delivering them from outward calamities, in reſtraining things hurtful from hurting them, and in deſtroying their enemies; in things ſpiritual, as in making known the mind and will of God to them, in comforting them, and ſuggeſting good things to them, and in helping and aſſiſting them againſt ſatan's temptations; and they are preſent with their departing ſouls at death, and carry them to heaven, and will gather the elect together at the laſt day. And they are *ſent forth* to miniſter to them in ſuch a way; they are ſent forth by Chriſt, the Lord and creator of them, who therefore muſt be ſuperior to them; they don't take this office upon themſelves, tho' being put into it, they faithfully and diligently execute it, according to the will of Chriſt: and this ſhows the care of Chriſt over his people, and his kindneſs to them, and the great honour he puts upon them, to appoint ſuch to miniſter to them; and ſince they are of ſo much uſe and ſervice, they ought to be reſpected and eſteemed, tho' not worſhipped.

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[a] T. Bab. Chagiga, fol. 12. 2. & 14. 1, 2. & 16. 1. Taanith, fol. 11. 1. & Megilla, fol. 15. 2. & in Zohar paſſim.

CHAP. II.

IN this chapter the Apoſtle, from the ſuperior excellency of Chriſt, by whom the Goſpel revelation is come, diſcourſed of in the preceding, urges the believers he writes to, to a more diligent attention to the Goſpel, and the doctrines of it; to which he adds another motive inducing thereunto, leſt thoſe things ſhould be let ſlip, and be loſt, ver. 1. and then, by another argument from the leſs to the greater, that if the law, which was given by angels, could not be broke with impunity, then how ſhould ſuch eſcape divine puniſhment that neglected and deſpiſed the Goſpel, which is a doctrine of ſalvation, was delivered by the Lord himſelf, and confirmed by various teſtimonies and miracles, ver. 2, 3, 4. And beſides, the Goſpel diſpenſation is not put into the hands of angels, but into the hands of Chriſt, to whom all things are ſubject, which is proved out of *Pſ.* viii. 4, 5, 6. and which proof ſhows, that tho' Chriſt, on account of his ſufferings and death, was for a while made lower than the angels, yet being now crowned with glory and honour, he is above them, and they are ſubject to him, ſince all things are, ver. 5, 6, 7, 8, 9. And this anticipates an objection that might be taken from hence againſt what the Apoſtle had aſſerted in the foregoing chapter, concerning the ſuperiority of Chriſt to angels; and this leads him on to obſerve the reaſon of the ſufferings and death of Chriſt, and alſo of his incarnation; that the moving cauſe of Chriſt's ſufferings and death, was the grace and good-will of God; that he did not ſuffer for himſelf, but for others, for every one of thoſe deſcribed in the context; that inaſmuch as he was the ſurety of thoſe perſons, it was agreeable to the juſtice of God, and it could not be otherwiſe, but he muſt be made perfect through ſuffering; and this was the way to bring many ſons to glory, ver. 9, 10. and as for his incarnation, or his becoming man, that was neceſſary, that the ſanctifier and the ſanctified might be of the ſame nature, that he might be able to call them brethren and children, ver. 11, 12, 13. as he does, for which are cited, *Pſ.* xxii. 22. and xviii. 2. *Iſ.* viii. 18. and becauſe the children he engaged to bring to glory were partakers of fleſh and blood; and alſo that he might be capable of dying, and by dying deſtroy the devil, and deliver his timorous people, who, thro' fear of death, lived in a continual ſtate of bondage, ver. 14, 15. for which reaſon he did not take upon him the nature of angels, but of the ſeed of *Abraham*, ver. 16. And beſides, it was neceſſary he ſhould be in all things like unto his brethren, that he might be merciful to them, and faithful to God, and be in a ſtate and condition capable of ſympathizing with them, and ſuccouring them under their temptations, which he was able to do by ſuffering thro' temptation himſelf, ver. 17, 18.

Ver. 1. *Therefore we ought to give the more earneſt heed*, &c.] This is an inference from the Apoſtle's diſcourſe in the preceding chapter; ſince he, by whom God has ſpoke in theſe laſt days, is his Son, who is infinitely above the angels, they being his creatures, and worſhippers of him, and miniſters to him, and his; therefore the greater regard ſhould be had to the Goſpel ſpoken by him: even *to the things which we have heard*; which are no other than the truths of the Goſpel, which had been preached unto them, and which were heard by the Apoſtles, who had preached them to them; and they had heard them from them, or from Chriſt himſelf, and were what their foreſathers had deſired to hear, and which the carnal ear has not heard; for there is an internal and an external hearing of the Goſpel. Now it becomes the hearers of it, to give heed, or attend unto it, to beware of that which is pernicious and hurtful, and to regard that which is good and profitable; and this giving heed takes in a cloſe conſideration of Goſpel truths, a diligent enquiry into them, a valuable eſteem of them, a ſtrict adherence to them, and a watchfulneſs to retain what is heard, and to conform unto it: and this was to be done *more earneſtly* than their forefathers had, or than they themſelves had; or this may be put for the ſuperlative degree, and ſignify, that they ſhould give the moſt earneſt heed; for they had the moſt abundant reaſon to give heed, ſince what they heard was not from *Moſes*, and the prophets, to whom they did well to take heed, but from Chriſt the Son of God, who was greater than they: *leſt at any time we ſhould let them ſlip*; and this either reſpects perſons; and ſo the *Vulgate Latin* verſion renders it, *leſt we ſhould run out*; and the *Syriac* verſion, *leſt we ſhould fall*; and the *Arabic* verſion, *leſt we ſhould fall from honeſty*; which may intend partial ſlips and falls, to which the people of God are ſubject; and which are oftentimes owing to inadvertency to the word; for the Goſpel, duly attended to, is a preſervative from falling: or it may reſpect things, even the doctrines of the Goſpel, leſt we ſhould let them ſlip out of us, through us, or beſides us: the metaphor ſeems to be taken either from leaking veſſels, which let out what is put into them; or to ſtrainers, which let the liquor through, and it falls on the ground, and cannot be gathered up, and ſo becomes uſeleſs; and which is expreſſive of unprofitable hearing of the word, thro' inattention, negligence and forgetfulneſs, and the irrecoverableneſs of it, when it is gone: the Goſpel may be loſt to ſome that hear it, as to any real benefit and advantage by it; and ſome who hear the Goſpel may be loſt and periſh; but the grace of the Goſpel can never be loſt.

Ver. 2. *For if the word ſpoken by angels was ſtedfaſt*, &c.] This is a deſcription of the law, from whence the Apoſtle argues to a ſtricter regard to the Goſpel, as from the leſſer to the greater: this is called *the word*, and a terrible one it was; it was a voice of words, which they that heard, intreated they might hear no more; it was the word *ſpoken* with an articulate voice, and was heard by the *Iſraelites*, and it was ſpoken *by angels*. Jehovah the Father's voice was never heard; when he came to give the law, ten thouſand angels came along with him; and the miniſtry of theſe he uſed in the delivery of the law; by them he ſpoke it; they formed in the air the voices heard; it was ordained by them, and given by the diſpoſition of them; ſee *Acts* vii. 53. *Gal.* iii. 19. To which agree thoſe words of *Herod*, ſpoken to the *Jews*, recorded by *Joſephus*[b]; that we learn of God, δι' ἀγγέλων, *by angels*, the beſt of doctrines, and the moſt holy things in the law. And this *was ſtedfaſt*; firm, and ſure, being the word of God, which cannot paſs away, until it be fulfilled; it was confirmed by terrible ſigns attending it, and by the peoples aſſent unto it; the penalty of it is ſure and certain, in caſe of diſobedience; and as to the form and miniſtration of it, it remained until Chriſt, the end of it, came; and as to the matter of it, ſo far as of a moral nature, it ſtill remains: the judicial and ceremonial parts of it are abrogated; and the whole of it is aboliſhed, as in the hands of *Moſes*, and as a covenant of works, and as to the curſe and condemnation of it, and with reſpect to juſtification by it; but it ſtill continues as a curſing law to all that are under it; and as a means of conviction to ſinners in the hands of the Spirit; and as a rule of walk and converſation to ſaints, as in the hands of Chriſt: *and every tranſgreſſion and diſobedience received a juſt recompence of reward*; every precept of the law had a penalty annexed to it; and every breach of it was puniſhed as that penalty required; and that according to the ſtrict juſtice of God, and the juſt demerit of ſin; and none eſcaped, but ſuffered the puniſhment due to the violation of the precept either in themſelves, or in their ſurety; ſo ſtedfaſt and immoveable was this law.

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[b] Antiq. l. 15. c. 5. §. 3.

Ver. 3. *How ſhall we eſcape*, &c.] The righteous judgment of God, and eternal puniſhment: *if we neglect ſo great ſalvation?* as the Goſpel is, which is called *ſalvation*, in oppoſition to the law, which is the miniſtration of condemnation; and becauſe it is a declaration of ſalvation by Chriſt; and is the means of bringing it near, and of the application of it in converſion, and ſo is the power of God unto it: and it is a *great* ſalvation; the Goſpel which reveals it is great, for the author of it is Chriſt; it has been confirmed by miracles, and attended with great ſucceſs; and has in it great things, great myſteries, and exceeding great and precious promiſes: and the ſalvation which it declares is great; it is the produce of great wiſdom; it is wrought by a great perſon, by a ſaviour, and a great one, and who is the great God, and our ſaviour; it has been procured at great charge and expence, even at the expence of the blood and life of the Son of God; and has been obtained thro' great difficulties; and is the ſalvation of the ſoul, the more noble part of man; and it is a compleat and everlaſting one: to *neglect* this, is to be careleſs of it; to contemn it, and to deſpiſe the miniſters of it; and to make any thing elſe but Chriſt the way of ſalvation: and the danger ſuch are in is very great; it is not poſſible that they ſhould eſcape divine vengeance, ſince their ſin is ſo great, and attended with ſuch aggravating circumſtances; for it is a contempt of the grace and wiſdom of God in providing ſuch a ſaviour, and a trampling under foot the Son of God, and a counting his blood as a common thing; and beſides, there's no more ſacrifice for ſin, they can have nothing to atone for it; and that God, whom they offend hereby, is both omniſcient and omnipotent, and there will be no eſcaping out of his hands: to which muſt be added, that this Goſpel of ſalvation is that *which at the firſt began to be ſpoken by the Lord*; by the Lord Jeſus Chriſt himſelf; the Goſpel was preached by him, and he was extraordinarily qualified for it; and he ſpake it as never man did: it was preached by *John* indeed, and by all the prophets before him, and to the *Iſraelites* in the wilderneſs, and to *Abraham* before them, and even to *Adam* in *Eden*'s garden, which was the firſt time it was ſpoken; but then it was ſpoken to him by the Lord; by the word of the Lord, the eſſential Word, the Son of God, as the ancient *Chaldee* paraphraſes, which expreſs the ſenſe of the old *Jewiſh* church, ſhew[e]: beſides, it began moſt fully and clearly to be preached by him in the days of his fleſh, ſo as it never was preached before, nor ſince; grace and truth, the doctrines of grace and truth came by him, in all their fulneſs and glory: and *was confirmed unto us by them that heard* him; the Goſpel is in itſelf firm and ſtable; nor did the words of Chriſt need any confirmation, who is truth itſelf, the *Amen*, and faithful witneſs; but in condeſcenſion to human weakneſs, and by reaſon that Chriſt, as man, was not every where, and that by the mouth of more witneſſes it ſhould be eſtabliſhed, he ſent forth his Apoſtles to preach it; who heard it from him, and they publiſhed it to the *Jews* firſt, as theſe were to whom the Apoſtle writes, and then to the *Gentiles*. And tho' the Apoſtle had it firſt by revelation from Chriſt himſelf, *Gal.* i. 11, 12. it was confirmed to him by *Ananias*.

Ver. 4. *God alſo bearing them witneſs*, &c.] The Apoſtles of Chriſt; God teſtifying to their miſſion and commiſſion, and the truth of the doctrine they preached: *both with ſigns and wonders, and with divers miracles*; ſuch as taking up ſerpents without hurt, healing the ſick, cauſing the lame to walk, and raiſing the dead, and caſting out devils, and the like; all which were for the confirmation of the Goſpel preached by them: a ſign, wonder, or miracle, for theſe ſignify the ſame thing, is a marvellous work done before men, by the power of God, to confirm a divine truth; God is the ſole author of miracles; and they were done in the firſt ages of chriſtianity, when they were neceſſary, to give evidence of the truth of it, and to eſtabliſh men in it; and theſe were various, as before obſerved: *and gifts of the Holy Ghoſt*; ſuch as beſides gifts of healing and working miracles, gifts of foretelling things to come, diſcerning of ſpirits, ſpeaking with divers kinds of tongues, and the interpretation of tongues, 1 *Cor.* xii. 8, 9, 10, *according to his own will*; either according to the will of God, who bore teſtimony by theſe miracles and gifts; or according to the will of the Holy Spirit, who diſtributed them to men ſeverally as he pleaſed, 1 *Cor.* xii. 11.

Ver. 5. *For unto the angels*, &c.] Tho' angels were concerned in the giving of the law, and were frequently employed under the former diſpenſation, in meſſages to men, and in making revelations of God's mind and will to them, yet to them *hath he not put in ſubjection the world to come, whereof we ſpeak*: by which is meant, not the future ſtate of eternal glory and happineſs in heaven, as oppoſed to this world, and the preſent ſtate of things; tho' there may be much truth in this ſenſe, as that the preſent world is in ſubjection to angels, and the world to come is not; the preſent world is much in ſubjection, tho' it is not put into ſubjection, to evil angels, who uſurp a power over it, hence ſatan is called the God and prince of this world; and it is in ſome ſenſe in ſubjection to good angels, as they are uſed by God in the execution of his providential care and government, in influencing and aſſiſting at the councils of princes, in inflicting God's judgments on kingdoms and nations, and in the ſpecial care of his own people: but the world to come, as oppoſed to this, is not at all ſubject to them; they are employed in carrying the ſouls of departed ſaints thither, and ſhall be with them there, and join with them in their ſervice; but they'll not be as kings, nor even as children, but as ſervants; much leſs is heaven at their diſpoſe to give to whomſoever they pleaſe; it is only in this ſenſe in ſubjection to Chriſt, the prince of life, who has power to give eternal life to as many as the Father has given to him: but it is not of this world the Apoſtle is ſpeaking; he is ſpeaking of ſomething now, which bears this name, and in proof of it, cites a paſſage out of *Pſ.* viii. where mention is made of ſheep, and other things, which cannot refer to the world of glory: rather it deſigns the new heavens and new earth at the reſurrection, and day of judgment, for theſe will not be put in ſubjection to angels; tho' of theſe the Apoſtle is not ſpeaking in the context: it ſeems therefore to intend the Goſpel, and the Goſpel-diſpenſation and church-ſtate, in oppoſition to the *Jewiſh* ſtate, and legal diſpenſation, which was called a world, and had in it a worldly ſanctuary, and worldly ordinances, which is now at an end; and at the end of which Chriſt came, and then another world took place, here called *the world to come*, as the times of the Meſſiah are frequently called by the *Jews*, עולם הבא, *the world to come*, the Goſpel-diſpenſation, the Apoſtle was treating of in the preceding verſes, in diſtinction from the law, the word ſpoken by angels; for the Goſpel was not ſpoken by them, but by the Lord: the Goſpel ſtate is very properly the world to come, with reſpect to the Old Teſtament ſaints, who were looking for it, and in which old things are paſt away, and all things are become new; angels deſire to look into the myſteries of it, and learn from the church the manifold wiſdom of God; but not they, but men are the diſpenſers of the doctrines of it; and Chriſt he is the head, king, governour, and father of this new world: ſo inſtead of *everlaſting Father*, the *Septuagint* render the clauſe in *Iſ.* ix. 6. πατηρ τȣ μελλοντος αιωνος, *the Father of the age*, or *world to come*; and hence mention is made in the *Jewiſh* writings, of עלמא דאתי דמשיחא, *the world to come of the Meſſiah* [d].

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[e] Targum Onkelos & Jon. in Gen. iii. 8. & Hieroſ. in v. 9.

Ver. 6. *But one in a certain place teſtified*, &c.] That is, *David*, for he is the penman of the pſalm, out of which the following words are taken; and tho' his name is not mentioned by the Apoſtle, nor the particular place, or the pſalm pointed at, as in *Acts* xiii. 33, 35. yet this was not thro' ignorance of either, nor out of diſreſpect to the penman; but becauſe the Apoſtle is writing to *Jews*, who were converſant with the ſcriptures, and knew full well who ſaid the words, and where they were: and it is uſual with the *Jews* to cite paſſages in this manner; and the form by which the paſſage is introduced, by the word *teſtified*, is quite agreeable to their way of citing ſcripture, of which there is another inſtance in ch. vii. 17. and I think that this form is only uſed in this Epiſtle to the *Hebrews*, with which they were acquainted: it is common with them to ſay, התורה העידה, *the law teſtified* [e], as it is ſaid in ſuch or ſuch a place; and here the Apoſtle produces a paſſage, as a witneſs and teſtimony of the truth of what he had ſaid, that the Goſpel diſpenſation is not put in ſubjection to angels, but to the Meſſiah: the paſſage ſtands in *Pſ.* viii. 4. which pſalm belongs to the times of the Meſſiah, as appears from the inapplication of it to others; and from the application of a paſſage in it to the children in his time, *Matt.* xxi. 16. by Chriſt himſelf, and of the paſſage here by the Apoſtle; nor in any other time was the name of the Lord excellent in all the earth, with which the pſalm begins and concludes; *Saying, what is man that thou art mindful of him? or the ſon of man that thou viſiteſt him?* this is not to be underſtood of mankind in general: not of man in a ſtate of innocence; there were no babes nor ſucklings in paradiſe, nor enemies to reſtrain; *Enoſh*, the word for man, ſignifies a frail mortal man, which *Adam* then was not; nor could he be called the ſon of man; nor can it ſo well ſuit with him, to be ſaid to be made a little lower than the angels, and then crowned with glory and honour: nor of man as fallen, for all things are not ſubjected unto him; but of Chriſt, with whom every thing agrees, as the name by which he is called, *Enoſh*, a frail man; for he was a man encompaſſed with infirmities; of no note and eſteem among men; a man of ſorrows, and accquainted with griefs; was ſubject to death, and did die; and is often called the ſon of man: what is ſaid of him, ſuits with him, as that God was *mindful of him*; which may be expreſſive of his love and delight in, and choice of his human nature, to be taken into union with his divine perſon; and of his counſel and covenant in preparing it for him; and of his uniting it to his perſon; and of his providential care of it, and great affection for it; of his unction of it, and of his great regard to it in its ſufferings, by ſupporting it, and in raiſing it from the dead: and alſo that he *viſited* him; not in a way of wrath, but of favour, with his preſence, with the gifts and graces of his Spirit, with divine ſupports, and ſpiritual peace and joy; all which in itſelf it was not deſerving of, nor could it claim; and therefore theſe things are ſpoken of as favours, and in a way of admiration.

Ver. 7. *Thou madeſt him a little lower than the angels*, &c.] In the *Hebrew* text it is, *than Elohim*, which ſome render, *than God*; but it is rightly rendered by the Apoſtle, *than angels*; and ſo the *Targum*, *Jarchi*, *Aben Ezra*, *Kimchi*, and *Ben Melech* interpret it. Chriſt was made a little lower than the angels, thro' the aſſumption of the human nature, which is inferior to angels, eſpecially the corporal part of it, and in this *Kimchi* makes the leſſening to be; and more eſpecially as that was aſſumed by Chriſt, with the infirmities of it; and by reaſon of the ſtraights and indigencies he was brought into in it; beſides, he was in it made under the law, which was given by angels, and to ſome parts of which they are not ſubject; and ſometimes he ſtood in need of the miniſtry and ſupport of angels, and had it; particularly he was made lower than they, when he was deprived of the gracious preſence of God, and in the time of his ſufferings and death; and which ſeem chiefly to be reſpected, as appears from ver. 9. and the word *little* may not ſo much intend the degree of his humiliation, as the duration of it; for it may be rendered, *a little while*; in which ſenſe it is uſed in *Acts* v. 34. as the *Hebrew* word מעט is in *Pſ.* xxxvii. 10. and ſo may reſpect the time of his ſuffering death; and at moſt the time from his incarnation to his reſurrection; for he could not continue long in this low eſtate, which is matter of joy to us; he could not be held by the cords of death, but muſt riſe, and be exalted above angels, as he is: and he was made ſo low by God, Jehovah the Father, whoſe name is excellent in all the earth, *Pſ.* viii. 1. he pre-ordained him to this low eſtate; he prepared a body for him, and had a very great hand in his ſufferings and death; tho' neither of theſe were contrary to his will: *thou crowneſt him with glory and honour*; with that glory he had with the Father before the world was, and which followed upon his ſufferings and death; for through them he entered into it, and upon his reſurrection had it; and he is aſcended on high, where he has the honour to ſit at the right hand of God, which none of the angels have; and therefore is now above them, tho' once for a while below them, and they are now ſubject to him: *and didſt ſet him over the works of thy hands*; over angels, principalities, and powers; over the kings of the earth, and all the inhabitants of it, and all things in it, and made him higher than the heavens, and gave him a name above every name.

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[d] Targum in 1 Kings iv. 33.

[e] T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 37. 1. Maimon. Hilchot Yeſode Hattorah, 3. 7. §. 6. & Melachim, c. 11. §. 1. Vid. Aben Ezra in Lev. xvi. 8.

Ver. 8. *Thou haſt put all things in ſubjection under his feet*, &c.] Good angels, men and devils, all things in heaven, earth, and ſea; ſee 1 *Pet*. iii. 22. *for in that he put all in ſubjection under him, he left nothing* that is *not put under him*; there is no one perſon or thing that is not ſubject to Chriſt; the ſubjection is the moſt univerſal, either voluntary or involuntary; whether they will or no, they are, and muſt be ſubject; God has left nothing but what he has put under his power: *but we ſee not yet all things put under him*; this ſeems to be an objection, and even a contradiction to what is before ſaid; which may be removed by obſerving, that tho' this general ſubjection is not ſeen by us, it does not follow that it is not; and tho' it is not as yet viſible, yet it will be: and beſides, the Apoſtle's ſenſe may be, that no ſuch general ſubjection to any mere man has ever been ſeen and known; as not to *Solomon*, nor *Ahaſuerus*, nor *Cyrus*, nor *Alexander* the great, nor *Julius*, nor *Auguſtus Cæſar*, nor any other; and this he may obſerve, to ſhew the inapplication of this paſſage to any but to Jeſus Chriſt; and this ſenſe is confirmed by what follows.

Ver. 9. *But we ſee Jeſus*, &c.] Not with bodily eyes, but with the eyes of the mind, and underſtanding; that he is Jeſus, as the *Syriac* verſion reads; and that he is deſigned in the above words; and that he has all things made ſubject unto him; and that he was humbled, and now exalted, as follows: *who was made a little lower than the angels*; in his ſtate of humiliation; ſee the note on ver. 7. *for the ſuffering of death*: this clauſe may be conſidered either as connected with the preceding; and then the ſenſe is, that Jeſus became lower than the angels, by, or thro' ſuffering death; in that reſpect he was lower than they, who die not; this proved him to be in a condition below them, and ſhowed how pertinent the above words were to him, and how they were fulfilled in him: or with the following; and then the meaning is, that becauſe Jeſus ſuffered death in the room and ſtead of his people; humbled himſelf, and became obedient to death, even the death of the croſs, when he was very low indeed, therefore he is *crowned with glory and honour*; ſee *Phil*. ii. 8, 9. and the note on ver. 7. *that he by the grace of God ſhould taſte death for every man*; that is, Chriſt was made a little lower than the angels by becoming man, and aſſuming a body frail and mortal, that he might die for his church and people: to *taſte death*, is a *Jewiſh* phraſe, often to be met with in *Rabbinical* writings; ſee the note on *Matt*. xvi. 28. and ſignifies the truth and reality of his death, and the experience he had of the bitterneſs of it, it being attended with the wrath of God, and curſe of the law; tho' he continued under it but for a little while, it was but a taſte; and it includes all kinds of death, he taſted of the death of afflictions, being a man of ſorrows all his days, and a corporal death, and what was equivalent to an eternal one: and ſo ſome think the words will bear to be rendered, *that he by the grace of God might taſte of every death*; which rendering of the words, if it could be eſtabliſhed, as it is agreeable to the context, and to the analogy of faith, would remove all pretence of an argument from this place, in favour of the univerſal ſcheme: what moved God to make him lower than the angels, and deliver him up to death, was not any anger towards him, any diſregard to him, or becauſe he deſerved it, but his *grace*, free favour, and love to men; this moved him to provide him as a ranſom; to pre-ordain him to be the lamb ſlain; to ſend him in the fulneſs of time, and give him up to juſtice and death: the *Syriac* verſion reads, *for God himſelf through his own grace taſted death for all*; Chriſt died, not merely as an example, or barely for the good of men, but as a ſurety, in their room and ſtead, and that not for every individual of mankind; for there are ſome he knows not; for ſome he does not pray; and there are ſome who will not be ſaved: the word *man* is not in the original text, it is only, υπερ παντος, which may be taken either collectively, and be rendered *for the whole*; that is, the whole body, the church for whom Chriſt gave himſelf, and is the ſaviour of; or diſtributively, and be tranſlated, *for every one*; for every one of the ſons, God brings to glory, ver. 10. for every one of the *brethren*, whom Chriſt ſanctifies, and he is not aſhamed to own, and to whom he declares the name of God, ver. 11, 12. for every one of the members of the *church*, in the midſt of which he ſung praiſe, ver. 12. for every one of the *children*, God has given him, and for whoſe ſake he took part of fleſh and blood, ver. 13, 14. and for every one of the *ſeed* of *Abraham*, in a ſpiritual ſenſe, whoſe nature he aſſumed, ver. 16.

Ver. 10. *For it became him for whom are all things*, &c.] This is not a periphraſis of Chriſt, who died, but of God the Father, who delivered him to death; and who is the final cauſe of all things, in nature, and in grace, all things being made for his pleaſure and for his glory; and he is the efficient cauſe of all things, as follows: *and by whom are all things*; all the works of creation, providence, and grace: *in bringing many ſons to glory*; not to worldly glory, but to the heavenly glory, which they are undeſerving of; and which was long ago prepared for them; is at preſent hid; is weighty, ſolid, durable, yea eternal: the perſons whom God, of his rich grace, brings to this, are *ſons*; who are predeſtinated to the adoption of children; are regenerated by the Spirit of God; believe in Chriſt; and have the ſpirit of adoption given them, and ſo being children, are heirs of glory: and theſe are *many*; for tho' they are but few, when compared with others, yet they are many, conſidered by themſelves; they are many that God has ordained to eternal life, and given to Chriſt, and for whom he has given himſelf a ranſom, and whom he juſtifies; and accordingly there are many manſions of glory, provided for them in their Father's houſe, whoſe act it is to bring them thither: he has choſen them to this glory, and prepared it for them; he ſent his Son to redeem them; he reveals his Son in them, the hope of glory; he calls them to his eternal glory, and makes them meet for it, and gives them an abundant entrance into it: and *him it became*——*to make the captain of their ſalvation perfect thro' ſufferings*; Chriſt is *the captain of ſalvation*, and is ſo called, becauſe he is the author of it; and he is the prince and commander of theſe ſons, who are committed to his charge, and are under his care; and is their guide and leader; and who is gone before them to prepare their manſions of glory for them: and he is made *perfect thro' ſufferings*; he ſuffered all that the law and juſtice of God could require; and hereby he became perfectly acquainted with the ſufferings of his people, and a perfect ſaviour of them; and in this way went to glory himſelf: and it *became* God the Father, the firſt cauſe, and laſt end of all things, ſince he had a deſign to bring all his adopted ſons to glory, that his own Son ſhould perfectly ſuffer for them; this was agreeable to, and becoming the perfections of his nature, his wiſdom, his veracity, his juſtice, grace, and mercy.

Ver. 11. *For both he that ſanctifieth*, &c.] Not himſelf, though this is ſaid of him, *John* xvii. 19. nor his Father, though this alſo is true of him, *Iſ.* viii. 13. but his people, the ſons brought to glory, whoſe ſalvation he is the captain of; they are ſanctified in him, he being made ſanctification to them; and they have their ſanctification from him, all their grace and holineſs; and they are ſanctified by him, both by his blood, which expiates their ſins, and removes the guilt of them, and by his Spirit, working internal principles of grace and holineſs in them, who are by nature, and in their unregenerate ſtate, guilty and unclean: *and they who are ſanctified*; the ſons brought to glory; they are not naturally holy, nor ſo of themſelves, they are made holy; all that are ſons are made holy; whom God adopts into his family, he regenerates: ſanctification is abſolutely neceſſary to their being brought to glory; and between the ſanctifier and the ſanctified there is a likeneſs, as there ought to be: they are *all of one*; they are both of one God and Father, Chriſt's God is their God, and his Father is their Father; they are of one body, Chriſt is the head, and they are members; they are of one covenant, Chriſt is the ſurety, mediator, and meſſenger of it, and they ſhare in all its bleſſings and promiſes; they are of one man *Adam*, Chriſt is a ſon of *Adam*, tho' not by ordinary generation, they deſcend from him in the common way; they are all of one nature, of one blood; Chriſt has took part of the ſame fleſh and blood with them: *for which cauſe he is not aſhamed to call them brethren*; Chriſt, and theſe ſons that are ſanctified, ſtand in the relation of brethren to each other; Chriſt is the firſt-born among many brethren; he is a brother born for the day of adverſity, and one that ſticks cloſer than a brother: and this relation is founded both upon the incarnation of Chriſt, who thereby became his peoples *Goel*, or near kinſman, yea brother, *Cant.* viii. 1. and upon their adoption into his Father's family, which is made manifeſt by their regeneration, and by their doing his Father's will under the influence of his grace and Spirit, *Matt.* xii. 49, 50. and this relation Chriſt owns; he called his diſciples brethren, when God had raiſed him from the dead, and given him glory; and ſo he will call all his ſaints, even the meaneſt of them, in the great day, *Matt.* xxviii. 10. and xxv. 40. and *he is not aſhamed* to do it; he does not diſdain it, tho' he is God over all, and the Son of God, and is alſo in his human nature made higher than the heavens; which ſhows the wonderful condeſcenſion of Chriſt, and the honour that is put upon the ſaints; and may teach them not to deſpiſe the meaneſt among them: ſuch a relation the *Jews* own will be between the Meſſiah and the *Iſraelites*. The *Targumiſt* on *Cant.* viii. 1. paraphraſes the words thus; "when the king Meſſiah ſhall be revealed to the congregation of *Iſrael*, the children of *Iſrael* ſhall ſay unto him, come, be thou with us, לאח, *for a brother*, or *be thou our brother*." Nor can they ſay this will reflect any diſcredit upon Chriſt, when they make ſuch a relation to be between God and them. The *Iſraelites*, they ſay [f], are called, אחים להקבה, *the brethren of the holy bleſſed God*; in proof of which they often produce *Pſ.* cxxii. 8. as being the words of God to them; and again, interpreting thoſe words in *Lev.* xxv. 48. *one of his brethren may redeem him*, this, ſay [g] they, is the holy bleſſed God.

Ver. 12. *Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren*, &c.] Theſe words, with the following clauſe, are cited from *Pſ.* xxii. 22. as a proof of what the Apoſtle had before aſſerted; and that this pſalm is to be underſtood, not of the *Jewiſh* nation, or people of *Iſrael*, nor of *Eſther*, nor of *David*, but of the Meſſiah, appears from the title of it, *Aijeleth, Shahar*, which ſignifies the morning hind; from the particular account of Chriſt's ſufferings in it; from his ſeveral offices herein pointed to; from the converſion of the *Gentiles* it propheſies of; and from ſeveral paſſages cited from hence, and applied to Chriſt; ſee *Matt.* xxvii. 35, 39, 43, 46. And theſe are the words of Chriſt addreſſed to his Father; whoſe name he promiſes to declare to his brethren; meaning not the *Jews*, in general, his brethren according to the fleſh; but his diſciples and followers, particularly the twelve apoſtles, and the five hundred brethren to whom he appeared after his reſurrection; and indeed all the ſaints and people of God may be included: and by his *name* he would declare to them, is not meant any particular name of his, as *Elohim*, *El-ſhaddai*, *Jehovah*, or the like; but rather he himſelf, and the perfections of his nature, which he, the only-begotten Son, lying in his boſom, has declared; tho' the Goſpel ſeems chiefly to be deſigned; ſee *John* xvii. 6, 26. and this Chriſt declared with great exactneſs and accuracy, with clearneſs and perſpicuity, and with all integrity and fidelity: he ſpoke it out plainly, and concealed no part of it; as he received it from his Father, he faithfully made it known to his people; this is expreſſive of Chriſt's prophetic office, of his preaching of the Goſpel, both in his own perſon, and by his miniſters: *in the midſt of the church will I ſing praiſe unto thee*; or *a hymn*; this is to be underſtood not of the church above, but of the church below; and not of the ſynagogue of the *Jews*, but of the diſciples of Chriſt, and of his ſinging an hymn to God, with and among them, as he did at the inſtitution of the ſupper, *Matt.* xxvi. 30. for tho' the number of the Apoſtles was but ſmall, yet they made a congregation or church, and which was a pure and glorious one. With the *Jews* [h], ten men made a congregation.

Ver. 13. *And again, I will put my truſt in him*, &c.] Theſe words are taken not from *Iſ.* viii. 17. where, in the *Septuagint* verſion, is a like phraſe; for they are not the words of the Meſſiah there, but of the prophet; and beſides, the Apoſtle disjoins them from the following words, which ſtand there, by ſaying, *and again*; but they are cited from *Pſ.* xviii. 2. in which pſalm are many things which have reſpect to the Meſſiah, and his times; the perſon ſpoken of is ſaid to be made the head of the heathen, to whom, unknown people yield a voluntary ſubmiſſion, and the name of God is praiſed among the *Gentiles*, ver. 43, 49. The *Targum* upon it makes mention of the Meſſiah in ver. 32. and he is manifeſtly ſpoken of under the name of *David*, in ver. 50. and which verſe is applied to the Meſſiah, by the *Jews*, both ancient and modern [i]: and theſe words are very applicable to him, for as man he had every grace of the Spirit in him; and this of faith, and alſo of hope, very early appeared in him; he truſted in God for the daily ſupplies of life, and that he would help him in, and through the work of man's ſalvation; ſee *Pſ.* xxii. 9, 10. *Iſ.* l. 7, 8, 9. he committed his ſpirit into his hands at death, with confidence, and believed he would raiſe his body from the dead; and he truſted him with his own glory, and the ſalvation of his people: and this is a citation pertinent to the purpoſe, ſhewing that Chriſt and his people are one, and that they are brethren; for he muſt be man, ſince, as God, he could not be ſaid to truſt; and he muſt be a man of ſorrows and diſtreſs, to ſtand in need of truſting in God. *And again, behold I and the children which God hath given me*; this is a citation from *Iſ.* viii. 18. in which prophecy is a denunciation of God's judgments upon *Iſrael*, by the *Aſſyrians*, when God's own people among them are comforted with a promiſe of the Meſſiah, who is deſcribed as the Lord of hoſts; who is to be ſanctified, and be as a ſanctuary to the ſaints, and as a ſtone of ſtumbling to others; and the prophet is ordered to bind and ſeal up the doctrine among the diſciples, at which he ſeems aſtoniſhed and concerned, but reſolves to wait; upon which Chriſt, to encourage him, ſpeaks theſe words; for they are not addreſſed to God, as the *Syriac* verſion renders them, *behold I and the children, whom thou haſt given me, O God*; in which may be obſerved, that the ſaints are children, with reſpect to God, who has adopted them, and with reſpect to Chriſt, who is their everlaſting father; that they were given to Chriſt as his ſpiritual ſeed, and offſpring, as his portion, and to be his care and charge; and that this is worthy of attention, and calls for admiration, that Chriſt and his people are one, and that he is not aſhamed to own them before God and men.

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[f] Zohar in Exod. fol. 23. 3. & in Lev. fol. 3. 3. & 9. 3. & 32. 2.

[g] Tzeror Hammor, fol. 106. 3.

[h] Miſn. Sanhedrin, c. 1. §. 6.

[i] Echa Rabbati, fol. 50. 2. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 47. 3.

Ver. 14. *Foraſmuch then as the children are partakers of fleſh and blood*, &c.] By *the children* are meant, not the children of this world, or the men of it; nor the children of the fleſh, or *Abraham*'s natural ſeed; nor viſible profeſſors of religion; nor the Apoſtles of Chriſt only; but all the children of God, the children given to Chriſt; all the ſons that are brought to glory: theſe *are partakers of fleſh and blood*; of human nature, which is common to them all, and which is ſubject to infirmity and mortality; and the ſenſe is, that they are frail mortal men: and this being their ſtate and caſe, *he alſo himſelf took part of the ſame*; Chriſt became man alſo, or aſſumed an human nature like theirs; this ſhows that he exiſted before his incarnation, who of himſelf, and by his own voluntary act, aſſumed an individual of human nature into union with his divine perſon, which is expreſſive of wondrous grace and condeſcenſion: Chriſt's participation of human nature, and the childrens, in ſome things agree, in others they differ; they agree in this, that it is real fleſh and blood they both partake of; that Chriſt's body is not ſpiritual and heavenly, but natural as theirs is; and that it is a compleat, perfect human nature, and ſubject to mortality and infirmity like theirs: but then Chriſt took his nature of a virgin, and is without ſin; nor has it any diſtinct perſonality, but from the moment of its being ſubſiſted in his divine perſon: and now the true reaſon of Chriſt's aſſuming ſuch a nature, was on account of the children, which diſcovers great love to them, and ſhows that it was with a peculiar view to them that he became man; hence they only ſhare the ſpecial advantages of his incarnation, ſufferings, and death: and his end in doing this was, *that thro' death he might deſtroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil*; the devil is ſaid to have the power of death, not becauſe he can kill and deſtroy men at pleaſure, but becauſe he was the firſt introducer of ſin, which brought death into the world, and ſo he was a murderer from the beginning; and he ſtill tempts men to ſin, and then accuſes them of it, and terrifies and affrights them with death; and by divine permiſſion has inflicted it, and will be the executioner of the ſecond death. The Apoſtle here ſpeaks in the language of the *Jews*, who often call *Samael*, or ſatan, מלאך המות, *the angel of death*, in their *Targums*[k], *Talmud*[l], and other writings[m]; and ſay, he was the cauſe of death to all the world; and aſcribe much the ſame things to him, for which the Apoſtle here ſo ſtiles him: and they moreover ſay[n], that he will ceaſe in the time to come; that is, in the days of the Meſſiah; and who, being come, has deſtroyed him, not as to his being, but as to his power; he has bruiſed his head, deſtroyed his works, diſarmed his principalities and powers, and took the captives out of his hands, and ſaved thoſe he would have devoured: and this he has done by death; *by his own death*, as the *Syriac* and *Arabic* verſions read; whereby he has aboliſhed death itſelf, and ſin the cauſe of it, and ſo ſatan, whoſe empire is ſupported by it.

Ver. 15. *And deliver them, who through fear of death*, &c.] This is another end of Chriſt's aſſuming human nature, and dying in it, and thereby deſtroying ſatan, that he might ſave ſome out of his hands: who *were all their life-time ſubject to bondage*; meaning chiefly God's elect among the *Jews*; for tho' all men are in a ſtate of bondage to the luſts of the fleſh, and are ſatan's captives; yet this deſcribes more particularly the ſtate of the *Jews*, under the law of *Moſes*, which gendred unto bondage; which they being guilty of the breach of, and ſeeing the danger they were expoſed to on that account, were ſubject, bound, and held faſt in and under a ſpirit of bondage: and that *thro' fear of death*; thro' fear of a corporal death; thro' fear of chaſtizements and afflictions, the fore-runners of death, and what ſometimes bring it on; and thro' fear of death itſelf, as a diſunion of ſoul and body, and as a penal evil; and thro' fear of what follows it, an awful judgment: and this the *Jews* eſpecially were in fear of, from their frequent violations of the precepts, both of the moral, and of the ceremonial law, which threatened with death; and this they lived, in a continual fear of, becauſe they were daily tranſgreſſing, which brought on them a ſpirit of bondage unto fear: and, as *Philo* the *Jew*[o] obſerves, nothing more brings the mind into bondage than the fear of death: and many of theſe, even all the choſen ones among them, Chriſt delivered, or ſaved from ſin, from ſatan, from the law, and its curſes, from death corporal, as a penal evil, and from death eternal; even from all enemies and dangers, and brought them into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

Ver. 16. *For verily he took not on him* the nature *of angels*, &c.] Good angels; for they are all along ſpoken of in this book; and it would have been impertinent to have ſaid this of evil angels: and this is to be underſtood not of a denying help and aſſiſtance to the angels; for tho' they have not redemption from Chriſt, which they needed not, yet have they help from him; they are choſen in him, and are gathered together under him; and he is the head of them, and they are upheld and ſuſtained by him in their being, and well-being: but of a non-aſſumption of their nature; there was no need of it with reſpect to good angels, and there was no ſalvation deſigned for evil ones; and to have aſſumed the nature of angels, would have been of no ſervice to fallen man; an angelic nature is not capable of death, which was neceſſary to atone for ſin, ſave men, and deſtroy ſatan: this negative propoſition is very ſtrongly put, *he never took*, as the *Vulgate Latin* verſion more rightly renders it; at no time, in no place; nor is it ſaid in any place of ſcripture that he did; this is a certain truth, and not to be diſputed. The *Syriac* and *Arabic* verſions render it, *he took not of*, or *from angels*; he took not any individual from among them: *but he took on him the ſeed of Abraham*; not all his poſterity, but ſome individual, as the word ſeed is ſometimes uſed, *Gen.* iv. 25. and xv. 3. Chriſt aſſumed human nature as derived from *Abraham*; for the Meſſiah was to ſpring from *Abraham*, and is promiſed, as that ſeed of his, in whom all nations ſhould be bleſſed; and he was particularly promiſed to the *Jews*, the ſeed of *Abraham*, to whom the Apoſtle was writing; and it was with a view to *Abraham*'s ſpiritual ſeed, the children of the promiſe, that Chriſt partook of fleſh and blood: the word here uſed ſignifies to catch hold of any one ready to periſh, or to lay hold on a perſon running away, and with great vehemence and affection to hold any thing faſt, that it be not loſt, and to help perſons, and do good unto them; all which may be obſerved in this act of Chriſt's, in aſſuming an individual of human nature, in *Abraham*'s line, into union with his divine perſon; whereby he has ſaved thoſe that were gone out of the way, and were ready to periſh, and done them the greateſt good, and ſhown the ſtrongeſt affection to them: and from hence may be learned the deity and eternity of Chriſt, who was before *Abraham*, as God, tho' a ſon of his as man; and his real humanity, and that it was not a perſon, but a ſeed, a nature he aſſumed; and alſo the union and diſtinction of natures in him: and Chriſt's taking human, and not angelic nature, ſhews the ſovereignty of God, and his diſtinguiſhing grace and mercy to men.

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[k] Targum Jon. in Gen. iii. 6. & in Hab. iii. 5.

[l] T. Bab. Succa, fol. 53. 1. & Avodah Zara, fol. 5. 1. & 20. 2.

[m] Zohar in Gen. fol. 27. 1, 2. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 6. 2. & 22. 4. Caphtor, fol. 26. 2. & alibi.

[n] Baal Hatturim in Num. iv. 19.

[o] Quod omnis Probus Liber, p. 868.

Ver. 17. *Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren*, &c.] The adopted ſons of God, who were brethren before Chriſt's incarnation, being from all eternity predeſtinated to the adoption of children: Chriſt's incarnation was in time, and after that many of the brethren exiſted; and it was only for their ſakes, that he aſſumed human nature; and therefore it was proper he ſhould be like them in that nature, in all things: in all the eſſentials of it; it was not neceſſary that he ſhould have it by natural generation; nor that it ſhould have a ſubſiſtence in itſelf as theirs: and in all the properties and affections of it, that are not ſinful; for it did not behove him to be like them in ſin, nor in ſickneſs, and in diſeaſes of the body: and in all temptations; tho' in ſome things his differ from theirs; none of his aroſe from within; and thoſe from without could make no impreſſion on him; and in ſufferings, that there might be a conformity between the head and members; tho' there is in ſome things a difference; his ſufferings were by way of puniſhment, and were attended with wrath, and were meritorious, which can't be ſaid of theirs; but that he ſhould have an human nature, as to its eſſence and perfection, like to theirs, was neceſſary: it was proper he ſhould be truly and really man, as well as truly God, *that he might be a merciful and faithful high-prieſt*; he could not be an *high-prieſt*, offer ſacrifice for ſin, and make interceſſion, unleſs he was man; nor could he be a *merciful* and compaſſionate one, ſympathize with his people in their ſorrows, temptations, and ſufferings, unleſs he was like them in theſe; nor would he be a *faithful*, that is, a true and lawful one otherwiſe, becauſe every high-prieſt is taken from among men: *in things* pertaining *to God*; in things in which God has to do with his people, as to preſide in his name over them, to declare his will unto them, and bleſs them; and in things in which the people have to do with God, to offer to God a ſacrifice for their ſins, to preſent this ſacrifice to him, to appear in his preſence for them, to carry in their petitions, and plead their cauſe as their advocate: *to make reconciliation for the ſins of the people*; of God's covenant-people, the people he has choſen for himſelf, and given to his Son; and whom Chriſt ſaves from their ſins, by making ſatisfaction for them, to the law and juſtice of God, which is here meant by reconciliation: and in order to this, which could not be done without blood, without ſufferings and death, it was proper he ſhould be man, and like unto his brethren: the alluſion ſeems to be to the two goats on the day of atonement, one of which was to be ſlain, and the other let go; which were to be, as the *Jews* ſay [p], שוין, *alike*, in colour, in ſtature, and in price; and ſo were the birds to be alike in the ſame things, that were uſed at the cleanſing of the leper [q]: and the *Jews* tell us [r], that the high-prieſt was to be greater than his brethren, in beauty, in ſtrength, in wiſdom, and in riches; all which is true of Chriſt.

Ver. 18. *For in that he himſelf hath ſuffered, being tempted*, &c.] By ſatan, at his entrance on his public miniſtry, and a little before his death; which was done, not by ſtirring up ſin in him, for he had none, nor by putting any into him, which could not be done, nor could ſatan get any advantage over him; he ſolicited him to one thing and another, but in vain; tho' theſe temptations were very troubleſome, and diſagreeable, and abhorrent to the pure and holy nature of Chriſt, and ſo muſt be reckoned among his ſufferings, or things by which he ſuffered: and as afflictions are ſometimes called temptations, in this ſenſe alſo Chriſt ſuffered, being tempted, with outward poverty and meanneſs, with ſlight and neglect from his own relations, and with a general contempt and reproach among men: he was often tempted by the *Jews* with enſnaring queſtions; he was deſerted by his followers, by his own diſciples, yea by his God and Father; all which were great trials to him, and muſt be accounted as ſufferings: and he alſo endured great pains of body, and anguiſh of mind, and at laſt death itſelf. And ſo *he is able to ſuccour them that are tempted*; as all the ſaints, more or leſs, are, both with ſatan's temptations, and with afflictions in the world, which God ſuffers to befal them, on various accounts; partly on his own account, to ſhow his grace, power, and faithfulneſs in ſupporting under them, and in delivering out of them; and partly on his Son's account, that they might be like unto him, and he may have an opportunity of ſuccouring them, and ſympathizing with them; and alſo on their own account, to humble them, to try their faith, to excite them to prayer and watchfulneſs, and to keep them dependent on the power and grace of God: and theſe Chriſt ſuccours, by having and ſhewing a fellow-feeling with them; by praying for them; by ſupporting them under temptations; by rebuking the tempter, and delivering out of them: and all this he is able to do; he muſt be able to ſuccour them as he is God; and his conquering ſatan is a convincing evidence to the ſaints of his ability; but here it intends his qualification, and fitneſs, and readineſs to help in ſuch circumſtances, from the experience he himſelf has had of theſe things.

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[p] Miſna Yoma, c. 6. §. 1.

[q] Miſna Negaim, c. 14. §. 5.

[r] T. Bab. Horayot, fol. 9. 1. Maimon. Cele Hamikdaſh, c. 5. §. 1.

CHAP. III.

THE Apoſtle having diſcourſed, in the preceding chapters, concerning the dignity of Chriſt's perſon, and his wondrous grace in the aſſumption of human nature, and ſuffering in the room and ſtead of his people, exhorts the *Hebrews* in this to a ſerious conſideration of him, attention to him, and faith in him, and conſtancy in it; the arguments he uſes to engage them to theſe things, are taken from the grace and benefit they themſelves were partakers of thro' him, from the office in which he was, and his faithfulneſs to his Father in the diſcharge of it, ver. 1, 2. which is illuſtrated in the caſe of *Moſes*, who was faithful in the houſe of God, and whom Chriſt excelled, and therefore was worthy of more honour; partly, becauſe he is the builder of the houſe; and partly, becauſe he is a Son in it, when *Moſes* was only a ſervant; which houſe is Chriſt's own, and conſiſts of true and ſteadfaſt believers in him, ver. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. wherefore the exhortation to regard him is renewed, inforced, and expreſſed in the words of the Holy Ghoſt, ver. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11. which are taken out of *Pſ.* xcv. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11. and applied to the preſent caſe: hence the Apoſtle cautions againſt unbelief, as being a great evil in its ſelf, and bad in its conſequence, cauſing perſons to depart from the living God, ver. 12. in order to prevent which he adviſes to a daily exhortation of each other to their duty, that ſo they might not be hardened in ſin thro' the deceitfulneſs of it, ver. 13. and the rather it became them to be concerned to hold faſt their faith in Chriſt, to the end, ſince this is the grand evidence of being a partaker of him, ver. 14. And then the exhortation in the above paſſage of ſcripture is recited, ver. 15. to ſhew, that tho' not all the perſons ſpoken of, yet ſome did provoke the Lord by their unbelief, and unbecoming carriage, ver. 16. wherefore, by the example of puniſhment being inflicted on ſuch, of which inſtances are given in the fore-fathers of theſe people, ſuch as their carcaſſes falling in the wilderneſs, and their not entring into the land of *Canaan*, which they could not, becauſe God ſwore they ſhould not, being grieved and provoked by them, and becauſe of their unbelief, they are diſſuaded from the ſame evils, leſt they ſhould be puniſhed in like manner, ver. 17, 18, 19.

Ver. 1. *Wherefore holy brethren*, &c.] The Apoſtle calls the *Hebrews brethren*, not becauſe they were of the ſame natural ſtock and lineage, but becauſe they were in the ſame ſpiritual relation; they all had the ſame father, belonged to the ſame family, were the adopted ſons of God, the brethren of Chriſt, of one another, and of the Apoſtle; and they were *holy*, not by birth, nor by their external ſeparation from other nations, but thro' ſanctification of the Spirit; and they were ſo by profeſſion, and in the opinion of the Apoſtle: *partakers of the heavenly calling*; by which is meant, not any buſineſs, or employment of life; nor a call to any office in church or ſtate; nor a mere external call by the miniſtry of the word; but an internal, ſpecial call of grace, to the enjoyment of the bleſſings of grace here, and to glory hereafter; and which is not according to works, but according to the grace of God, and is by powerful, efficacious, and irreſiſtible grace: and this is ſaid to be *heavenly*, becauſe the grace by which the ſaints are called is from heaven, and it is to heaven they are called; and the means of their calling, the Goſpel, is from heaven; and this epithet is uſed to ſhew the excellency of their vocation, and to diſtinguiſh it from all others: and this the *Hebrews* are ſaid to be *partakers* of; which ſhows, that God had not utterly caſt off that people, and yet that they were not the only perſons that enjoyed the grace of effectual vocation, they were but partners with others; and that the ſaints are alike ſharers in this bleſſing, they are called in one hope of their calling; and it denotes the truth and reality of it: the duty they are exhorted to, is, to *conſider the Apoſtle and high-prieſt of our profeſſion, Chriſt Jeſus*; the *Alexandrian* copy, the *Vulgate Latin*, and *Ethiopic* verſions, read, only *Jeſus*; who is called *the Apoſtle*, becauſe he was ſent of God to preach the Goſpel, work miracles, and do the will of God, particularly to obtain redemption and ſalvation for his people; which miſſion does not ſuppoſe any inequality of perſons, or change of place, or any compulſion or diſreſpect to Chriſt, but love to men; and is to be underſtood of him as in office as mediator, and ſhows his authority, and that he was no impoſtor. The high-prieſt among the *Jews* was, on the day of atonement, conſidered as, שליח, *an Apoſtle*, or *meſſenger*[*]; for ſo the elders of the *Sanhedrim*, addreſs him on that day, ſaying, "Lord, "high-preſt, we are the meſſengers of the *Sanhedrim*, "and thou art, שלוחנו, *our Apoſtle*, or *meſſenger*, "and the meſſenger of the *Sanhedrim*." And it follows here, and *the high-prieſt of our profeſſion*; which may be underſtood either objectively, whom they profeſſed, both by words or deeds; for a profeſſion of him ſhould be public, viſible, and ſincere; or efficiently, he being the author, ſum, and ſubſtance of the religion, faith, and Goſpel which was profeſſed by them: and he is to be *conſidered* in the greatneſs and dignity of his perſon, as the Son of God; and in his wondrous grace and love in aſſuming human nature, and dying for his people; and in the relations he ſtands in to them as a father, huſband, brother, friend; and in his ſeveral offices, as mediator, and particularly as ſent of God, to be the ſaviour of ſinners; and as the high-prieſt, who has offered himſelf a ſacrifice, and ever lives to make interceſſion; and all this to encourage the ſaints to hold faſt their profeſſion of him.

Ver. 2. *Who was faithful to him that appointed him*, &c.] Or *made him*; Chriſt, as man, was made, but not as God; nor is the Apoſtle ſpeaking

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[*] Miſn. Yoma, c. 1. §. 5.

ing of the divine nature of Chriſt, but of his offices: wherefore this phraſe deſigns the conſtitution and ſettlement of him in office; which may take in the eternal appointment of him as mediator; the open promiſe of him in time; his miſſion, unction, and atteſtation from God; and his manifeſtation and declaration as ſuch, at his aſcenſion and ſeſſion at God's right hand, when he was made Lord and Chriſt. Now as mediator, he had a truſt repoſed in him; as the perſons of all God's elect, and a fulneſs of all grace for them; the treaſures of wiſdom and knowledge, and eternal life and happineſs; and alſo the glory of God in their ſalvation: which truſt he has faithfully diſcharged as an Apoſtle, and high-prieſt; in a declaration of the whole will of God; in acknowledging it was his Father's doctrine he brought, and in ſeeking not his own, but his Father's glory; in redeeming and ſaving the perſons committed to him; in diſtributing his grace to them; and in bringing them ſafe to glory; and in taking care of things pertaining to God: *as alſo Moſes* was faithful *in all his houſe*; the paſſage referred to, is in *Numb.* xii. 7. and which ſeems not ſo much to intend the fidelity of *Moſes*, in managing the affairs of God's houſe, as the largeneſs of the truſt repoſed in him, the dignity and honour conferred on him, and the power and authority he was inveſted with, in having the whole houſe of *Iſrael* committed to his care and charge, in which he exceeded all other prophets; and ſo the faithfulneſs of Chriſt is not ſo much to be underſtood of the diſcharge of his truſt, as of the truſt itſelf; and the ſenſe is, that he was truſted much by God the Father, who conſtituted him mediator, even as *Moſes* was; and this ſenſe beſt agrees with ver. 5, 6. And *De Dieu* has obſerved, that the *Hebrew* word, נאמן, in *Miſnic* writings [t], ſignifies, as it does, one that is truſted, or is fit to be truſted, as Chriſt and *Moſes* were; tho' the former is much more worthy than the latter, as follows.

Ver. 3. *For this* man *was counted worthy of more glory than Moſes*, &c.] *Moſes* was counted worthy of glory and honour, and had it given him, both by God and by men; by God, as appears from the work he called him to, to deliver his people *Iſrael*, to reveal his mind and will to them, and to rule and govern them; and from the favours he ſhewed him, as the miracles he did by him, the near converſe he admitted him to, and the view he gave him of his glory, which he made to paſs before him, and his regard to him at his death and burial, as well as the teſtimony he gave of him; and he was counted worthy of honour by men, and who gave it him, as *Pharaoh* and his people, and the *Iſraelites*. The *Jews* give very great commendations of him; they call him a father in the law, a father in wiſdom, and a father in prophecy [u]; and ſay, that he is the father, maſter, head, and prince of all the prophets [w]; yea, the great prophet expected in the laſt days, they ſay will be but next to *Moſes*, their maſter [x]: they obſerve, that there were more miracles wrought by, and for him, than were wrought by, and for all the prophets that have been ſince the world began [y]; ſo that he not only exceeded them in the excellency and ſublimity of prophecy, but in the multitude of miracles: but Chriſt is worthy of more glory than *Moſes*, and has it given him by God, angels, and men: he is a greater ſaviour than *Moſes*; *Moſes* was but a temporal ſaviour, but he is the author of ſpiritual and eternal ſalvation: he is a greater prophet than *Moſes*, being the only-begotten Son of God, who lay in the boſom of the Father, and has declared him, his mind and will, his Goſpel, grace, and truth, as *Moſes* never did: he is a greater king than he, being made higher than the kings of the earth: he did more miracles than *Moſes*, and had a greater teſtimony from God, than he had, as that he was his beloved Son, and to be heard; he was alſo raiſed from the dead, and is ſet down at the right hand of God, and is appointed judge of all; he is miniſtred to, and worſhipped by angels, is believed on by men, who aſcribe the whole glory of their ſalvation to him. *Inaſmuch as he who hath builded the houſe, hath more honour than the houſe*; this *houſe*, or *temple*, as the *Arabic* verſion renders it, is the church, of which Chriſt is the builder; tho' not to the excluſion of the Father, and the Spirit, who are co-efficient builders with him, nor of miniſters of the Goſpel as inſtruments, nor of believers in a private capacity, who build up one another; but he has the chief concern in the building, which lies in the converſion of ſouls, and in the edification of them, and is carried on by his Spirit in the miniſtry of the word and ordinances, and from hence he has a glory; ſee *Zech.* vi. 12, 13. a greater glory than *Moſes*, ſeeing he was but a part of this houſe, at moſt but a pillar in it; but Chriſt is the builder, foundation, and corner-ſtone.

Ver. 4. *For every houſe is built by ſome man*, &c.] Or *by ſome one*; for a houſe does not build itſelf: this is true of houſes properly taken, or improperly, as nations, tribes, families, and kindred, of the whole church in general, of particular congregations, and of individual believers; the greateſt ſaints, even Apoſtles and prophets, ſuch an one as *Moſes*, are built by and upon Chriſt; their perſons are built on him; they receive all their gifts for edification from him, and all their ſucceſs is owing to him; tho' they are to be eſteemed of in their proper places: the Apoſtle's deſign is to bring down the high eſteem the *Jews* had of *Moſes*, that they might rightly value Chriſt. *But he that built all things is God*; Chriſt has built all things, and therefore he is God, and muſt be infinitely above *Moſes*; for this is not to be underſtood of God the Father, and of the creation of the world, and of all things in it by him; but of Chriſt, and of his building the church, and of his ordering and managing of that, and all affairs relating to it; ſuch as the conſtitution of it, ſettling the worſhip of God, and the ordinances in it, the redemption and ſalvation of the members of it, and its rule and government; all which prove him to be God, and above *Moſes*.

Ver. 5. *And Moſes verily was faithful in all his houſe as a ſervant*, &c.] *Moſes* was not only a ſervant to the *Iſraelites*, but he was alſo the Lord's ſervant, a ſervant of his chuſing, ſending, and approving; he was a ſervant in holy things, and ſerved the Lord heartily, ſincerely, and ingenuouſly, with all becoming fear and reverence, reſpect and honour, and with all ready and chearful obedience; the houſe in which he was a ſervant, was not his own, but belonged to God, even the Son of God, as appears from the following verſe; he was not a ſervant in the world, and with reſpect to civil things, and the affairs of providence, but in the church of God, and in divine things; and he was faithful here, and that in all things; he did all things exactly according to the pattern ſhewed him in the mount; and the Apoſtle ſtrongly affirms all this, as he well might, ſince there was full proof of it, and God himſelf had bore a teſtimony to it: and the end of his being a ſervant here was, *for a teſtimony of thoſe things which were to be ſpoken after*; theſe words may regard his faithful teſtification of God's will to the people of *Iſrael*, after he was fixed as a ſervant in God's houſe; or what he ſaid afterwards concerning the Meſſiah, of whom he ſpake and wrote, and of whom he bore an honourable teſtimony, *Deut.* xviii. 15. or they may have reſpect to the things ſpoken after *Moſes*'s time, by the prophets, Chriſt, and his Apoſtles, which agreed with the teſtimony of *Moſes*; or to the things afterwards ſpoken of in this epiſtle; to which may be added, that *Moſes* in his office was typical of things to be ſpoken and done by the Meſſiah, when he came; as his deliverance of the children of *Iſrael* out of *Egypt*; his leading them through the Red Sea and wilderneſs, to *Canaan*'s land; his giving them the law from mount *Sinai*; the erection of the tabernacle, with all its furniture, and the inſtitution of ſacrifices, and the like.

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[t] Miſn. Sanhedrin, c. 3. §. 2.

[u] T. Bab. Megilla, fol. 13. 1.

[w] Shemot Rabba, §. 21. fol. 106. 3. Maimon. Yeſode Hattorah, c. 7. §. 6. Obede Cochabim, c. 1. §. 3. & in Miſn. Sanhedrin, c. 11. §. 1. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 18. 3.

[x] Maimon. Teſhubah, c. 9. §. 2.

[y] Menaſſeh ben Iſrael, Conciliat. in Deut. qu. 11.

Ver. 6. *But Chriſt as a ſon over his own houſe*, &c.] As *Moſes* was not, tho' the *Jews* ſay that he was מאריה דבית [a] and בעל הבית [b] *lord* and *maſter of the houſe*; yea and בן בית *the ſon of the houſe* [c]; but this he was not: Chriſt is the ſon and heir, the Lord and maſter; he is a ſon, not by creation, or by adoption, or by office, but by nature: hence it appears that he is God, and is equal with God; and this his ſonſhip is the foundation of his office, and hereby he becomes the heir of all things: and when he is ſaid to be *as a ſon*, it does not intend mere reſemblance; but is expreſſive of his right to heirſhip and government, and of the eſteem and reverence he had in his houſe, and of his fidelity as a ſon there; and tho' he was a ſervant, as man and mediator, and had a great piece of ſervice to perform, and which he has performed with diligence and faithfulneſs, yet he was alſo a ſon, Lord and heir, as *Moſes* was not; and he is over the houſe of God, as king, prieſt, and prophet in it, and as the firſt-born, ſon and heir, and as the maſter and governor of it; and which is called his own, becauſe given him by the father, purchaſed by himſelf, and which he has built, and in which he dwells: *whoſe houſe are we*; believers in Chriſt, whether *Jews* or *Gentiles*; who as lively ſtones are built up a ſpiritual houſe, in whom Chriſt dwells by faith, and over whom he preſides and reigns: *if we hold faſt the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end*. Theſe words are not to be underſtood as a condition of the former aſſertion; nor is a final falling away from grace to be inferred from hence, for the ſuppoſition proves not ſuch an inference, but the contrary; namely, that they that have true faith, hope, and confidence, ſhall keep them to the end; and therefore are the houſe of Chriſt: beſides, the doctrine of apoſtacy, is quite repugnant to the Apoſtle's argument; according to which, Chriſt might have no houſe, and can have none till men have perſevered: but the Apoſtle's deſign is to give a word of exhortation to himſelf and others, to hold faſt the confidence; and ſo the words are rather deſcriptive of the perſons, who are the houſe of Chriſt; ſuch who have a good hope through grace, wrought in them, and can rejoice in hope of the glory of God; and can uſe freedom of ſpeech and boldneſs at the throne of grace; and have an holy confidence of intereſt in the love of God, and ſalvation by Chriſt, and go on in the exerciſe of theſe graces to the end of their days.

Ver. 7. *Wherefore as the Holy Ghoſt ſaith*, &c.] In *Pſ.* xcv. 7. *to day if ye will hear his voice*; either the precepts of Chriſt, to hear which is to obey them; and this is an acknowledgment of Chriſt as king of ſaints, and is a teſtimony of love to him, and is well-pleaſing in his ſight; and in which the ſaints find pleaſure themſelves, and profit alſo: or the Goſpel of Chriſt, which is a voice of love, grace, and mercy; of peace and reconciliation; of pardon and righteouſneſs; of liberty, redemption, and ſalvation by Chriſt; and to hear it, is not only to hear it externally, but internally, ſo as to underſtand it, and diſtinguiſh it from the voice of a ſtranger, and to approve of it, and believe it, and put in practice what is heard: and *to day*, may intend ſome feſtival-day in *David*'s time, when, and on account of which, this Pſalm was penned; as the feaſt of tabernacles, which was a type of Chriſt tabernacling in human nature; or it may regard the time of man's life, while it is day, or the preſent inſtant of life; or rather, the whole Goſpel diſpenſation. The Pſalm from whence theſe and ſome following words are taken, belongs to the Meſſiah; for the perſon, the ſubject of it, is called the rock of our ſalvation; and every thing in it is applicable to him; as the aſcription of deity, and divine worſhip; the creation and preſervation of the univerſe; yea, he is repreſented as a ſhepherd, and the ſaints as his ſheep; which plainly points at the office of Chriſt: and theſe very words are often made uſe of by the *Jews*, and applied to the Meſſiah, ſhewing that if the *Jews* would repent but one day, or keep the ſabbath but one day, the ſon of *David*, the Meſſiah would come; ſince it is ſaid, *to day if ye will hear his voice* [d]; which the *Chaldee* paraphraſe renders מימריה *his word*, his eſſential word, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

Ver. 8. *Harden not your hearts*, &c.] There is a natural hardneſs of the heart; the heart of man is like a ſtone, deſtitute of ſpiritual life, motion, and activity; it is ſenſeleſs, ſtupid, impenitent, ſtubborn, and inflexible; on which no impreſſions can be made, but by powerful grace: and there is an acquired, habitual, and voluntary hardneſs of heart, to which men arrive by various ſteps; as entertaining pleaſing thoughts of ſin; an actual commiſſion of it, with frequency, till it becomes cuſtomary, and ſo habitual; an extenuation or juſtification of it, and ſo they become hardened againſt all reproofs and ſermons, and to all afflictions and judgments; are inſenſible and paſt feeling, and openly declare for ſin, and glory in it: and there is a hardneſs which God's people are liable to, and ſhould guard againſt; and which is brought on by a neglect of private and public worſhip, and by keeping bad company, and through the ill examples of others, and by giving way to leſſer ſins; for all ſin is of an hardening nature: *as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderneſs*; the *Jews* provoked God in the wilderneſs by their unbelief, murmurings, ingratitude, and idolatry; and they tempted him there by diſtruſting his power and goodneſs; hence, one of the places in which they murmured againſt him was called *Maſſah* and *Meribah*, *Exod.* xvii. 7. and it is an aggravation of their ſin, that it was in the wilderneſs, after they had been juſt brought out of bondage into liberty, and had lately had ſuch an inſtance of the power and goodneſs of God, in bringing them through the Red Sea; and where they could have no human ſupplies, and therefore ſhould have been entirely dependent on God, and truſt in him.

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[a] Zohar in Lev. fol. 2. 2.
[b] Tzeror Hammor, fol. 35. 2.
[c] Lexic. Cabaliſt. p. 203.
[d] T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 98. 1. Shemot Rabba, §. 25. fol. 109. 3. & Shir Haſhirim Rabba, fol. 19. 3.

Ver. 9. *When your fathers tempted me*, &c.] This the Apoſtle cites and repeats, to expoſe the glorying of the *Jews* in their anceſtors; to diſſuade them from following their ſinful practices; to deter them from the ſame by obſerving both their ſin and puniſhment; and to heighten their regards to the voice and Goſpel of Chriſt: *proved me*; this is either an explication of the former phraſe; or it may deſign the experience this people had of the power and goodneſs of God, notwithſtanding their tempting and provoking the Lord by a diſtruſt of them; which is an aggravation of their ſin and ingratitude, and ſhews the forbearance of God, and that wicked men may partake of outward favours: *and ſaw my works forty years*; that is, God's works of providence, in furniſhing them with the neceſſaries of life, in guiding, protecting, and ſupporting them for the ſpace of forty years, in the wilderneſs; and his miracles, and the puniſhment of their enemies; yet they ſaw and perceived not, but all this time ſinned againſt the Lord, ſee *Deut.* xxix. 2—8. the ſpace of time, *forty years*, is in the Pſalm placed to the beginning of the next verſe, and is joined with God's grief and indignation at the people, as it is alſo by the Apoſtle, in ver. 17. but the people's ſin, and God's grief at it being of equal duration, it matters not to which it is placed, and therefore to both; perhaps, one reaſon of its being repeated, and ſo much notice taken of it is, becauſe there was juſt this number of years from Chriſt's ſufferings, to the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*; which the Apoſtle might have in view.

Ver. 10. *Wherefore I was grieved with that generation*, &c.] דור מדבר *the generation of the wilderneſs*, as the *Jews* often call them; and which they ſay was more beloved than any generation [e]; and yet they won't allow them a part in the world to come; ſee the note on the following verſe. When God is ſaid to be grieved with them, it is to be conſidered as an Anthropopathy, as ſpeaking after the manner of men, as in *Gen.* vi. 5, 6. The word ſignifies, that he was wearied by them, and weary of them; that he loathed them, and was diſpleaſed with them; it ſhews the notice God took of their ſin; the heinouſneſs of it, his diſplicency at it, and determination to puniſh it: the cauſe of his grief and indignation were their unbelief, ingratitude, and idolatry: *and ſaid, they do always err in their heart*; all ſins are errors, or aberrations from the law of God; all men err in this ſenſe: theſe people erred in their hearts, for there is error in the underſtanding, and will, and affections, as well as in life and actions; and they may be ſaid to err in their hearts, becauſe their ſins not only ſprung from the heart, but they were done heartily, or with their hearts, and that continually; which ſhews the ſottiſhneſs of this people; their ſtubbornneſs and rebellion; their want of integrity, and their conſtancy in ſinning: heart ſins as well as others, are taken notice of by God: *and they have not known my ways*; they did not take notice of God's ways of providence towards them; nor did they approve of, and delight in his ways of worſhip and duty, or in his commands.

Ver. 11. *So I ſware in my wrath*, &c.] Swearing is aſcribed to God, to ſhew the certainty of the thing ſpoken of; as of mercies, when he ſwears in love, and by his holineſs; ſo here, of puniſhment, when he ſwears in wrath, in indignation, in ſore diſpleaſure, and the threatned evil is irrevocable and inevitable: *they ſhall not enter into my reſt*; into the land of *Canaan*, called God's reſt, becauſe he promiſed it, and gave it to the *Iſraelites* as their reſt; and where he himſelf had a place of reſt; and where he gave the Meſſiah, the author of peace and reſt; and which was a type of heaven, that reſt from toil and labour, which remains for the people of God; and into which it is ſaid, this generation did not enter; for the *Jews* ſay [f], "the generation of the wilderneſs have no part in the world "to come:" but this ſeems too harſh, for doubtleſs there were many who died in the wilderneſs, that went ſafe to heaven, notwithſtanding all their ſins and provocations.

Ver. 12. *Take heed, brethren*, &c.] This exhortation is founded upon the State and caſe of their anceſtors before given, as a warning and caution to the then preſent *Hebrews*; and whom the Apoſtle ſtiles *brethren*, to ſhew that he had no hard thoughts of them, and that his jealouſy was a godly one, and not an evil ſuſpicion; and may teach us that all exhortations, admonitions, and reproofs ſhould be given in love: *leſt there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief*; or ſuch an evil heart, in which unbelief prevails, and is predominant: there is in every man whether a profane ſinner, or an hypocritical profeſſor, an evil heart, and an unbelieving one; and there is unbelief in regenerate perſons, which when cheriſhed and encouraged by them is a great evil, and ſhould be avoided; and this ſin is aggravated by the many inſtances of God's grace, and by the many declarations of it, and by the exceeding great and precious promiſes God has made, and by the great diſcoveries of his love to their ſouls in times paſt: and this ſin, when it gets a-head, has a very great influence on the heart, to make it evil; and unbelief was the firſt ſin of man, at leaſt it very early appeared; it is the mother-ſin, and puts perſons upon every ſin; it defiles the conſcience, hardens the heart, renders the word unprofitable, unfits for duty, and makes men unſtable, and therefore to be ſhunned; and eſpecially becauſe of the dreadful effect following: *in departing from the living God*; that is, from Chriſt, who is the ſon over his own houſe, and whoſe voice is to be heard; for of no other is the Apoſtle ſpeaking in the context; and who is not only the ſon of the living God, but he is himſelf the living God; he has life in himſelf, and is the fountain and author of life, natural, ſpiritual, and eternal. This is mentioned to exalt the perſon of Chriſt, the Apoſtle and high-prieſt of our profeſſion; and to diſcover the greatneſs and heinouſneſs of the ſin of ſuch as depart from him and his Goſpel, and to deter men from it: there is a final and total departure from Chriſt, from his Goſpel and ordinances, from his people, and from a former profeſſion of faith, which is never to be found in true believers; for they are as mount *Zion*, which can never be removed; but there is a partial departure, and for a while, which they are liable to, and is attended with bad effects to them, and ſhould be guarded againſt: ſaints ſhould take heed of themſelves, and of their hearts, and of [illegible] unbelief of them, that they do not in the leaſt depart from Chriſt, by letting go their hold of him, or by a non-exerciſe of faith upon him; and this ſhould be the care and concern of every individual member of the church, and at all times; unbelief is very diſhonourable to God and Chriſt; contradicts the word and promiſes of God; is uncomfortable to the ſaints; it is a ſin that very eaſily beſets,

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[e] T. Hieroſ. Avoda Zara, fol. 39. 2.

[f] Tzeror Hammor, fol. 118. 1.

ſets, and is very provoking to God, and is highly reſented by him.

Ver. 13. *But exhort one another daily*, &c.] In order to prevent unbelief and apoſtacy. The phraſe is ſometimes rendered, *comfort one another*, or, *your ſelves together*, as in 1 *Theſſ*. v. 11. which the ſaints may do, by diſcourſing together about divine things; by praying together; by inſtructing one another in the doctrines of the Goſpel; by putting one another in mind of the covenant of grace, and its promiſes; and by obſerving the near approach of everlaſting happineſs with Chriſt. And tho' the buſineſs of exhortation greatly belongs to miniſters of the word, yet it ought not to be neglected by private believers; who ought, when it becomes neceſſary, to exhort one another to prayer; to an attendance on the word and ordinances; to a regard to their converſations; to a cloſe adherence to their profeſſion; and to a believing view and conſideration of Chriſt, the Apoſtle and high-prieſt of it; and to a due concern for his truth and intereſt: and this ſhould be done in love, with good and conſolatory words, and in things, in which the ſaints are concerned, and do themſelves regard; and it is an affair which requires prudence and faithfulneſs; and ſuppoſes that God's own people may be dull, heavy, and ſluggiſh; and this is to be done *daily*, every day, as often as there is an occaſion, and an opportunity for it: and *while it is called to day*; while the Goſpel diſpenſation continues; or while the time of life laſts. This ſhews that the phraſe *to day*, in *Pſ*. xcv. did not reſpect *David*'s time only. The *Syriac* verſion renders it, *until that day which is called to day*; until the everlaſting day appears, when there will be no need of ſuch exhortations, nor any danger of what follows: *leſt any of you be hardened through the deceitfulneſs of ſin*; actual ſin, which is a tranſgreſſion of the law; every ſin is of an hardening nature, and by being often committed, an habit is contracted, and a callouſneſs brought upon the heart and conſcience; or the corruption of nature, indwelling ſin may be meant; an evil and a corrupt heart which deceives through promiſes of pleaſure, or profit to a man's ſelf, or of ſecrecy and impunity; it ſuggeſts the power a man has to repent at pleaſure, and the mercy of God, by which means the man is drawn in to it, and by frequent repeating it, grows hardened in it.

Ver. 14. *For we are made partakers of Chriſt*, &c.] Being loved by him, given to him, and choſen in him before the foundation of the world; and ſo participate of all ſpiritual bleſſings in him; for this reſpects ſomething paſt, and may be rendered, *we have been made*. The phraſe is expreſſive of union to Chriſt, which is not by faith on man's part, and by the ſpirit on Chriſt's part, but by his everlaſting love, taking his people into an oneneſs with himſelf; thereby becoming their head, ſurety, and repreſentative, which is the ground and foundation of all the bleſſings of grace being imparted to them: hence ariſes communion; as this is a conjugal union, there is communion of names, of perſons, of goods, of honour and dignity, and of everlaſting glory; as it is a federal or repreſentative union, hence a non-imputation of ſin, juſtification, and freedom from condemnation; and as it is an union of head and members; hence a communication of life, and the ſecurity of it, and of all grace and ſtrength; hence holineſs, fruitfulneſs, and perſeverance, and everlaſting happineſs both of ſoul and body: *if we hold faſt the beginning of our confidence ſtedfaſt unto the end*; by *confidence* is meant faith, which is an hypoſtaſis, or ſubſiſtence which is the word here uſed; and is ſo called, becauſe it gives a kind of ſubſiſtence, ſubſtance, or being to things it is concerned with, *Heb*. xi. 1. and becauſe it is a great ſupport to believers, under their various exerciſes; and is that by which they have an open, ſpiritual, and comfortable ſubſiſtence, and abiding in Chriſt: the *beginning* of it which is to be held faſt, is either Chriſt himſelf, who is the αρχη, the beginning, the author, and finiſher of faith; and ſo this ſhews from whom, and in what way, this grace is diſtributed; and is expreſſive of communion with Chriſt, and is an evidence of the participation of him: or elſe the Goſpel, which is the means of implanting faith, and directs to that which is the ground and foundation of it; and this is to be held faſt, and never to be departed from: or elſe the grace of faith itſelf, which is a grace but begun, not yet finiſhed, but ſhall continue, and is to be held faſt, and conſtantly exerciſed; and perſeverance in believing on Chriſt is an evidence of union to him.

Ver. 15. *While it is ſaid to day*, &c.] Exhort one another, and hold faſt Chriſt and his Goſpel, and faith and confidence therein; what follows is a repetition of the citation in ver. 7, 8. in order to make a further improvement of it; which ſhews, that the words belong to the preſent times of the Goſpel, and contain in them matter of moment, and great concern; and that ſcripture inſtructions and exhortations are of perpetual uſe.

Ver. 16. *For ſome when they had heard*, &c.] The *Arabic* verſion adds, *his voice*; the law on mount *Sinai*; the voice of words, with the voices and thunderings that attended it; the book of the covenant read; the whole ſyſtem of laws and ordinances delivered to *Moſes*, and by him to them; and alſo the Goſpel, for that was preached to the *Iſraelites* in the wilderneſs, and heard by them; as appears from ch. iv. 2. and which ſeems chiefly intended: and yet ſome of the hearers of it *did provoke*; not only *Moſes*, to ſpeak unadviſedly with his lips; but they provoked Jehovah himſelf, and the angel of his preſence, and his Holy Spirit, by their idolatry, ingratitude, and unbelief: and the aggravation of their ſin is, that they did it when they had heard the Goſpel, and while they were hearing it; which ſhews that the Goſpel may be heard to no advantage; as when it is heard in a careleſs and indifferent manner; when it makes no impreſſion, takes no place, and has no root; when the world and the things of it are the great concern of the mind, while hearing it; when it is not attended with the power and Spirit of God; when it is not received in love, nor mixed with faith, nor put in practice: and hence the Goſpel heard, comes to be an aggravation of mens condemnation: *howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moſes*; that is, they did not all provoke, but ſome did; which is another aggravation of their ſin; they were juſt come out of *Egyptian* bondage; brought out of it by the Lord, with the mighty and outſtretched arm of his power; and yet they provoked him: and this was done by *Moſes*; by the hand of *Moſes*, as the *Syriac* verſion renders it; by his means, by him as an inſtrument; and yet they provoked him: but however all did not, yet theſe were but few; it ſeems only *Caleb* and *Joſhua*, out of ſix hundred thouſand; God will have a few to ſerve him in the worſt of times.

Ver. 17. *But with whom was he grieved forty years?* &c.] As is ſaid in *Pſ*. xcv. 10. ſee the note on ver. 10. was it *not with them that had ſinned*; not merely by committing perſonal iniquities, and particular provocations, which all men are guilty of, but by committing publick ſins; they ſinned as a body of men; they joined together in the commiſſion of ſin: every ſin is grieving to God, becauſe it is contrary to his nature, is an act of enmity to him, is a tranſgreſſion of his righteous law, and a contempt of his authority; but eſpecially publick ſins, or the ſins of a multitude, and when they are perſiſted in, which was the caſe of the *Iſraelites*; they ſinned againſt him during the forty years they were in the wilderneſs; and ſo long was he grieved with them: the *Alexandrian* copy reads, *with them that believed not*; which points out the particular ſin theſe men were guilty of, and which was ſo grieving to God, and ſuits well with the Apoſtle's deſign: *whoſe carcaſſes fell in the wilderneſs?* and ſo never entered into the land of *Canaan*. They died in the wilderneſs; and they did not die common and natural deaths, at leaſt not all of them; their deaths were by way of puniſhment; in a way of wrath; in a judicial way: the *Syriac* verſion renders it, *their bones fell in the wilderneſs*; they lay ſcattered and unburied, and expoſed to view, as an example of divine vengeance, ſee *Numb.* xiv. 29.

Ver. 18. *And to whom ſware he that they ſhould not enter into his reſt*, &c.] As in *Pſ.* xcv. 11. ſee the note on ver. 11. *but to them that believed not?* the Lord; notwithſtanding the ſigns and wonders he ſhewed among them, they would not be perſuaded by *Moſes* and *Aaron*, by *Joſhua* and *Caleb*, to be ſtill and quiet, to ceaſe murmuring, and ſubmit to the will of God, and believe in him; they were diſobedient, ſtubborn, and rebellious, and would go up, when they were bid not to go up; for which reaſon God ſwore in his wrath that they ſhould not enter into the good land. Unbelief is a ſource of ſin, and cauſe of judgment, being greatly provoking to God.

Ver. 19. *So we ſee that they could not enter in*, &c.] To God's reſt, the land of *Canaan*, for they died by the plague before the Lord, and their carcaſſes fell in the wilderneſs, before they came to it, *Numb.* xiv. 37, 45. and the reaſon was, *becauſe of unbelief*; their diſtruſt of God, his power, and his providence: this inſtance is produced by the Apoſtle, to ſhew the evil nature of unbelief, and the ſad effects of it; to deter perſons from it, and that they might take heed of encouraging it; and which inſtance he further improves in the following chapter.

CHAP. IV.

FROM the puniſhment inflicted on the unbelieving *Hebrews*, who died in the wilderneſs, and entered not into the land of reſt made mention of in the preceding chapter, the Apoſtle proceeds to caution the preſent *Hebrews* of his time, and who profeſſed faith in Chriſt, leſt ſeeing there was a reſt, and a promiſe of entering into it, they ſhould ſeem to come ſhort of it, ver. 1. and the rather, ſince they that fell in the wilderneſs had the Goſpel preached to them as well as they; and the reaſon why it did not profit was, becauſe it was not received by faith, ver. 2. as alſo ſeeing it is by faith that believers now enter into reſt, ver. 3. which reſt is not the reſt of the ſeventh day, on which God reſted; nor the reſt of the land of *Canaan* which *Joſhua* led the *Iſraelites* into; for if he had entered them into the reſt the Apoſtle means, *David*, ſo many hundred years after him, would not have made mention of another reſt, ver. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8. wherefore it follows that there is another reſt for the people of God, which he that enters into ceaſes from his own works, as God did from his, ver. 9, 10. and this is the reſt that every one that profeſſes faith in Chriſt, ſhould be ſolicitous and diligent to enter into, leſt he ſhould fall ſhort of it through unbelief; as the unbelieving *Iſraelites* did of their reſt, ver. 11. and the arguments engaging to ſuch a concern are taken from the properties and perfections of Chriſt, the eſſential word of God; particularly from his omnipotence and his omniſcience, ver. 12, 13. And ſeeing he is by nature the ſon of God, and by office a great high-prieſt that is entered into heaven for his people, the encouragement is great to hold faſt the profeſſion of faith in him they have made, ver. 14. and the rather, ſince he is a ſympathiſing high-prieſt, as he muſt needs be, ſince he has been tempted, afflicted, and has ſuffered every way as his people, and is in all reſpects like them, excepting that he has no ſin, ver. 15. and this conſideration ſhould engage believers to come to the throne of grace with all boldneſs, and in expectation of having grace and mercy beſtowed on them for the ſupply of their daily wants, ver. 16.

Ver. 1. *Let us therefore fear*, &c.] Not with a fear of wrath and damnation; nor with a fear of diffidence and diſtruſt of the power, grace, and goodneſs of God; but with a cautious fear, a godly jealouſy, a careful circumſpection, and watchfulneſs: *leſt a promiſe being left* us *of entering into his reſt*; not the land of *Canaan*, the type of heaven, but rather heaven itſelf, the ultimate glory: there is a reſt of the body in the grave, from work, ſervice, and labour, and from diſtempers and diſeaſes, where it reſts under the guardianſhip of the Spirit, until the reſurrection morn; and there is a reſt of the ſoul before the reſurrection, in the arms of Chriſt, with whom it immediately is, upon its departure from the body; and there is a reſt both of ſoul and body after the reſurrection, from ſin, from afflictions, from ſatan's temptations, from unbelief, doubts, and fears, and from all enemies: and this may be called, the reſt of God, becauſe he is the author and giver of it; and it will lie much in communion with him; and beſides, heaven is the place of God's reſt, *Iſ.* lxvi. 1, 2. and the poſſeſſion and enjoyment of the heavenly glory is often ſignified by an entering into it: and there is a promiſe of this, which is left in Chriſt's hands, and ſhall never fail; tho' ſome who have hoped for it may come ſhort of it, or at leaſt ſeem to do ſo: but rather a reſt under the Goſpel diſpenſation is here intended, ſince it is a reſt believers enter into now, ver. 3. and ſince the Goſpel church is repreſented as a ſtate of peace and reſt, *Iſ.* xi. 6, 7, 8, 9, 10. and which lies in a more clear and comfortable application of the blood and righteouſneſs of Chriſt to the ſaints; in a freedom from a ſpirit of bondage to fear, and from the yoke of carnal ordinances, and in the enjoyment of Goſpel privileges and ordinances; and this is God's reſt, which he has provided for New Teſtament ſaints, and into which they enter by faith, and a profeſſion of it; and the Goſpel is the promiſe or declaration which was left among theſe *Hebrews*, and in the world, to encourage them ſo to do: leſt *any of you ſhould ſeem to come ſhort of it*; either of the promiſe, or the reſt promiſed; which if underſtood of the heavenly glory, the ſenſe is, that tho' true believers ſhall not come ſhort of that, yet they may *ſeem* to others to do ſo; and therefore ſhould be careful of their lives and converſations, that they might not ſeem to come ſhort; and this they ſhould do, for the glory of God, the honour of Chriſt and his Goſpel, and the good of others: but if the reſt, and the promiſe of it intend the Goſpel and its diſpenſation, the meaning is; that ſaints ſhould be concerned ſo to behave, that they might not ſeem to fail of the doctrine of the grace of God, and to be diſappointed of that reſt and peace promiſed in it. One of *Stephens*'s copies read, leſt *any of us*; which ſeems moſt agreeable both to what goes before, and follows.

Ver. 2. *For unto us was the Goſpel preached*, &c.] The Goſpel is the good news and glad tidings of ſalvation by Chriſt; and this may be ſaid to be preached, when men preach not themſelves, nor read lectures of morality, nor mix law and Goſpel together, nor make juſtification and ſalvation to be by works, nor ſet perſons to make their peace with God, or get an intereſt in Chriſt; but when they preach Chriſt, and ſalvation alone by him; and ſo it was preached to the *Hebrews*, and that more fully, and with more clearneſs, power, and ſucceſs than formerly; and which is a privilege and bleſſing; and is ſometimes bleſſed for the conviction of ſinners, for regeneration, for the implanting of faith, and the comfort of believers. The words may be rendered, *we were evangelized*; as ſuch may be ſaid to be, who have a ſpirit of liberty, in oppoſition to a ſpirit of bondage; who live by faith on Chriſt alone; who derive their peace and comfort, not from their works, but from him; whoſe repentance and obedience are influenced by the love of God; and who deſire to perform all duties aright, and depend on none: now tho' this was true of the Apoſtle and others, yet is not the ſenſe here, becauſe of what follows, *as well as unto them*, or *even as they*; for tho' the Goſpel was preached to the *Iſraelites* in the wilderneſs, in the miniſtry of *Moſes*, and by types and ſacrifices; yet they were not evangelized by it, or caſt into a Goſpel mould, or brought into a Goſpel ſpirit: however it was preached unto them; which ſhews the antiquity of it; the ſameneſs of the method of ſalvation in all ages; the neceſſity of ſalvation by Chriſt, and the unity of Chriſt's church under different diſpenſations: *but the word preached did not profit them*; that is, the Goſpel, which is here called *the word of hearing*, as it may be rendred; becauſe it is and may be heard; and there is a neceſſity of hearing, in order to faith in Chriſt: the word ſignifies a rumour, or report: the Goſpel is a report of Chriſt, his perſon and offices; of his great love to ſinners, and of what he has done for them; but tho' it is a word of hearing, a report made, and the word preached, yet to ſome it is unprofitable; it has no good effect upon them; yea it is the ſavour of death unto death to them, and the aggravation of condemnation; and the reaſon of the inefficacy and unprofitableneſs of the word to the *Iſraelites* was, its *not being mixed with faith in them that heard* it; the Goſpel is as food, and faith is the hand that receives it, and takes it, and taſtes of it, and eats it, and concocts and digeſts it; and when this is the caſe, it is profitable and nouriſhing; but when it is otherwiſe, it is not. The *Alexandrian* copy, the *Complutenſian* edition, and five of *Beza*'s antient copies, and as many of *Stephens*'s, with others, read, *they were not mixed*; referring it not to the word, but to perſons; and ſo read the *Arabic* and *Ethiopic* verſions; and the ſenſe is, that the generality of the *Iſraelites* did not join themſelves in faith, in believing in God, to *Caleb* and *Joſhua*; who hearkened to the Lord, and received and obeyed his word; and ſo the word became uſeleſs to them: there ought to be an union or conjunction of the ſaints, and the bond of this union is love; and the thing in which they unite is faith, believing in Chriſt, and the doctrine of faith, which is but one; and tho' the word may be profitable to others who are not in the communion of the ſaints; yet forſaking the aſſembly of the ſaints, and not conſtantly attending with them, or not mixing with them continually in publick worſhip, is one reaſon of the unprofitable hearing of the word when it is preached to them.

Ver. 3. *For we which have believed do enter into reſt*, &c.] Not eternal reſt; all believers ſhall enjoy this, and they only; but this is not now, or at preſent enjoyed, unleſs things future may be ſaid to be preſent, becauſe of faith in them, and the certainty of them; but ſpiritual reſt in Chriſt under the Goſpel diſpenſation, which is a reſt from the burthen of the law of *Moſes*, and from all toil and labour for life, and ſalvation by works, and lies in an enjoyment of much inward peace of ſoul, notwithſtanding the world's troubles and ſatan's temptations; and ſuch who believe the word or Goſpel preached, and Chriſt in it, not with a general and hiſtorical faith, or only in profeſſion, but with the heart, and in truth, theſe enjoy this reſt; they are kept in perfect peace, and have much ſpiritual eaſe and comfort: this character diſtinguiſhes them from the unbelieving *Iſraelites* of old, and from preſent hypocrites and formal profeſſors: *as he ſaid, as I have ſworn in my wrath, if they ſhall enter into my reſt*; the words are in *Pſ.* xcv. 11. and are before cited in ch. iii. 11. ſee the note there: they entred not in becauſe of unbelief; none but believers enter into ſpiritual reſt. The Apoſtle applies this proof to his deſign, by removing all other reſts, and particularly by ſhewing that it does not mean God's reſt from the works of creation: *although the works were finiſhed from the foundation of the world*; that is, tho' the works of creation, all that God deſigned to make, were finiſhed and perfected within the firſt ſix days of the world, and then God reſted or ceaſed to work in a creative way; yet this is not the reſt deſigned in the paſſage of ſcripture cited, nor is it that reſt which believers enter into.

Ver. 4. *For he ſpake in a certain place*, &c.] *Gen.* ii. 2. that is, *Moſes*, the penman of that book ſpoke, or God by him: *of the ſeventh day on this wiſe*; of the ſeventh day of the world, or from the creation of the heavens and the earth: *and God did reſt the ſeventh day from all his works*; of creation, but not of providence; for in them he works hitherto; nor does this reſt ſuppoſe labour with fatigue and wearineſs, and eaſe and refreſhment from it; only ceſſation from working in a creative way, and the utmoſt delight, complacency and ſatisfaction in what he had done. The *Alexandrian* copy leaves out the phraſe, *the ſeventh day*.

Ver. 5. *And in this* place *again*, &c.] In *Pſ.* xcv. 11. he ſpeaks again of another reſt diſtinct from that on the ſeventh day; which, and not the latter, is what believers under the Goſpel diſpenſation enter into: *if they ſhall enter into my reſt*; that is, unbelievers ſhall not enter into it; as the unbelieving *Iſraelites* did not enter into the typical reſt, ſo neither ſhall any unbeliever enter into the Goſpel reſt, the antitype of the former.

Ver. 6. *Seeing therefore it remaineth*, &c.] It follows by juſt conſequence, *that ſome muſt enter therein*; for God's ſwearing concerning ſome, that they ſhould not enter into his reſt, ſuppoſes that others ſhould: *and they to whom it was firſt preached*; to whom the Goſpel was firſt preached, namely, the *Iſraelites* in the wilderneſs: *entered not in becauſe of unbelief*; ſee ch. iii. 19.

Ver. 7. *Again he limiteth a certain day*, &c.] Since the ſeventh day of the creation was a day of reſt which God entered into, and not man; and ſince the land of *Canaan* was a typical reſt, which the unbelieving *Iſraelites* did not enter into, becauſe of unbelief; and yet there muſt be perſons, and there muſt be a time for them to enter into the true reſt which God has left a promiſe of; therefore he has limited, fixed, and appointed a certain day, the Goſpel diſpenſation, for believers to enter into it: *ſaying in David*; or by *David*, who was the penman of the *ninety-fifth Pſalm*, as may be learned from hence; and this is agreeable to, and confirms a rule which the *Jews* give, that thoſe Pſalms which are without a title were written by *David*[g]; the Spirit of God ſpake in him and by him, and plainly pointed out another day of reſt from the abovementioned: *to day after ſo long a time*; as two thouſand five hundred years from the firſt ſeventh day to *David*'s time, and five hundred years from the times of *Moſes* and *Joſhua*, to his: *as it is ſaid*; the *Alexandrian* copy reads, *as it is before ſaid*, or, *above ſaid*, as the *Vulgate Latin*, and *Syriac* verſions; that is, in *Pſ.* xcv. 7, 8. before cited, ch. iii. 7, 8. *to day if ye will hear his voice harden not your hearts*; ſee the note on ch. iii. 7, 8.

Ver. 8. *For if Jeſus had given them reſt*, &c.] That is, *Joſhua*; for *Hoſheah*, *Joſhua*, and *Jeſus*, are one and the ſame name; or *Jeſus himſelf*, as two of *Stephens*'s copies read; and ſo *Joſhua* is called *Jeſus* by the *Septuagint* interpreters on *Exod.* xvii. 10. and xxiv. 13. and other places where he is mentioned; and alſo by *Joſephus*[h], and *Philo*[i] the *Jew*. The *Syriac* verſion, leſt any ſhould miſtake this for Jeſus Chriſt, adds, *the ſon of Nun*; who is certainly the perſon deſigned, as the Apoſtle's reaſoning ſhews; who was an eminent type of Jeſus Chriſt: there is an agreement in their names, both ſignify a ſaviour, *Joſhua* was a temporal ſaviour, Chriſt a ſpiritual one; and in their office they were both ſervants; and in their qualifications for their office, ſuch as wiſdom, courage, faithfulneſs, and integrity. *Joſhua* was a type of Chriſt in many actions of his life; in the miracles he wrought, or were wrought for him; in the battles he fought, and the victories he obtained; in ſaving *Rahab* and her family; in receiving the *Gibeonites*, who came ſubmiſſively to him; and in leading the children of *Iſrael* into *Canaan*'s land, which he divided to them by lot: but tho' he brought them into a land of reſt, into the typical reſt, where they had reſt for a while from their temporal enemies, yet he did not give them the true ſpiritual reſt: had he, *then would he not afterward ſpoken of another day*; that is, God, in *David*'s time, and by him, would not have ſo long after appointed another day of reſt; meaning, not any particular day of the week, but the whole Goſpel-diſpenſation, in the times of the Meſſiah; wherefore the Apoſtle concludes as follows.

Ver. 9. *There remaineth therefore a reſt for the people of God.*] Not all mankind; nor the people of the *Jews* only; rather the people of God, both *Jews* and *Gentiles*, under the New Teſtament; the people whom God has loved with a ſpecial love, has choſe in Chriſt, and given to him, with whom he has made a covenant in him, and whom Chriſt ſaves from their ſins, and calls by his grace; and the reſt which remains for them is not a new ſabbath-day, but a ſabbatiſm: and this does not ſo much deſign eternal reſt in heaven; tho' the *Jews* often call that a ſabbath; the 92^d^ pſalm they ſay is a pſalm for the time to come, שכלו שבת, *which is all ſabbath*, and the reſt of eternal life[k]: but rather this intends the ſpiritual reſt believers have in Chriſt under the Goſpel-diſpenſation, which they now enter into, and of which the Apoſtle had been treating; and as for the word *remaineth*, this does not denote the futurity of it, but the Apoſtle's inference or conſequence from what he had ſaid; and the ſenſe is, it remains therefore, and is a certain fact, a clear conſequence from what has been obſerved, that there is another reſt diſtinct from God's reſt on the ſeventh day, and from the reſt in the land of *Canaan*; which were both typical ones of the preſent reſt the ſaints now enjoy: ſo the *Jews* call the world to come, the times of the Meſſiah, שבת הגדול, *the great ſabbath*[l].

Ver. 10. *For he that is entered into his reſt*, &c.] This is to be underſtood not of believers, nor of their entrance into the Goſpel reſt, or into eternal reſt, but of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt; for a ſingle perſon is only ſpoken of, and not many, as in ver. 3. and the reſt entred into is his own, which cannot be ſaid of any other; and beſides, a compariſon is run between his entrance into reſt, and ceaſing from his works, and God's reſting the ſeventh day, and ceaſing from his, which can only agree with him; and beſides, Chriſt is immediately ſpoken of, and at large deſcribed in ver. 12, 13, 14. Now he entered into his reſt, not when he was laid in the grave, but when he roſe from the dead, and aſcended into heaven, and ſat down at the right hand of God, as having done his work; and this is the ground and foundation of the ſaints reſt under the Goſpel-diſpenſation; for theſe words are a reaſon of the former, as appears by the cauſal particle *for*: and now being at reſt, *he alſo hath ceaſed from his own works, as God* did *from his*; Chriſt had works to do, as preaching the Goſpel, performing miracles, and obtaining the redemption and ſalvation of his people: theſe were given him to do, and he undertook them, and he has finiſhed them; and ſo ceaſes from them, as never to repeat them more, they being done effectually, ſtand in no need of it; and ſo as to take delight and complacency in them; the pleaſure of the Lord proſpering in his hand, the effects of his labour anſwering his deſigns; juſt as God ceaſed from the works of creation, when he had finiſhed them.

Ver. 11. *Let us labour therefore to enter into that reſt*, &c.] Not eternal reſt; this is not to be entered into now; nor is an entrance into it to be obtained by labour; ſalvation is not by works; eternal life is a free gift; good works don't go before to prepare heaven for the ſaints, but follow after: nor is the ſaints entrance into it a precariou thing; God has promiſed it, and provided it fo his people; Chriſt is in the poſſeſſion of it, and i preparing it for them; and the Spirit of God i working them up for the ſelf-ſame thing, and Chriſt will give them an abundant entrance into it: but the Goſpel reſt is here meant, that reſt which believers now enter into, and is at this preſent time for them, ver. 3, 10. and tho' true believers are entered into it, yet their reſt, peace, and joy in Chriſt is not full; they enter by degrees into it, and by believing enjoy more of it: and this is to be laboured for, by prayer, hearing the word, and attendance on ordinances; and this requires ſtrength, diligence, and induſtry; and ſuppoſes difficulties and diſcouragements, thro' the corruptions of the heart, and the temptations of ſatan; and this is deſigned to quicken and awaken a godly jealouſy in God's people, over themſelves: *leſt any man fall after the ſame example of unbelief*; into the ſin of unbelief, and into puniſhment thro' it, as the *Iſraelites* did; who ſinning, their carcaſſes fell in the wilderneſs, and they entered not into God's reſt, as he ſwore they ſhould not: true believers may fall into ſin, and from a degree of the exerciſe of grace, and of the ſtedfaſtneſs of the Goſpel; but they cannot finally and totally fall away, becauſe they are kept by the power of God; yet they may ſo fall, as to come ſhort, or at leaſt ſeem to come ſhort of enjoying the reſt and peace of the Goſpel ſtate: external profeſſors may fall from the Goſpel, and the religion they have profeſſed, and come ſhort of the glory they expected; and fall into juſt and deſerved puniſhment, in like manner as the unbelieving *Iſraelites* did.

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[g] Aben Ezra & Kimchi Præfat. in Tillim, paſſim.

[h] Antiq. Jud. l. 4. c. 7. §. 2. c. 8. §. 46, 47, 48. & l. 5. c. 1. §. 1.

[i] De Charitate, p. 698, 699, 700.

[k] Miſn. Tamid, c. 7. §. 4. T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 97. 1. Shi hashirim Rabba, fol. 16. 3. Maſſecheth Sopherim, c. 18. §. 1. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 3. 1.

[l] Zohar in Gen. fol. 31. 4 Shaare Ora, fol. 17. 1. Caphtor, fol. 64. 1.

Ver. 12. *For the Word of God is quick and powerful*, &c.] This is to be underſtood of Chriſt, the eſſential Word of God; for the Word of God was a known name of the Meſſiah among the *Jews*; ſee the note on *John* i. 1. and therefore the Apoſtle makes uſe of it when writing to them: and the words are introduced as a reaſon why care ſhould be taken, that men fall not off from the Goſpel, becauſe Chriſt, the author, ſum, and ſubſtance of it, is the living God, omnipotent and omniſcient; for not a thing, but a perſon is ſpoken of, who is a judge, and a critical diſcerner of the ſecrets of mens hearts: and certain it is, that this word is ſpoken of as a perſon, and is ſaid to be a prieſt in the following verſes; to which may be added, that the ſeveral things ſaid of the word exactly agree with Chriſt: he is *the Word of God*; as the word is the birth of the mind, he is the only-begotten of the Father; he is the Word that ſpoke for the elect in the council and covenant of grace, and that ſpoke all things out of nothing in creation; he is the Word that has been promiſed, and ſpoken of by the prophets from the beginning of the world; and is the interpreter of his Father's mind, and our advocate with the Father: he is *quick*, or, as it may be better rendered, *living*; he has life in himſelf as God, he is the living God; he is the living redeemer and mediator, and he lives for ever as man; he is the author and giver of life, natural, ſpiritual, and eternal: and he is *powerful*, as he appears to be in the creation and ſuſtentation of all things; in his miracles and miniſtrations; in the work of man's redemption; in the preſervation of his people, and in his advocacy and interceſſion: *and ſharper than any two-edged ſword*; or *more cutting* than one, by the words of his mouth, by the power of his ſpirit, and the efficacy of his grace; for his mouth itſelf is as a ſharp ſword, and out of it comes forth one, *Iſ.* xlix. 2. *Rev.* xix. 13, 15. by which he pierces the hearts of men, cuts them to the quick, and lays them open. Jehovah is called a two-edged ſword with the *Jews*[m]; and *Philo* the *Jew* ſpeaks of the flaming ſword of the *Logos*[n]. *Piercing even to the dividing aſunder ſoul and ſpirit, and of the joints and marrow*; the like property *Philo* the *Jew* aſcribes to the *Logos*, or Word; he calls him τομευς, *a cutter*, and ſays, he cuts and divides all things, even all ſenſible things, yea atoms, and things indiviſible[o]: the Apoſtle ſeems to have reſpect to the ſeveral names with which the ſoul of man is called by the *Jews*, נפש רוח ונשמה, *ſoul, ſpirit, and breath*[p]; the latter of theſe, they ſay, dwells between the other two. Some by the ſoul underſtand the natural and unregenerate part in man, and by the ſpirit the renewed and regenerate part, which tho' ſometimes are not ſo eaſily diſtinguiſhed by men, yet they are by Chriſt; others think the ſoul deſigns the inferior faculties, the affections; and the ſpirit the ſuperior ones, the mind and underſtanding: but the Apoſtle's meaning ſeems to be this, that whereas the ſoul and ſpirit are inviſible, and the joints and marrow are covered and hid; ſo ſharp and quick-ſighted, and ſo penetrating is the divine Word, that it reaches the moſt ſecret and hidden things of men: and this ſenſe is confirmed by what follows, *and is a diſcerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart*; Chriſt knows what is in man; he is the ſearcher of the hearts, and the trier of the reins of the children of men; and this will be more apparent at the laſt day, when he will make manifeſt the counſels of the heart, and will critically enquire, and accurately judge of them.

Ver. 13. *Neither is there any creature that is not manifeſt in his ſight*, &c.] Chriſt is the Lord God omniſcient; there is no creature in general, rational, or irrational, animate or inanimate, but what are known to him, and ſeen by him; for all creatures are made, and upheld by him, and he is omnipreſent; and in particular, there is no man but is manifeſt to him; ſo בריה, *creature*, is often uſed by the *Rabbins* for *man*: all men, openly prophane men, who are enemies to Chriſt, and his people, are under his eye and notice; he knows their perſons, he ſees their actions, even thoſe that are moſt ſecretly deviſed and performed againſt him, and his ſaints; and he takes ſuch notice of them, as to bring them into judgment for them; he knows formal profeſſors of religion, and upon what foot they have taken up their profeſſion, and how they keep their luſts with their profeſſion; he can diſtinguiſh between profeſſion and grace; and he knows and obſerves the ſprings and progreſs of their apoſtacy: and as for true believers, he knows their perſons, and knows them to be his; he ſees their ſins and their weakneſſes; he takes notice of their graces, and obſerves their wants; and there is nothing in them, or belongs to them, but what is before him, even the ſecret deſires of their ſouls. So *Philo* the *Jew* ſays[q], the divine Word reaches to, and comprehends all things, nothing eſcapes him: and this phraſe is very commonly uſed of the divine being by the *Jews*, הכל גלוי לפניו, *all things are manifeſt before him*[r]; and this being uſed of Chriſt, is no inconſiderable proof of his proper deity: *but all things*

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[m] Zohar in Cab. Lex. p. 364. [n] De Cherubim, p. 112. [o] Quis rerum divin. Hæres, p. 499, 500, 510, 511, 513. [p] Zohar in Gen. fol. 55. 2. & 113. 1, 2. & in Exod. fol. 58. 3, 4. & in Lev. fol. 29. 2. T. Hieroſ. Celaim, fol. 31. 3. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 2. 1. [q] De Sacrif. Abel, p. 140. [r] Tzeror Hammor, fol. 122. 2. Vid. Seder Tephillot, fol. 281. 1. Ed. Baſil.

things are *naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.* The words are an alluſion to wreſtlers, who exerciſed naked, and took each other by their necks and collars; and when one was thrown upon his back, as the word rendered *opened*, is by ſome tranſlated, he was publickly expoſed and known: or to the putting of a creature in ſuch a poſture when ſacrificed; or rather to the cutting of it up, and laying open its entrails; and eſpecially to the manner of doing it among the *Jews*, with which theſe perſons, the Apoſtle writes to, were acquainted: and it was this; when the lamb for the daily ſacrifice was ſlain, the prieſt hung it up by the foot, and ſkinned it; and when he came to the breaſt, he cut off the head; and having finiſhed the ſkinning of it, he divided the heart, and took out the blood; then he cut off the ſhoulders; and when he came to the right leg, he cut it off, and then cut it down thro' the chine-bone, and כולו גלוי לפניו, *all of it was manifeſt before him* [s]. The very phraſe before uſed. The word here uſed ſeems to anſwer to ערף, which, with the *Arabians*, ſignifies, *to know*, or make known; and מעריף, with the *Rabbins*, is uſed for a companion, a familiar one that is well known; the theme in the *Hebrew*, is עורף, the *neck*. The laſt clauſe, *with whom we have to do*, manifeſtly points at the perſon here ſpoken of, Jeſus Chriſt: ſaints have a concern with him now, as their way to the father, as their ſaviour and redeemer; they have to do with his blood for pardon and cleanſing, and with his righteouſneſs for juſtification, and with his fulneſs for every ſupply of grace; and with him as their king to rule over them, protect and defend them, and as their prophet to teach them, and their high-prieſt to intercede for them. Moreover, the words may be rendered, *to whom we muſt give an account*; and ſo the *Syriac* verſion renders them, *to whom they give an account*; as all men muſt at the great day: and all this that is ſaid of the word of God ſhould engage to care, watchfulneſs, and circumſpection in the courſe of a profeſſion of religion.

Ver. 14. *Seeing then that we have a great high-prieſt*, &c.] That Chriſt is a prieſt, and an high-prieſt, has been obſerved already, in ch. ii. 17. but here he is called a *great* one, becauſe of the dignity of his perſon, as follows, and the virtue of his ſacrifice; and becauſe of the place where he now officiates as a prieſt, heaven; and with reſpect to the continuation of his prieſtood; and likewiſe becauſe he makes others prieſts unto God; and this great high-prieſt is no other than the Word of God before ſpoken of: ſo the divine *Logos*, or Word, is often called a prieſt, and an high-prieſt, by *Philo* the *Jew* [t]. This great high-prieſt believers *have*, and have an intereſt in him; he is called to this office, and inveſted with it; he has been ſent to do his work as a prieſt; and he has done the greateſt part of it, and is now doing the reſt; and ſaints receive Chriſt as ſuch, and the bleſſings of grace from him, thro' his ſacrifice and interceſſion: *that is paſſed into the heavens*; he came down from thence, and offered himſelf a ſacrifice for the ſins of his people; and having done this, he aſcended thither again, to appear to make interceſſion for them; whereby he fully anſwers to his character as the great high-prieſt: and what makes him more fully to appear ſo, is what follows, *Jeſus, the Son of God*; the former of theſe names ſignifies a ſaviour, and reſpects his office; the latter is expreſſive of his dignity, and reſpects his perſon; who is the Son of God in ſuch ſenſe as angels and men are not; not by creation, nor adoption, but by nature; not as man and mediator, but as God, being of the ſame nature with his Father, and equal to him; and 'tis this which makes him a great high-prieſt, and gives virtue and efficacy to all he does as ſuch: wherefore, *let us hold faſt* our *profeſſion*; of faith, of the grace and doctrine of faith, and of Chriſt, and ſalvation by him, and of the hope of eternal life and happineſs; which being made both by words and deeds, publickly and ſincerely, ſhould be held faſt; which ſuppoſes ſomething valuable in it, and that there is danger of dropping it; and that it requires ſtrength, courage, and greatneſs of mind, and an uſe of all proper means: and it ſhould be held without wavering; for it is good and profitable, it recommends the Goſpel; and it has been made publickly before witneſſes; and not to hold it faſt is diſpleaſing to God, and reſented by him: and the prieſthood of Chriſt is an argument to enforce this duty, for he is the high-prieſt of our profeſſion; he has eſpouſed our cauſe, and abode by it; he has bore witneſs to the truth of the Goſpel himſelf; he prays for the ſupport of our faith; he pities and ſuccours; and he is paſſed into the heavens, where he appears for us, owns us, and will own us.

Ver. 15. *For we have not an high-prieſt*, &c.] That is cruel and unmerciful; the ſaints have an high-prieſt, but not ſuch an one: *which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities*; ſuch as bodily diſeaſes, and wants, perſecutions from men, and the temptations of ſatan; under all which Chriſt ſympathizes with his people; and which ſympathy of his ariſes from his knowledge and experience of theſe things, and the ſhare he has had of them, and from that union there is between him and his people: and it is not a bare ſympathy, but is attended with his aſſiſtance, ſupport, and deliverance; and the conſideration of it is of great comfort to the ſaints: *but was in all points tempted like as we are*; of the temptations of Chriſt, and of the ſaints, ſee the note on ch. ii. 18. yet *without ſin*; there was no ſin in his nature; tho' he was encompaſſed about with infirmities, yet not with ſinful infirmities, only ſinleſs ones; nor was there any ſin in his temptations; tho' he was ſolicited to ſin by ſatan, yet he could find none in him to work upon; nor could he draw him into the commiſſion of any ſin.

Ver. 16. *Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace*, &c.] Either to Chriſt, who is before ſpoken of as an high-prieſt, and who was typified by the mercy-ſeat, to which there ſeems to be an alluſion; and coming to him as a prieſt upon his throne, is very proper: to him ſaints come for pardon and cleanſing, and for a juſtifying righteouſneſs, for the acceptance of their perſons, and the preſentation of their ſervices, and for every ſupply of grace; and to him they may come *boldly*, ſince he ſtands in the relations of a father, huſband, and brother; and from him they may expect to receive mercy, ſince it is kept for him, and with him, and is only diſpenſed thro' him; and in him they may hope to find grace, ſince all fulneſs of it dwells in him; and help in every time of need, ſince their help is laid on him. Or elſe to God the Father, ſince Chriſt, the high-prieſt, is the way of acceſs to God, and it is by him the ſaints come unto the Father; who is repreſented as on a *throne*, to ſhew his majeſty, and to command reverence; and as on a *throne of grace*, to encourage diſtreſſed ſouls to come unto him; and to expreſs his ſovereignty in the diſtribution of his grace: and this coming to him

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[s] Miſna Tamid, c. 4. §. 2.

[t] Alleg. l. 2. p. 76. De Profugis, p. 466. & de Somniis, p. 597.

is a ſacerdotal act, for every believer is a prieſt; and is not local, but ſpiritual, and with the heart, and by faith; and chiefly regards the duty of prayer, and a drawing nigh to God in that ordinance with ſpiritual ſacrifices to offer unto him: and this may be done *boldly*, or *with freedom of ſpeech*; ſpeaking out plainly all that is in the heart, uſing an holy courage and intrepidity of mind, free from ſervile fear, and a baſhful ſpirit; all which requires an heart ſprinkled from an evil conſcience, faith in the perſon, blood, and righteouſneſs of Chriſt, a view of God, as a God of peace, grace, and mercy, and a holy confidence of being heard by him; and ſuch a ſpirit and behaviour at the throne of grace, are very conſiſtent with reverence of the divine majeſty, with ſubmiſſion to his will, and with that humility which becomes ſaints. The *Jews* often ſpeak of, כסא הדין, *a throne of judgment*, and, כסא רחמים, *a throne of mercy*[u]; and repreſent God as ſitting upon one or other of theſe, when he is diſpenſing juſtice or mercy[w]; and the latter they ſometimes call, as here, כסא חסד ורחמים, *a throne of grace and mercy*[x]: and ſo they make the firſt man *Adam* to pray to God after this manner[y]; "let my prayer come before the throne of thy glory, and let my cry come before, כסא רחמיך, *the throne of thy mercy*." The end of coming hither is, *that we may obtain mercy*; the ſure mercies of *David*, the bleſſings of the everlaſting covenant; particularly pardoning mercy, and the freſh application of it, and every other bleſſing of grace that is needful: and there's reaſon to expect it, ſince there is mercy with God; and it is with Chriſt, as the head of the covenant; and it is ready for thoſe that aſk it; and it has been obtained by many, and is everlaſting. *And find grace to help in time of need*; the *Syriac* verſion renders it, *in time of affliction*; which is a time of need, as every time of diſtreſs is, whether from the immediate hand of God, or thro' the perſecutions of men, or the temptations of ſatan: and help at ſuch times may be expected; ſince not only God is able to help, but he has promiſed it; and he has laid help on Chriſt; and gives it ſeaſonably, and at the beſt time; and it ſprings from grace, yea it is grace that does help; by which may be meant, the diſcoveries of God's love, and the ſupplies of grace from Chriſt: which may be hoped for, ſeeing God is the God of all grace; and he is ſeated on a throne of grace; and all fulneſs of grace dwells in Chriſt: to find grace often, ſignifies to find favour with God, to be accepted by him, as well as to receive grace from him.

CHAP. V.

THE Apoſtle having made mention of Chriſt as an high-prieſt, in the preceding chapter, proceeds in this to give an account of an high-prieſt, and applies the character of him to Chriſt; and ſhews that he is of another order of prieſthood than that of *Aaron*, even of the order of *Melchiſedek*; of whom he could ſay many things, but the *Hebrews* were dull of hearing them; which leads him to blame them for their rudeneſs, and nonproficience. The deſcription of the high prieſt is taken from his relation to men, ſeparation from them, and ordination for them; from his oblation of their gifts and ſacrifices; from his ſympathy with them, and from his call of God, ver. 1, 2, 3, 4. all which are accommodated to Chriſt; as his vocation of God, ver. 5, 6. confirmed by two teſtimonies out of *Pſ.* ii. 7. and cx. 4. his being a man, and having infirmities, tho' ſinleſs ones, and his ſympathy with men, and compaſſion on them, ver. 7. his obedience and ſufferings, and the oblation of himſelf, whereby he became the author of ſalvation to his people, which is the main thing in his prieſthood, ver. 8, 9. and which was not of the order of *Aaron*, tho' in ſome things there was an agreement with it, but of the order of *Melchiſedek*, ver. 10. of whom the Apoſtle could ſay many ſurprizing things; but theſe *Hebrews* were dull of apprehenſion, and uncapable of receiving them, ver. 11. And then he proceeds to blame them for their dulneſs, which he aggravates by the time they had been in the ſchool of Chriſt, when it might have been expected they would have been teachers of others; by their being yet ſcholars, and of the loweſt claſs, who had need to be taught the firſt rudiments of the chriſtian religion; yea, by their being as babes that ſtood in need of milk, and could not bear meat, ver. 12. And then follows a deſcription both of babes, and of adult perſons; ſuch as are unſkilful in the word of righteouſneſs are babes, and uſe milk; but thoſe who exerciſe their ſpiritual ſenſes, to diſcern between good and bad doctrine, are adult, and can digeſt ſtrong meat, ver. 13, 14.

Ver. 1. *For every high-prieſt taken from among men*, &c.] Every one that was an high-prieſt under the law was a man, and not an angel; and it was proper he ſhould be ſo, that he might be a prieſt for men, have compaſſion on them, and offer for them; and he was among the number of common men, and was taken out from them, and choſen and ſeparated from the reſt of men, as *Aaron* and his ſons were from the children of *Iſrael*, *Exod.* xxviii. 1. And ſuch an one *is ordained for men*; in their room and ſtead, and for their good; and above them, as the word ſometimes ſignifies; he was exalted unto, and inveſted with a ſuperior office, to which he was ordained acccording to the law of a carnal commandment, by anointing with oil, and without an oath. *In things pertaining to God*; in things in which God had to do with men; and ſo he preſided over them in the name of God, and declared the will of God unto them, and bleſſed them; and in things in which men had to do with God; and ſo he appeared in their name, and repreſented their perſons, and preſented their ſacrifices to God, as follows: *that he may offer both gifts and ſacrifices for ſins*; free-will-offerings, peace-offerings, burnt-offerings, ſin and treſpaſs-offerings, all kind of ſacrifice.

Ver. 2. *Who can have compaſſion on the ignorant*, &c.] Who have committed ſins of ignorance, and bring their ſacrifices for them; theſe he does not inſult and upbraid, nor break out into anger and indignation againſt; but pities them, and ſympathizes with them; has a juſt meaſure of compaſſion ſuitable to their condition, and bears with them with great moderation and temper: *and on them that are out of the way*; of God's commandments; who are like ſheep going aſtray, and turn

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[u] Targum in Pſ. xxix. 10. T. Bab. Avoda Zara, fol. 3. 2. Zohar in Gen. fol. 38. 3. & in Num. fol. 91. 2. & 93. 2.

[w] Megillat Eſther, fol. 95. 1.

[x] Raziel, fol. 32. 1.

[y] Ibid. fol. 3. 1.

to their own way; who tranſgreſs the law of God, and err from it; perhaps ſuch who ſin knowingly and wilfully, and thro' infirmity, are meant: *for that he himſelf alſo is compaſſed with infirmity*; not of body only, but of mind, ſinful infirmity; he had much of it, it beſet him all around; he was *clothed* with it, as the *Syriac* verſion renders it; as *Joſhua* the high-prieſt was with filthy garments, *Zech.* iii. 3.

Ver. 3. *And by reaſon hereof*, &c.] Becauſe of his ſinful infirmity: *he ought, as for the people, ſo alſo for himſelf to offer for ſins*; as he offered ſacrifice for the ſins of the people, ſo he was obliged to offer for his own ſins; in this Chriſt differed from the high-prieſt, for he had no ſin of his own to offer for, ch. vii. 27. but they had, and therefore offered for them, *Lev.* xvi. 11. and made a confeſſion of them: the form of which, as uſed on the day of atonement, was this; "he put both his hands upon the bullock, "and confeſſed, and thus he ſaid: I beſeech thee, "O Lord, I have done wickedly, I have tranſ"greſſed, I have ſinned before thee, I and my "houſe; I beſeech thee, O Lord, pardon the ini"quities, tranſgreſſions, and ſins, which I have "done wickedly, tranſgreſſed, and ſinned before "thee, I and my houſe." And this he did a ſecond time on that day [z].

Ver. 4. *And no man taketh this honour to himſelf*, &c.] That is, the honour of the prieſthood: the office of the high-prieſt was a very honourable one; it was a peculiar honour to *Aaron*, and his ſons, to be ſeparated unto it; their inſtalment into it was very grand and ſolemn; at that time they were anointed with oil, and clothed with glorious garments, and ſacrifices were offered for them; they had an honourable maintenance aſſigned them, and a large retinue of prieſts and levites to attend them; great reſpect and reverence were ſhown them: but their principal honour lay in the work they performed; in repreſenting the whole body of the people; in offering gifts and ſacrifices for them; in bleſſing them; and in the reſolution of difficult caſes brought unto them; in all which they were types of Chriſt, the high-prieſt. Now no man might take this honourable office upon himſelf, or intrude himſelf into it, or obtain it by any unjuſt method, or in any other way than by a call from God; nor did any man dare to do it, until of late, when ſome got into it of themſelves, and were put in by the *Roman* governours, and even purchaſed it of them [a]: ſo *Joſhuah ben Gamla* became an high-prieſt [b]; and ſome have thought the Apoſtle has ſome reſpect to theſe wicked practices, and tacitly reproves them, as what ought not to be: for no one ought to be in this office, *but he that is called of God, as* was *Aaron*; whoſe call was immediately from the Lord, and was unqueſtionable: *Moſes* was ordered to ſeparate him, and his ſons, from the children of *Iſrael*, and inſtal them into this office; they were deſtroyed by fire, or ſwallowed up by the earth that diſputed his call; and this was confirmed by a miracle, by his dry rod budding, blooming, and bringing forth almonds: and the Apoſtle inſtances in him, becauſe his call was ſo remarkable and authentic; and becauſe he was the firſt high-prieſt of the *Jews*, and from whence the reſt deſcended, who were lawful ones.

Ver. 5. *So alſo Chriſt glorified not himſelf to be made an high-prieſt*, &c.] It was a glorifying of Chriſt, to make him an high-prieſt; not as God, for as ſuch no addition can be made to his glory; yea, it was a condeſcenſion in him to become a prieſt: but as man; it was an honour to the human nature to be united to the Son of God; and to be ſeparated from others to this office; and to be called unto it, qualified for it, and inveſted with it; and to be of the order he was, and to do the work; and the very aſſiſtance he had in it, for the accompliſhment of it, was a glorifying of him, for which he prayed; and the work being done, he had glory given him by his Father; and an aſcription of glory is made to him by angels and ſaints: but Chriſt did not take this high and honourable office to himſelf, nor the glory of it; indeed, he did not receive it from man, nor was he made a prieſt according to the ceremonial law; yet he did not intrude himſelf into this office: *but he that ſaid unto him, thou art my Son, to-day have I begotten thee*; he appointed him to this office; he ſent him to execute it; he anointed him with the oil of gladneſs above his fellows; he conſecrated and eſtabliſhed him in it with an oath; and preſcribed to him what he ſhould do, ſuffer, and offer; and declared to him what he might expect as the reward thereof. Theſe words are taken out of *Pſ.* ii. 7. ſee the note on ch. i. 5. and they are not to be conſidered as conſtitutive of Chriſt's prieſthood, as if that was intended by the begetting of him as a Son; but as deſcriptive of the perſon, who called him to it, who ſtood in the relation of a Father to Chriſt, and Chriſt in the relation of a Son to him; therefore the one was very proper to call, and the other a very fit perſon to be called to this office, being every way capable of executing it, to the glory of God, and to the good of men.

Ver. 6. *As he ſaith alſo in another* place, &c.] Or *pſalm*, namely, in *Pſ.* cx. 4. that is the ſame perſon, even God the Father, who ſpake the words before cited, alſo expreſſed the following: *thou art a prieſt for ever, after the order of Melchiſedeck*; that the pſalm, from whence theſe words are taken, belongs to the Meſſiah, ſee the note on *Matt.* xxii. 44. and this very paſſage is applied unto him by the *Jewiſh* writers [c]; and had not this been the general ſenſe of the *Jewiſh* church at this time, the Apoſtle writing to *Hebrews* would not have produced it; and it very clearly expreſſes the prieſthood of Chriſt, the eternity of it, and the order according to which it was; and it being not according to the order of *Aaron*, but of another, ſhows the change of the prieſthood, and ſo of the law; of *Melchiſedeck*, ſee the note on ch. vii. 1.

Ver. 7. *Who in the days of his fleſh*, &c.] Or *of his humanity*, as the *Arabic* verſion renders it; or *when he was clothed with fleſh*, as the *Syriac* verſion; in the time of his humiliation, when he was attended with the ſinleſs infirmities of the fleſh, or human nature; it may take in the whole courſe of his life on earth, eſpecially the latter part of it: it is not to be concluded from hence, that he has not fleſh now, or is not in the fleſh; for it is certain tha the had fleſh after his reſurrection; only now he is free from all the infirmities of the fleſh, the pains, and ſorrows, and griefs of it, which he endured when here on earth: *when he had offered up prayers and ſupplications*; as he often did in many parts of his life, particularly in the garden, and upon the croſs, when he offered up himſelf: and as the days of Chriſt's fleſh were filled up with prayers and ſupplications, ſo ſhould ours be alſo: the word for *ſupplications*, ſignifies branches of olive trees, covered with wool [d]; which ſuch as ſued for peace, carried in their hands, and ſo came to ſignify ſupplications for peace: the manner in which theſe were offered up by Chriſt, was *with ſtrong crying* and *tears*; with a moſt vehement outcry, with a loud voice; as when on the croſs; and tho' there is no mention of his tears at that time, or when in the garden, no doubt but he ſhed them: all that Chriſt did, and ſaid, are not written; ſome things were received by tradition, and by inſpiration; Chriſt wept at other times, and why not at theſe? and there are ſome circumſtances in his prayers which intimate as much, *Matt.* xxvi. 38. and xxvii. 46. *Luke.* xxii. 44. which ſhows the weight of ſin, of ſorrow, and of puniſhment, that lay upon him, and the weakneſs of the human nature, conſidered in it ſelf: and it may be obſerved to our comfort, that as Chriſt's crying and tears were confined to the days of his fleſh, or to the time of his life here on earth, ſo ſhall ours be alſo. Mention is made of, הפלות חזקות, *ſtrong prayers* [e] in *Jewiſh* writings. The perſon to whom Chriſt offered his prayers, is deſcribed in the following words, *unto him that was able to ſave him from death*; from a corporal death, as he could, but that it was otherwiſe determined; or rather to raiſe him from the dead, to deliver him from the ſtate of the dead, from the power of death, and the grave, as he did; and ſo the *Syriac* verſion renders it, *to quicken him from death*; to reſtore him from death to life: *and was heard in that he feared*; or *by fear*; by God, who was the object of his fear, and who is called the fear of *Iſaac*, *Gen.* xxxi. 42. he was always heard by him, and ſo he was in the garden, and on the croſs; and was carried thro' his ſufferings, and was delivered from the fear of death, and was ſaved from the dominion and power of it, being raiſed from the dead by his Father: or *he was heard becauſe of his fear*, or *reverence*; either becauſe of the dignity and reverence of his perſon, in which he was had by God; or becauſe of his reverence of his Father.

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[z] Miſna Yoma, c. 3. §. 8. & c. 4. §. 2.

[a] T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 8. 2. Bartenora in Miſn. Yoma, c. 1. §. 1. & Maimon. in ib. §. 3.

[b] Miſn. Yebamot, c. 6. §. 4. & Gloſſ. in T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 18. 1.

[c] Moſes Hadarſan apud Galatin. l. 10. c. 6. Abot R. Nathan, c. 34.

[d] Harpocratian. Lex. p. 152. Alexand. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 5. c. 3.

Ver. 8. *Though he were a Son*, &c.] The Son of God, as the *Vulgate Latin* verſion reads; not by creation, nor by adoption, nor by office, but by nature, being the only-begotten of the Father, having the ſame nature and perfections with him: *yet learned he obedience*; not to his parents, or civil magiſtrates, tho' that is true; nor merely to the precepts of the law, which he did; but unto death; thro' ſufferings he became obedient to death, even the death of the croſs: and this he learnt; not that he was ignorant of the nature of it; nor was he deſtitute of an obedient diſpoſition to it; but the meaning is, he had an experience of it, and effected it; and which was voluntary and done in our room and ſtead; and is the rule and meaſure of our righteouſneſs before God: and this he learned, *by the things which he ſuffered*; from men, from devils, and from the juſtice of God, Chriſt's ſonſhip did not exempt him from obedience and ſufferings; this ſhows the dignity of Chriſt's perſon, that he is the Son of God, not as mediator, for as ſuch he is a ſervant; and it would be no wonder that he ſhould learn obedience as a ſervant; and this ſhows alſo the great humility and condeſcenſion of Chriſt in obeying and ſuffering for us, tho' ſo great a perſon; and likewiſe the vile nature of ſin, and the ſtrictneſs of divine juſtice: and we may learn from hence, not to expect to be exempted from ſufferings on account of ſonſhip; nor to conclude we are not ſons, becauſe we ſuffer; and that afflictions are inſtructive, and by them experience is learned.

Ver. 9. *And being made perfect*, &c.] In his obedience thro' ſufferings; having compleated his obedience, gone thro' his ſufferings, and finiſhed his ſacrifice, and being perfectly glorified in heaven: *he became the author of eternal ſalvation unto all them that obey him*; the ſalvation Chriſt is the author of is *eternal*; it was reſolved upon from eternity, and contrived in it; it was ſecured in the everlaſting covenant, in which not only a ſaviour was provided, but bleſſings both of grace and glory: and it is to eternity; and ſtands diſtinguiſhed from a temporal ſalvation, and is oppoſed to eternal damnation; it is the ſalvation of the ſoul, which is immortal; and it takes in both grace and glory, which are of a durable nature; and the continuance of it is owing to the abiding and laſting virtue of Chriſt's perſon, blood, and righteouſneſs: and Chriſt is the cauſe or author of this ſalvation, by his obedience and ſufferings; by obeying the precept, and bearing the penalty of the law; by the price of his blood, and by the power of his arm; by his death and by his life; by his ſacrifice on the croſs, and by his interceſſion in heaven; by beſtowing grace here, and glory hereafter: this ſhows that ſalvation is done, and that Chriſt is the ſole author of it, and that all the glory of it ſhould be given to him; and thoſe to whom he is the author of ſalvation, are ſuch as hearken to the voice of his Goſpel, and obey him in his ordinances. Chriſt is not the author of ſalvation to all men; all men do not obey him; all thoſe whom Chriſt ſaves, he brings them to an obedience to himſelf; for his obedience for them does not exempt them from obedience to him, tho' their obedience is no cauſe of their ſalvation; Chriſt himſelf is the alone author of that.

Ver. 10. *Called of God an high-prieſt, after the order of Melchiſedec.*] על דברתי, *according to what is ſaid of him*, *Pſ.* cx. 4. there is a reſemblance between *Melchiſedec* and Chriſt; many things that are ſaid of the one, agree with the other: there is a likeneſs in *Melchiſedec* to Chriſt; in his perſon, and what is ſaid of him; that he was without father and mother; and in his office as a prieſt, and in the manner of his inſtalment into it; and in the antiquity, dignity, and perpetuity of it: and this is repeated for the further confirmation of Chriſt's prieſthood, and is a concluſion of the truth of it from ſufficient evidence: this does not ſo much deſign the conſtitution of Chriſt as prieſt, nor the call of him to that office, as the denomination or furnaming of him a prieſt of *Melchiſedec*'s order, becauſe of the agreement between them; and contains a reaſon of Chriſt's being the author of eternal ſalvation, becauſe he is a prieſt for ever; and prevents any objections againſt Chriſt's prieſthood, and opens a way to diſcourſe more largely concerning it.

Ver. 11. *Of whom we have many things to ſay*, &c.] Either of *Melchiſedec*, or of Chriſt, or of his prieſthood, or of all of theſe; ſince the Apoſtle does largely treat of them in the following chapters: he ſays many things concerning *Melchiſedec* in the *ſeventh* chapter, and many things of Chriſt, and his prieſthood, in thoſe that follow; Chriſt is a large and inexhauſtible ſubject in the Goſpel-miniſtry, and what a Goſpel miniſter delights to dwell on; and it is a fund and ſtock from whence he is furniſhed with things of the greateſt uſefulneſs, and of the utmoſt importance: *and hard to be uttered*; as were many things reſpecting *Melchiſedec*, mentioned in ch. vii. 3. and alſo concerning Chriſt, and his prieſthood;

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[e] Tzeror Hammor, fol. 37. 4.

prieſthood: abſtruſe and difficult things are to be looked into, conſidered, ſearched after, and inſiſted on: the whole ſcripture is profitable, and the whole counſel of God is to be declared, and things hard to be explained ſhould be attempted; this is the way to an increaſe of light and knowledge; tho' it becomes miniſters to conſult their own abilities, and the capacity of their hearers, that they don't go beyond them: *ſeeing ye are dull of hearing*; this dulneſs of hearing is thought by ſome to ariſe from their afflictions; or from their attachment to the law of *Moſes*; or rather from their ſluggiſhneſs, indocility, and want of induſtry; and oftentimes this ariſes from pride and prejudice, and irreverence of the word of God; and frequently from the deceitfulneſs of riches, and the cares of this life.

Ver. 12. *For when for the time ye ought to be teachers*, &c.] Theſe *Hebrews* had had great advantages; they were not only deſcended from *Abraham*, and had the law of *Moſes*, and the writings of the Old Teſtament, but ſome of them had enjoyed the miniſtry of Chriſt, and however of his Apoſtles; and it was now about thirty years from the day of *Pentecoſt*, in which the gifts of the Holy Ghoſt were beſtowed in ſuch an extraordinary manner, and a large number were converted, and a church-ſtate ſettled among them; and therefore conſidering the length of time, the opportunities and advantages they had enjoyed, it might have been expected, and indeed it is what ſhould have been, that they would have been teachers of others, ſome in a private, and ſome in a public way: from whence it may be obſerved, that to have time for learning, and yet make no proficiency, is an aggravation of dulneſs; moreover, that men ought to be hearers, and make ſome good proficiency in hearing, before they are fit to be teachers of others; alſo, that perſons are not only to hear for their own edification, but for the inſtruction of others, tho' all hearers are not deſigned for public teachers; for to be teachers of others, requires a conſiderable ſhare of knowledge: to which may be added, that the churches of Chriſt are the proper ſeminaries of Goſpel miniſters. But this was ſo far from being the caſe of theſe *Hebrews*, that the Apoſtle ſays of them, *ye have need that one teach you again, which be the firſt principles of the oracles of God*; by *the oracles of God* are meant the ſcriptures, not the law of *Moſes* only, but all the writings of the Old Teſtament, which were given by the inſpiration of God, and are authoritative and infallible; and by the *firſt principles* of them are intended, either the firſt promiſes in them, concerning the Meſſiah; or the inſtitutions, rites, and ceremonies of the law, which are ſometimes called ϛοιχεια, *elements*, *Gal.* iv. 3, 9. where the ſame word is uſed as here; and which were the alphabet and rudiments of the Goſpel to the *Jews*: or elſe the Apoſtle deſigns the plain doctrines of the Goſpel, which were at firſt preached unto them, in which they needed to be again inſtructed, as they were at firſt; ſo that inſtead of going forward, they had rather gone back: *and are become ſuch as have need of milk*; of the types, ſhadows, and figures of the law, which were ſuited to the infant ſtate of the church, who by ſenſible objects were directed to the view of Goſpel grace; or of the plain and eaſier parts of the Goſpel, comparable to milk for their purity, ſweetneſs, nouriſhing nature, and being eaſy of digeſtion: *and not of ſtrong meat*; ſuch as the deep things of God, the myſteries of the Goſpel; thoſe which are more hard to be underſtood, received, and digeſted; ſuch as the doctrines of the Trinity, of God's everlaſting love, of eternal election and reprobation, of the perſon of Chriſt, the abrogation of the law, *&c.*

Ver. 13. *For every one that uſeth milk*, &c.] And ſits down contented with the firſt principles of the Goſpel, ſuch as are eaſily taken in and digeſted; or makes uſe of the ceremonial law, as a ſchoolmaſter to teach him the Goſpel: is *unſkilful in the word of righteouſneſs*; the Goſpel, which is a doctrine of righteouſneſs; not of works of righteouſneſs done by men, and of juſtification by them, or of a man's own righteouſneſs; but of the pure, perfect, and everlaſting righteouſneſs of Chriſt: and it's called ſo, becauſe it is the means of ſtripping a man of his own righteouſneſs; and of revealing the righteouſneſs of Chriſt unto him; and of working faith in him to lay hold upon it; and of diſcovering the agreement there is between the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, and the juſtice of God; and of teaching men to live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly: and ſuch are unſkilful in it, who either have no knowledge of the doctrine of juſtification; of the matter of it, Chriſt's righteouſneſs; of the form of it, by imputation; and of the date of it, before faith: or have a very confuſed notion of it, joining their own works with Chriſt's righteouſneſs, for juſtification, as many *judaizing* profeſſors did; or who, if they have a notional knowledge of it, have no practical concern in it; don't believe with the heart unto righteouſneſs; have not the experience, ſweetneſs, and power of this doctrine upon them; and do not live lives agreeable to it: *for he is a babe*. This word is uſed ſometimes by way of commendation, and is expreſſive of ſome good characters of the ſaints; ſuch as harmleſſneſs and inoffenſiveneſs, humility and meekneſs, a deſire after the ſincere milk of the word, freedom from rancor and malice, hypocriſy and guile; but here it is uſed by way of reproach, and denotes levity and inconſtancy, ignorance and non-proficiency, want of digeſtion of ſtrong meat, and incapacity to take care of themſelves, as ſtanding in need of tutors and governours.

Ver. 14. *But ſtrong meat belongeth to them that are of full age*, &c.] Or *perfect*; ſee 1 *Cor.* ii. 6. This does not intend a perfection of juſtification, for tho' ſome have a greater degree of faith than others, and a clearer diſcovery of their juſtification, yet babes in Chriſt are as perfectly juſtified, as more grown and experienced believers; nor a perfection of ſanctification, for there is no perfection of holineſs but in Chriſt; and tho' the work of ſanctification may be in greater perfection in one ſaint, than in another, yet all are imperfect in this life; and as to a perfection of parts, babes have this as well as adult perſons: but it deſigns a perfection of knowledge; for tho' none are entirely perfect, yet ſome have arrived to a greater degree of the knowledge of Goſpel-myſteries, than others, and to theſe the ſtrong meat of the Goſpel belongs; they are capable of underſtanding the more myſterious parts of the Goſpel; of ſearching into the deep things of God; and of receiving, and digeſting the more ſublime truths of the chriſtian religion: even *thoſe, who by reaſon of uſe, have their ſenſes exerciſed to diſcern both good and evil*; that is, their ſpiritual ſenſes, the internal ſenſes of the underſtanding and judgment, ſignified by external ones; as by ſeeing the Son; hearing the voice of Chriſt; ſavouring or ſmelling a ſweet odour in the things of God, and Chriſt; taſting that the Lord is gracious; feeling and handling the word of life, as theſe are held forth in the everlaſting Goſpel: and theſe being exerciſed on their proper object, by uſe, an habit is contracted; and ſuch are qualified for diſcerning, as between moral good and evil, and the worſe and better ſtate of the church, and between law and Goſpel, ſo between the doctrines of Chriſt, and the doctrines of men; who find they differ: the doctrines of Chriſt ſuch experienced perſons find to be good, wholeſome, nouriſhing, and ſalutary; and the doctrines of men to be evil, to eat, as does a canker, and to be pernicious, poiſonous, and damnable; and the diſcernment they make, and the judgment they form, are not according to the dictates of carnal reaſon, but according to the ſcriptures of truth, and their own experience.

CHAP. VI.

IN this chapter the Apoſtle exhorts the believing *Hebrews*, not to reſt in the rudiments of the chriſtian religion they had learned; and much leſs to lay them again in the foundation after the *Jewiſh* manner, of which he inſtances in ſix particulars; but to ſeek after a perfect knowledge of evangelic truths, which, under a divine permiſſion, was his determination to do, ver. 1, 2, 3. which was the beſt method to prevent apoſtacy, he diſſuades from; by giving the characters of apoſtates, ſhewing how far they may go in the knowledge of divine things, and yet fall away; by aſſerting the impoſſibility of their repentance and recovery, with the reaſon of it, taken from the blackneſs of their crimes, ver. 4, 5, 6. and the difference between them, and true believers, he illuſtrates by two ſorts of earth, the one takes in the rain that comes down from heaven, and brings forth herbs for the uſe of its dreſſer, and is bleſſed of God; ſuch are true believers in Chriſt, ver. 7. the other bears thorns and briars, and is rejected and curſed, and in the iſſue burned; and to ſuch earth the above apoſtates may be compared, ver. 8. but leſt the believing *Hebrews*, ſuch as were truly gracious among them, ſhould conclude that this was their caſe, and that it was deſperate; and leſt they ſhould think the Apoſtle had an ill opinion of them, he declares, he was otherwiſe perſuaded of them, and hoped, and believed, they were intereſted in the things of ſalvation, ver. 9. the reaſons of which perſuaſion are taken from the work of grace, which was wrought in them; from their laborious love they ſhowed to the name of God, and to his people, and which they continued to ſhow; and from the righteouſneſs of God in not forgetting all this, ver. 10. And then he proceeds to exhort them to diligence in the exerciſe of grace, and diſcharge of duty, that ſo they might arrive to a full aſſurance of hope, ver. 11. and not to indulge ſlothfulneſs, but to be followers of the ſaints that were gone before them; whoſe character is, that thro' faith, and patience, they had inherited the promiſes, things the Apoſtle would have thoſe believers imitate them in, ver. 12. and particularly inſtances in *Abraham*, the father of this people, and of all believers; who having a promiſe from God, to which an oath was annexed, patiently waited for it, and obtained it, ver. 13, 14, 15. and having made mention of an oath, the Apoſtle takes notice of the nature and uſe of one among men, ver 16. and of the deſign of God in making uſe of one himſelf, which was to confirm his promiſe, and ſhew its immutability to the heirs of it; and that by obſerving theſe two immutable things, which could never fail, they might have ſolid and abiding comfort; even all ſuch, who under a ſenſe of danger, flee to Chriſt for refuge, who is the ground of hope propoſed to them in the Goſpel, to lay hold upon, ver. 17, 18. and becauſe of the firmneſs of the grace of hope, as it is converſant with Chriſt, and is caſt on him, the good ground of it, it is compared to an anchor; and is ſaid to be ſure and ſtedfaſt, and to enter within the vail, where Chriſt is gone as a fore-runner; and which is an encouragement to that grace to enter in after him; who is farther deſcribed by his name *Jeſus*, by his office as an high-prieſt, and by the order of which he is, that of *Melchiſedec*, ver. 19, 20. which is mentioned, to lead on to what the Apoſtle had to ſay concerning him, in the next chapter.

Ver. 1. *Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Chriſt*, &c.] The Goſpel is *the doctrine of Chriſt*, and is ſo called, becauſe Chriſt, as God, is the author of it; as mediator, he received it from his Father; as man, he was the preacher of it; and he is alſo the ſum and ſubſtance of it: the *principles* of this doctrine, are either the eaſier parts of the Goſpel, called *milk* in the latter part of the preceding chapter; which are not to be left with diſlike and contempt, nor ſo as to be forgotten, nor ſo as not to be recurred to at proper times; but ſo as not to abide in and ſtick here, without going further: or rather the ceremonies of the law, which were the elements of the *Jews* religion, and the *beginning*, as the word may be here rendered, of the doctrine of Chriſt; which were ſhadowy and typical of Chriſt, and taught the *Jews* the truths of the Goſpel concerning Chriſt; in theſe the believing *Jews* were very deſirous of ſticking, and of abiding by them, and of continuing them in the Goſpel church; whereas they were to be left, ſince they had had their uſe, and had anſwered what they were deſigned for, and were now aboliſhed by Chriſt. *Let us go on to perfection*; in a comparative ſenſe, to a more perfect knowledge of things, which the clear revelation and miniſtry of the Goſpel lead unto; and which the rites and ceremonies, types and figures of the law, never could: *not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works*; the *Syriac* verſion reads this by way of interrogation, *do ye lay again*, &c. and makes the third verſe to be an anſwer to it: the phraſe, *not laying again the foundation*, is to be read in connexion, not only with this article of repentance, but with each of the other five articles, the foundation of which is no more to be laid again, than this: and not laying it again, either means not teaching it, and ſo refers to the Apoſtle, and other miniſters of the word, who ſhould not inſiſt upon the following things, at leaſt not ſtick there, but go on to deliver things more ſublime and grand; or not hearing it, and ſo refers to the *Hebrews*, who ſhould ſeek after a more perfect knowledge of evangelic truths, than the following articles exhibited to them: and the ſeveral parts of this foundation, which are not to be laid again miniſterially, by preachers, or attended to by hearers, deſign either the firſt things, with which the Goſpel-diſpenſation was uſhered in; or rather, and which I take to be the true ſenſe, the general principles and practices of the *Jews* under the former diſpenſation; for theſe are not the ſix principles of the chriſtian religion, as they are commonly called, but ſo many articles of the *Jewiſh* creed; ſome of which were peculiar to the *Jews*, and others common to them, with us chriſtians: thus, *repentance from dead works*, does not intend evangelical repentance, the doctrine of which is to be miniſterially laid, and the grace itſelf to be exerciſed over and over again; but a repentance which aroſe from, and was ſignified by the ſacrifices of ſlain beaſts; for by them the *Jews* were taught the doctrine of repentance, as well as remiſſion of ſin; and in, and over them did they confeſs their iniquities; yea, every beaſt that was ſlain for ſacrifice, carried in it a conviction of ſin, an acknowledgment of guilt; and it was tacitly owning, that they, for whom the creature was ſlain, deſerved to be treated as that was, and die as that did. So the *Jews* [f] ſay, "when a man ſacrifices a beaſt, he thinks "in his own heart, I am rather a beaſt than this; "for I am he that hath ſinned, and for the ſin which "I have committed I bring this; and it is more "fitting that the man ſhould be ſacrificed ra-"ther than the beaſt; and ſo it appears that, "על ידי קרבנו הוא יחרט, *by the means of his offer-"ing he repents.*" But now under the Goſpel-diſpenſation, believing *Jews*, as theſe were to whom the Apoſtle writes, were not to learn the doctrine of repentance from ſlain beaſts, or to ſignify it in this way; ſince repentance and remiſſion of ſins were preached moſt clearly to them in the name of Chriſt: nor were they to lay again another part of this foundation, or a ſecond article of the *Jewiſh* creed, *and of faith towards God*; which article is expreſſed in language agreeable to the *Jewiſh* diſpenſation; whereas evangelical faith is uſually called the faith of Chriſt, or faith in Chriſt, or towards our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; but this reſpects faith in God, as the God of *Iſrael*: hence ſays our Lord to his diſciples, who were all *Jews*, *ye believe in God*; ye have been taught, and uſed to believe in God, as the God of *Iſrael*; *believe alſo in me*, as his Son, and the Meſſiah, and the mediator between God and man, *John* xiv. 1. ſo that now they were not only to have faith towards God, as the God of *Iſrael*, and to teach and receive that doctrine; but to have faith in Chriſt as the ſaviour of loſt ſinners, without the intermediate uſe of ſacrifices.

Ver. 2. *Of the doctrine of baptiſms*, &c.] Some read this diviſively, *baptiſm and doctrine*, as the *Ethiopic* verſion; as if, the one reſpected the ordinance of baptiſm, and the other the miniſtry of the word; but it is beſt to read them conjunctively: and by which moſt underſtand the Goſpel ordinance of water-baptiſm, ſo called by a change of number, the plural for the ſingular, as the *Syriac* and *Ethiopic* verſions, who render it *baptiſm*; or becauſe of the different perſons baptized, and times of baptizing, as ſome; or becauſe of the trine immerſion, as others; or becauſe of the threefold baptiſm of ſpirit, blood, and water, which have ſome agreement with each other; or becauſe of the baptiſm of *John*, and Chriſt, tho' they are one and the ſame; or becauſe of the inward and outward baptiſm, the one fitting and qualifying for the other; and ſo the doctrine of it is thought to reſpect the neceſſity, uſe, and end of it: but ſince there is but one baptiſm, and the above reaſons, for the plural expreſſion are not ſolid, and ſufficiently ſatisfying, it is beſt to interpret this of the divers baptiſms among the *Jews*, ſpoken of in *Heb*. ix. 10. which had a *doctrine* in them, to that people; teaching them the cleanſing virtue of the blood of Chriſt, and leading them to it, to waſh in for ſin, and for uncleanneſs; but now, ſince this blood was ſhed, they were no more to teach nor learn the doctrine of cleanſing by the blood of Chriſt this way; nor any more to be led unto it thro' theſe divers baptiſms, ablutions, and purifications. *And of laying on of hands*; the foundation of this was to be no more laid, nor the doctrine of it to be any longer taught, and learned in the way it had been; for not the rite, but the doctrine of laying on of hands is here intended; and it has no reference to the rite of laying on of hands by the Apoſtles, either on private perſons, or officers of churches; for what was the doctrine of ſuch a rite, is not eaſy to ſay; but to the rite of laying on of hands of the prieſts, and of the people, upon the head of ſacrifices; which had a doctrine in it, even the doctrine of the imputation of ſin to Chriſt, the great ſacrifice. It was uſual with the *Jews* [g], to call the impoſition of hands upon the ſacrifice, ſimply, סמיכה, *laying on of hands*; and they underſtood by it the transferring of ſin from the perſons that laid on hands, to the ſacrifice, on which they were laid; and that hereby, as they expreſs it, ſins were ſeparated from them, and, as it were, put upon the ſacrifice [h]; but now believers were no longer to be taught and learn the great doctrine of the imputation of ſin, by this rite and ceremony; ſince Chriſt has been made ſin for them, and has had ſins imputed to him, and has bore them in his own body on the tree: *and of reſurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment*; articles of faith, which diſtinguiſhed the *Jews* from the *Gentiles*, who were greatly ſtrangers to a future ſtate, the reſurrection of the dead, and judgment to come: theſe are doctrines of pure revelation, and were taught under the Old Teſtament, and were believed by the generality of the *Jews*, and are articles which they hold in common with us chriſtians; yet the believing *Hebrews* were not to reſt in the knowledge of theſe things, and in the ſmaller degrees of light they had in them, under the former diſpenſation; but were to go on to perfection, and bear forward towards a greater ſhare of knowledge of theſe, and other more ſublime doctrines of grace; ſince life and immortality are more clearly brought to light by Chriſt thro' the Goſpel.

Ver. 3. *And this will we do if God permit.*] That is, leave the rites and ceremonies of the law, which were the rudiments, or firſt principles of the Goſpel, and go on to a more perfect knowledge of Goſpel truths; and not lay again as the foundation of the miniſtry, or inſiſt upon them as if they were the main things, even the above articles of the *Jewiſh* creed, eſpecially in the way and manner in which they had been taught and learnt: the ſenſe is, that the Apoſtle and his brethren in the miniſtry were determined to inſiſt upon the more ſolid and ſubſtantial parts of the Goſpel, and which tended to bring on their hearers to perfection; and that it became the believing *Hebrews* to ſeek after a greater degree of knowledge under the miniſtry of the word. It is, or at leaſt ſhould be, the determination of a Goſpel miniſter, to preach Chriſt, and the great truths of the Goſpel; and whereſoever God has called him to it, tho' there may be many adverſaries; and tho' he may be reproached, calumniated, and deſerted; reſolution in preaching the Goſpel, and adhering to it, is very commendable in a miniſter; and it is very laudable in hearers to attend to it, ſtand by it, and ſearch further into it; and which both ſhould determine upon with a regard to the will of God, *if God permit*; God's permiſſion is much to be obſerved in the miniſtry of the word, in giving gifts to men, in placing them out here and there, where they ſhall exerciſe them, in directing them to ſubjects, and in making their miniſtry uſeful and ſucceſsful: and it may be obſerved in general, that nothing can be done, or come to paſs, good or bad, but what God permits or wills to be done; no good things, no actions, civil, natural, moral, or ſpiritual; no evil things, the evil of puniſhment, afflictions, the perſecutions of wicked men, the temptations of ſatan, hereſies, and even immoralities.

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[f] Nizzachon Vet. p. 11. Ed. Wagenſeil.

[g] Miſn. Kidduſhin, c. 2. § 8. & Bartenora in ib.

[h] R. Levi ben Gerſom in Exod. fol. 103. 1. & in Lev. fol. 117. 2.

Ver. 4. *For it is impoſſible for thoſe who were once enlightened*, &c.] The *Syriac* and *Ethiopic* verſions render it, *baptized*; and the word is thought to be ſo uſed in ch. x. 32. And indeed baptiſm was called very early *illumination* by the ancients, as by *Juſtin Martyr*[i], and *Clemens Alexandrinus*[k], becauſe only enlightened perſons were the proper ſubjects of it; and the word *once* here uſed ſeems to confirm this ſenſe, ſince baptiſm, when rightly adminiſtred, was not repeated; but then this ſenſe depends upon an uſe of a word, which it is not certain did as yet obtain; nor does the Apoſtle take notice of baptiſm in a parallel place, ch. x. 26, 27. This gave riſe to, and ſeems to favour the error of *Novatus*, that thoſe who fall into ſin after baptiſm are to be cut off from the communion of the church, and never more to be reſtored unto it; contrary to the promiſes of God to returning backſliders, and contrary to facts, as well as to the directions of Chriſt, and his Apoſtles, to receive and reſtore ſuch perſons; and ſuch a notion tends to ſet aſide the interceſſion of Chriſt for fallen believers, and to plunge them into deſpair: it is better therefore to retain the word *enlightened*, in its proper ſenſe, and to underſtand it of perſons enlightened with Goſpel knowledge; there are ſome who are ſavingly enlightened by the Spirit of God, to ſee the impurity of their hearts and actions, and their impotency to perform that which is good, the imperfection of their own righteouſneſs to juſtify them, their loſt ſtate and condition by nature, and to ſee Chriſt and ſalvation by him, and their intereſt in it; and theſe being *once* enlightened, never become darkneſs, or ever ſo fall as to periſh; for if God had a mind to deſtroy them, he would never have ſhown them theſe things, and therefore can't be the perſons deſigned here; unleſs we render the words, as the *Syriac* verſion does, *it is impoſſible*—— דתוב נחטון, *that they ſhould ſin again*; ſo as to die ſpiritually, loſe the grace of God, and ſtand in need of a new work upon them, which would be impoſſible to be done: but rather ſuch are meant, who are ſo enlightened as to ſee the evil effects of ſin, but not the evil that is in ſin; to ſee the good things which come by Chriſt, but not the goodneſs that is in Chriſt; ſo as to reform externally, but not to be ſanctified internally; to have knowledge of the Goſpel doctrinally, but not experimentally; yea, to have ſuch light into it, as to be able to preach it to others, and yet be deſtitute of the grace of God: *and have taſted of the heavenly gift*; either faith, or a juſtifying righteouſneſs, or the pardon of ſin, or eternal life; which are all ſpiritual and heavenly gifts of grace, and which true believers have real taſtes of; and hypocrites pleaſe themſelves with, having ſome ſpeculative notions about them, and ſome deſires after them, ariſing from a natural principle of ſelf-love. Some think the Holy Ghoſt is intended; but rather Chriſt himſelf, the unſpeakable gift of God's love, given from heaven, as the bread of life. Now there are ſome who have a ſaving ſpiritual taſte of this gift; for tho' God's people, whilſt unregenerate, have no ſuch taſte; their taſte is vitiated by ſin, and it is not changed; ſin is the food they live upon, in which they take an imaginary pleaſure, and diſreliſh every thing elſe; but when regenerated, their taſte is changed, ſin is rendered loathſome to them; and they have a real guſt of ſpiritual things, and eſpecially of Chriſt, and find a real delight and pleaſure in feeding by faith upon him; whereby they live upon him, and are nouriſhed up unto eternal life, and therefore can't be the perſons here ſpoken of: but there are others who taſte, but diſlike what they taſte; have no true love to Chriſt, and faith in him; or have only a carnal taſte of him, know him only after the fleſh, or externally, not inwardly and experimentally; or they have only a ſuperficial taſte, ſuch as is oppoſed to eating the fleſh, and drinking the blood of Chriſt, by faith, which is proper to true believers; the guſt they have is but temporary, and ariſes from ſelfiſh principles. *And were made partakers of the Holy Ghoſt*; not his perſon, nor his ſpecial grace; there are ſome who ſo partake of him, as to be united to him, in whom he becomes the principle of ſpiritual life, and motion: ſuch have the fruits of the Spirit, and communion with him; they enjoy his perſonal preſence and inhabitation in them; they have received him as a ſpirit of illumination and conviction, of regeneration and ſanctification, as the ſpirit of faith, and as a comforter; and as a ſpirit of adoption, and the earneſt and ſeal of future glory; but then ſuch can never ſo fall away as to periſh: a believer indeed may be without the ſenſible preſence of the Spirit; the graces of the Spirit may be very low, as to their exerciſe; and they may not enjoy his comforts, gracious influences, and divine aſſiſtance; but the Spirit of God never is, in the above ſenſe, in a caſt-away; where he takes up his dwelling, he never quits it; if ſuch could periſh, not only his own glory, but the glory of the Father, and of the Son, would be loſt likewiſe: but by the Holy Ghoſt is ſometimes meant, the gifts of the Spirit, ordinary or extraordinary, 1 *Cor*. xii. 4—11. and ſo here; and men may be ſaid to be partakers of the Holy Ghoſt, to whom he gives wiſdom and prudence in things natural and civil; the knowledge of things divine and evangelical, in an external way; the power of working miracles, of propheſying, of ſpeaking with tongues, and of the interpretation of tongues; for the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghoſt ſeem chiefly deſigned, which ſome, in the firſt times of the Goſpel, were partakers of, who had no ſhare in ſpecial grace, *Matt*. vii. 22, 23. 1 *Cor*. xiii. 2, 3.

Ver. 5. *And have taſted the good word of God*, &c.] Not the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the eſſential Word of God, who ſeems to be intended before by the heavenly gift; but rather, either the ſcriptures of truth in general, which are the word of God, endited by him, and contain his mind and will; which he makes uſe of for conviction, converſion, inſtruction, and comfort; and which are preſerved by him: and theſe are a *good* word; they come from him who is good; they are a revelation of good things; they make known things true, pleaſant, and profitable: or elſe the Goſpel in particular, of which God is the author; and in which is a wonderful diſplay of his wiſdom and grace; and which he owns and bleſſes for his own glory, and the good of others: and this is a *good word*, the ſame with דבר טוב, *good matter*, or *word*, in *Pſ*. xlv. 1. פתגם טובי, *my good word*, or *the word of my goodneſs*, in the *Targum*

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[i] Apolog. 2. p. 94.

[k] Pædagog. l. 1. c. 6. p. 93.

gum on *Iſ.* lv. 11. for it is the word of righteouſneſs, reconciliation, peace, pardon, life, and ſalvation. And there is a ſpecial and ſpiritual taſte of this good word, which is delightful, reliſhing, and nouriſhing; and ſuch who have it can never totally and finally fall away; becauſe they who taſte it, ſo as to eat and digeſt it, and be nouriſhed by it, to them it becomes the engrafted word, which is able to ſave them: but there is ſuch a taſte of this word as is diſreliſhing, as in prophane ſinners, and open oppoſers and perſecutors of the word, or as in hypocrites and formal profeſſors; which is only an aſſent to the ſcriptures, as the revelation of God, or a ſuperficial knowledge of the doctrines of the Goſpel without the experience of them, and a temporal faith in them, and a natural affection for them, and pleaſedneſs with them for a time; as the *Jews*, and *Herod* with *John*'s miniſtry, and the ſtony-ground hearers. *And the powers of the world to come*; meaning either the ſtate of the church, and the glorious things relating to it, after the firſt reſurrection, which they might have ſome notional apprehenſions of; or the ultimate ſtate of glory and happineſs, the powers of which are the immortality, incorruption, and glory of the body, the perfect holineſs and knowledge of the ſoul, entire freedom from all evils of every kind, full communion with Father, Son, and Spirit, and a compleat enjoyment of all happineſs for ever; which hypocrites may have a notional knowledge of, a natural deſire after, and delight in the contemplation and hope of, as *Balaam* had; or rather the δυνάμεις, miracles and mighty works in the former part of the Goſpel-diſpenſation, or times of the Meſſiah, the *Jews* world to come, ſee the note on ch. ii. 5. are intended; which many, as *Judas* and others were able to perform, who were not ſincere chriſtians, or true believers.

Ver. 6. *If they ſhall fall away*, &c.] This is not ſuppoſed of true believers, as appears from ver. 9. nor is it to be ſuppoſed of them that they may fall totally and finally; they may indeed fall, not only into afflictions, and temptations, but into ſin; and from a lively and comfortable exerciſe of grace, and from a degree of ſtedfaſtneſs in the Goſpel; but not irrecoverably: for they are held and ſecured by a threefold cord, which can never be broken; by God the Father, who has loved them with an everlaſting love, has choſen them in Chriſt, ſecured them in the covenant of grace, keeps them by his power, has given them grace, and will give them glory; and by the Son, who has undertook for them, redeemed and purchaſed them, prays and makes preparations in heaven for them, they are built on him, united to him, and are his jewels, whom he will preſerve; and by the Holy Ghoſt, whoſe grace is incorruptible, whoſe perſonal indwelling is for ever, who himſelf is the earneſt and ſeal of the heavenly inheritance, and who having begun, will finiſh the good work of grace: but falling away, ſo as to periſh, may be ſuppoſed, and is true of many profeſſors of religion; who may fall from the profeſſion of the Goſpel they have made, and from the truth of it, and into an open denial of it; yea, into an hatred and perſecution of what they once received the external knowledge of; and ſo ſhall fall ſhort of heaven, and into condemnation: for, *to renew them again unto repentance*, is a thing impoſſible: by *repentance* is meant, not baptiſm of repentance; nor admiſſion to a ſolemn form of publick repentance in the church; nor a legal repentance, but an evangelical one: and ſo to be *renewed* unto it is not to be baptized again, or to be reſtored anew to the church by repentance, and abſolution; but muſt be underſtood either of renovation of the ſoul, in order to repentance; or of the reforming of the outward converſation, as an evidence of it; or of a renewing of the exerciſe of the grace of repentance: and to be renewed *again* to repentance does not ſuppoſe that perſons may have true repentance and loſe it; for tho' truly penitent perſons may loſe the exerciſe of this grace for a time, yet the grace itſelf can never be loſt: moreover, theſe apoſtates before deſcribed, had only a ſhew of repentance, a counterfeit one; ſuch as *Cain*, *Pharaoh*, and *Judas* had; and conſequently, the renewing of them again to repentance, is to that which they only ſeemed to have, and to make pretenſions unto; now to renew them to a true repentance, which they once made a profeſſion of, the Apoſtle ſays, is a thing *impoſſible*: the meaning of which is not only that it is difficult; or that it is rare and unuſual; or that it is unſuitable and improper; but it is abſolutely impoſſible: it is impoſſible to theſe men to renew themſelves to repentance; renovation is the work of the Holy Ghoſt, and not of man; and repentance is God's gift, and not in man's power; and it is impoſſible for miniſters to renew them, to reſtore and bring them back, by true repentance; yea, it is impoſſible to God himſelf, not through any impotence in him, but from the nature of the ſin theſe men are guilty of; for by the high, tho' outward attainments they arrive unto, according to the deſcription of them, their ſin is the ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt, for which no ſacrifice can be offered up, and of which there is no remiſſion, and ſo no repentance; for theſe two go together, and for which prayer is not to be made; ſee *Matt.* xii. 32. *Heb.* x. 26, 27. 1 *John* v. 16. and chiefly becauſe to renew ſuch perſons to repentance, is repugnant to the determined will of God, who cannot go againſt his own purpoſes and reſolutions; and ſo the *Jews*[l] ſpeak of repentance being with-held by God from *Pharaoh*, and from the people of *Iſrael*; of which they underſtand, *Exod.* ix. 16. *Iſ.* vi. 10. 2 *Chron.* xxxvi. 16. and ſay, that when the holy bleſſed God with-holds repentance from a ſinner אינו יכול לשוב *he cannot repent*; but muſt die in his wickedneſs which he firſt committed of his own will; and they further obſerve[m] that, he that prophanes the name of God, has it not in his power to depend on repentance, nor can his iniquity be expiated on the day of atonement, or be removed by chaſtiſement: *ſeeing they crucify to themſelves the Son of God afreſh*; who is truly and properly God, begotten of the Father, and of the ſame nature with him, in whom he greatly delights; this is Chriſt's higheſt name and title; and it was for aſſerting himſelf to be the Son of God, that he was crucified; and his being ſo, puts an infinite virtue in his ſufferings and death; and it heightens the ſin of the *Jews*, and of theſe apoſtates, in crucifying him. He was once crucified, and it is both impoſſible and unneceſſary that he ſhould be, properly ſpeaking, *crucified afreſh*, or *again*; it is impoſſible, becauſe he is riſen from the dead, and will never die more; it is unneceſſary, becauſe he has finiſhed and compleated what he ſuffered the death of the croſs for; but men may be ſaid to crucify him again, when by denying him to be the Son of God, they juſtify the crucifixion of him on that account; and when they leſſen and vilify the virtue of his blood and ſacrifice; and when both by errors and immoralities

they

apostates

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[l] Maimon. Hilchot. Teſhuba, c. 6. §. 3.

[m] Vid. R. David Kimchi in Iſ. xxii. 14.

they cauſe him to be blaſphemed, and evil ſpoken of; and when they perſecute him in his members: and this may be ſaid to be done *to themſelves afreſh*; not that Chriſt was crucified for them before, but that they now crucify him again, as much as in them lies; or *with themſelves*, in their own breaſts and minds, and to their own deſtruction. Now this being the caſe, it makes their renewal to repentance impoſſible; becauſe, as before obſerved, the ſin they commit is unpardonable; it is a denial of Chriſt, who gives repentance; and ſuch who ſin it muſt arrive to ſuch hardneſs of heart as to admit of no repentance; and it is juſt with God to give up ſuch to a final impenitence, as thoſe who knowingly and out of malice and envy crucified Chriſt, had neither pardon nor repentance; and beſides, this ſin of denying Chriſt to be the Son of God, and ſaviour of men, after ſo much light and knowledge, precludes the way of ſalvation, unleſs Chriſt was to be crucified again, which is impoſſible; for ſo the *Syriac* verſion connects this clauſe with the word *impoſſible*, as well as a foregoing one, rendering it, *it is impoſſible to crucify the ſon of God again, and to put him to ſhame*; and ſo the *Arabic* verſion. Chriſt was put to open ſhame at the time of his apprehenſion, proſecution, and crucifixion; and ſo he is by ſuch apoſtates, who, was he on earth, would treat him in the ſame manner the *Jews* did; and who do traduce him as an impoſtor and a deceiver, and give the lye to his doctrines, and expoſe him by their lives, and perſecute him in his ſaints.

Ver. 7. *For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it*, &c.] Here the Apoſtle illuſtrates what he had before been ſpeaking of, by a ſimile taken from the *earth*, to which men in general anſwer, who are of the earth; earthy, and unregenerate men and carnal profeſſors are of earthly minds; they are like the earth when it was rude and without form, and curſed by God; and are as inſenſible as the earth: but the earth is particularly diſtinguiſhed into that which is fruitful, and which is unfruitful; and the former is ſpoken of in this verſe, to which true believers in Chriſt agree; who are the good ground, into which the ſeed of God's word is received, and brings forth fruit; theſe are God's tillage or huſbandry: and the *rain* that comes upon them may ſignify either the grace of Chriſt, which, like rain, is an inſtance of his ſovereignty, and what he alone can give, and not the vanities of the *Gentiles*; and which he gives to perſons undeſerving of it; and which refreſhes, revives, and makes fruitful: or elſe Chriſt himſelf, *Pſ.* lxxii. 6. *Hoſ.* vi. 3. whoſe firſt coming was like rain much deſired, and long expected; and ſo is his ſpiritual coming very deſirable, delightful, refreſhing, and fructifying: or rather his Goſpel, *Deut.* xxxii. 2. *Iſ.* lv. 9. which comes from above, and is the means of ſoftening hard hearts; of reviving diſtreſſed and diſconſolate minds, and of making barren ſouls fruitful; which is done by coming *oft* upon them, at firſt converſion, and afterwards, alluding to the former and latter rain; and may refer to the receiving of more grace, even grace for grace, out of Chriſt's fulneſs, through the miniſtration of the word, which is drank in by faith, under the influence of the Spirit of God: *and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dreſſed*, God the Father, who is the huſbandman, and miniſters of the Goſpel, who are labourers under him; and where the Goſpel comes in power, it brings forth the fruits of the ſpirit, the fruits of righteouſneſs, the fruits meet for repentance; and which are to the glory of God the Father, and are anſwerable to the means he makes uſe of, the miniſtry of the word and ordinances; and no man can bring forth fruit without Chriſt, his ſpirit, and grace: and ſuch earth, or thoſe ſignified by it, *receiveth bleſſing from God*; both antecedent to all this, and which is the cauſe of fruitfulneſs; and as conſequent upon it, for ſuch receive more grace, even all the bleſſings of grace, and at laſt the bleſſing of glory; and all this being in a way of receiving, ſhews it to be of gift, and of pure grace.

Ver. 8. *But that which beareth thorns and briars*, &c.] To which wicked men anſwer; who are unfruitful and unprofitable, and are hurtful, pricking and grieving, by their wicked lives and converſations, by their bitter and reproachful words, and by their violent and cruel perſecutions; and particularly carnal profeſſors, and eſpecially apoſtates, ſuch as before deſcribed; for to ſuch earth, profeſſors of religion may be compared, who are worldly, ſlothful, defrauding and over-reaching, carnal and wanton; as alſo heretical men, and ſuch as turn from the faith, deny it, and perſecute the ſaints: and the things or actions produced by them are aptly expreſſed by *thorns* and *briars*; ſuch as errors, hereſies, and evil wotks of all kinds; and which ſhew that the ſeed of the word was never ſown in their hearts, and that that which they bear, or throw out, is natural to them: and ſuch earth *is rejected*; as ſuch men are, both by the church, and by God himſelf; or *reprobate*, as they are concerning the faith, and to every good work; and are given up by God to a reprobate mind: and is *nigh unto curſing*; and ſuch men are curſed already by the law, being under its ſentence of curſe and condemnation; and are nigh to the execution of it; referring either to the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, which was near at hand; or to the final judgment, when they ſhall hear, go ye curſed: *whoſe end is to be burned*; with everlaſting and unquenchable fire, in the lake which burns with fire and brimſtone.

Ver. 9. *But beloved, we are perſuaded better things of you*, &c.] The Apoſtle addreſſes the believing *Hebrews*, as *beloved*; being beloved by the Lord, not as the deſcendants of *Abraham*, but as the elect of God, and ſo as loved with an everlaſting love; and which might be known to themſelves, by its being ſhed abroad in their hearts, and by their being called by grace, and by their love to him, and to his people: and from hence they might conclude, they ſhould not fall away, as the apoſtates before ſpoken of; ſince in conſequence of being beloved by God, they were choſen in Chriſt unto ſalvation; Chriſt was given to die for them; they had the ſpirit ſent down into their hearts; they were juſtified, pardoned, and adopted; nor could they be ſeparated from the love of God: and the Apoſtle alſo ſo calls them, becauſe they were beloved by him, not merely as being his countrymen, but as ſaints; and this he ſays to teſtify his affection to them; to ſhew that what he ſaid was not from hatred of them, or prejudice to them; and that his exhortations, cautions, and reproofs, might be better taken; and particularly that they might credit what he here ſays, that he was *perſuaded better things* of them, than what he had ſaid of others in ver. 4, 5, 6. even ſuch as are expreſſed in ver. 10. he was perſuaded they had the true grace of God; whereas the abovementioned perſons had only gifts, when in the height of their profeſſion; and the leaſt degree of grace is better than the greateſt gifts men can be poſſeſſed of: grace makes a man a good man, not gifts; a man may have great gifts and not be a good man; grace is uſeful to a man's ſelf, gifts are chiefly uſeful to others; grace makes men fruitful, when gifts leave them barren in the knowledge of Chriſt; grace is laſting, when gifts fail, and ceaſe and vaniſh away; grace will abide the fire of perſecution, when gifts will not; grace is ſaving, gifts are not: *and things that accompany ſalvation*; which enter into ſalvation; are ingredients in it, and parts of it, and with which ſalvation is connected; ſuch as faith, love, *&c.* or which mutually touch or follow one another in the chain of ſalvation; as to be predeſtinated, juſtified, called, adopted, ſanctified, and at laſt glorified: *though we thus ſpeak*; concerning others, as in the preceding verſes: the hard things ſpoken by him of ſome, were conſiſtent with ſuch perſuaſions in general; for there might be ſome among them to whom the aforeſaid characters belonged; and ſaying ſuch things might be a means to make others watchful and careful.

Ver. 10. *For God is not unrighteous*, &c.] He is juſt and true, righteous in all his ways and works; there is no unrighteouſneſs nor unfaithfulneſs in him; and this the Apoſtle makes a reaſon of his ſtrong perſuaſion of better things concerning the believing *Hebrews*; becauſe he was well ſatisfied of the good work upon them, and he was aſſured that God was not unrighteous and unfaithful: *to forget your work*; which is not to be underſtood of any good work done by them, for theſe are generally expreſſed in the plural number; and beſides, theſe, if at all, are deſigned in the next clauſe; moreover, external good works, or ſuch as appear to men to be ſo, are performed by hypocrites; nor can they be ſaid to be better things, at leaſt, not ſuch as men are ſaved by: men may fall from theſe; and ſuppoſing them intended, the merit of works cannot be eſtabliſhed, as is attempted from hence by the *Papiſts*; for the Apoſtle could only conſider them as fruits, not as cauſes of ſalvation; they are imperfect, and cannot juſtify, and therefore cannot ſave; they don't go before to procure ſalvation, but follow after, and, at moſt but accompany; and tho' God does remember and not forget them, this is owing to his grace, and not to their merit; God's righteouſneſs in remembring them, regards not a debt of juſtice, but a point of faithfulneſs: but this is to be underſtood of the work of God upon them, called in ſcripture a good work, and the work of faith; and is elſewhere joined, as here, with the labour of love; ſee 1 *Theſſ.* i. 3. and this might be called their work, not becauſe wrought by them, but becauſe it was wrought in them; and the grace that came along with it, was exerciſed by them: now from hence the Apoſtle might be perſuaded of better things of them, even ſuch as accompany ſalvation; ſince this work is a fruit of everlaſting and unchangeable love, and is itſelf immortal, and the beginning of eternal life; and particularly faith is the effect of electing grace; ſhall never fail; is the means of the ſaints preſervation; and is connected with everlaſting ſalvation: it follows, *and labour of love which ye have ſhewed towards his name*; the word *labour* is omitted in the *Alexandrian* copy, *Vulgate*, *Latin*, *Syriac*, and *Ethiopic* verſions: this may be underſtood either of love to God, the name of God being put for himſelf; who is to be loved for his own ſake, on account of the perfections of his nature, as well as for the works of his hands; and which is to be ſhewed for the ſake of glorifying him: and this love is laborious; it ſets a man to work for God; nor are any works to be regarded but what ſpring from love to God, and to his name; and from hence the Apoſtle might entertain a good hope of theſe perſons, ſince their love to God was an effect of God's love to them, is a part of the work of grace, and cannot be loſt; all things work together for good to ſuch as love God; and theſe have a crown of life promiſed unto them: or elſe it may be underſtood of love to the ſaints, as follows, *in that ye have miniſtred to the ſaints, and do miniſter*; in ſeeking both their temporal and ſpiritual good; and tho' all men in general are to be loved, yet eſpecially the ſaints, who are ſet apart by God, whoſe ſins are expiated by Chriſt, and who are ſanctified by the Spirit; and love to them being laborious, and appearing in many inſtances, and this ſhewn for the Lord's ſake, for his name ſake, might lead the Apoſtle more ſtrongly to conclude better things of them, even things of a ſaving nature; ſince charity or love to the ſaints is better than gifts, and is the evidence of grace, of paſſing from death to life, and of being the diſciples of Chriſt; ſee 1 *Cor.* xiii. 1, 2, 3.

Ver. 11. *And we deſire that every one of you do ſhew the ſame diligence*, &c.] In the conſtant exerciſe of the graces of faith and love, and in miniſtring to the neceſſities of the ſaints: there is a ſpiritual labour, diligence, and induſtry to be uſed by the ſaints; and former diligence is a motive to future; and is a means of attaining to full aſſurance, as appears by what follows; and this is to be ſhewn for the glory of God, for the evidence of the above graces, and for an example and encouragement to other ſaints: and the perſons addreſſed being *every one*, this ſhews the Apoſtle's impartiality in his exhortations, and ſerved to remove all groundleſs ſuſpicions in particular perſons; and the manner of his addreſſing them ſhews his hearty concern for their welfare, his mildneſs and gentleneſs towards them, and his deſign to encourage them to go forward; and that his exhortation might have the greater weight, he uſes the plural *we*; and this exhortation put in this form, moreover ſhews that what he had ſaid before, had no tendency in ſome things to encourage deſpair, or in others careleſſneſs and indolence: and what he had in view in the whole was, that they might arrive *to the full aſſurance of hope unto the end*; not only that they might keep up an hope, but attain to the full aſſurance of it; as to intereſt in the love and grace of God; in the covenant of grace, its bleſſings and promiſes; in God, as a covenant God and Father; in Chriſt, as a ſaviour and redeemer; and as to the truth of the work of grace upon their ſouls, and their right and meetneſs for the poſſeſſion of eternal glory and happineſs: the phraſe *unto the end*, may either reſpect the continuance of the grace of aſſurance; or refer to the ſhewing forth of their diligence and induſtry in miniſtring to the ſaints, as they had done, to the end of their lives.

Ver. 12. *That ye be not ſlothful*, &c.] With reſpect to hearing the word, and attendance on every ordinance; with reſpect to the uſe of means for the increaſe of knowledge, faith, and hope; and with reſpect to miniſtring to the ſaints; but on the contrary, ſhould take every opportunity of improvement and doing good: *but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promiſes*; or things promiſed; not the land of *Canaan*, nor the coming of the Meſſiah; but either grace and ſalvation by Chriſt; or eternal life, which is expreſſed by a promiſe, to ſhew that it is not by any works, or merits of men; that it is wholly of grace, and ſhall certainly be enjoyed: and it is expreſſed in the plural number *promiſes*, becauſe it is the grand promiſe, which is incluſive of all others; and becauſe it has been given out at various times, and in different manners: and the poſſeſſion of it being ſignified by *inheriting*, it ſhews that this is their father's gift and legacy, which they have as children; and which comes to them thro' the death of Chriſt, and of which the Spirit is the ſeal; and comes not by works of righteouſneſs done by them: and the means through which ſaints that are gone before are come to the enjoyment of this happineſs, are *faith* and *patience*; not that *faith* is the cauſe of, or what gives right to the inheritance, but it deſigns a courſe and walk of believing, at the end of which, ſaints come to glory; and faith is connected with ſalvation, and ſalvation with that; and through faith believers are preſerved unto it: and *patience* is joined with faith, as a fruit and evidence of it; and ſuppoſes troubles which are patiently endured before men come to the poſſeſſion of the inheritance: now the Apoſtle exhorts theſe *Hebrews* to be followers and imitators of ſuch, in diligence, faith, and patience, when they need not doubt of inheriting the ſame promiſed bleſſedneſs they do.

Ver. 13. *For when God made promiſe to Abraham*, &c.] The Apoſtle propoſes *Abraham* as a pattern, becauſe he was the father of theſe *Hebrews*, and of all believers; and becauſe they were intereſted in the promiſe made to him, and had a right to the ſame bleſſing with him; and becauſe he was remarkable for his faith and patience: *the promiſe* made to him is not that in *Gen.* xii. 1, 2, 3. nor that in *Gen.* xv. 1, 4, 5, 13, 14. but that in *Gen.* xxii. 16, 17. for that only had an oath annexed to it: and this was made by Jeſus Chriſt, there called the Angel of the Lord, and here God; and who is truly and properly ſo; and than whom there is none greater; and who elſewhere, as here, is ſaid to ſwear by himſelf, *Iſ.* xlv. 23. as follows: *becauſe he could ſwear by no greater, he ſware by himſelf*; ſwearing is aſcribed to a divine perſon after the manner of men, and in condeſcenſion to them; and who is never introduced ſwearing, but in matters of moment and of great importance; the note of *Philo* the *Jew*[n] on the paſſage in *Gen.* xxii. from whence the following words are cited, is worthy of obſervation, being very near the Apoſtle's words; "well does he (God) confirm the promiſe with an "oath, and with an oath that becomes God; for "you ſee that God does not ſwear by another, for "nothing is better than himſelf, but by himſelf, "who is the beſt of all; but ſome have ſuggeſted "as if it was inconvenient to ſwear, for an oath is "taken for the ſake of faith; but God alone is "faithful," *&c.*

Ver. 14. *Saying, ſurely bleſſing I will bleſs thee*, &c.] Which is expreſſive of the certainty of the bleſſings; the reality and ſubſtantiality of them; the abundance of them, and the continuance of the ſame: and of this nature are all ſpiritual bleſſings; as to be choſen of God; to have God to be a covenant God and Father; to be juſtified, pardoned, adopted, and ſanctified, and ſo have a right and title to eternal happineſs: *and multiplying I will multiply thee*; meaning both in his natural and ſpiritual ſeed, which has had its accompliſhment.

Ver. 15. *And ſo after he had patiently endured*, &c.] He waited long for a ſon, from whom the Meſſiah was to ſpring, after he had had the promiſe of one; and he endured many afflictions with patience, in his journeys from place to place, throughout his life to the end: *he obtained the promiſe*; he was greatly bleſſed in temporal things; he lived to ſee the ſon of the promiſe, and his ſons; he ſaw the day of Chriſt by faith, and now inherits the heavenly glory, which is the thing chiefly deſigned.

Ver. 16. *For men verily ſwear by the greater*, &c.] Theſe words contain a reaſon why God ſwore by himſelf, and why his promiſes, having an oath annexed to them, ought to be believed. Men when they ſwear, they ſwear by the greater; not by themſelves, as God does, becauſe there is one greater than they; not by any of the creatures on earth, nor by the angels in heaven, but by God; becauſe he is the God of truth, the ſearcher of hearts, and who can take vengeance on perjurers: and an oath may lawfully be taken, when it is truth that is ſworn to, and is juſt and good; and in caſes of weight and moment; and in what is poſſible and right to perform; and when it is done with deliberation, in the fear of God, with a view to his glory, and the good of men: for an oath is of a moral nature, what God has commanded, and he himſelf has taken; it has been uſed by Chriſt, and by the ſaints of the Old and New Teſtament; and is propheſied of the New Teſtament ſaints, as what they ſhould practiſe; and is a part of religious worſhip: *and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all ſtrife*; it is uſed to confirm things that are doubtful, and in diſpute; and to put an end to ſtrife and contention; ſo *Philo*[o] the *Jew* ſays, "by an oath "things doubtful are determined, and things un-"certain are confirmed, and what were not be-"lieved receive credit." The manner in which an oath was taken among the *Jews*, to which, the Apoſtle writing to ſuch, muſt be thought to have reſpect, was this; "he that ſwore took the book of "the law in his hand, and he ſtood and ſwore by "the name (of God) or by his ſurnames; and the "judges did not ſuffer any one to ſwear but in the "holy Tongue; and thus he ſaid, behold I ſwear "by the God of *Iſrael*, by him whoſe name is "merciful and gracious, that I do not owe this "man any thing[p]." The *Hebrew* word שבעה uſed for an oath is of the root שבע which ſignifies to *fill*, *ſatiate*, *ſatisfy*; for an oath being taken about matters in controverſy, not clear but doubtful, give content unto and ſatisfy the minds of men; and the ſame word alſo ſignifies *ſeven*, a number of fulneſs and perfection; an oath being for the perfecting and finiſhing an affair in debate; agreeably, when covenants were made by oaths, ſeven witneſſes were uſed, *Gen.* xxi. 28, 29, 30. and *Herodotus* ſays[q], as *Cocceius*[r] obſerves, that the *Arabians*, when they ſwore at making covenants, anointed the ſtones with blood.

Ver. 17. *Wherein God willing*, &c.] Or *wherefore*, as the *Syriac* and *Ethiopic* verſions render it; that is, whereas an oath is uſed among men to confirm any thing that might be doubted; therefore God, in condeſcenſion to the weakneſs of men, made uſe of one; being very deſirous and determined, *more abundantly to ſhew unto the heirs of promiſe the immutability of his counſel*; by which is meant, not the Goſpel nor the ordinances of it, tho' theſe are ſometimes called the counſel of God; but the decree of God, concerning the ſalvation of his people by Jeſus Chriſt, which is immutable; as appears from the unchangeableneſs of his nature, the ſovereignty of his will, the unſearcheableneſs of his wiſdom, the omnipotence of his arm, and the unconditionality of the thing decreed, and from that and the purpoſe of it being in Chriſt: and the immutability of this, God was willing to ſhew *more abundantly* than in other purpoſes, tho' all God's purpoſes are unchangeable; or then had been ſhewn to the Old Teſtament ſaints; and more than was neceſſary, had it not been for man's weakneſs: even to *the heirs of promiſe*; not any earthly temporal promiſe, but the promiſe of grace and glory, the promiſe of eternal life; the heirs of which are not only *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, and *Jacob*, or God's elect among the *Jews*, but all that are Chriſt's; who are juſtified by his righteouſneſs, believe in him, and are the children of God; for as many as are ſuch, are heirs of eternal glory, and of the promiſe of it: and that the unchangeableneſs of God's purpoſe in ſaving them by Chriſt might be manifeſt to them, and be out of all doubt, he *confirmed it by an oath*; his counſel and purpoſe; he not only determined in his mind that he would ſave them, and promiſed it in his covenant; but he alſo, to confirm it the more to the perſons concerned in it, if poſſible, annexed his oath to it; or *he interpoſed* or *acted the part of a mediator by an oath*; which ſome refer to Chriſt's mediation between God and *Abraham*, when he ſwore unto him, as before obſerved; but rather it expreſſes the interpoſition of the oath between God's purpoſe and promiſe, and man's weakneſs: God did as it were bind himſelf by his oath, or lay himſelf under obligation, or become a ſurety, for the fulfilment of his purpoſe and promiſe; which ſhews the ſuperabounding grace of God, the weakneſs of man, and what reaſon the heirs of promiſe have to believe.

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[n] Leg. Allegor. l. 2. p. 98.

[o] De Somniis, p. 567.

[p] Moſes Kotſenſis Mitzvot Torah, pr. Affirm. 123.

[q] Thalia, l. 3. c. 8.

[r] Lexic. Rad. שבע col. 848.

Ver. 18. *That by two immutable things*, &c.] God's counſel and oath, which never change and alter, and from which he never varies: *in which it was impoſſible for God to lye*; fail or deceive, nor indeed in any thing elſe, beſides his counſels, promiſes, and oath, ſee *Tit.* i. 2. *we might have a ſtrong conſolation*; the ſaints often ſtand in need of conſolation, by reaſon of ſin, ſatan, and the world; and it is the will of God that they ſhould be comforted; and he would have them have *ſtrong conſolation*; that which is ſolid and abiding, and an abundance of it; and this much depends on the immutability of God's counſel and oath: *who have fled for refuge*; either in alluſion to mariners, as ſome think; who make all the haſte they can to their port and haven, and are glad when they arrive there, and there caſt anchor; of which mention is made in the next verſe: or to runners in a race, who make up to the mark, in order to lay hold on the prize; hence Chriſt is afterwards ſpoken of as a forerunner: or rather to ſuch as fled to the cities of refuge, which were a type of Chriſt; the names of theſe cities were, *Kedeſh*, *Shechem*, *Hebron*, *Bezer*, *Ramoth*, and *Golan*; Joſh. xx. 7, 8. and the ſituation of them according to the *Jews*[s], was like two rows in a vineyard. *Hebron* in *Judah* was over-againſt *Bezer* in the wilderneſs; *Shechem* in mount *Ephraim*, was over-againſt *Ramoth* in *Gilead*; *Kedeſh* in mount *Naphtali*, was over-againſt *Golan* in *Baſhan*: the names of theſe ſeveral cities agree with Chriſt; *Kedeſh* ſignifies *holy*, as Chriſt is, both as God and man, and is made ſanctification to his people; *Shechem* is *the ſhoulder*, and Chriſt has not only bore the ſins of his people in his own body, on the tree, but he bears and carries their perſons, and has the government of them on his ſhoulders, where they are ſafe and ſecure; *Hebron* may be interpreted *fellowſhip*, and the ſaints have not only fellowſhip with Chriſt, but with the Father through him; *Bezer* may be rendred *a fortified place*; Chriſt is a ſtrong hold, a tower, a place of defence, whither the righteous run, and are ſafe; *Ramoth* ſignifies *exaltations*, and may fitly be applied to Chriſt, who is exalted at God's right-hand, and who will exalt thoſe that truſt in him in due time; *Golan* may be tranſlated *manifeſted*; Chriſt the Son of God has been manifeſt in the fleſh, to deſtroy the works of the devil; and he will be revealed from heaven in a glorious manner at the laſt day: theſe cities were known to be ſuch; and they were open to all *Iſraelites* and proſelytes, that killed any perſon at unawares; and they were open at all times; and the way to them was made plain and large; every year care was taken to make the way good, to remove every hillock, or any thing that hindered; if there was a river in the way, to make a bridge over it; and where more ways met, to ſet up pillars with a hand to them, and theſe words written on it מִקְלָט מִקְלָט *refuge, refuge*; nor was the road to be leſs in breadth than 32 cubits[t]; and there was always room in theſe cities; and whoever fled there was ſafe; but thoſe that were found without, died: thus Chriſt is known to be a refuge for diſtreſſed ſinners; and he is open to all that come unto him, and at all times; the way of life and ſalvation by him is plainly pointed out in the Goſpel, and by the miniſters of it; who are appointed to direct unto him, and to remove all impediments and diſcouragements from ſuch who are ſeeking to him; and tho' ſo many have been received and ſaved by him, ſtill there is room for more; and whoever betake themſelves to him are ſafe, but thoſe that are without him die and periſh: ſo *Philo* the *Jew*[u] makes the divine word or *Logos* to be the chief and moſt profitable refuge to fly unto, of all the ſix which he takes notice of; and the *Jews* have a notion that in the time to come, in the days of the Meſſiah, three other cities of refuge will be added[w]. There is in ſome things a difference between Chriſt and theſe cities of refuge; there were ſix of theſe, but there is no other than Chriſt; the cities of refuge were only for ſuch who ſhed blood ignorantly, but Chriſt is a refuge for all ſorts of ſinners; they were in a kind of exile who fled to them, but in Chriſt is compleat liberty; it was poſſible that ſuch might die in them, but thoſe that are in Chriſt never die the ſecond death; and at beſt, thoſe who fled thither were only ſaved from a temporal death, whereas thoſe who betake themſelves to Chriſt are ſaved with an everlaſting ſalvation. Now *fleeing* to Chriſt, implies danger in the perſons that flee, as ſuch are in danger, in themſelves, of the curſe and condemnation of the law, of the wrath of God, and eternal death; it ſuppoſes a ſenſe of this danger, which when right comes from the ſpirit of God; it ſhews guilt of conſcience, and a conſciouſneſs of the inſufficiency of other refuges, and a knowledge of Chriſt, as a ſuitable one; and is expreſſive of haſte and hearty deſire to be there: *to lay hold on the hope ſet before us*; by which is meant, not the grace of hope, but either heaven hoped for, or rather Chriſt the object of hope; who is not only ſet down at God's right hand, but is ſet forth in the Goſpel and in the ordinances, both by the Spirit of God, and by the miniſters of the word; that men may look and go to him, and truſt and believe in him, to the ſaving of their ſouls; where he is in ſight, near at hand, acceſſible to; the way to him is ſtreight forward; and here he abides: and he is ſet before us to be laid hold upon, which intends an act of faith; which grace lays hold on the perſon, blood, and righteouſneſs of Chriſt; and is done in a view of fullneſs and ſafety in him, and under a ſenſe of danger otherwiſe; it ſuppoſes grace, and that in exerciſe and ſomewhat ſtrong; and ſome degree of reſolution and courage of faith, and the ſtedfaſtneſs and continuance of it; the ſoul determining, if it periſhes it will periſh here; and it ſhews that Chriſt and his grace are to be touched and laid hold upon by faith.

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[s] T. Bab. Maccot, fol. 9. 2.

[t] T. Hieroſ. Maccot, fol. 31. 4. Bemidbar Rabba, §. 23. fol. 232. 3. 4. Maimon. Hilchot Rotzeach, c. 8. §. 5. Moſes Kotſenſis Mitzvot Torah, pr. Affirm. 76. Bartenora in Miſn. Maccot, c. 2. §. 5.

[u] D

profugis, p. 464.

[w] T. Hieroſ. Maccot, fol. 32. 1. Maimon. ut ſupra, §. 4.

Ver. 19. *Which* hope *we have as an an anchor of the ſoul,* &c.] This world is as a ſea; the church in it, and ſo every believer is as a ſhip; the port that is bound unto is heaven; Chriſt is the pilot, and hope is the anchor: an anchor is caſt on a bottom, out of ſight; and when the ſhip is in a calm, or in danger of a rock, or near the ſhore; but is of no ſervice without a cable; and when caſt aright, keeps the ſhip ſteady: ſo hope is caſt on Chriſt; whence he is often called hope itſelf, becauſe he is the ground and foundation of it, and who is at preſent unſeen to bodily eyes; and the anchor of hope without the cable of faith is of little ſervice; but being caſt aright on Chriſt, keeps the ſoul ſteady and immoveable: in ſome things there is a difference between hope and an anchor; an anchor is not of ſo much uſe in tempeſts as in a calm, but hope is; the cable may be cut or broke, and ſo the anchor be uſeleſs, but ſo it can't be with faith and hope; when the ſhip is at anchor, it does not move forward, but it is not ſo with the ſoul, when hope is in exerciſe; the anchor of hope is not caſt on any thing below, but above; and here it is called the anchor of the ſoul, to diſtinguiſh it from any other, and to ſhew the peculiar benefit of it to the ſoul. *Pythagoras* makes uſe of the ſame metaphor[x]; "riches, he ſays, are "a weak anchor, glory is yet weaker; the body "likewiſe; principalities, honours, all theſe are "weak and without ſtrength; what then are ſtrong "anchors? prudence, magnanimity, fortitude; "theſe no tempeſt ſhakes." But theſe philoſophical moral virtues are not to be compared with the chriſtian's grace of hope, which is *both ſure and ſtedfaſt*; it is in itſelf a grace firm and ſtable; it is permanent and can never be loſt: and it is ſtill more ſure and ſtedfaſt, by virtue of what it is fixed upon, the perſon, blood and righteouſneſs of Chriſt; and by the immutability, faithfulneſs, and power of God it is concerned with; and through the aboundings and diſcoveries of divine love, grace, and mercy; and from the inſtances of grace to the vileſt of ſinners: *and which entereth into that within the vail*; the holy of holies, heaven itſelf; in alluſion to the vail which divided between the holy and the holy of holies: the things within the vail, or in heaven, which hope entering into fixes upon, are the perſon of Chriſt, who is entered there, and appears in the preſence of God for his people; his blood which he has carried along with him, and by which he is entered there; his juſtifying righteouſneſs by which the law is fulfilled, the two tables of ſtone in the ark of the teſtimony; the ſweet incenſe of his mediation, which is continually offered up by him; the mercy-ſeat, or throne of grace, on which Jehovah ſits as the God of grace; and all the glories of heaven; all which hope is concerned with, and receives ſtrength and vigour from: and their being within the vail, is expreſſive of their hiddenneſs and inviſibility at preſent, and of their ſafety and ſecurity, as well as of their ſacredneſs; and this ſhews a difference between the hope of believers and others, whoſe hope fixes upon things ſhort of theſe; and likewiſe the great privilege of a believer, who being made a prieſt unto God, has liberty and boldneſs to enter into the holieſt of all. The *Jews*[y] ſpeak of a vail in the world to come, which ſome are worthy to enter into.

Ver. 20. *Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jeſus,* &c.] Chriſt was a runner; he had a race to run, which lay in going about to heal diſeaſes, in preaching the goſpel, in obeying the law, and in ſuffering death for his people; which race was run by him, with great ſwiftneſs, ſtrength and courage, with patience, chearfulneſs, and joy, and is now ended; as appears from the accompliſhment of ſalvation, from his entrance into heaven, and ſeſſion at the right hand of God; from the glorification of his human nature, and its everlaſting freedom from the dominion of death: and this race is run out, as a *forerunner*; Chriſt is the moſt excellent runner; there is none like him; there is none that can come up to him; he has out-ran and exceeded all others; he has performed in the beſt manner; he has run out his race firſt, and has entered into heaven firſt by his own blood; and he has cleared the way thither, and opened the gates of heaven for his people; and is a guide and pattern for them to follow: and he is the forerunner for them, as well as entered for them; for he was born, and he lived, and died for them, for their good and ſervice; and he is entered into heaven for them, as man and mediator, and as their high-prieſt; where he repreſents their perſons, appears and intercedes for them, takes care of their affairs, and preſents their ſervices; prepares manſions of glory for them, and takes poſſeſſion of heaven in their name, and opens the way for them to follow him thither; all which gives great encouragement to hope to enter now, where Jeſus is: who is *made an high prieſt for ever after the order of Melchiſedec*; ſee ch. v. 6, 10. This is repeated here to lead on to what the Apoſtle had to ſay concerning *Melchiſedec* in the following chapter.

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[x] Apud Stobæum, Serm. I.

[y] Zohar in Gen. fol. 73. 3.

CHAP. VII.

THE Apoſtle having made mention of *Melchiſedec* in the latter part of the preceding chapter, proceeds in this to give ſome account of him, and of the excellency of his prieſthood, and to ſhew, that Chriſt is a prieſt of his order, and is ſuperior to *Aaron* and his ſons. He firſt declares what *Melchiſedec* was, that he was both king and prieſt; he names the place he was king of, and tells whoſe prieſt he was, even the prieſt of the moſt high God; and goes on to obſerve what he did, that he met *Abraham* returning from the ſlaughter of the kings, that he bleſſed him, and took tithes of him, ver. 1, 2. and then interprets his name, and royal title, the one ſignifying king of righteouſneſs, the other king of peace; that for any thing that can be learned from the ſcriptures, it is not known who was his father or his mother; what his lineage and deſcent; when he was born, or when he died; and that he is like to the Son of God, and continues a prieſt, ver 2, 3. upon which the Apoſtle calls upon the *Hebrews* to conſider the greatneſs of his perſon; and as it appears from that ſingle inſtance of his receiving tithes from the patriarch *Abraham*, ver. 4. by which it is evident, that he is greater than the *Levites*; and which is demonſtrated in the following particulars: the *Levites* received tithes of their brethren that came out of *Abraham*'s loins, as they did, but *Melchiſedec*, whoſe deſcent was not from them, received tithes from *Abraham* himſelf, and beſides bleſſed him; and it is a clear caſe, that the leſſer is bleſſed of the greater, ver. 5, 6, 7. the *Levites* were mortal men that received tithes, but a teſtimony is bore to *Melchiſedec*, that he lives, ver. 8. yea, *Levi* himſelf paid tithes to *Melchiſedec*, ſince he was in the loins of his father *Abraham* when *Melchiſedec* met him, and took tithes of him; and therefore muſt be greater than *Levi*, ver. 9, 10. And next the Apoſtle proves the imperfection of the *Levitical* prieſthood from this conſideration, that there is another prieſt riſen up, not of the order of *Aaron*, but of the order of *Melchiſedec*, of which there would have been no need, if the *Levitical* prieſthood had been perfect; nor would it have been changed, as it is, and which has alſo made a change of the law, by which it is eſtabliſhed, neceſſary, ver. 11, 12. that the prieſt that is riſen up is not of the order of *Aaron*, is clear, becauſe he is of another tribe, even of the tribe of *Judah*, to which the prieſthood did not belong, ver. 13, 14. and that he is of the order of *Melchiſedec*, and ſo not according to the ceremonial law, but after the power of an endleſs life, is manifeſt from the teſtimony of the ſacred ſcripture, ver. 15, 16, 17. which lies in *Pſ.* cx. 4. and that the ceremonial law, on which the *Levitical* prieſthood ſtood, is changed and abrogated, is ſtrongly aſſerted, and the reaſons of it given, becauſe it was weak and unprofitable, and made nothing perfect; and this was diſannulled by Chriſt, the better hope brought in, who has made ſomething perfect, and thro' whom we have acceſs to God, ver. 18, 19. Moreover, the ſuperior excellency of Chriſt's prieſthood to the Levitical one, is ſhewn in ſeveral particulars; the prieſts of *Aaron*'s order were made without an oath; Chriſt was made with one, as is evident from the above cited teſtimony, ver. 20, 21, 22. they were many, he but one; they were mortal, and did not continue, he continues ever, having an unchangeable prieſthood, ver. 23, 24. wherefore, as they were not ſuffered to continue by reaſon of death, their prieſthood was ineffectual; they could not take away ſin, and ſave ſinners; but Chriſt is able to ſave to the uttermoſt all that draw nigh to God by him, as a prieſt, and that becauſe he ever lives to compleat his office by interceſſion, ver. 25. wherefore ſuch an high-prieſt as he is, muſt become men, and be ſuitable to them, eſpecially ſince he is pure and holy, and in ſuch an exalted ſtate, ver. 26. and this is another difference between him and the prieſts under the law; they were men that had infirmity, and were guilty of ſins themſelves, and ſo had need to offer for their own ſins, and then for the ſins of others; but Chriſt, the Son of God, who was conſecrated a prieſt for evermore, by the word of the oath, had no ſin of his own to offer ſacrifice for, only the ſins of his people, which he did once, when he offered himſelf, ver. 27, 28.

Ver. 1. *For this Melchiſedec king of Salem*, &c.] Various have been the opinions of writers concerning *Melchiſedec*; ſome have thought him to be more than a man; ſome, that he was an angel; others, that he was the Holy Ghoſt; and others, that he was a divine perſon ſuperior to Chriſt, which needs no refutation; others have ſuppoſed that he was the Son of God himſelf: but he is expreſly ſaid to be like unto him, and Chriſt is ſaid to be of his order; which manifeſtly diſtinguiſh the one from the other; beſides, there is nothing ſaid of *Melchiſedec* which proves him to be more than a man: accordingly others take him to have been a mere man; but theſe are divided; ſome ſay, that he was *Shem*, the ſon of *Noah*, which is the conſtant opinion of the *Jewiſh* writers [z]; but it is not true of him, that he was without father, and without mother, an account of his deſcent being given in ſcripture; nor is it probable that he ſhould be a king of a ſingle city in *Ham*'s country, and *Abraham* be a ſtranger there: others ſay, that he was a *Canaanitiſh* king, of the poſterity of *Ham*; others affirm him to be a perfect ſinleſs man, and that all that is ſaid of him in *Geneſis*, and in this context, is literally true of him; but that he ſhould be immediately created by God, as *Adam*, and be without ſin as he, are things entirely without any foundation: others take him to be a mere man, but an extraordinary one, eminently raiſed up by God to be a type of the Meſſiah; and think it moſt proper not to enquire curiouſly who he was, ſince the ſcripture is ſilent concerning his genealogy and deſcent; and that as it ſhould ſeem on purpoſe, that he might be a more full and fit type of Chriſt; and this ſenſe appears beſt and ſafeſt. *Aben Ezra* ſays, his name ſignifies what he was, the king of a righteous place: *Salem*, of which he was king, was not *Shalem*, a city of *Shechem*, in the land of *Canaan*, *Gen.* xxxiii. 18. afterwards called *Salim*, near to which *John* was baptizing, *John* iii. 23. where is ſhown the palace of *Melchiſedec* in its ruins, which can't be, ſince that city was laid to the ground and ſowed with ſalt by *Abimelech*, *Judg.* ix. 45. but *Jeruſalem* is the place; which is the conſtant opinion of the *Jews* [a], and is called *Salem* in *Pſ.* lxxvi. 2. The interpretation of this word is given in the next verſe; ſome of the *Jewiſh* writers referred to ſay, that it was uſual for the kings of *Jeruſalem* to be called *Melchiſedec* and *Adoni-zedek*, as in *Joſh.* x. 3. juſt as the kings of *Egypt* were called *Pharoah*. This king was alſo *prieſt of the moſt high God*, as he is ſaid to be, *Gen.* xiv. 18. for he was both king and prieſt, in which he was an eminent type of Chriſt; and his being a king is no objection to his being a prieſt, ſince it was uſual for kings to be prieſts; and tho' the *Hebrew* word *Cohen*, ſometimes ſignifies a prince, it can't be ſo underſtood here, not only becauſe the word is rendered *prieſt* by the *Septuagint*, and by the Apoſtle, but becauſe he is called the prieſt of God; and Chriſt is ſaid to be of his order: and he is ſtiled the prieſt of God, becauſe he was called and inveſted by him with this office, and was employed in his ſervice; who is ſaid to be the moſt high God, from his dwelling on high, and from his ſuperior power to all others, and to diſtinguiſh him from idol Gods; this is a character of great honour given to *Melchiſedec*: *who met Abraham returning from the ſlaughter of the kings*; the four kings, whoſe names are mentioned in *Gen.* xiv. 1. whom *Abraham* ſlew, and over whom he got an entire victory, with only three hundred and eighteen men of his own houſe, after they had conquered the kings of *Sodom*, *Gomorrha*, *Admah*, *Zeboim*, and *Bela*: which ſhows that war is lawful; that enemies may be ſlain in war; that kings may fall as well as other men; and that thoſe who have conquered others, may be conquered themſelves: and as he was returning with his ſpoils, *Melchiſedec* met him; not alone, which is not to be ſuppoſed of ſo great a perſon; nor empty, for he brought with him bread and wine, not for ſacrifice, as the *papiſts* would have it; but as *Jarchi*, a *Jewiſh* interpreter on the place obſerves, they uſed to do ſo to ſuch as were fatigued in war; for this is to be conſidered as a neighbourly action, done in point of intereſt and gratitude, and was a truly chriſtian one, and very laudable and commendable; and doubtleſs had ſomething in it typical of Chriſt, who gives to hungry and weary ſaints the bread of life, and refreſhes them with the wine of divine love and grace: *and bleſſed him*; *Abraham*, and the moſt high God alſo: the form of bleſſing both is recorded in *Gen.* xiv. 19, 20. This was not a mere civil ſalutation, nor only a congratulation upon his ſucceſs, nor only a return of thanks for victory, tho' theſe things are included; nor did he do this as a private perſon, but as the prieſt of the moſt high God, and bleſſed him in his name authoritatively, as the high-prieſt among the *Jews* afterwards did, *Num.* vi. 23—27. and in this he was a type of Chriſt, who bleſſes his people with all ſpiritual bleſſings, with redemption, juſtification, pardon, peace, and all grace, and with eternal glory.

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[z] Targum in Jon. & Jeruſ. Jarchi, Baal Hatturim, Levi ben Gerſom & Abendana in Gen. xiv. 18. Bemidbar Rabba, §. 4. fol. 182. 4. Pirke Eliezer, c. 8. Juchaſin, fol. 135. 2. Tzeror Hammor, ſol. 16. 2. Shalſhelet Hakabala, fol. 1, 2. Peritzol. Itinera Mundi, p. 17.

Ver. 2. *To whom alſo Abraham gave a tenth part of all*, &c.] Or *tithes*, as in *Gen.* xiv. 20. *Philo* the *Jew* [b] renders the *Hebrew* phraſe, מעשר מכל, juſt as the Apoſtle does, δεκατην απο παντων, *a tenth part of all*, or *out of all*; not of all that he brought back, as *Lot*'s goods, or the king of *Sodom*'s, or any others; only of the ſpoils of the enemy, as in ver. 4. which is no proof of any obligation on men to pay tithes now to any order of men; for this was a voluntary act, and not what any law obliged to; it was done but once, and not conſtantly, or every year; it was out of the ſpoils of the enemy, and not out of his own ſubſtance, or of the increaſe of the earth; nor was it for the maintenance of *Melchiſedec*, as a prieſt, who alſo was a king, and was richly provided for; but to teſtify his gratitude to God, for the victory obtained, and his reverence of, and ſubjection to the prieſt of God. *Firſt being by interpretation king of righteouſneſs*; or a *righteous king*, as *Melchiſedec* was; not the king of a righteous place, as *Aben Ezra* thought, a place wherein dwelt righteouſneſs, or righteous perſons; but it was his proper name, which ſo ſignifies, and in which he was a type of Chriſt; who is righteous, not only as God, and as man, and as mediator, but particularly in the adminiſtration of his kingly office: his kingdom lies in righteouſneſs, as well as peace; the ſubjects of it are righteous perſons, and all his ways are juſt and true; his Goſpel, by which he rules, is a declaration of righteouſneſs; and he himſelf is the author of righteouſneſs, to all his people: *and after that alſo king of Salem, which is king of peace*; and may reſpect his peaceable government; and is very applicable to Chriſt, the prince of peace; whoſe kingdom is a kingdom of peace; his ſceptre is a ſceptre of peace; his royal proclamation is the Goſpel of peace; and his ſubjects are the ſons of peace; and he himſelf is the author of peace, not only between *Jew* and *Gentile*, but between God and his people; and he is the donor of peace, external, internal, and eternal. So *Philo* the *Jew* [c] interprets this name, *king of peace*, juſt as the Apoſtle does.

Ver. 3. *Without father, without mother, without deſcent*, &c.] Which is to be underſtood not of his perſon, but of his prieſthood; that his father was not a prieſt, nor did his mother deſcend from any in that office; nor had he either a predeceſſor or a ſucceſſor in it, as appears from any authentic accounts: or this is to be interpreted, not of his natural, but ſcriptural being; for no doubt, as he was a mere man, he had a father, and a mother, and a natural lineage and deſcent; but of theſe no mention is made in ſcripture, and therefore ſaid to be without them; and ſo the *Syriac* verſion renders it, *whoſe father and mother are not written in the genealogies*; or there is no genealogical account of them. The *Arabic* writers tell us who his father and his mother were; ſome of them ſay that *Peleg* was his father: ſo *Elmacinus* [d], his words are theſe; *Peleg* lived after he begat *Rehu* two hundred and nine years; afterwards he begat *Melchiſedec*, the prieſt, whom we have now made mention of. *Patricides* [e], another of their writers, expreſſes himſelf after this manner; "they who ſay *Melchiſedec* had neither beginning of days, nor end of life, and argue from the words of the Apoſtle *Paul*, aſſerting the ſame, do not rightly underſtand the ſaying of the Apoſtle *Paul*; for *Shem*, the ſon of *Noah*, after he had taken *Melchiſedec*, and withdrew him from his parents, did not ſet down in writing how old he was, when he went into the eaſt, nor what was his age when he died; but *Melchiſedec* was the ſon of *Peleg*, the ſon of *Eber*,

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[a] Targ. Onk. Jon. & Jeruſ. Levi ben Gerſom, Aben Ezra & ben Melec in Gen. xiv. 18. Toſaphot T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 16. 1.

[b] De Congreſſu, p. 438.

[c] Leg. Alleg. l. 2. p. 75.

[d] In Hottinger. Smegma Orientale, l. 1. c. 8. p. 269, 254.

[e] In ib. p. 305, 306, 254.

“ the ſon of *Salah*, the ſon of *Cainan*, the ſon of *Arphaxad*, the ſon of *Shem*, the ſon of *Noah*; and yet none of thoſe patriarchs is called his father. This only the Apoſtle *Paul* means, that none of his family ſerved in the temple, nor were children and tribes aſſigned to him. *Matthew* and *Luke* the Evangeliſts only relate the heads of tribes: hence the Apoſtle *Paul* does not write the name of his father, nor the name of his mother.” And with theſe writers *Şahid Aben Batric*[e] agrees, who expreſly affirms that *Melchiſedec* was, אבן פאלג, *the ſon of Peleg*; though others of them make him to be the ſon of *Peleg*'s ſon, whoſe name was *Heraclim*. The *Arabic Catena*[f] on *Gen.* x. 25. *the name of one was Peleg*, has this note in the margin; “and this *(Peleg)* was the father of *Heraclim*, the father of *Melchiſedec*;” and in a preceding chapter, his pedigree is more particularly ſet forth: “*Melchiſedec* was the ſon of *Heraclim*, the ſon of *Peleg*, the ſon of *Eber*; and his mother's name was *Salathiel*, the daughter of *Gomer*, the ſon of *Japhet*, the ſon of *Noah*; and *Heraclim*, the ſon of *Eber* married his wife *Salathiel*, and ſhe was with child, and brought forth a ſon, and called his name *Melchiſedec*, called alſo king of *Salem:* after this the genealogy is ſet down at length. *Melchſedec*, ſon of *Heraclim*, which was the ſon of *Peleg*, which was the ſon of *Eber*, which was the ſon of *Arphaxad*, &c. till you come to, which was the ſon of *Adam*, on whom be peace.” It is very probable *Epiphanius* has regard to this tradition, when he obſerves[g], that ſome ſay that the father of *Melchiſedec* was called *Eracla*, and his mother *Aſtaroth*, the ſame with *Aſteria*. Some *Greek*[h] writers ſay, he was of the lineage of *Sidus*, the ſon of *Ægyptus*, a king of *Lybia*, from whence the *Egyptians* are called: this *Sidus*, they ſay, came out of *Egypt* into the country of the *Canaanitiſh* nations, now called *Paleſtine*, and ſubdued it, and dwelled in it, and built a city, which he called *Sidon*, after his own name: but all this is on purpoſe concealed, that he might be a more apparent type of Chriſt, who as man is, *without father*; for though, as God, he has a father, and was never without one, being begotten by him, and was always with him, and in him; by whom he was ſent, from whom he came, and whither he is gone; to whom he is the way, and with whom he is an advocate: yet, as man, he had no father; *Joſeph* was his reputed father only; nor was the Holy Ghoſt his father; nor is he ever ſaid to be begotten as man, but was born of a virgin. Some of the *Jewiſh* writers themſelves ſay, that the redeemer, whom God will raiſe up, ſhall be *without father*[i]. And he is *without mother*, tho' not in a ſpiritual ſenſe, every believer being ſo to him as ſuch; nor in a natural ſenſe, as man, for the virgin *Mary* was his mother; but in a divine ſenſe, as God: and he is *without deſcent* or *genealogy*; not as man, for there is a genealogical account of him as ſuch, in *Matt.* i. and *Luke* iii. and his pedigree and kindred were well known to the *Jews*; but as God; and this diſtinguiſhes him from the gods of the heathens, who were genealogized by them, as may be ſeen in *Heſiod*, *Apollodorus*, *Hyginus*, and other writers; and this condemns the blaſphemous genealogies of the *Gnoſticks* and *Valentinians*. It follows, *having neither beginning of days, nor end of life*; that is, there is no account which ſhows when he was born, or when he died; and in this he was a type of Chriſt, who has no beginning of days, was from the beginning, and in the beginning, and is the beginning, and was from everlaſting; as appears from his nature as God, from his names, from his office as mediator, and from his concern in the council and covenant of peace, and in the election of his people; and he has no end of life, both as God and man; he is the living God; and tho' as man he died once, he'll die no more, but lives for ever. It is further ſaid of *Melchiſedec*, *but made like unto the Son of God*; in the above things; from whence it appears, that he is not the Son of God; and that Chriſt, as the Son of God, exiſted before him, and therefore could not take this character from his incarnation or reſurrection: *abideth a prieſt continually*; not in perſon, but in his antitype Chriſt Jeſus; for there never will be any change of Chriſt's prieſthood; nor will it ever be transferred to another; the vertue and efficacy of it will continue for ever; and he will ever live to make interceſſion; and will always bear the glory of his being both prieſt and king upon his throne: the *Syriac* verſion renders it, *his prieſthood abides for ever*; which is true both of *Melchiſedec* and of Chriſt.

Ver. 4. *Now conſider how great this man was*, &c.] *Melchiſedec*, of whom ſo many great and wonderful things are ſaid in the preceding verſes: and as follows, *unto whom the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the ſpoils*; of *Abraham*'s giving tithes to him, ſee the note on ver. 2. and *Melchiſedec*'s greatneſs is aggravated, not only from this act of *Abraham*'s, but from *Abraham*'s being a *patriarch*, who did it; he was the patriarch of patriarchs, as the ſons of *Jacob* are called, *Acts* vii. 8, 9. he is the patriarch of the whole *Jewiſh* nation, and of many nations, and of all believers, the friend of God, and heir of the world; how great then muſt *Melchiſedec* be, to whom he paid tithes? and how much greater muſt Chriſt, the antitype of *Melchiſedec*, be?

Ver. 5. *And verily they that are of the ſons of Levi*, &c.] Or *Levites*; who are of the tribe of *Levi*, whoſe deſcent is from him: *who receive the office of the prieſthood*; as ſome of them were prieſts, tho' not all; and the Levites therefore are ſometimes called prieſts. *R. Joſhua ben Levi* ſays, that in twenty-four places the prieſts are called Levites; and this is one of them, *Ezek.* xliv. 15. *and the prieſts and Levites*, &c.[k] *theſe have a commandment to take tithes of the people according to the law*; the ceremonial law, *Numb.* xviii. 20—26. theſe they took of all the people of *Iſrael* in the reſt of the tribes, by the commandment of God, on account of their ſervice in the tabernacle; and becauſe they had no inheritance in the land; and to ſhew that the *Iſraelites* held their land of God himſelf: *that is of their brethren, though they come out of the loins of Abraham*; who are their brethren and kinſmen according to the fleſh, tho' of different tribes; and from theſe they receive, notwithſtanding they are the ſons of *Abraham:* but here a difficulty ariſes, how the Levites that were prieſts can be ſaid to receive tithes from the people, when they received the tenth part of the tithes, or the tithe of tithes from the *Levites*, *Num.* xviii. 26. *Neh.* x. 38. but it ſhould be obſerved, that it was not neceſſary that the Levites ſhould give theſe tithes to the prieſts themſelves; an *Iſraelite* might do it, and ſo give the Levites the leſs; on which account the prieſts may be ſaid to receive from the people; beſides, *Ezra* in his time ordered, that the firſt tithe ſhould not be given to the Levites, but to the prieſts, becauſe they would not go up with him to *Jeruſalem* [l].

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[e] In Mr. Gregory's preface to his works.

[f] In ib.

[g] Contra Hæreſ. Hæreſ. 55.

[h] Suidas in voce Melchiſedec, Malala, l. 3. Glycas, Cedrenus & alii.

[i] R. Moſes Hadarſan apud Galatin. l. 3. c. 17. & l. 8. c. 2.

[k] T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 86. 2. & Becorot, fol. 4. 1.

Ver. 6. *But he whoſe deſcent is not counted from them*, &c.] That is, *Melchiſedec*, whoſe genealogy or pedigree is not reckoned from the Levites, nor from any from whom they deſcend; his lineal deſcent is not the ſame with theirs; and ſo did not receive tithes by any law, as they did, but by virtue of his ſuperiority: *received tithes of Abraham*; not from the people, or his brethren, but from *Abraham*, the father of the people of *Iſrael*, and of *Levi* himſelf: *and bleſſed him that had the promiſes*; of a ſon, and of the Meſſiah, that ſhould ſpring from him, in whom all nations ſhould be bleſſed, and of the land of *Canaan*, and of the bleſſings of grace and glory. This ſhows that *Melchiſedec* had a deſcent, tho' it was not known; and that, ſince his deſcent was not the ſame with the Levites, he was a more proper type of Chriſt, who belonged not to that, but another tribe.

Ver. 7. *And without all contradiction, the leſs is bleſſed of the greater.*] This is a ſelf-evident truth, and is undeniable; it admits of no controverſy, and can't be gainſayed, that he that bleſſeth, is greater in that reſpect than he that is bleſſed by him; as the prieſts were greater in their office than the people who were bleſſed by them; and ſo *Melchiſedec*, as a prieſt of the moſt high God, and as bleſſing *Abraham*, was greater than he; and ſo muſt be greater than the Levites, who ſprung from him; and his prieſthood be more excellent than theirs; and conſequently Chriſt, his antitype, and who was of his order, muſt be greater too; which is the deſign of the Apoſtle throughout the whole of his reaſoning.

Ver. 8. *And here men that die receive tithes*, &c.] The prieſts and Levites were not only men, and mortal men, ſubject to death, but they did die, and ſo did not continue, by reaſon of death, ver. 24. *but there he* receiveth them, *of whom it is witneſſed that he liveth*; which is to be underſtood of *Melchiſedec*; who is not oppoſed to men, as if he was not a man, nor to mortal men, but to men that die; nor is he ſaid to be immortal, but to live: and this may reſpect the ſilence of the ſcripture concerning him, which gives no account of his death; and may be interpreted of the perpetuity of his prieſthood, and of his living in his antitype Chriſt; and the teſtimony concerning him, is in *Pſ.* cx. 4.

Ver. 9. *And as I may ſo ſay*, &c.] With truth, and with great propriety and pertinence: *Levi alſo who receiveth tithes*; or the *Levites*, who receive tithes according to the law of *Moſes* from the people of *Iſrael*: *paid tithes in Abraham*; that is, to *Melchiſedec*; and therefore *Melchiſedec* muſt be greater than they, and his prieſthood a more excellent one than theirs; ſince they who receive tithes from others gave tithes to him.

Ver. 10. *For he was yet in the loins of his father*, &c.] *Abraham*; namely, *Levi* and his whole poſterity; which is to be underſtood ſeminally, juſt as all mankind were in the loins of *Adam*, when he ſinned and fell, and ſo they ſinned and fell in him; and ſo *Levi* was in *Abraham*'s loins, *when Melchiſedec met him*; which, as it proves *Melchiſedec* to be greater than *Levi*, and much more Jeſus Chriſt, who is a prieſt of his order, which is the grand thing the Apoſtle has in view; ſo it ſerves to illuſtrate ſeveral points of doctrine, in which either of the public heads, *Adam* and Chriſt, are concerned, with reſpect to their ſeed and offspring; ſuch as perſonal election in Chriſt, an eternal donation of all bleſſings of grace to the elect in him, eternal juſtification in him, the doctrine of original ſin, and the ſaints crucifixion, burial, reſurrection, and ſeſſion in Chriſt, and together with him.

Ver. 11. *If therefore perfection were by the Levitical prieſthood*, &c.] The prieſtood which was eſtabliſhed in the tribe of *Levi*; ſo called, to diſtinguiſh it from that which was before this inſtitution, from the times of *Adam*, as well as from the prieſthood of *Melchiſedec*, and from the prieſthood of Chriſt, and from that of his people under the Goſpel, who are all prieſts; as well as to reſtrain it to the ſubject of the Apoſtle's diſcourſe: the deſign of which is to ſhow, that there is no perfection by it; as is clear from the prieſts themſelves, who were but men, mortal men, ſinful men, and ſo imperfect, and conſequently their prieſthood; and from their offerings, between which, and ſin, there is no proportion; and at beſt were but typical of the ſacrifice of Chriſt; and could neither make the prieſts nor the worſhippers perfect, neither in their own conſciences, nor in the ſight of God: moral actions are preferred before them, and yet by theſe there is no perfection, juſtification, and ſalvation; to which may be added, that the ſacrifices the prieſts offered did not extend to all kind of ſins, only to ſins of ignorance, not to preſumptuous ones; and there were many under that diſpenſation puniſhed with death; and at moſt they only delivered from temporal, not eternal puniſhment, and only entitled to a temporal life, not an eternal one. *For under it the people received the law*; not the moral law, which was given to *Adam* in innocence, and as it came by *Moſes*, it was before the Levitical prieſthood took place; but the ceremonial law, and which was carnal, mutable, and made nothing perfect: the *Syriac* verſion renders it, *by which a law was impoſed upon the people*; to regard the office of prieſthood, and the prieſts in it, and bring their ſacrifices to them; and the *Arabic* verſion reads, *the law of the prieſt's office*; which office was after the law of a carnal commandment, and ſo imperfect, as is manifeſt from what follows: for had perfection been by it, *what further need* was there *that another prieſt ſhould ariſe after the order of Melchiſedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron?* that there was another prieſt promiſed and expected, and that he ſhould ariſe after the order of *Melchiſedec*, and who was to make his ſoul an offering for ſin, is certain, *Ezra* ii. 63. *Pſ.* cx. 4. *Iſ.* liii. 10. and ſuch an one has riſen, even Jeſus of *Nazareth*; and yet there would have been no need of him, and eſpecially, that he ſhould be of a different order from *Aaron*'s, had there been perfection by the *Levitical* prieſthood.

Ver. 12. *For the prieſthood being changed*, &c.] Not tranſlated from one tribe, family, or order, to another, but utterly aboliſhed; for tho' it is called an everlaſting prieſthood, yet that is to be underſtood with a limitation, as the word *everlaſting* often is, as relating to things under that diſpenſation; for nothing is more certain than that it is done away: it was of right abrogated at the death of Chriſt, and it is now in fact; ſince the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, the daily ſacrifice has ceaſed, and the children of *Iſrael* have been many days without one, and without an *Ephod*. And the *Jews* themſelves own, that the high prieſthood was to ceaſe in time

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[l] Maimon. Hilchot Maaſer, c. 1. §. 4.

to come [m], and which they ſay *Azariel* the ſon of *Oded* propheſied of in 2 *Chron.* xv. 3. *There is made of neceſſity a change alſo of the law*; not the moral law, that was in being before the prieſthood of *Aaron*, nor do they ſtand and fall together; beſides, this ſtill remains, for it is perfect, and cannot be made void by any other; nor is it ſet aſide by Chriſt's prieſthood: tho' there is a ſenſe in which it is aboliſhed; as it is in the hands of *Moſes*; as it is a covenant of works; as to juſtification by it; and as to its curſe and condemnation to them that are Chriſt's; yet it ſtill remains in the hands of Chriſt, and as a rule of walk and converſation; and is uſeful, and continues ſo on many accounts: but either the judicial law; not that part of it which is founded on juſtice and equity, and was a means of guarding the moral law, for that ſtill ſubſiſts; but that which was given to the *Jews* as *Jews*, and ſome parts of which depended on the prieſthood, and ſo ceaſed with it; as the laws concerning the cities of refuge, raiſing up ſeed to a deceaſed brother, preſerving inheritances in families, and judging and determining controverſies: or rather the ceremonial law, which was but a ſhadow of good things to come, and was given but for a time; and this concerned the prieſthood, and was made void by the prieſthood of Chriſt; for that putting an end to the *Levitical* prieſthood, the law which related to it muſt unavoidably ceaſe, and become of no effect. This the *Jews* moſt ſtrongly deny; God, they [n] ſay, will not change nor alter the law of *Moſes* for ever. The 9th article of their creed, as drawn up by *Maimonides*, runs thus [o]; "I believe with a perfect faith "that this law לא תהא מוחלפת *ſhall not be changed*, "nor ſhall there be another law from the creator, "bleſſed be his name." But the reaſoning of the Apoſtle is ſtrong and unanſwerable.

Ver. 13. *For he of whom theſe things are ſpoken*, &c.] In *Pſ.* cx. 4. and in the type of him *Melchiſedec*, in the preceding verſes; for not *Melchiſedec* is here meant, but the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, as appears by what follows; the antitype of *Melchiſedec*, the Lord our righteouſneſs, the prince of peace, the prieſt of God, that lives for ever, without father, without mother, *&c.* *pertaineth to another tribe*; the tribe of *Judah*, and not the tribe of *Levi*: *of which no man gave attendance at the altar*; either of burnt-offering or of incenſe; that is, no man waited there, or took upon him and exerciſed the prieſt's office that was of the tribe of *Judah*: no man might lawfully do it; *Uzziah* indeed, thruſt himſelf into the prieſt's office, who was of that tribe, and went into the temple and burnt incenſe upon the altar of incenſe; but then he had no right to do it, and was puniſhed for it.

Ver. 14. *For it is evident that our Lord ſprang out of Judah*, &c.] Out of the tribe of *Judah*; it is certain that the Meſſiah was to ſpring from that tribe, *Gen.* xlix. 10. 1 *Chron.* v. 2. he was to be of the family of *Jeſſe*, and of the houſe of *David*; and hence he is ſometimes called *David* himſelf; and ſo the *Jews* expect that he will come from the tribe of *Judah*, and not from any other [p]; and it is evident that Jeſus, who is our Lord by creation, redemption, and the conqueſt of his grace, ſprung from this tribe: this is clear from the place of his birth, *Bethlehem* of *Judah*; and from his reputed father *Joſeph*, and real mother *Mary*, being both of the houſe of *David*; and this was known to the *Jews*, and it is owned by them that he was near to the kingdom [q], which he could not be if he was not of that tribe; and hence he is called the lion of the tribe of *Judah*: *of which tribe Moſes ſpake nothing concerning the prieſthood*; he ſaid many things of it in *Deut.* xxxiii. 8. and relates many things concerning it as ſpoken by *Jacob*, but nothing about the prieſthood, as if it belonged to that, or that any that ſhould ſpring from it, ſhould exerciſe that office. The *Alexandrian* copy, the *Claromontane* manuſcript, and the *Vulgate Latin* verſion read, *concerning the prieſts*; whence it follows that there is a change of the prieſthood, and that the Meſſiah, as he was not to be, ſo he is not a prieſt of *Aaron*'s order, not being of the ſame tribe.

Ver. 15. *And it is yet far more evident*, &c.] From a fact which cannot be denied; *for that after the ſimilitude of Melchiſedec there ariſeth another prieſt*; or another has riſen, even Jeſus the ſon of *David*, of the tribe of *Judah*; another from *Aaron*, one that is not of his family or tribe, but one like to *Melchiſedec*: hence we learn that *Melchiſedec* and Chriſt are not the ſame perſon; and that the order and ſimilitude of *Melchiſedec* are the ſame; and that Chriſt's being of his order only imports that there is a reſemblance and likeneſs between him and *Melchiſedec*, in many things, which are obſerved in the beginning of this chapter: and this *ariſing* does not intend Chriſt's ſetting up himſelf, only his appearance in this form; and being expreſſed in the preſent tenſe, denotes the continual being, and virtue of his prieſthood.

Ver. 16. *Who was made*, &c.] Not as man, much leſs as God; but as a prieſt, conſtituted and appointed one: *not after the law of a carnal commandment*; either the ceremonial law in general, which was a carnal one, if we conſider the perſons to whom it belonged, the *Iſraelites* according to the fleſh; it was incumbent upon, and might be performed by ſuch who were only carnal; and it was performed by and for men that were in the fleſh, or mortal; and if we conſider the matter of it, the ſubject on which various of its rites were exerciſed, was the fleſh or body, and which were performed by manual operation; and the ſacrifices of it were the fleſh of beaſts; and theſe were for the ſins of the fleſh, and for the removing the ceremonial uncleanneſs of it; and the virtue of them reached only to the purifying of the fleſh; and the whole of it is diſtinct from the moral law, which is ſpiritual, and reaches to the ſpirit or ſoul of man; whereas this only was concerned about temporal and external things: or elſe the law of the prieſtood is particularly intended; or that commandment which reſpected the prieſthood of *Aaron*; which law regarded the carnal deſcent of his ſons; injoined a carnal inauguration of them, and provided for their ſucceſſion and continuance in a carnal way; after which, Chriſt the great high-prieſt did not become one: *but after the power of an endleſs life*; this may be underſtood either of the Goſpel, according to which Chriſt is a prieſt; and which is called *life*, in oppoſition to the law which is the miniſtration of death; and becauſe it is the means of quickning dead ſinners, and of reviving drooping ſaints; and points out Chriſt the way of life, and has brought life and immortality to light: and may be ſaid to be *endleſs*, in diſtinction from the law, which is temporary; and becauſe it is itſelf permanent and everlaſting; contains in it the promiſe of eternal life, and is the means of bringing ſouls unto it: and there is a *power* goes along with it; which diſtinguiſhes it from the weak and beggarly elements of the ceremonial law, which is aboliſhed, becauſe of the weakneſs of it; for it is attended with the power of the Spirit of God, and is the power of God unto ſalvation: or elſe this intends the endleſs life which Chriſt has, in and of himſelf; and which qualifies him for a prieſt; and ſtands oppoſed to the mortality of the prieſts, and to that law, which could not ſecure them from it: the prieſts died, and the law by which they were prieſts could not prevent their death; Chriſt is the living God, the prince of life, he had power to lay down his life as man, and power to take it up again; and his life, as man, is an endleſs one, which qualifies him for that part of his prieſtly office, his interceſſion and advocacy: or it may deſign that power, which his Father has given him as mediator, of an endleſs life, both for himſelf and for all his people; and regards chiefly his ever living as a prieſt, and the perpetuity of his prieſthood, and the continual virtue and efficacy of it.

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[m] Vajikra Rabba, §. 19. fol. 160. 4.

[n] Seder Tephillot, Ed. Amſterd. fol. 2. 1.

[o] Apud Seder Tephillot, Ed. Baſil. fol. 86. 2.

[p] Ryaa Mehimna in Zohar in Exod. fol. 49. 3. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 62. 2.

[q] T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 43. 1.

Ver. 17. *For he teſtifieth*, &c.] That is, either *David*, the penman of the pſalm, or rather the Holy Ghoſt the enditer of it, or God in the ſcripture, in *Pſ.* cx. 4. of this form of citing ſcripture, ſee the note on ch. ii. 6. *thou art a prieſt for ever after the order of Melchiſedec*; ſee ch. v. 6, 10. and vi. 20.

Ver. 18. *For there is verily a diſanulling of the commandment*, &c.] Not the moral law; though what is here ſaid of the commandment may be applied to that; that is ſometimes called the commandment, *Rom.* vii. 12, 13. it went before the promiſe of the Meſſiah, and the Goſpel of Chriſt, and the diſpenſation of it; it is in ſome reſpects weak; it cannot juſtify from the guilt of ſin, nor free from the power of it, nor ſecure from death the puniſhment of it, nor give eternal life; tho' it has a power to command, accuſe, convince, and condemn; and it is alſo unprofitable in the buſineſs of juſtification and ſalvation; tho' otherwiſe it is profitable to convince of ſin, to ſhew what righteouſneſs is, and to be a rule of converſation to the ſaints in the hand of Chriſt; yet not this, but the ceremonial law is meant, which is the commandment that reſpected the *Levitical* prieſthood, and is called a carnal one, and is incluſive of many others, and which diſtinguiſhes that diſpenſation from the Goſpel one: and this may be ſaid to be *going before*; with reſpect to time, being before the Goſpel ſtate, or the exhibition of the new covenant of grace; and with reſpect to uſe, as a type or ſhadow of good things to come; and as it was a ſchool-maſter going before, and leading on to the knowledge of evangelical truths: and this is now diſannulled, abrogated, and made void; the middle wall of partition is broken down, and the law of commandments contained in ordinances is aboliſhed: *for the weakneſs and unprofitableneſs thereof*; the ceremonial law was *weak*; it could not expiate or atone for ſin, in the ſight of God; it could not remove the guilt of ſin from the conſcience, but there was ſtill a remembrance of it; nor could it cleanſe from the filth of ſin; all it could do was, to expiate ſin typically, and ſanctify externally to the purifying of the fleſh; and all the virtue it had was owing to Chriſt whom it prefigured; and therefore being fulfilled in him, it ceaſed: and it was *unprofitable*; not before the coming of Chriſt, for then it was a ſhadow, a type, a ſchool-maſter, and had its uſefulneſs; but ſince his coming, who is the body and ſubſtance of it, it is unprofitable to be joined to him; and is of no ſervice in the affair of ſalvation; and is no other than a grievous yoke of bondage; yea, is what renders Chriſt unprofitable and of no effect, when ſubmitted to as in force, and as neceſſary to ſalvation; and becauſe of theſe things, it is aboliſhed and made null and void. The *Jews*, tho' they are ſtrenuous aſſerters of the unalterableneſs of the law of *Moſes*, yet ſometimes are obliged to acknowledge the abrogation of the ceremonial law in the times of the Meſſiah; the commandment, they ſay [r], meaning this, ſhall ceaſe in the time to come; and again, "all ſacrifices ſhall ceaſe in the future ſtate, or time to come, (*i. e.* the times of the Meſſiah,) but the ſacrifice of praiſe [s]."

Ver. 19. *For the law made nothing perfect*, &c.] Or no man; neither any of the prieſts that offered ſacrifices, nor any of the people for whom they were offered; it could not perfectly make atonement for ſin; nor make men perfectly holy or righteous; it could neither juſtify nor ſanctify; neither bring in a perfect righteouſneſs, nor bring men to perfect holineſs, and ſo to eternal life and ſalvation: *but the bringing in of a better hope* did; not the grace of hope; that is not ſomething newly brought in, the ſaints under the Old Teſtament had it; nor is it better now than then, tho' it has greater advantages and more encouragement to the exerciſe of it: nor heaven and eternal glory, the thing hoped for; the ſaints under the legal diſpenſation hoped for this, as well as believers under the preſent diſpenſation; nor is what the latter hope for better than that the former did: nor is God the author and object of hope intended; the phraſe of bringing in will not ſuit with him; beſides, he is diſtinguiſhed from it, in the next clauſe: to underſtand it of the Goſpel, the means of hope, and of encouraging it, is no ill ſenſe; that ſtanding in direct contradiſtinction to the law: but the prieſthood of Chriſt, of which the Apoſtle is treating in the context, is generally underſtood, which is the ground of hope; for all promiſes reſpecting eternal life are confirmed by it, and all bleſſings connected with it procured; and it is better than the *Aaronical* prieſthood, under the law; and a better ground of hope than the ſacrifices of that law were: Chriſt himſelf may be deſigned, who is often called hope, being the object, ground, and foundation of it; and is a better one than *Moſes*, or his law, *Aaron*, or his prieſthood; and it is by him men draw nigh to God; and the bringing in of him or his prieſthood ſhews that Chriſt's prieſthood was not upon the foot of the law, and that he exiſted as a prieſt, before brought in, and as a better hope, tho' not ſo fully revealed; and it may have reſpect to his coming in the fleſh, being ſent, or brought in by his Father: now the bringing in of him and his prieſthood did make ſomething perfect; it brought to perfection all the types, promiſes, and propheſies of the Old Teſtament, the whole law, moral and ceremonial; it brought in perfect atonement, reconciliation, pardon, righteouſneſs, and redemption; it perfected the perſons of all God's elect; and perfecty provided for their holineſs, peace, comfort, and eternal happineſs: ſome read the words *but* it, the law, was *the bringing in of a better hope*; the law led unto, made way for, and introduced Chriſt, the better hope; and ſo the *Arabic* verſion, *ſeeing it ſhould be an entrance to a more noble hope*; the *Syriac* verſion renders it, *but in the room of it entered a hope more excellent than that*; than the law: *by the which we draw nigh unto God*; the Father, as the Father of Chriſt, and of his people in him, and as the father of mercies, and the God of all grace; and this drawing nigh to him is to be underſtood not locally but ſpiritually; it includes the whole worſhip of God, but chiefly deſigns prayer: and ought to be done with a true heart, in oppoſition to hypocriſy; and in faith, in oppoſition to doubting; and with reverence and humility, in oppoſition to raſhneſs; and with freedom, boldneſs, and thankfulneſs: and it is through Chriſt and his prieſthood, that ſouls have encouragement to draw nigh to God; for Chriſt has paid all their debts, ſatisfied law and juſtice, procured the pardon of their ſins, atonement and reconciliation for them; he is the way of their acceſs to God; he gives them audience and acceptance; he preſents their prayers, and intercedes for them himſelf.

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[r] T. Bab. Nidda, fol. 61. 2.

[s] Vajikra Rabba, §. 9. fol. 153. 1. & §. 27. fol. 168. 4.

Ver. 20. *And in as much as not without an oath,* &c.] Our verſion ſupplies as follows, *he was made prieſt*; which well agrees with what is ſaid in the next verſe; the *Syriac* verſion renders it, *and which he confirmed to us by an oath*; that is, the better hope, Chriſt and his prieſthood, ſaid to be brought in, and by which men draw nigh to God; this is eſtabliſhed by the oath of God himſelf, referring to *Pſ.* cx. 4. afterwards cited in proof of it.

Ver. 21. *For these prieſts were made without an oath,* &c.] The prieſts of the tribe of *Levi*, and of the order of *Aaron*, were inſtalled into their office, and inveſted with it, without an oath; no mention is made of any when *Aaron* and his ſons were put into it in *Moſes*'s time; nor was any uſed afterwards, neither by God, nor by the prieſts, nor by the people; it is true indeed that after the ſect of the *Sadduces* aroſe, the high-prieſt on the day of atonement was obliged to take an oath that he would not change any of the cuſtoms of the day[t]; but then this regarded not his inveſtiture, but the execution of his office; and was an oath of his and not of the Lord's, which is here deſigned: *but this with an oath*; that is, Chriſt was made an high-prieſt with an oath, even with an oath of God; which gives his prieſthood the preference to the *Levitical* prieſthood, which was without one: and this oath was made, *by him that ſaid unto him*; the *Syriac* verſion reads, *as he ſaid to him by David*; that is, in *Pſ.* cx. 4. *David* being the penman of that pſalm, in which ſtand the following words of the Father to Chriſt: *the Lord ſware and will not repent, thou art a prieſt for ever after the order of Melchiſedec*; which proves that Jehovah ſwore that Chriſt ſhould be a prieſt, and continue ſo: ſwearing, when aſcribed to God, is after the manner of men, and is always by himſelf, and never upon any trivial account; but either to confirm his love to his people, or his covenant with them, or the miſſion of his Son to be the redeemer, or as here, his prieſtly office: and this oath was made not ſo much on Chriſt's account, as on account of the heirs of promiſe, for their conſolation; and ſhews the dignity, validity, importance, and ſingularity of Chriſt's prieſthood, as well as the durableneſs of it; and of this oath God will never repent: repentance cannot properly fall upon God, on any account; for it is contrary to his holineſs and righteouſneſs, and to his happineſs, to his unchangeableneſs, omniſcience, and omnipotence; it is indeed ſometimes aſcribed to him improperly, and after the manner of men; and only regards a change of his outward conduct according to his immutable will; and the change that is made is in the creature, and not in God himſelf: but God will not repent in any ſenſe of the prieſthood of Chriſt, nor of his oath, that it ſhould continue for ever according to the *Melchiſedecian* order; for he was every way qualified for it, and has faithfully performed it.

Ver. 22. *By ſo much was Jeſus made a ſurety of a better teſtament.*] Or *covenant*, for the word ſignifies both; and what is intended may be called both a teſtament and a covenant; a teſtament, becauſe it is founded in the good will and pleaſure of God, and reſpects an inheritance bequeathed by God the Father to his children, which was confirmed and comes to them by the death of Chriſt the teſtator; and a covenant, it being a compact or agreement made by the Father with Chriſt, as the repreſentative of all the elect; in which promiſes and bleſſings of all ſorts are provided and ſecured for them in him; and is called in ſcripture a covenant of life and peace, becauſe theſe are things concerned in it; and is commonly by men called the covenant of grace, becauſe it ſprings from the grace of God, the ſubject matter of it is grace, and the end of it is the glory of God's grace: now this is better than the covenant of works broken by man, and which expoſes him to the curſe and condemnation of the law; or than the covenant of the *Levitical* prieſthood, by which was no perfection; and the form of adminiſtration of it under the Goſpel diſpenſation is better than that under the law, for it is now revealed more clearly, and adminiſtred without types, ſhadows, and ſacrifices; and the extent of its adminiſtration is larger, reaching to *Gentiles* as well as *Jews*; and beſides, it is now actually ratified and confirmed by the blood of Chriſt, which is therefore called the blood of the everlaſting covenant: and of this teſtament or covenant Chriſt is the *ſurety*; the word ſignifies, one that draws nigh: Chriſt drew nigh to his Father in the council of peace, and undertook to be the ſaviour and redeemer of his people; he ſubſtituted himſelf in their place and ſtead; he interpoſed between the creditor and the debtor, and became ſurety for the payment of the debts of the latter, and ſo ſtood engaged for them, and in their room: Chriſt is not the ſurety for the Father to his people, but for them to the Father; as to ſatisfy for their ſins, to work out a righteouſneſs for them, to preſerve and keep them, and make them happy; which is an inſtance of matchleſs love.

Ver. 23. *And they truly were many prieſts,* &c.] There were many common prieſts at a time; and tho' there were but one high-prieſt at a time, yet there were many of them in a line of ſucceſſion from *Aaron* down to the Apoſtles time. The *Jews* ſay[u], that under the firſt temple eighteen high-prieſts miniſtred, and under the ſecond temple more than three hundred: this ſhews the imperfection of this prieſthood, ſince it was in many hands; no one continuing and being ſufficient to execute it; but Chriſt is the one and only high-prieſt; there is no other, nor is there any need of any other: the reaſon why there were ſo many under the law was, *becauſe they were not ſuffered to continue by reaſon of death*; death has a power to forbid a long continuance in this world, and no man does continue long here; death puts a ſtop to mens works, and to the exerciſe of their ſeveral callings; no office, even the moſt ſacred, exempts from it; no not the office of high-prieſts: theſe were but men, ſinful men, and ſo died; and their diſcontinuance by reaſon of death, ſhews the imperfection of their prieſthood: there was another reaſon beſides this which the Apoſtle gives, why the high-prieſts were ſo many, and eſpecially about this time; and that is, the office was bought for money, and men that would give moſt were put into it: hence there were frequent changes; the *Jews* themſelves ſay, they changed every twelve months[w].

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[t] Miſn. Yoma, c. 1. §. 5.

[u] T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 9. 1. Piske Toſephot Zebachim, Art. 72.

Ver. 24. *But this* man *becauſe he continueth ever*, &c.] Tho' he died, death did not forbid him to continue, as it does other men; he was not forced to die, he died voluntarily; and he continued but for a ſmall time under the power of death; beſides, his death was a branch of his prieſtly office; ſo that he not only continued in his divine nature, which ſtill had the human nature in union with it, but he continued in his office as a prieſt, and quickly roſe from the dead; and the virtue of his ſacrifice always remains, and he himſelf ever lives as an interceſſor: wherefore he *hath an unchangeable prieſthood*; which will never be antiquated, and give place to another; nor does it, or ever will it paſs from him to another, for it is needleſs, ſeeing he lives, and no other is ſufficient for it; and it would be injuſtice to paſs it to another; the glory of it is due to him; and this is matter of comfort to the ſaints, that he ſits a prieſt upon his throne, and that his prieſthood always continues.

Ver. 25. *Wherefore he is able alſo to ſave them to the uttermoſt*, &c.] Becauſe he continues ever, and has an unchangeable prieſthood. This is to be underſtood not of temporal ſalvation, nor of providential favours, but of ſpiritual and eternal ſalvation; and includes a deliverance from all evil here and hereafter, and an enjoyment of all good in this world and in that to come: Chriſt was called to this work by his Father; he was promiſed by him to do it, and was ſent by him to effect it, and has accompliſhed it; and this is the reaſon of his name Jeſus, and was the end of his coming into this world, and which the Goſpel always repreſents as ſuch: this work required ability; here was a law to be fulfilled; juſtice to be ſatisfied; ſin to be bore, removed, and atoned for; many enemies to engage with, and a curſed death to undergo: it was a work no creature, angels or men, were able to undertake and perform; the prieſts under the law could not; men cannot ſave themſelves, nor can any creature work out ſalvation for them: but Chriſt is able; as appears from the help his father laid on him, who knew him to be mighty; from his own undertaking it, being mighty to ſave; and from his having compleatly effected it; and he muſt needs be able to do it, ſince he is the mighty God: and he is able to ſave to the uttermoſt; *to the utmoſt perfection*, as the *Arabic* verſion renders it; ſo as nothing can be wanting in the ſalvation he is the author of, nor any thing added to it; or *for ever*, as the *Vulgate Latin*, *Syriac* and *Ethiopic* verſions render it; to the utmoſt of time, even to eternity, as well as to the utmoſt of mens wants: the perſons he is able to ſave, are ſuch *that come to God by him*; Chriſt is able to ſave all the world, were it his will; but not his abſolute power is deſigned by his ability, but that power which by his will is put into act; and reaches not to all men, for all are not ſaved; and thoſe that are, are deſcribed by ſpecial characters, as here: they are ſuch who come to God, not eſſentially conſidered, but perſonally, or in the perſon of the Father; and not as an abſolute God, but as in Chriſt; not as on a throne of juſtice, but as on a throne of grace and mercy; not only as Chriſt's Father, but as theirs; and not only as the God of nature and providence, but as the God of grace: and this act of coming to him is a fruit of his everlaſting love; an effect of Chriſt's death; is peculiar to regenerate perſons; takes in the whole ſervice of God, eſpecially prayer; is not local but ſpiritual, it is by faith; and ſuppoſes ſpiritual life, and implies a ſenſe of need, and of God's ability and willingneſs to help: the medium or mean by which ſuch come to God is Chriſt. Man had acceſs to God in his ſtate of innocence, but ſinning, was not admitted; there is no approaching now unto him without a middle perſon; Chriſt is the mediator, who having made peace, atoned for ſin, ſatisfied juſtice, and brought in an everlaſting righteouſneſs, introduces his people into God's preſence; in whom their perſons and ſervices are accepted, and through whom all bleſſings are communicated to them: *ſeeing he ever liveth to make interceſſion for them*; Chriſt ever lives as God, he is the living God; and tho' he died as man, he is riſen from the dead, and will not die again, but live for evermore; and he lives as mediator and redeemer, and particularly as a prieſt; one branch of whoſe office it is to intercede for his people: this he does now in heaven; not by vocal prayer and ſupplication, at leaſt not as in the days of his fleſh; or as if he was ſupplicating an angry judge; nor as controverting or litigating a point in the court of heaven; but by the appearance of his perſon for them; by the preſentation of his ſacrifice, blood, and righteouſneſs; by declaring his will, that ſuch and ſuch bleſſings be beſtowed on ſuch and ſuch perſons; and by recommending the prayers of his people, and removing the charges and accuſations of ſatan: the things he intercedes for are, the converſion of his that are in a ſtate of nature; the conſolation of diſtreſſed ones; freſh diſcoveries of pardoning grace to fallen believers; renewed ſtrength to oppoſe ſin, exerciſe grace, diſcharge duty, and bear up under temptations, and deliverance out of them; perſeverance in faith and holineſs, and eternal glorification; and he intercedes for theſe things; not for all the world, but for all the elect, even tho' tranſgreſſors; and he is very fit for this work, as the following verſe ſhews; he is the one and only mediator; and he is a very prevalent interceſſor, he always ſucceeds; and he does this work readily, willingly, chearfully, and freely; and all this proves him to be able to ſave; for tho' the impetration of ſalvation is by his death, the application of it is owing to his interceding life; had he died and not lived again, he could not have ſaved to the uttermoſt; his life is the ſecurity of his people's, and he lives for them, and as their repreſentative; the bleſſed effects of which they conſtantly enjoy.

Ver. 26. *For ſuch an high-prieſt became us*, &c.] Is ſuitable to us, anſwers to our caſes and neceſſities, is every way ſuch an one as is wanted: who is *holy*; by nature, originally and underivatively, perfectly and compleatly, internally as well as externally; he was typified by the high-prieſt, who had holineſs to the Lord written on his forehead, and far exceeds any of the prieſts in holineſs; and ſuch an one becomes us, for had he not been holy he could not have entered into the holy place for us, or have appeared there on our account, or have been our ſanctification; ſo *Philo* the *Jew* ſpeaks of the true prieſt as being not man, but the divine word, and as free from all ſin voluntary and involuntary[x]: *harmleſs*; without any vitioſity in his nature, without guile in his mouth, or malice in his heart; doing no injury to any man's perſon or property: the character chiefly regards the innocence and holineſs of his life and converſation; and in which he exceeded the prieſts under the law; and is a ſuitable one for us, for hereby he was fit to be made ſin, and to take it away: *undefiled*; with the ſin of *Adam*, with which all mankind are defiled; with the blood of ſlain beaſts, with which the prieſts under the law were ſprinkled; with the filthy converſation of the wicked, which affects good men: hence he was more excellent than the prieſts under the law; and one that becomes us, ſince his blood is the blood of a lamb without ſpot and blemiſh: the high-prieſts under the law, according to the *Jews*[y], were to excel their brethren in knowledge, beauty, and riches; but the diſtinguiſhing character of our high-prieſt is purity and holineſs: *ſeparate from ſinners*; not but that he took the nature of ſinners, tho' not a ſinful nature; and he was often in the company of ſinners, when on earth, and was reckoned among them, and as one of them; but he was ſeparated from them in *Adam*; he was not among the individuals of human nature that ſinned in him; and he was brought into the world in a different manner from them, not deſcending from *Adam* by ordinary generation; and he had no communion with them in ſin; nor did he encourage them to it in the days of his fleſh; and now he is removed far from them; and herein he exceeds the prieſts under the law, and is ſuitable to us: the *Syriac* and *Ethiopic* verſions read, *ſeparate from ſins*; the alluſion ſeems to be, to the ſeparating of the high-prieſt from his own houſe to one of the courts of the temple ſeven days before the day of atonement[z], and ſo before the burning of the heifer[a]: *and made higher than the heavens*; than the viſible heavens, the airy and ſtarry heavens, and than the angels in heaven; and ſo preferable to the high-prieſts, and exceedingly agreeable to us, ch. iv. 14. the alluſion may be to the carrying of the high-prieſt on the day of atonement to an upper chamber in the temple, called the chamber of *Abtines*[b]: this may be underſtood either of Chriſt's exaltation in heaven, where angels are ſubject to him and his prieſthood is compleated; or of his excelling the angels in the holineſs of his nature, which agrees with the other characters in the text, and ſtands oppoſed to the infirmities of the prieſts.

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[w] T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 8. 2.

[x] De Profugis, p. 466, 467. & de Victimis, p. 843.

Ver. 27. *Who needeth not daily as thoſe high-prieſts*, &c.] They being ſinners, and he not: *to offer up ſacrifice firſt for his own ſins and then for the people's*; as they did on the day of atonement; ſee *Lev.* xvi. 6, 11, 15, 16. upon which place the *Jews*[c] make the ſame remark the Apoſtle does here; "he (the "high-prieſt, they ſay) offers ſacrifices for the ſins "of the people, for his own, בקדמיתא *firſt*, ולבתר "*and afterwards*, for the ſins of the people:" which was one reaſon of the imperfection and inſufficiency of their ſacrifices; but Chriſt needed not to offer for his own, nor could he, for he had none of his own; what he had was by imputation; wherefore he only needed to offer, and he only did offer for the ſins of the people; not of the *Jews* only, but of the *Gentiles* alſo, even of all God's covenant people; nor did he need to do this daily, as they did; they offered ſacrifice daily, the common prieſts every day, morning and evening, and the high-prieſt on a ſtated day once a year, on the day of atonement: *for this he did once when he offered up himſelf*; and in this alſo he differed from them; they offered not themſelves, but what was inferior to themſelves, and what could not take away ſin, and therefore was repeated; but Chriſt offered himſelf, his whole human nature, ſoul and body, and both as in union with his divine nature; and this being offered to God freely and voluntarily in the room and ſtead of his people, was acceptable to God: hereby juſtice was ſatisfied; the law fulfilled; ſin taken away, and compleat ſalvation obtained; ſo that there never was ſince any need of his offering again, nor never will be; which ſhews the perfection and fullneſs of his prieſthood, and the preference of it to the *Levitical* one.

Ver. 28. *For the law maketh men high-prieſts which have infirmity*, &c.] Every word has an emphaſis on it, and ſhews the difference between Chriſt and theſe prieſts: they were many; they were made prieſts by the law, the law of a carnal commandment, which made nothing perfect, and was diſannulled; they were men that were made prieſts by it, and could not really draw nigh to God, and mediate with him for themſelves, or others, nor atone either for their own or others ſins; and they were men that had infirmity, not natural and corporal, for they were to have no bodily blemiſhes and deficiences in them, but ſinful ones; and eſpecially ſuch were they who bore this office under the ſecond temple, and particularly in the times of Chriſt and his Apoſtles[d]: *but the word of the oath which was ſince the law*; that word which had an oath annexed to it, which declared Chriſt an high-prieſt after the order of *Melchiſedec*, was ſince the law of the prieſthood of *Aaron*; for tho' Chriſt was made a prieſt from eternity, yet the promiſe which declared it, and had an oath joined to it was afterwards in *David*'s time, *Pſ.* cx. 4. and this word of the oath maketh *the Son*; not a ſon, but a prieſt; publiſhes and declares him to be ſo: Chriſt, tho' a man, yet he is not a mere man; he is the Son of God, and as ſuch oppoſed to men; and therefore is not the Son of God as man; and this ſhews that he was a ſon before he was a prieſt, and therefore is not ſo called on account of his office; and it is his being the Son of God which gives luſtre and glory to his prieſtly office, and virtue and efficacy to his ſacrifice and interceſſion, and gives him the preference to all other prieſts: *who is conſecrated for evermore*; or *perfected*, or *perfect*; he is perfect in his obedience and ſufferings, in his ſacrifice, and as he is now in heaven, in compleat glory; the law made men prieſts that did not continue, but Chriſt is a prieſt for evermore, and abſolutely perfect.

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[y] Maimon. & Bartenora in Miſn. Yoma, c. 1. §. 3.

[z] Miſn. Yoma, c. 1. §. 1.

[a] Miſn. Parah, c. 3. §. 1.

[b] Miſn. Yoma, c. 1. §. 5.

[c] Zohar in Lev. fol. 26. 4.

[d] Vid. T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 8. 2. & 9. 1.

CHAP. VIII.

THE Apoſtle obſerving that the prieſthood of Chriſt is the ſum of what he had treated of in the preceding chapter, proceeds to ſhew the ſuperior excellency of it in other inſtances, particularly in the place where Chriſt now officiates, which is in heaven; he being ſet down at the right hand of God there, and ſo was a miniſter of the ſanctuary, and true tabernacle pitched by God, and not man; whereas the prieſts of *Aaron*'s line only miniſtred on earth, and in the typical ſanctuary and tabernacle, ver. 1, 2. and after he had obſerved that Chriſt muſt have ſomething to offer, meaning his body, to anſwer to the gifts and ſacrifices prieſts were ordained to offer, ver. 3. he proves the neceſſity of his miniſtring in heaven, becauſe if he was on earth he would not be a prieſt, a compleat one, and would have been uſeleſs and needleſs, ver. 4. and beſides, it was proper that he ſhould go up to heaven, and miniſter there, as the antitype of the prieſts, who to the example and ſhadow of heavenly things, ſerved in the tabernacle which was made by *Moſes*, by the order of God, and according to the pattern ſhewed him in the mount, ver. 5. and that the miniſtry of Chriſt in the true ſanctuary is much more excellent than the miniſtry of the prieſts in the ſhadowy one, is evident from his being the mediator of a better covenant, ver. 6. and that the covenant he is the mediator of, is the better covenant, appears from the better promiſes of which it conſiſts, and from the faultineſs of the former covenant, ver. 6, 7. and that that was faulty, and ſucceeded by another, he proves from a paſſage in *Jer.* xxxi. 31—34. in which mention is made of a new covenant, and as diſtinct from that made with the *Jewiſh* fathers, and violated by them; and ſeveral of the promiſes of this new and ſecond covenant are rehearſed, and which manifeſtly appear to be better than what were in the former, ver. 8, 9, 10, 11, 12. from all which the Apoſtle concludes, that a new covenant being made, the old one muſt be antiquated; and that whereas it was decaying and waxing old, it was juſt ready to vaniſh away, ver. 13.

Ver. 1. *Now of the things which we have ſpoken this is the ſum*, &c.] The ſcope and drift, the compendium and ſubſtance; or the principal of what has been ſaid in, or from *Pſ.* cx. 4. and has been diſcourſed of in the three preceding chapters, is the prieſthood of Chriſt: *we have ſuch an high-prieſt*; as is deſcribed in the foregoing diſcourſe, and in the following words: Chriſt is a prieſt, an high-prieſt, and the ſaints high-prieſt; they are not without one under the Goſpel-diſpenſation; and Chriſt is he, and always continues, in whoſe ſacrifice and interceſſion they have a ſhare: *who is ſet on the right hand of the throne of the majeſty in the heavens*; he is *ſet*, whereas the *Levitical* prieſts ſtood; which ſhews that he has done his work, and that with acceptance; and is in a ſtate of eaſe and reſt; and is poſſeſſed of honour, glory, majeſty, and authority, and which continue: the place where he is ſet is, *on the right hand of the throne of the majeſty*; the ſame with the right hand of God; for by the throne of the majeſty is meant, God the Father in his royal glory and dignity; ſo *Tiphereth*, one of the ten numbers in the *Jews Cabaliſtic* tree, whoſe name is *Jehovah*, is called כסא הכבוד *the throne of glory* [e]; ſo angels are called thrones, *Col.* i. 16. but God is a throne of majeſty ſuperior to them; and at his right hand ſits Chriſt the great high-prieſt; which is expreſſive of his high honour, glory, and power, and even of his equality with God: the phraſe, *in the heavens*, may refer both to God the throne of majeſty, who is there, and to Chriſt the high-prieſt, who is paſſed into them, and received by them, and ſits there.

Ver. 2. *A miniſter of the ſanctuary*, &c.] The heavenly one, ſo called, in alluſion to the holy of holies, the type of it; and becauſe it is truly an holy place; and which Chriſt ſanctifies and prepares for his people by his preſence and interceſſion: or *of the holy ones*, or *ſaints*; who are ſanctified or ſet apart by God the Father, to whom Chriſt is made ſanctification, and who are made holy by the Spirit of God; to theſe Chriſt is a miniſter; he was ſo in his prophetic office, to the loſt ſheep of the houſe of *Iſrael*; and in his prieſtly office, to all the choſen ones, when on earth, offering himſelf a ſacrifice for them, and now he is a miniſter to them in heaven, interceding for them; and in his kingly office, governing, protecting, and defending them: or *of holy things*; to his people, ſuch as the gifts of his Spirit, grace, and all ſupplies of it, and at laſt glory; and for them, preſenting their ſacrifices of prayer and praiſe to God, which become acceptable to him through his powerful mediation: *and of the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched, and not man*; by which is meant, not heaven, the ſame with the ſanctuary, for this would be an unneceſſary tautology, and an explanation of a word by another more obſcure; nor is there any reaſon why it ſhould be added, *which the Lord pitched, and not man*; ſince every one muſt believe that heaven is made by God alone; but rather the church of Chriſt, which is ſometimes called a tabernacle, and is a true one, of which the tabernacle of *Moſes* was a type, and is of God's building, and where Chriſt miniſters, being the high-prieſt over the houſe of God; tho' it is beſt to interpret it of the human nature of Chriſt, in which he tabernacled among men, and which was typified by the tabernacle of *Moſes*, and therefore is called the *true* one, in diſtinction from that; for as there God dwelt, and his glory was ſeen, and he granted his preſence to his people, and the ſacrifices were brought and offered up there, and to this the people looked when at a diſtance, and this appeared very coarſe without, but within full of holy things; ſo in Chriſt's human nature the fullneſs of the Godhead dwells bodily; here the glory of God is ſeen, even in the face of Jeſus; and through him God vouchſafes communion with his people; and by him the ſacrifices of prayer and praiſe are offered up; and to him do the ſaints look for the acceptance of them; and tho' in the days of his fleſh he looked very mean and deſpicable, yet was full of grace and truth, and of all the gifts of the Spirit: and the human nature of Chriſt was not of man; it was not propagated by human generation, but was produced through the power of the Holy Ghoſt; and in this tabernacle Chriſt miniſtred when on earth, and now miniſters in heaven.

Ver. 3. *For every high-prieſt is ordained to offer gifts and ſacrifices*, &c.] See the note on ch. ỽ. 1. *wherefore it is of neceſſity that this man have ſomewhat alſo to offer*; or *this perſon*; for the word *man* is not in the text, and ſeems not ſo proper a word to be ſupplied, ſince it was his human nature that it was neceſſary he ſhould have to offer; he was a perſon, and exiſted as a divine perſon antecedent to his aſſumption of human nature: as God, he had nothing to offer, or that was capable of being offered; ſomething to offer as a ſacrifice was neceſſary to him as a prieſt, but not any thing was proper to him; *Levitical* ſacrifices would not do, theſe could not take away ſin; beſides, the great high-prieſt was not of the tribe of *Levi*, nor of the order of *Aaron*, and therefore could not offer theſe. An angelic nature would have been improper, that is not capable of dying; and the offering up of ſuch an one would have been of no ſervice to men, for whom prieſts are ordained; but an human nature is meant, and which it was neceſſary Chriſt ſhould have, and offer, for it is for men that he became an high-prieſt; it was human nature that had offended God, and ſatisfaction muſt be made in that nature; and this was capable of ſuffering and dying; yet not human nature under any conſideration was neceſſary for him to have and offer; not merely as in a ſtate of innocence, without any infirmity, nor as ſinful, yet as perfect as to parts and qualities; and a nature, and not a perſon, was neceſſary to be had, and to be taken into cloſe and inſeparable union to his divine perſon; and of this there was a neceſſity, not abſolute, or a neceſſity of coaction and force: Chriſt was not forced unto it; but on the foot of his ſuretyſhip engagements, and becauſe of making ſatisfaction for the ſin of man, it was neceſſary; otherwiſe Chriſt voluntarily engaged to be a prieſt, and willingly became man, and freely offered himſelf, ſoul and body, in the room and ſtead of his people.

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[e] Lex. Cabal. p. 483.

Ver. 4. *For if he were on earth, he ſhould not be a prieſt*, &c.] The *Socinians* from hence attempt to prove that Chriſt was not a prieſt, and did not offer ſacrifice on earth; whereas his coming into the world, and his appearance in human nature, was in the character of a prieſt, and to qualify himſelf for one; his death was his ſacrifice, which was on earth; and he never offered but one ſacrifice; and it was after he had offered himſelf that he went to heaven; ſo the ſacrifices under the law were firſt offered, before their blood was carried within: but the meaning is, either if *that* was on earth, namely what it was neceſſary he ſhould have to offer; if his human nature had been earthly, had been of men, had come by ordinary generation, he had not been properly, only typically a prieſt, at moſt; and had been no better than the typical ones; yea, he would have been needleſs, nay might not have offered, not being of *Levi*'s tribe, and could not have exiſted as a prieſt with the ſons of *Aaron*; but he had his human nature in another way, through the power of the Holy Ghoſt from above, and therefore is ſaid to come from above, from heaven, and to be the Lord from heaven: or the ſenſe is, if he was on earth, and had not died, he had not been a prieſt; and if he had died and remained under the power of death, he had been a prieſt of no account and uſe; and had he roſe again and remained on earth, without going to heaven, with his blood and ſacrifice, he had not been a perfect prieſt; if Chriſt had remained on earth, the *Levitical* prieſthood had remained, and ſo he would have been no prieſt, ſince two prieſthoods could not have ſubſiſted together. The *Levitical* prieſthood was in force whilſt Chriſt was on earth; Chriſt's prieſthood was not perfected on earth; the *Levitical* prieſthood remaining whilſt he was on earth, proves he was not then a perfect prieſt, or had not compleated his prieſthood; had he been ſo, that would not have ſubſiſted; it was neceſſary therefore that Chriſt ſhould enter into the holy place, to put an end to the *Levitical* prieſthood: moreover, if he had remained on earth, he had been needleſs; *ſeeing that there are prieſts that offer gifts according to the law*; there were prieſts when Chriſt was upon earth; their work was to offer gifts the people brought, and ſacrifices for ſin, and that according to the law of *Moſes*, which till the death of Chriſt was in full force.

Ver. 5. *Who ſerve unto the example and ſhadow of heavenly things*, &c.] Things reſpecting the perſon, office, and grace of Chriſt; the prieſts themſelves were types of him; the places they miniſtred in were an exemplar of the heavenly places, as the word may be rendred, where Chriſt is; and the things they miniſtred were ſhadows of the good things which are by Chriſt; and the ſhadows were mere repreſentations, dark, obſcure, glimmering ones, and were fleeting and tranſitory: *as Moſes was admoniſhed of God*; by an oracle; he was a peculiar favourite of God, and was the mediator between God and the people of *Iſrael*, and what he received was oracle-wiſe; what he delivered to the people was what he received from God; and what was thus delivered ought to be received as from God: and this admonition or oracle was given him *when he was about to make the tabernacle*; the *Levitical* one, with every thing appertaining to the worſhip of God in it: this is aſcribed to *Moſes*, tho' it was made by others, becauſe it was by his direction, and under his care and overſight; and he had this admonition at the beginning of it; and at the finiſhing of it he looked upon it, and ſaw that it was all done as the Lord had commanded, *Exod.* xxv. 40. and xxxix. 43. *for ſee, ſaith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern ſhewed to thee in the mount*; *Moſes* was taken up into a mountain with God, even mount *Sinai*; and whilſt he was there, a pattern was given him of the tabernacle and all its utenſils; this was not a device of his own, but was ſhewn him by God; and this pattern reached to every particular thing; and great care and circumſpection were uſed that the moſt minute thing anſwered to it. The *Jews* think this pattern was given him by the miniſtry of angels; *Gabriel*, they ſay [f], girt himſelf with a girdle, and ſhewed to *Moſes* the work of the candleſtick; and they further ſay, that an ark of fire, and a table of fire, and a candleſtick of fire, deſcended from heaven, and *Moſes* ſaw them, and made according to them: from whence it may be obſerved that the tabernacle, and tabernacle worſhip, were of divine inſtitution; the ceremonious rites of the *Jews* were not, as ſome have affirmed, borrowed from the *Egyptians*; nor were they given as diverſions to that people, nor only to preſerve them from idolatry, and keep them ſeparate from others, but were deſigned to lead them to Chriſt, they were typical of; wherefore the abuſe, and not the uſe of them, were condemned under the former diſpenſation; tho' they were to continue no longer than till Chriſt came, and ſuffered and died; and now they are aboliſhed: moreover, it may be gathered from hence, that whatever is done in a way of religious worſhip, ſhould be according to a divine rule; a church of Chriſt ought to be formed according to the primitive pattern, and ſhould conſiſt, not of all that are born in a nation, province, or pariſh; nor ſhould all that are born of believing parents be admitted into it; no unholy, unbelieving, and unconverted perſons,

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[f] T. Bab. Menachot, fol. 29. 1.

ſons, only ſuch as are true believers in Chriſt, and who are baptized according as the word of God directs; the officers of a church ſhould be only of two ſorts, biſhops, elders, paſtors or overſeers, and deacons; the ordinances are baptiſm, which ſhould only be adminiſtred to believers, and by immerſion, and the Lord's ſupper, of which none ſhould partake, but thoſe who have taſted that the Lord is gracious; and this ſhould be performed as Chriſt performed it, and as the Apoſtle *Paul* received it from him; the diſcipline of Chriſt's houſe ſhould be regarded, and all the laws of it carefully and punctually put in execution; and a converſation becoming the Goſpel ſhould be attended to.

Ver. 6. *But now hath he obtained a more excellent miniſtry*, &c.] Chriſt has a *miniſtry*, he is the miniſter of the ſanctuary, ver. 2. he has *obtained* this miniſtry of his father; he was called unto it and engaged in it by him; and he has *now* obtained it; for tho' he was called to it from eternity, it was in time he came an high-prieſt of good things to come; and his miniſtry is *a more excellent* one than that of the prieſts, who offered gifts according to the law, and ſerved to the example and ſhadow of heavenly things; as abundantly appears from the preceding chapter, and from this, as well as from what follows: *by how much alſo he is the mediator of a better covenant*; the covenant of grace, as adminiſtred under the goſpel-diſpenſation; which is not only better than the covenant of works, that being conditional, this abſolute; that ſtood on the foot of works, this on the foot of grace, and is eſtabliſhed in Chriſt; that being broken and made void, this continues; and not only better than the covenant of the *Levitical* prieſthood, which was but a typical one, and is now ceaſed, but alſo than the covenant of grace, as adminiſtred under the legal diſpenſation; being better than that, as to the manner of its manifeſtation, which is more full and clear; and as to the extent of its adminiſtration, reaching to *Gentiles* as well as *Jews*; and as to the ratification of it by the blood of Chriſt, called from thence the blood of the everlaſting covenant; and as to the promiſes of it, here ſaid to be better: *which was eſtabliſhed upon better promiſes*; which are not now delivered out as before, under the figure of earthly and temporal things; nor under a condition to be performed nor confined to a particular people and nation; and which are attended with a greater meaſure of the Spirit, to open and apply them; and are all ſecured in Chriſt Jeſus, and confirmed by his blood: and now of this covenant Chriſt is the *mediator*; a mediator is of more perſons than one, and of theſe at variance; and he is a middle perſon between both; and his buſineſs is, to bring both parties together, and make peace between them: the two parties in this caſe are God and man, ſet at a diſtance from each other by the ſin of man, whereby man is become enmity to God; Chriſt is the mediator between God and man, a middle perſon between both, being both God and man, the days-man, who lays his hands on both; who brings men to God that were afar off, and makes peace for them by the blood of his croſs, and ſatisfies the juſtice of God, which he has done by the ſacrifice of himſelf; and now appears in the preſence of God for them, and intercedes for them, and applies the bleſſings of the covenant to them by his Spirit, and keeps and preſerves them ſafe to his everlaſting kingdom; and for this office he is every way fit, and in this he excels the *Levitical* prieſts, and has a miniſtry ſuperior to theirs, ſince he is ſuch a mediator, and a mediator of ſuch a covenant.

Ver. 7. *For if that firſt* covenant *had been faultleſs*, &c.] Not the covenant of works; that was made in paradiſe, this on mount *Sinai*; that was made with *Adam* and his poſterity, this with the *Jews* only; that had no mediator, this had one, *Moſes*; that was not dedicated with blood, this was; that had no forgiveneſs of ſin in it, this had; under that ſaints are not, but they were under this; to be under that was no privilege, but to be under this it was, as to the *Iſraelites*, who on this account were preferable to all other nations: nor is the pure covenant of grace, as adminiſtred under the Goſpel meant; for tho' that was firſt made, yet is the ſecond in adminiſtration; that includes the elect of God among the *Gentiles*, this only the *Jews*; that is made only with them, and is made known to them whom God calls by his grace in time, this was made with good and bad; that was of pure grace, this required works in order to life and the enjoyment of its bleſſings; that is an everlaſting covenant, this is done away; and the one is manifeſtly diſtinguiſhed from the other in this chapter: but the covenant here deſigned is the covenant of grace, as adminiſtred under the legal diſpenſation, and which was a typical one; the people with whom it was made were typical of the true *Iſrael* of God; the bleſſings promiſed in it were ſhadows of good things to come; the works it required were typical of Chriſt's obedience to the law, in the room and ſtead of his people, by which he fulfilled it; the ſacrifices on which it were eſtabliſhed, were types of the ſacrifice and death of Chriſt; the mediator of it, *Moſes*, was a type of Chriſt, the mediator of the new covenant; and it was confirmed by the blood of beaſts, which was typical of the blood of Chriſt: this covenant was not *faultleſs*, but was faulty or blame-worthy; not that there was any thing ſinful and criminal in it, but it was deficient; there was a weakneſs in it; its ſacrifices could not make men perfect, nor take away ſin; there wanted a larger ſupply of the grace of the Spirit to write the law of God upon the heart, and to enable men to keep it; there was not in it ſo full a revelation of the mind and will of God, and of his love and grace as has ſince been made; nor did it exhibit a free and full pardon for all ſins, unclogged of every condition; the perſons that were under it were faulty; hence it follows, that God found fault with them, they could not anſwer the requirements and end of it: had it been faultleſs, *then ſhould have no place been ſought for the ſecond*; the covenant of grace unvailed in the Goſpel-diſpenſation, called the better teſtament, the better covenant, and the new covenant; in order to introduce which, the firſt was removed, that this might ſucceed it; juſt as becauſe there was no perfection by the *Levitical* prieſthood, it became neceſſary that another prieſt ſhould ariſe, of another order.

Ver. 8. *For finding fault with them*, &c.] Both with the covenant, which had its faults, and with the people who continued not in it, and were therefore diſregarded by the Lord, ver. 9. *he ſaith, behold the days come (ſaith the Lord) when I will make a new covenant with the houſe of Iſrael, and with the houſe of Judah*; the words are cited from *Jer.* xxxi. 31, 32. in which God promiſes *a new covenant*; ſo called, not becauſe new made; for with reſpect to its original conſtitution, it was made from eternity; Chriſt the mediator of it, and with whom it was made, was ſet up from everlaſting; and promiſes and bleſſings of grace were put into his hands before the world began: nor is it newly revealed, for it was made known to *Adam*, and in ſome meaſure to all the Old Teſtament ſaints, tho' it is more clearly revealed than it was; but it is ſo called in diſtinction from the former adminiſtration of it, which is waxen old, and vaniſhed away; and with reſpect to the order of ſucceſſion, it taking place upon the former being removed; and on account of the time of its more clear revelation and eſtabliſhment, being in the laſt days; and becauſe of its mode of adminiſtration, which is different from the former, in a new way, and by the uſe of new ordinances; and becauſe it is always new, its vigour and efficacy are perpetual; it will never be antiquated, or give place to another; and it provides for, and promiſes new things, a new heart, a new ſpirit, *&c.* to which may be added, that it is a famous, excellent covenant, there's none like it; juſt as an excellent ſong is called a new ſong.[f] The perſons with whom this covenant is promiſed to be made, are the houſes of *Iſrael* and *Judah*; which being literally taken, had its fulfilment in the firſt times of the Goſpel, through the miniſtry of *John* the *Baptiſt*, Chriſt, and his Apoſtles, by whom this covenant was made known to God's elect among the twelve tribes; but being myſtically underſtood, includes both *Jews* and *Gentiles*, the whole *Iſrael* of God; *Iſrael* not after the fleſh, but after the ſpirit; ſuch as were *Jews* inwardly; God's elect of every nation: the word, συντελεσω, rendered, *I will make*, ſignifies, I will conſummate, or finiſh, or end, or fulfil it; which ſhews the perfection of this covenant, and the imperfection of the former; and that what was typified in the firſt, is fulfilled in this; and that it is now eſtabliſhed and ratified by Chriſt; and is ſo finiſhed, as to the manifeſtation and adminiſtration of it, that there will be no alteration made in it, nor any addition to it: the time of doing all this is called *the days to come*; the laſt days, the days of the Meſſiah, which were future in *Jeremiah*'s time: and a *behold* is prefixed to the whole, as a note of attention, this being an affair of great moment and importance; and as a note of demonſtration, or as pointing to ſomething that was deſired and expected; and as a note of admiration, it containing things wonderful and marvellous.

Ver. 9. *Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers*, &c.] The anceſtors of the *Jews* at mount *Sinai*: *in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt*; which is mentioned, not only to obſerve the time when the former covenant was made with the *Iſraelites*, which was juſt upon their deliverance out of *Egypt*; but alſo to ſhew their weakneſs and inability to have delivered themſelves, and the tenderneſs of God towards them; they were like children, they could not help themſelves when God took them by the hand, and brought them forth with an outſtretched arm; and likewiſe to expoſe their ingratitude, and vindicate his conduct towards them: *becauſe they continued not in my covenant*; tho' they promiſed, at the reading of it, that all that the Lord had ſaid, they would hear and do; but their hearts were not right with God, and they were not ſtedfaſt in his covenant, and therefore their carcaſſes fell in the wilderneſs: *and I regarded them not, ſaith the Lord*; the words in *Jer.* xxxi. 32. are very differently rendered in our tranſlation, *altho' I was an huſband unto them*; and ſo it becomes an aggravation of their ſin of ingratitude, in not continuing in his covenant: in the margin it is rendered interrogatively, *ſhould I have continued an huſband unto them?* that is, after they had ſo treated him, no; as if he ſhould ſay, I will not behave towards them as ſuch; I'll reject them, and diſregard them. The *Chaldee* paraphraſe is juſt the reverſe of the Apoſtle's tranſlation, *and I was well-pleaſed with them*: ſome render them, *I ruled over them*, as a lord over his ſervants, in a very ſevere manner. Others obſerving the great difference there is between the *Hebrew* text, and the Apoſtle's verſion, have ſuppoſed a different *Hebrew* copy from the preſent, uſed by the *Septuagint*, or the Apoſtle, in which, inſtead of בעלתי, it was read either בחלתי, or געלתי; but there is no need of ſuch a ſuppoſition, ſince Dr. *Pocock*[g] has ſhewn, that בעל, in the *Arabic* language, ſignifies to loath and abhor, and ſo to diſregard; and *Kimchi*[h] relates it as a rule laid down by his father, that where-ever this word is uſed in conſtruction with ב, it is to be taken in an ill part, and ſignifies the ſame as בחלתי, *I have loathed*; in which ſenſe that word is uſed in *Zech.* xi. 8. and ſo here, I have loathed them, I abhorred them, I rejected them, I took no care of them, diſregarded them, left their houſe deſolate, and ſuffered wrath to come upon them to the uttermoſt.

Ver. 10. *For this is the covenant that I will make with the houſe of Iſrael*, &c.] That is, this is the ſum and ſubſtance of the covenant, which God promiſed to make with, or to make manifeſt and known to his choſen people, the true *Iſraelites*, under the Goſpel diſpenſation; or the following are the ſeveral articles of that covenant, he propoſed to conſummate or finiſh, as before: *after thoſe days ſaith the Lord*; after the times of the Old Teſtament, when the Meſſiah ſhall be come, and the Goſpel day ſhall take place. So the *Jews*[i] apply theſe days, when they repreſent the *Iſraelites* ſaying to *Moſes*, O that he (God) would reveal (himſelf or will) to us a ſecond time! O that he would kiſs us with the kiſſes of his mouth, and that the doctrine of the law was fixed in our hearts; when he (*Moſes*) ſaid to them, this is not to be done now, but לעתיד לבא, *in the time to come*, (*i. e.* in the times of the Meſſiah) as it is ſaid, *Jer.* xxxi. 33. *I will put my law*, &c. and ſo[k] they are elſewhere applied to the ſame times. And the firſt article in it is, *I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts*; by the *laws* of God are meant not the precepts of the ceremonial law, which were now abrogated, but either the moral law, and its commands; which is a tranſcript of the divine nature, was inſcribed on *Adam*'s heart in innocence, and ſome remains of it are even in the *Gentiles*, but greatly obliterated thro' the ſin of man; and there is in men naturally a contrary diſpoſition to it; in regeneration it is re-inſcribed by the Spirit of God; and great reſpect is had to it by regenerate perſons, in which lies one part of their conformity to Chriſt: or elſe, ſince the word *law* ſignifies ſometimes no other than a doctrine, an inſtruction, the doctrines of grace, of repentance towards God, of faith in Chriſt, and love to him, and every other doctrine may be intended; and the tables where, according to the tenor of this covenant, theſe are put and written, are two tables, as before, the *mind* and *heart*; but not two tables of ſtone, on which the law of *Moſes* was written, partly that it might not be loſt, through defect of memory, and partly to denote the firmneſs and ſtability of it, as alſo to point at the hardneſs of man's heart; but the fleſhly tables of the heart; not that part of our fleſh that is called the heart; but the ſouls of men, ſuch hearts as are regenerated and ſanctified by the Spirit of God, and ſuch minds as are renewed by him: and the *putting* of them into the mind, deſigns the knowledge of them, which God gives; as of the moral law, of its ſpirituality and perfection, ſhewing that there is no life and righteouſneſs by it, that it is fulfilled by Chriſt, and is a rule of converſation to the ſaints; and of all other laws, ordinances, and doctrines of Chriſt: and the *writing* them in, or on the heart, intends a filling the ſoul with love and affection to them, ſo that it regards them ſingly and heartily; and a powerful inclination of the heart to be ſubject to them, thro' the efficacious grace of God; and which is done, not with the ink of nature's power, but with the Spirit of the living God, 2 *Cor.* iii. 3. *And I will be to them a God*; not in ſuch ſenſe as he is the God of all mankind, or as he was the God of *Iſrael* in a diſtinguiſhing manner, but as he is the God of Chriſt, and of all the elect in him; and he is their God, not merely as the God of nature and providence, but as the God of all grace; he is ſo in a covenant way, and as in Chriſt, and by vertue of electing grace, and which is made manifeſt in effectual vocation; and as ſuch, he has ſet his heart on them, and ſet them apart for himſelf; he ſaves them by his Son, adopts and regenerates them, juſtifies and ſanctifies them, provides for them, protects and preſerves them; and happy are they that are intereſted in this bleſſing of the covenant, which is preferable to every thing elſe; they have every thing, and can want no good thing; they need fear no enemy; all things work together for their good; and God continues to be their God in life and in death; ſo that they may depend on his love, be ſecure of his power, expect every needful ſupply of grace, and to be carried thro' every duty and trial, and to ſhare in the firſt reſurrection, and to enjoy eternal happineſs: *and they ſhall be to me a people*; not in ſuch ſenſe as all mankind are, or the *Jews* were in a more peculiar reſpect, but as all God's elect are, whether *Jews* or *Gentiles*; and who are ſuch whom God has loved with a ſpecial love, has choſe in Chriſt, and given to him, and with whom he has made a covenant in him; whom Chriſt ſaves from their ſins by his blood, and calls them by his grace and Spirit, and who give up themſelves to him; theſe are a diſtinct and peculiar people, a people near unto the Lord, and who are all righteous in Chriſt, and are made willing in the day of his power on their ſouls.

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[g] Not. Miſcell. in Port. Moſis, p. 9.

[h] In Jer. xxxi. 32. & Sepher Shoraſhim, rad. בעל.

[i] Shirhaſhirim Rabba, fol. 3. 2.

[k] Midraſh Kohelet, fol. 64. 3

Ver. 11. *And they ſhall not teach every man his neighbour*, &c.] The *Alexandrian* copy reads, *citizen*; that is, fellow-citizen; and ſo the *Syriac* and *Arabic* verſions: *and every man his brother, ſaying, know the Lord*: this is not to be underſtood, ſo as to ſet aſide the external and public miniſtry of the word, which is a ſtanding ordinance of God under the Goſpel diſpenſation; or even the private inſtructions of ſaints one to another, in chriſtian converſation, whereby they may build up one another in their moſt holy faith; but the ſenſe is, that men ſhould not only teach, but the Spirit of God ſhould teach with them, and by them; and it ſtands oppoſed to particular and pretended revelations, and eſpecially to magiſterial dictates; and denotes the abundance of knowledge that ſhould be in Goſpel times, which ſhould not be reſtrained to particular perſons, and ſetts of men, but ſhould be ſhared by all believers, more or leſs: *for all ſhall know me, from the leaſt to the greateſt*; from babes to fathers in Chriſt; not with a natural, but with a ſpiritual knowledge; not with a general knowledge of him, that he is, but with a ſpecial knowledge of him, that he is theirs; not with a legal, but with an evangelical knowledge; not with the knowledge of him in, and thro' the creatures, but in Chriſt; and that not ſpeculative, but experimental and practical; ſuch as is attended with faith in him, fear of him, love to him, and a chearful obedience to his will: the knowledge of the Lord, under the New Teſtament diſpenſation, is greater than under the former diſpenſation; the ſubject-matter of it is more diſtinct; God is more known in the perſons of the Father, Son, and Spirit, in the perfections of his nature, in his titles and characters, and in his Son; the manner of it is more clear, open, and perſpicuous; the perſons to whom it is communicated are more numerous; it is not reſtrained to *Jews*, but is given to the *Gentiles*; and all this owing to a greater effuſion of the Spirit; ſee 1 *John* ii. 27.

Ver. 12. *For I will be merciful to their unrighteouſneſs*, &c.] That is, ſin; for all unrighteouſneſs is ſin, being contrary to the juſtice of God, and his righteous law: and the phraſe is expreſſive of God's forgiveneſs of it, which is a very conſiderable article of the covenant of grace; mercy is the ſpring and original of pardon; it is what God delights in, and therefore he pardons freely; it is large and abundant, and hence he pardons fully; and this lays a foundation for hope in ſenſible ſinners: and the way and means, in and by which God pardons, is the propitiatory ſacrifice of his Son; and the word here rendered *merciful*, ſignifies *propitious*; God pardons none but thoſe to whom he is pacified, or rendered propitious by Chriſt; there's no mercy, nor pardon, but through him; he pardons on the foot of reconciliation and ſatisfaction for ſin by Chriſt; ſo that forgiveneſs of ſin is an act of juſtice, as well as of mercy; or it is an act of mercy ſtreaming thro' the blood and ſacrifice of Chriſt. *And their ſins and their iniquities will I remember no more*; by which are meant all kind of ſin, original and actual; ſins before and after converſion; every ſin but that againſt the Holy Ghoſt, and that God's covenant people are never guilty of; theſe God remembers no more; he caſts them behind his back, and into the depths of the ſea, ſo that when they are ſought for, they ſhall not be found; God will never charge them with them, or puniſh them for them: this is another phraſe to expreſs the forgiveneſs of ſins, and diſtinguiſhes the new covenant from the old one, or the former diſpenſation; in which, tho' there were many typical ſacrifices, and a typical removal of ſin, yet there was a remembrance of it every year.

Ver. 13. *In that he ſaith a new* covenant, &c.] In the above prophecy, ver. 8. *he hath made the firſt old*; this naturally follows from hence; if the ſecond is new, the firſt muſt be old; which is called ſo, not on account of its date and duration; for the covenant of grace itſelf is older than this mode of adminiſtration of it, and the manifeſtation of that to the patriarchs was before this covenant, and ſo was the covenant of works before it; but on the account of its faultineſs and deficiency, its weakneſs, and unprofitableneſs, and eſpecially its being antiquated, and made to give way to another. *Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vaniſh away*; the Apoſtle argues from the firſt covenant, being old, to its being near to diſſolution, or a diſappearance; and the diſſolution or diſappearance of this covenant was gradual; it began when the *Chaldeans* ſeized the land of *Canaan*; and the ark, an eminent type of Chriſt, being wanting in the ſecond temple, gave a hint of its waxing old; and both the civil and eccleſiaſtical government of the *Jews* were in great confuſion under the ſecond temple, at leaſt towards the cloſe of it; and even before the times of Chriſt, *John* the *Baptiſt* came, and proclaimed the near approach of the Meſſiah, and his kingdom: this covenant was of right aboliſhed at the time of Chriſt's death; upon his aſcenſion the Spirit was given, and the Goſpel publiſhed among all nations, by which it more and more diſappeared; and in fact it quite vaniſhed away, when the city and temple of *Jeruſalem* were deſtroyed, which was in a little time after the writing of this Epiſtle; ſo that the Apoſtle, with great propriety, ſays, it is *ready to vaniſh away*.

CHAP. IX.

THE Apoſtle having, in the former chapter, taken notice of the firſt covenant, in this proceeds to ſhew what belonged to it, that it had ſervice performed under it, and a place in which it was performed, ver. 1. and he begins with the latter, which he diſtinguiſhes into two parts, and ſhews what was in each of them; in the firſt, which was the holy place, were a candleſtick, table, and ſhew-bread; in the ſecond, which was the holieſt of all, were a golden cenſer, the ark of the covenant, the golden pot of manna, *Aaron*'s rod, the tables of the covenant, and the cherubim of glory over-ſhadowing the mercy-ſeat, ver. 2, 3, 4, 5. And next he ſpeaks of the ſervice performed in theſe places; in the firſt, the holy place, the common prieſts entred every day, doing ſervice, as offering ſacrifice, *&c.* ver. 6. and in the ſecond, the holy of holies, only the high-prieſt entred into, and that but once a year, with blood of ſlain beaſts, which he offered for his own ſins, and the ſins of the people, ver. 7. and this being ſhut up, and entred into but once a year, was an indication from the Holy Ghoſt, that the way into the holieſt of all, which this was then a figure of, was not yet made manifeſt, whilſt the tabernacle or temple was ſtanding, in which ſacrifices were offered, which could not perfect the offerer of them, or remove guilt from his conſcience, ver. 8, 9. which ſhows the imperfection of that prieſthood, it conſiſting of meats, drinks, baptiſms, and carnal ordinances impoſed on the *Jewiſh* nation until the times of the Meſſiah, ver. 10. which are now come, and in which there is an accompliſhment of all thoſe types and figures, Chriſt was typified by the high-prieſt; and he is come as ſuch, and the good things, the law was a ſhadow of, are come by him; who came into the world by the aſſumption of human nature, a more perfect tabernacle than the type of it was; and now having obtained eternal redemption for his people, he is gone into heaven, the moſt holy place, not as the high-prieſt, with the blood of ſlain beaſts, but with his own blood, ver. 11, 12. the efficacy of which blood is argued from the leſſer to the greater, that if the blood of beaſts, and water of ſeparation, ſanctified and purified externally, then much more muſt the blood of Chriſt purge the conſcience from ſin, that it may ſerve God, ſince Chriſt offered himſelf to God without ſpot, thro' the eternal Spirit, ver. 13, 14. The neceſſity of Chriſt's ſhedding his blood, or of his death, is proved from his being the mediator of the new covenant, which required the redemption of tranſgreſſions under the firſt teſtament, that called ones might have the promiſe of the eternal inheritance, ver. 15. And this is reaſoned from the nature of teſtaments or wills among men, which make the death of the teſtator neceſſary, they being of no force while he lives, only after his death, ver. 16, 17. And this is further illuſtrated by the firſt teſtament being dedicated by blood, and every thing belonging to it purged by it, the book, the people, the tabernacle, and all the veſſels of it; nor is there any remiſſion of ſin, whether typical or real, without ſhedding of blood, ver. 18, 19, 20, 21, 22. wherefore, as it was neceſſary that the patterns and types of heavenly things ſhould be purified in this manner; it muſt be more ſo, that the antitypes ſhould be purified with better ſacrifices, even with the ſacrifice of Chriſt, ver. 23. and accordingly Chriſt is entred into heaven itſelf, of which the holy places in the tabernacle were figures, there to preſent and plead his ſacrifice on account of his people, ver. 24. not that it was neceſſary that he ſhould offer up himſelf again, or often, as the high-prieſt his type, went every year into the holy place with the blood of others; for then he muſt have often ſuffered ſince the world began, of which there was no need, ſince his appearing once in the end of the world, to put away ſin by the ſacrifice of himſelf, is ſufficient, ver. 25, 26. for as it is the appointment of God, that men ſhould die but once, and then come to judgment, ſo it was only neceſſary that Chriſt ſhould be offered once to bear the ſins of all his people, and then appear a ſecond time without any ſin at all upon him, to the ſalvation of thoſe that look for him, ver. 27, 28.

Ver. 1. *Then verily the firſt* covenant *had ordinances of divine ſervice*, &c.] The deſign of the Apoſtle in this chapter, as it ſtands in connexion with what goes before, is to ſhew the preheminence of Chriſt, from the tabernacle, and the things in it; as well as from the prieſthood and covenant; and as alſo the abrogation of the *Levitical* ceremonies in particular, as well as the firſt covenant in general; and that they were all types and figures of Chriſt, and had their fulfilment in him: the word *firſt*, here uſed, deſigns not the tabernacle, but the covenant; therefore it is rightly thus ſupplied in our verſion, as it is in the *Arabic* and *Ethiopic* verſions: which is ſaid to have *ordinances of divine ſervice*; belonging to the ſervice of God, which was performed both by the prieſts, and by the people; and theſe ordinances were no other than the carnal ordinances, or rites of the ceremonial law: the word uſed ſignifies *righteouſneſſes*; and they are ſo called, becauſe they were appointed by a righteous God; and were impoſed on the people of the *Jews* in a righteous way; and by them men became externally and typically righteous; for they were figures and types of juſtification by the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, tho' no compleat, perfect, real righteouſneſs came by them. *And a worldly ſanctuary*. *Philo* the *Jew* ſays [1], it was a type of the world, and of the various things in it; tho' it was rather either a type of the church, or of heaven, or of Chriſt's human nature: the better reaſon of its being ſo called is, becauſe it conſiſted of earthly matter, and worldly things; it was in the world, and only had its uſe in the world, and ſo is oppoſed to the heavenly ſanctuary;

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[1] De Vita Moſis, p. 667.

tuary; for the *Jews* often ſpeak of המקדש שלמעלה, *a ſanctuary above*, and המקדש שלמטה, *a ſanctuary below*[m], and of משכנא לעילא, *a tabernacle above*, and משכנא לתתא, *a tabernacle below*[n]; which anſwer to one another: the words may be rendered *a beautiful ſanctuary*, a well-adorned one; and ſuch eſpecially was the temple, or ſanctuary built by *Solomon*, rebuilt by *Zerubbabel*, and repaired and adorned by *Herod*, *Luke* xxi. 5. And the *Jews* ſay, that he that never ſaw *Herod*'s building, meaning the temple, never ſaw a *beautiful* building; ſee *Luke* xxi. 5.

Ver. 2. *For there was a tabernacle made*, &c.] By the direction of *Moſes*, according to the pattern ſhewed him in the mount: *the firſt*; that is, the firſt part of the tabernacle, called the holy place, in diſtinction from the holy of holies, which was the ſecond part of the tabernacle; for otherwiſe there were not a firſt and a ſecond tabernacle; there never was but one tabernacle: *wherein was the candleſtick*; that this was in the tabernacle, and on the ſouthſide of it, and without the vail, where the Apoſtle has placed it, is plain from *Exod.* xxvi. 35. and xl. 24. This was wanting in the ſecond temple[o]: it was a type of Chriſt myſtical, or the church; in the general uſe of it, to hold forth light, ſo the church holds forth the light of the Goſpel, being put into it by Chriſt; in the matter of it, which was pure gold, denoting the purity, worth, ſplendor, glory, and duration of the church; in the parts of it, it had one ſhaft in the middle of it, in which all the parts met and cemented, typical of Chriſt the principal, and head of the church, whoſe ſituation is in the midſt of the church, and who unites all together, and is but one: the ſix branches of it may intend all the members of the church, and eſpecially the miniſters of the word; the ſeven lamps with oil in them, may have a reſpect to the ſeven ſpirits of God, or the Spirit of God with his gifts and graces, and a profeſſion of religion with grace along with it: and it was typical of the church in its ornaments and decorations; its bowls, knops, and flowers, may ſignify the various gifts of the Spirit, beautifying miniſters, and fitting them for uſefulneſs; and in the appurtenances of it, the tongs and ſnuff-diſhes may ſignify church diſcipline, cenſures, and excommunications. *And the table and the ſhew-bread*; the table, with the ſhew-bread on it, was alſo in the tabernacle, on the north-ſide of it, and without the vail, *Exod.* xxvi. 35. and xl. 22. This was alſo wanting in the ſecond temple[p]: the table was typical of Chriſt, and of communion with him; of the perſon of Chriſt; in the matter of it, which was *Shittim* wood overlaid with gold, whereby were ſignified the two natures of Chriſt in one perſon; the human nature by the *Shittim* wood, which is incorruptible, for tho' he died he ſaw no corruption, and is riſen again, and lives for ever; and the divine nature by the gold, all the fulneſs of the Godhead dwelling in him; and in the decorations of it, as the border, golden crown, *&c.* which may reſpect the fulneſs of his grace, and the honour and glory he is crowned with, which render him exceeding valuable and precious: and it may be typical of communion with him, either hereafter, when the ſaints ſhall ſit with him as at a table, and eat and drink with him in the kingdom of his Father; or here, to which Chriſt admits them, and than which nothing is more honourable, comfortable, and deſirable; and it may be ſignificative of the miniſtration of the word and ordinances, of which Chriſt is the ſum and ſubſtance, and in which he grants his people fellowſhip with him: to this table belonged rings and bars to carry it from place to place, which was done by the prieſts; where the church is, there Chriſt is, and there is the miniſtration of his word and ordinances; and which are ſometimes moved from one place to another, by the miniſters of the word, according to divine direction. The *ſhew-bread*, on the table, was typical either of the church of Chriſt, the ſaints, who may be ſignified by the unleavened cakes, being true and ſincere, and without the leaven of malice and hypocriſy; and by twelve of them, which may repreſent the twelve tribes of *Iſrael*, the whole ſpiritual *Iſrael* of God; and by bread of faces, as the word for ſhew-bread may be rendered, ſince they are always before the Lord, and his eyes are continually upon them; they are ſet upon the pure table, Chriſt, on whom they are ſafe, and by whom they are accepted with God: and the ſhew-bread being ſet in rows, may denote their order and harmony; and their being removed every ſabbath-day, may ſignify the ſucceſſion of ſaints in the church, as one is removed, another is brought in; and the frankincenſe put upon each row, ſhews them to be a ſweet ſavour to God: or elſe the ſhew-bread was typical of Chriſt himſelf, who is the bread of life, the food of his people; and may be ſignified by the ſhew-bread for its fineneſs and purity, being made of fine flour, Chriſt is the fineſt of the wheat, bread from heaven, and angels food; for its quantity, twelve cakes, with Chriſt is bread enough, and to ſpare, for all the elect; for its continuance, Chriſt always abides, and ſuch as feed upon him live for ever; for its gratefulneſs, Chriſt's fleſh is meat indeed, and his blood drink indeed; and for its being only for the prieſts, as only ſuch who are made prieſts to God, live by faith on Chriſt; ſee *Lev.* xxv. 5—9. Moreover, the interceſſion of Chriſt may be prefigured by the ſhew-bread, or bread of faces, he being the angel of God's preſence or face, who appears in the preſence of God for his people; and this conſiſting of twelve loaves, according to the number of the tribes of *Iſrael*, ſhews that Chriſt repreſents the whole *Iſrael* of God in heaven, and intercedes for them; and whereas the ſhew-bread always continued, no ſooner was one ſett of loaves removed, but another was put in their room; this may point at the continual interceſſion of Chriſt, for his people; and the frankincenſe may denote the acceptableneſs of it to God. *Which is called the ſanctuary*; or *holy*; this refers either to the firſt part of the tabernacle, which was called the holy place, in which the prieſts in common miniſtred; or elſe to the things which were in it, now mentioned, the candleſtick-table, and ſhew-bread; to which the *Ethiopic* verſion adds, and the golden cenſer, which it leaves out in the fourth verſe; which verſion renders theſe words, *and theſe they call holy*; and ſo the *Arabic* verſion, *which are called holy things*, as they were, as well as the place in which they were; ſo the candleſtick is called the holy candleſtick in *Eccleſiaſticus* xxvi. 17. and the ark, candleſtick, table, cenſer, and altar, are called *ϛκευη ιερα*, *holy veſſels*, by *Philo* the *Jew*[q]; but the former ſenſe ſeems beſt, when compared with the following verſe.

Ver. 3. *And after the ſecond vail*, &c.] Were there more vails than one? the ſcripture ſpeaks but of one, *Exod.* xxvi. 31. there was indeed an hanging

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[m] Jarchi in Gen. xxviii. 17.

[n] Zohar in Exod. fol. 65. 4. & 94. 4. & 96. 2. & in Lev. fol. 1. 3.

[o] T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 4. 1.

[p] Menaſſeh ben Iſrael Conciliat. in Gen. qu. 41.

[q] De Vita Moſis, l. 3. p. 668.

ing for the door of the tent, but that is not called a vail; nor was there more than one vail in the tabernacle, nor in the temple of *Solomon*; but in the ſecond temple, under which the Apoſtle lived, there were two vails, which divided between the holy place, and the holy of holies; and the innermoſt of theſe the Apoſtle means: and ſo the *Jewiſh* writers [r] conſtantly affirm, that there were two vails between the ſaid places, and that two new ones were made every year [s]. So on the day of atonement, when the high-prieſt went into the moſt holy place, with the incenſe, it is ſaid [t]; that "he walked in the temple till he came between, שתי הפרוכות, *the two vails*, which divide between the holy, and holy of holies, and there was the ſpace of a cubit between them." The reaſon of theſe two vails may be ſeen in the account *Maimonides* gives of this matter [u]: "in the firſt temple there was a wall which divided between the holy, and holy of holies, the thickneſs of a cubit; but when they built the ſecond temple, it was doubted by them, whether the thickneſs of the wall was of the meaſure of the holy place, or of the meaſure of the holy of holies; wherefore they made the holy of holies twenty cubits compleat, and the holy place forty cubits compleat, and they left the ſpace of a cubit between the holy, and the holy of holies; and they did not build a wall in the ſecond temple, but they made, שתי פרוכות, *two vails*, one on the ſide of the holy of holies, and the other on the ſide of the holy place, and between them a cubit anſwerable to the thickneſs of the wall, which was in the firſt temple; but in the firſt temple there was but one vail only, as it is ſaid, *Exod.* xxvi. 33. *and the vail ſhall divide unto you*, &c." And to this account other *Jewiſh* writers [w] agree; and the ſpace between the two vails is called by them, טרקסין [x], ταραξις, from the trouble and perplexity this affair gave them. This vail, or vails, might repreſent the ſin of man, which ſeparates between God and men, excludes from heaven; but is removed by the death of Chriſt, when the vail was rent in twain; ſo that now there is an open way to heaven; Chriſt has entred into it by his own blood; and ſaints have boldneſs to enter there by faith and hope now, and ſhall hereafter perſonally enter into it: or elſe this vail may ſignify the ceremonial law, which ſeparated between *Jew* and *Gentile*, and is aboliſhed by the death of Chriſt: or rather it was typical of the fleſh, or human nature of Chriſt, called the vail of his fleſh, *Heb.* x. 20. ſee the note there. Now within this ſecond vail was *the tabernacle*, or that part of it, the ſecond part, *which is called theolieſt of all*; which was either typical of Chriſt, who is called the moſt holy, *Dan.* ix. 24. he being ſo in both natures, divine and human; or of heaven, for the holy places, made with hands, were figures of heaven, *ver.* 24. for its holineſs, it being the habitation of the holy God, holy angels, and ſpirits of juſt men made perfect; and for its inviſibility, and the unſeen things which faith and hope, which enter within the vail, are the evidence of; and for the things that are in it, typified by the following ones.

Ver. 4. *Which had the golden cenſer*, &c.] There were various cenſers uſed by the prieſts in the daily ſervice, but this was a peculiar one, which was uſed by the high-prieſt on the day of atonement; on other days he uſed a ſilver cenſer, but on that day a golden one, and with it he entred into the holy of holies [y]; and tho' *Moſes* does not call it a golden one, *Lev.* xvi. 12. yet *Joſephus* does [z]; and ſo do the *Jewiſh* doctors in the place referred to, with whom the Apoſtle agrees, and to this the alluſion is in *Rev.* viii. 3. but here a difficulty ariſes, how this can be ſaid to have been in the holy of holies, and within the vail, when, according to *Moſes*, it was without the vail, and was only carried within on the day of atonement; and ſo *Philo* the *Jew* [a] places it in the other part of the tabernacle; and it ſeems as if it was to avoid this difficulty, that the *Ethiopic* verſion has removed it from this verſe to verſe the ſecond, and put it among the things that were in the holy place; but there is no need of this, nor to ſay that the altar of incenſe is intended, for that is never ſo called, and beſides, was without the vail too. It ſhould be obſerved, that the Apoſtle does not ſay, that the golden cenſer was laid up in the holy of holies, and kept there, but that it *had* it; as it had it on the day of atonement, when it was carried in there by the high-prieſt, who there made uſe of it; and it was for the uſe of it in that place, that it was peculiarly deſigned. What was done by it, was this, burning coals were with it taken off from the altar before the Lord, and were brought in within the vail, where incenſe was put upon them, which covered the mercy-ſeat, that ſo the high-prieſt died not. The burning coals ſignify the very great ſufferings of Chriſt, not only the ſufferings of his body, which were very painful, but thoſe of his ſoul, when the wrath and hot diſpleaſure of God was poured out upon him; and thoſe coals being taken off from the altar before the Lord, ſhew, that the ſufferings of Chriſt were according to the will of God, were grateful to him, and always before him; and their being brought within the vail, does not denote that Chriſt is now in a ſuffering ſtate, tho' he is in the midſt of the throne, as a lamb that had been ſlain; but the continued virtue and efficacy of his ſufferings, and that our faith and hope which enter within the vail, have to do with his blood and ſacrifice thither carried. And the incenſe, which was carried in with thoſe coals, typified the interceſſion of Chriſt in heaven, which is pure and holy, ſweet, fragrant, and perpetual; and the prieſt having his hands full of it, expreſſes the fulneſs of Chriſt's interceſſion for all his elect, and for all things for them, and his fulneſs of merit to plead, which makes his interceſſion efficacious and prevalent; and hence, thro' his much incenſe, the prayers of his people become odorous and acceptable: and the incenſe being put upon the burning coals in the cenſer, ſhews, that Chriſt's interceſſion proceeds upon the foot of his blood and ſacrifice, his ſufferings and death; and hence it becomes grateful, and has its influence; the ſmoke of it covers the mercy-ſeat, or throne of grace, and makes that acceſſible; and as the prieſt, who offers it, never dies, ſo none of thoſe for whom he intercedes. *And the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold*; this is called the ark of the covenant, becauſe the tables of the covenant, afterwards mentioned, were put into it; and that it was overlaid with gold round about, is certain

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[r] T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 54. 1. & Cetubot, fol. 106. 1. Vid. Philo de Vita Moſis, l. 3. p. 667.

[s] Miſn. Shekalim, c. 8. §. 5. Maimon. Cele Hamikdaſh, c. 7. §. 16.

[t] Miſna Yoma, c. 5. §. 1. Vid. Bereſhit Rabba, §. 10. fol. 8. 3.

[u] Hilchot Beth Habbechira, c. 4. §. 2.

[w] Gloſſ. & Toſephot in T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 51. 2. & Bartenora in Miſn. Yoma, c. 5. §. 1. & in Middot, c. 4. §. 7.

[x] Miſn. Middot ib. & T. Bab. Yoma ib. & Gloſſ. in T. Bab. Cetubot, fol. 106. 1.

[y] Miſn. Yoma, c. 4. §. 4. Maimon, Yom Hacippurim, c. 2. §. 5.

[z] Antiq. l. 3. c. 8. §. 3.

[a] De Vita Moſis, l. 3. p. 668.

from *Exod.* xxv. 11. where it is ſaid to be overlaid with pure gold, within and without; and that the ark was within the vail, and in the moſt holy place, is manifeſt from *Exod.* xl. 21. 2 *Chron.* v. 7. that this was wanting in the ſecond temple, is generally agreed[b]; but who took it away, where it was put, or what became of it, various are the ſentiments of the *Jewiſh* writers: ſome ſay[c], it was carried away by *Nebuchadnezzar* into *Babylon*, and is meant by the godly veſſels of the houſe of the Lord, 2 *Chron.* xxxvi. 10. others ſay[d], that *Jeremiah* the prophet took it, and hid it in a cave on mount *Nebo*; but the more generally received opinion is, that it was hid by king *Joſiah* in ſome hidden and deep place, which *Solomon* had built for that purpoſe under ground, knowing that the temple would be deſtroyed[e]; and it is often ſaid, that it was hid under the pavement of a room in the temple, called לשכת דיר העצים, *the wood room*[f]. The ark is, by ſome, thought to be a type of the church, which is the ark of God, of his building, and where he dwells; the ark of the covenant, or teſtimony, where the oracles of God, his word and ordinances are: its being made of *Shittim* wood may denote the incorruption and duration of it; and its being covered with gold within and without, is expreſſive of its glory; and its being portable, and carried from place to place, ſhews, that the church is not always in one place; its rings, ſtaves, and prieſts that bore it, may point at the Goſpel, and the miniſters of it, the inſtruments of moving it; and its moving from place to place, and falling into the hands of enemies, were emblematical of the church's afflictions; as its reſt at laſt, in *Solomon*'s temple, may ſignify the church's reſt here and hereafter: but the ark is rather to be conſidered as a type of Chriſt; its various names agree with Chriſt, as the ark of God, the ark of his ſtrength, the glory of God, the face of God, the holy ark, the ark of the covenant, or teſtimony, yea Jehovah, and God himſelf: the time of its making is obſervable, it was made before the tabernacle, and the tabernacle for the ſake of it; Chriſt is before all creatures, and was ſet up as mediator before any thing exiſted, and all things are for his ſake; it being made of *Shittim* wood, covered with gold, may denote both the incorruption and glory of Chriſt; and its ſeveral decorations, the graces with which he was adorned, as man and mediator; its ſtaves and rings may deſign the word, ordinances, and miniſters, whereby he is carried into the ſeveral places of the world; here God granted his preſence, and counſel was aſked of him, and it was brought forth in time of war, as a ſecurity from enemies, all which is applicable to Chriſt; by it wonders were done, as the dividing of *Jordan* for the *Iſraelites* to paſs into the land of *Canaan*, the falling of the walls of *Jericho*, and the fall of *Dagon*; ſo Chriſt has opened the way for his people to heaven, has ſpoiled principalities and powers, and his Goſpel is powerful to the pulling down the ſtrong holds of ſin and ſatan; the moving of the ark from place to place, and its reſt in the temple may ſignify the reſt of Chriſt, after his many fatigues in this world. *Wherein was the golden pot that had manna*; which *Aaron* filled with manna by the direction of *Moſes*, who gave it at the appointment of God, that it might be preſerved to future ages, as a memorial of the goodneſs, care, and power of God in feeding the *Iſraelites* with it in the wilderneſs, *Exod.* xvi. 33, 34. This pot held an *omer*, which was more than three pints and a half; ſome ſay ſix pints: and though *Moſes* does not call it a golden pot, yet it is ſo called, not only by the *Septuagint* in *Exod.* xvi. 33. but alſo by *Philo* the *Jew*[g]; nor is it reaſonable to think with ſome *Jewiſh* writers[h], that it ſhould be made of earth, which was to continue for ages to come: this alſo was wanting in the ſecond temple[i]; and this, with *Aaron*'s rod, after mentioned, and other things, is ſaid to be hid when the ark was, and along with it[k]: but how this pot, as well as *Aaron*'s rod, can be ſaid to be in the ark, when it is aſſerted, at the bringing of the ark into the temple, at the dedication of it by *Solomon*, that there was nothing in it but two tables of ſtone, 1 *Kings* viii. 9. 2 *Chron.* v. 10. and both the pot of *manna*, and *Aaron*'s rod, are ſaid to be before the teſtimony, *Exod.* xvi. 34. *Numb.* xvii. 10. and not in it, is a difficulty. Some, in order to remove it, obſerve, that the phraſe, *wherein*, refers not to the ark, but to the tabernacle; but ſince the tables of the covenant were in the ark, and theſe are mentioned with it, and the phraſe, *over it*, in the next verſe, cannot be underſtood of the tabernacle, but of the ark, this ſolution is not ſatisfactory. Others have obſerved, that they might be in the ark in *Moſes*'s time, and in *Jeremiah*'s time, when they are ſaid to be hid, tho' they were not in *Solomon*'s: and others have taken notice, that the prepoſition ἐν, ſometimes ſignifies *at*, or *with*, as in *Col.* iii. 1. *John* i. 28. *Eph.* vi. 1, 2. and ſo the ſenſe is, that theſe were near unto it in the moſt holy place, and might be in the ſides of it, tho' not within it; for there were places in the ſides of the ark to put things into, *Deut.* xxxi. 26. 1 *Sam.* vi. 8. And certain it is from the above account from ſcripture, that they were near it; and ſo, by the *Jewiſh* writers, they are always mentioned along with it; when that was carried away, and hid, they were hid with it: but what a certain *Jewiſh* commentator[l] obſerves on 1 *Kings* viii. 9. is ſo expreſs, as if it was deſigned to vindicate our Apoſtle: his remark is this; "the intention of this "is not to deny that there were not the things "mentioned in the law, for they were, מונחים בו, "*left in it*, as *Aaron*'s *rod*, and *the pot of manna*, "only to deny, hereby, that there was not any "thing of the law, ſave the decalogue." And it ſhould be obſerved, that it is not ſaid of theſe, that they were put before the ark, but *before the teſtimony*; that is, before the tables of the covenant, which were within the ark. The *manna*, in this pot, was typical of Chriſt; in the ſignification of its name, whether it comes from מנה, *manah*, which ſignifies to appoint, prepare, and diſtribute, Chriſt being appointed, prepared, and diſtributed, as food for his people; or from מן הו, *man hu*, what is it? the words ſaid by the *Iſraelites*, when they firſt ſaw it, not knowing what it was; ſo Chriſt is unknown to his people until revealed to them, and remains unknown to all natural and unregenerate men: the manna came from heaven, from God, and was a free gift of his, and ſo Chriſt: it was round in form, and may be expreſſive of Chriſt's perfection, and eternity: it was in colour white, which may ſignify his purity and innocence: it was ſweet in taſte, and ſo is Chriſt, his fruits, his word and ordinances: it was ſmall in quantity, which may denote the meanneſs and deſpicableneſs of Chriſt in the eyes of the world: the people went out and gathered it, and ground it in mills, or beat it in mortars, and baked it, and eat, which may be typical of the apprehenſion, ſufferings, and death of Chriſt, in order to be fit food for the faith of believers. The perſons that were fed by it were the *Iſraelites*, who were brought out of *Egypt*, and then in the wilderneſs, a large number, and men of all ſorts, rich and poor, and who had an equal portion, though very undeſerving; ſo thoſe who are fed by Chriſt, and nouriſhed with him, the bread of life, are the ſpiritual *Iſrael* of God, whom Chriſt has redeemed from worſe than *Egyptian* bondage and darkneſs, tho' they are yet in the wilderneſs of this world; and they are a large number, the whole family of God, who receive out of Chriſt's fulneſs grace for grace; and there is no difference of high and low, rich and poor, bond or free, male or female; they are all one in Chriſt, and Chriſt is all in all; and they have all a whole Chriſt, tho' they are very undeſerving, being by nature children of wrath as others. And as the *Iſraelites* had the manna every day, and all the while they were in the wilderneſs, ſo Chriſt is the daily bread of believers; by him, in his word and ordinances, is his church nouriſhed in the wilderneſs, to whom he gives to eat of the hidden manna, the food of the wilderneſs. The *pot*, in which this manna was kept, was typical of the ordinances of the Goſpel; in its matter, being made of gold, denoting the preciouſneſs and duration of them; in the bigneſs of it, holding an *omer*, ſhewing that theſe contain plenty of good things to ſatisfaction; in the ſituation of it before the ark, ſignifying the preſence of Chriſt with his ordinances; and in its uſe to hold manna, and be a memorial of it to ages to come, as the ordinances have in them food for ſouls, and are the means of remembring Chriſt in future generations, till his ſecond coming. *And Aaron's rod that budded*; and not only budded, but bloomed, bloſſomed, and yielded almonds, *Numb.* xvii. 8. This alſo was laid before the ark of the teſtimony, ver. 10. and may be ſaid to be in it, or with it, in the ſame ſenſe as the pot of manna was; it was likewiſe wanting in the ſecond temple[m], and is ſaid to be hid with the pot of manna, and other things, as before obſerved: it was a type of Chriſt: it is affirmed by the *Jews*, that in the days of the Meſſiah, the prieſthood ſhall return, and the rod of *Aaron* ſhall flouriſh[n]; it was very proble, as ſome have thought[o], an almond-tree ſtick, as that in *Jer.* i. 11, 12. The almond tree has its name in *Hebrew* from a word which ſignifies haſte and viligance; it being, as *Pliny* ſays[p], the firſt of trees that buds and bloſſoms, and is very haſty in putting them forth. An almond-tree rod may be a proper emblem of Chriſt's ſpeedy incarnation in the fulneſs of time; and *Aaron*'s almond-tree rod, of his right to the prieſthood, and his vigilance in it: this was firſt a dry rod or ſtick, and may deſign the mean deſcent and appearance of Chriſt, being born of mean parents, living a mean and obſcure life; his entrance on his publick miniſtry, and continuance in it, were without any pomp or grandeur; he was as a root out of a dry ground; and tho' he did many miracles, theſe were treated with contempt; and he was at laſt apprehended, arraigned, and condemned as a malefactor, and died a ſhameful and an accurſed death: it looked very unlikely and unpromiſing, that he ſhould be the king Meſſiah; that he ſhould have all power in heaven and in earth; that he ſhould have the wiſdom he had, and do the miracles he did; and that he ſhould be the author of eternal ſalvation; and that ſuch fruits of grace, peace, pardon, and righteouſneſs, ſhould ſpring from him, as that *Aaron*'s dry rod ſhould bud, bloſſom, and bear almonds, in which it was a lively figure of Chriſt; that lying among other rods, and perhaps being like them, may denote Chriſt's aſſuming the common nature of men, or an individual of human nature in all things like to man; and this being cut off from the tree, and being a dry ſtick, may repreſent the death of Chriſt; and its budding and bloſſoming may point at the reſurrection of Chriſt from the dead; and as *Aaron*'s prieſthood was confirmed by the budding and bloſſoming of his rod, ſo the deity and Meſſiahſhip of Chriſt are confirmed by his reſurrection; and its bringing forth almonds, may deſign the fruits of Chriſt's death and reſurrection; and moreover, the almond tree being, as *Philo* the *Jew* ſays[q], the firſt of trees that buds and bloſſoms in the ſpring, and the laſt that caſts its leaves, it may be, as he obſerves, a ſymbol of the prieſtly tribe; and it may be a figure of the perpetuity of Chriſt, and his prieſthood: *and the tables of the covenant*; the ſame with the teſtimony which was ordered to be put into the ark, and accordingly was, *Exod.* xxv. 16, 21. and xl. 20. *Deut.* x. 2, 5. About this there is no controverſy; tho' it is a matter of diſpute with the *Jews*, whether the book of the law was in the ark or no: ſome ſay it was in the ſide of it, and others within it[r]; but *Maimonides*[s] ſays, that *Moſes* wrote the whole law with his own hand before he died, and gave a book (or copy) to every tribe, and one copy he put, בארון, *in the ark*: ſo *Jarchi* ſays[t], that the book of the law of *Moſes* was put into the midſt of the ark, and the ark was glorious and beautiful by that which was, בתוכו, *within it*. Theſe tables were made of ſtone, an emblem of the hardneſs of man's heart, which is deſtitute of ſpiritual life and motion, ſenſeleſs and ſtupid, impenitent, ſtubborn, and inflexible, and on which no impreſſions can be made but by powerful and efficacious grace; and alſo of the ſtability and duration of the law, as moral, which is not antiquated by another, nor made void by the Goſpel, nor altered in its nature and terms, but remains the ſame as to the matter of it; tho' it is now no covenant of works to believers, and they are freed from the curſe and condemnation of it: the number of theſe tables is two; the whole law is reduced by our Lord to two grand precepts of it, *Matt.* xxii. 37—40. and the fleſhly tables, on which it is reinſcribed in regeneration, are the heart and mind, 2 *Cor.* iii. 3. *Heb.* viii. 10. The place where theſe tables were put, is the ark, which was typical of the law being in Chriſt, not only in his hands, but in his heart, *Pſ.* xl. 8. and in his keeping, of which he is the fulfilling end; for he being the ſurety of his people, and becoming man, anſwered every part of the law; in the holineſs of his nature, in the perfect obedience of his life, and in his ſufferings and death, in which he bore the penalty of it: and theſe tables are called the tables of the covenant, becauſe the law on mount *Sinai* was a covenant made with the people of *Iſrael*; and was typical of the covenant, of which Chriſt is the ſurety and mediator, and which is ratified by his blood.

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[b] T. Bab. Menachot, fol. 27. 2. & Yoma, fol. 21. 2. Menaſſeh ben Iſrael Concil. in Gen. qu. 41. Kimchi in Hagg. i. 8.

[c] T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 53. 2. Seder Olam Rabba, c. 25. T. Hieroſ. Shekalim, fol. 49. 3.

[d] Joſeph. ben Gorion, l. 1. c. 17. 2 Maccab. ii. 4, 5.

[e] T. Hieroſ. Sota, fol. 22. 3. T. Bab. Ceritot, fol. 5. 2. Maimon. Beth Habbechira, c. 4, §. 1.

[f] Miſn. Shekalim, c. 6. §. 1, 2. T. Hieroſ. Shekalim, fol. 49. 3. T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 54. 1.

[g] De Cong. Quær. Erud. Gratia, p. 438.

[h] Mechilta, fol. 20. 1. & Tanchuma, fol. 29. 4.

[i] Menaſſeh ben Iſrael Conciliat. in Gen. qu. 41.

[k] T. Hieroſ. Shekalim, fol. 49. 3. & Sota, fol. 22. 3. T. Bab. Ceritot, fol. 5. 2. & Horayot, fol. 12. 1. Maimon. Beth Habechira, c. 4. §. 1.

[l] R. Levi ben Gerſom in 1 Kings viii. 9. ſo others in Laniado Celi Yekar in loc.

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[m] Menaſſeh ben Iſrael Conciliat. in Gen. qu. 41.

[n] Baal Hatturim in Num. xvii. 5.

[o] Joſeph. Antiq. l. 4. c. 4. §. 2. Aben Ezra in Num xvii 8.

[p] Nat. Hiſt. l. 16. c. 25.

[q] De Vita Moſis, l. 3. p. 681.

[r] T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 14. 1, 2. Jarchi in Deut. xxxi. 26.

[s] Præfat. in Yad Chazaka in principio.

[t] Gloſſ. on T. Bab. Avoda Zara, fol. 24. 2.

Ver. 5. *And over it the cherubim of glory*, &c.] Or *glorious cherubim*, where the *Shechinah*, or divine glory, dwelt, *Pſ.* lxxx. 1. Theſe were over the ark, and were in number two, as were the *cherubim* which God placed at the garden of *Eden*, *Gen.* iii. 24. according to the opinion of the ancient *Jews* [u]; and very likely theſe were made after the form of them. Some have thought them to be birds of a very terrible aſpect, which were ſet there to deter *Adam* and *Eve* from coming to the tree of life; and both *Philo* [w] and *Joſephus* [x] ſay, they were winged fowls; but the generality of the *Jewiſh* writers take them for angels [y]; and ſome of them ſay they were deſtroying angels, or noxious ſpirits [z], which is not probable; but why angels ſhould be ſo called, and what was their appearance, there are different opinions. *Jerom* ſays [a], the word ſignifies a multitude of knowledge; and indeed *Philo* the *Jew* [b] obſerves, that the *Greeks* would interpret the *Hebrew* word, much knowledge and underſtanding; and another *Jewiſh* writer [c] affirms, that the word *cherubim* is a name for ſeparate intelligences, as if angels were ſo called from their great knowledge, and that the word is the ſame as *cerabbim*, *as Rabbins*, doctors, or teachers; but for the moſt part they interpret it, *as young men* [d], becauſe that angels have appeared in the form of young men. So in the *Talmud* [e] it is aſked, "what does *cherub* "ſignify? ſays *R. Abbu*, כרביא, *as a young man*, "for ſo in *Babylon* they call a young man, רביא." Some think that the word *cherub*, is the ſame with רכוב, *Recub*, the letters tranſpoſed, which ſignifies a *chariot*, becauſe God is ſaid to ride upon a *cherub*, and the angels are called the chariots of the Lord, *Pſal.* xviii. 10. and lxviii. 17. *Zech.* vi. 1, 5. to which may be added, that *Ezekiel*'s viſion of the *cherubim* is frequently, by the *Jews* [f], called מרכבה, *Mercabah*, or *the chariot*; and mention is made of *the chariot of the cherubim*, in 1 *Chron.* xxviii. 18. to which reference may be had in *Hab.* iii. 8. tho' I rather think, with others, that the word is derived from כרב, *Carab*, which in the *Syriac* and *Arabic* languages ſignifies *to plow*, and ſo in the *Talmud* [g]; and a *cherub* took its name from hence, becauſe of the ox, whoſe face it had, that being a creature made uſe of in plowing; and that the face of an ox, and the face of a cherub, is the ſame, may eaſily be concluded from *Ezek.* i. 10. and x. 14. And now becauſe that *Ezekiel*'s *cherubim* had four faces, the face of a man, the face of a lion, the face of an ox, and the face of an eagle; and the *cherubim* in the temple were in the ſame form, as may be gathered from *Ezek.* xli. 18, 19. thoſe that were placed at the garden of *Eden*, may be thought to be in the ſame form alſo: and ſome of late have fancied, that they were an hieroglyphic of the Trinity of perſons in the Godhead, ſignified by the ox, the lion, and eagle; and of the incarnation of the Son of God, the face of a man being added to them; to ſupport which notion, it is further obſerved, that the word, כרובים, ſhould be pronounced *Ce-rubbim*, and interpreted, *as the mighty ones*. But it ſhould be known, that the word is alſo uſed in the ſingular number, *Pſ.* xviii. 10. *Ezek.* x. 4. and every ſingle *cherub* had theſe four faces, ſo that each of them muſt be a repreſentation of the Trinity, and of the incarnate ſaviour, of which only the word in the ſingular number can be uſed; and then it can only be ſaid of it, *ce-rub*, *as the mighty one*; which obſervation greatly weakens what is brought to ſupport the fancy: beſides, if the *cherubim* were an emblem of a plurality of perſons in the Godhead, they would rather be an emblem of a quaternity, and not of a trinity of perſons, ſince each had four faces, and thoſe diſtinct from each other; for the face of a man is as much a diſtinct face as any of the reſt. Now the human nature of Chriſt is no diſtinct perſon, much leſs one in the Godhead; and beſides is the inferior nature of Chriſt, whereas the face of the man, in the *cherubim*, is ſuperior to the reſt, which are the faces of irrational animals. Moreover, this would give us a ſimilitude of the divine being, and of that in him which is moſt incomprehenſible by us, the Trinity of perſons in the Godhead; and ſo an anſwer may be given to ſuch queſtions, the ſenſe of which ſuggeſts, that no anſwer can be returned to them, *Iſ.* xl. 18, 25. and xlvi. 5. and tho' the ſecond perſon often appeared in human form, and in the fulneſs of time became incarnate, and the Holy Ghoſt once deſcended as a dove, yet the Father's ſhape was never ſeen at any time, *John* v. 37. to which may be added, that this notion ſeems contrary to the ſecond command, *thou ſhalt not make unto thee any likeneſs of any thing that is in heaven above*, *Exod.* xx. 4. for allowing that the *cherubim* at the garden of *Eden*, were figures made by the Lord himſelf, 'tis not credible he ſhould make ſuch, he afterwards forbid others to make; beſides, the *cherubim* in the tabernacle and temple, were the ſame figures with thoſe in *Eden*, as is owned; and theſe were ordered of God to be made by men, and therefore ſurely can't be thought to be figures, emblems, and repreſentations of God himſelf in his three divine perſons; likewiſe the cherubim are not only diſtinguiſhed from him, but inſtead of being figures of him, they are always repreſented as vehicles on which he ſits or rides, *Exod.* xxv. 22. *Pſ.* lxxx. 1. and xviii. 10. Once more, it may deſerve ſome little conſideration, that the prince of *Tyre*, a type of antichriſt, the man of ſin, is called a *cherub*, *Ezek.* xxviii. 14, 16. which ſurely can't be in alluſion to the divine being, and the perſons in the Godhead, but very well in alluſion to angels, the ſons of God, as civil magiſtrates, good and bad, are ſometimes called. No doubt there was ſomething ſignified by the *cherubim* in the tabernacle and temple; but that this ſhould be the myſtery of them, is not eaſy of belief. *Philo* the *Jew* makes the *cherubim* to ſignify the two powers of God, his creative and governing powers [h]; and the *Jews* frequently ſpeak of, רזא דכרובים, *the myſtery of the cherubim* [i]: the *cherubim* over the ark, here ſpoken of, are ſometimes allegorized of the two teſtaments, the Old

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[u] Targum Jon. & Hieroſ. in Gen iii. 24.
[w] De Vita Moſis, l. 3. p. 668.
[x] Antiq. l. 3. c 6. §. 5.
[y] Bereſhit Rabba, §. 21. fol. 19 1. & Mattanot Cehunah in ib. Aben Ezra in Gen. iii. 24.
[z] Jarchi & Baal Hatturim in loc.
[a] Ep. Paulino, tom 3. fol. 3. F.
[b] Ut ſupra.
[c] R. Samuel Tzartzah, Sepher Meker Chayim, fol. 8. 3.
[d] Zohar in Gen. fol 122. 3. & Imre Binah in ib Aben Ezra in Gen. iii. 24. Kimchi Sepher Shoraſh. in rad. כרוב, & R. Sol. Urbin. Ohel Moed, fol. 58. 2.
[e] T. Bab. Chagiga, fol. 13. 2. & Succa, fol. 5. 2.
[f] T. Bab. Chagiga, fol 14. 2, ſo read inſtead of *Taanith*, in the marginal reference to the note on 1 Cor. xi. 10.
[g] T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 33. 2. Pava Kama, fol. 96. 2.
[h] De Cherubim, p 112. de Profugis, p 465. & de Vita Moſis, l. 3. p. 669.
[i] Zohar in Gen. fol. 99. 1. & 122. 4.

and New; the matter of them being of gold may denote the excellency, purity, ſimplicity, and duration of them; their number is two, as were the *Cherubim*; and as they were alike, and of one meaſure and ſize, this may intend the agreement between them; the doctrines, promiſes, prophecies, types, and figures of the Old Teſtament agree with the New; and the account that the one gives of the perſon and offices, and grace of Chriſt, agree with the other; their ſituation and poſition being placed at the two ends of the mercy-ſeat, and looking towards it, may denote their being full of Chriſt, from one end to the other, and their pointing at him, and bearing witneſs to him; here God alſo reveals himſelf, as he did between the *Cherubim*; and theſe are glorious as they were, full of glory, containing the glorious Goſpel of the bleſſed God: tho' rather the *Cherubim* on the mercy-ſeat, were ſymbols and repreſentations of angels, ſince to theſe the Apoſtle *Peter* ſeems to allude, in 1 *Pet*. i. 12. their being made of gold may denote their excellency, purity, and ſimplicity; their being on the mercy-ſeat ſhews their dependence on Chriſt, their confirmation by him, and miniſtration to him; their having wings, expreſſes their readineſs to do his will; and their looking one to another, ſignifies their unity and concord among themſelves; and their looking to the mercy-ſeat, their inſpection into the myſteries of grace; and their being over the ark, and God being in the midſt of them, declares the preſence of God with them, whoſe face they always behold; and as theſe *Cherubim* of glory, they are very glorious creatures, and in the glory of them will Chriſt come a ſecond time: *ſhadowing the mercy-ſeat*; that is, with their wings, as in *Exod*. xxv. 20. which was typical of Chriſt; its name agrees with him, a mercy-ſeat; for in him God ſhews himſelf merciful to his people; all the ſtores of mercy are laid up in him; the miſſion of him into this world is owing to the mercy of God; and the mercy of God was glorified by him in the redemption of his people; and he himſelf is the way thro' which they obtain and receive mercy; and he is alſo a merciful high-prieſt to them: the *Hebrew* word for the mercy-ſeat כַּפֹּרֶת ſignifies *a covering*; nor is our *Engliſh* word in ſound, very different from it; and it was ſo called, as *Kimchi* [k] obſerves, becauſe it covered the ark: Chriſt is a covering to his people; their perſons are clothed with his righteouſneſs, and all their ſins are covered by it; and they are ſecured from the curſe and condemnation of the law, and wrath to come: the *Septuagint* interpreters render it by ιλαστηριον, the word uſed here by the Apoſtle *Paul*, in *Rom*. iii. 25. there rendred *propitiation*, and applied to Chriſt, who has made reconciliation for ſin, and through whom God is propitious to his people. The matter, of which the mercy-ſeat was made, was pure gold, denoting the excellency and pretiouſneſs of Chriſt; the make of it, in its length and breadth, was juſt the ſame with the ark, in which the two tables were, *Exod*. xxv. 10, 17. Chriſt is the fulfilling end of the law, and exactly anſwers to all its requirements; his nature, to the holineſs and ſpirituality of it; his righteouſneſs, to all the obedience it commands; and his ſufferings and death, to the penalty it enjoins: its ſituation above the ark, ſhews that there is no mercy but in a way of righteouſneſs, and that Chriſt ſtands between God and the law, and by fulfilling it, covers all the tranſgreſſions of it; and being above it, is able to ſuppreſs all its accuſations and charges: from off the mercy-ſeat, God communed with his people; the way to communion with God is by Chriſt; the encouragement to go to God is from him; and the enjoyment of him is through him: on the day of atonement the mercy-ſeat was ſprinkled with blood, typical of the blood of Chriſt, whereby peace is made, and a way opened into the holieſt of all: *of which we cannot now ſpeak particularly*; not only of the mercy-ſeat, but of all the things before mentioned; for the word *which*, is in the plural number, and refers to all the preceding things; to diſcourſe of which, largely and particularly, required more time than the Apoſtle had, and muſt have exceeded the bounds of an epiſtle. The *Ethiopic* verſion renders it in the ſingular number, *of this*.

Ver. 6. *Now when theſe things were thus ordained*, &c.] Or prepared and got ready; that is, when the tabernacle was finiſhed, and ſet up, and provided with all its veſſels and furniture: *the prieſts went always into the firſt tabernacle*; the firſt part of the tabernacle, which was called the holy place, ver. 2. here the common prieſts went continually every day, morning and evening; the *Syriac* and *Ethiopic* verſions read, *the outward tabernacle*, in diſtinction from the innermoſt part of the tabernacle, or the moſt holy place: *accompliſhing the ſervice* of God; by offering ſacrifices, burning incenſe, and trimming the lamps, which they did every day: the prieſts entered into the holy place every day for ſervice; but they might not go in at any other time but the time of ſervice [l]: the phraſe, *of God*, is not in the text, but is a ſupplement; and it was uſual with the *Jews* to call the worſhip of the temple, and eſpecially that part of it which lay in ſacrifices עבודה *the ſervice*: *Simeon* the Juſt uſed to ſay, the world ſtands upon three things; upon the law ועל העבודה *and upon the ſervice*, and upon beneficence [m]; by *the ſervice*, the commentators [n] on the paſſage underſtand ſacrifices; and again it is ſaid [o], no man enters into the court לעבודה *for ſervice*, tho' he is clean, until he has dipped himſelf: the word here uſed in the *Greek* text is in the plural number, and may be rendred *the ſervices*, becauſe there were ſeveral ſorts of ſervices performed every day, as before obſerved, and ſeveral ſacrifices offered; and the *Vulgate Latin* verſion renders it, *the offices of ſacrifices*; and the *Ethiopic* verſion, *their offerings*; and the *Arabic* verſion, *offices*: and the ſervice which the high-prieſt performed in the holieſt of all once a year, was divers, which is mentioned in the following verſes, and is called *ſervice*, ver. 8. it is ſaid, that on the day of atonement there were five עבודות *ſervices* of the morning daily ſacrifice [p], in which the high-prieſt miniſtred in his golden garments: but here the ſervice of the common prieſts is meant, which was every day; and it becomes ſuch who are employed in ſacred ſervice, both to be conſtant in it, and to do it fully and compleatly.

Ver. 7. *But into the ſecond* went *the high-prieſt alone, once every year*, &c.] Tho' this is not expreſſed in ſo many words in *Lev*. xvi. 2. only it is ſaid that *Aaron came not at all times into the holy place within the veil*; yet it is the conſtant and generally received ſenſe of the *Jewiſh* writers, in agreement with the Apoſtle here, that the high-prieſt went into the holy of holies but once a year [q], on the day of atonement, which was on the tenth of the month *Tiſri*, and anſwers to part of *September*;

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[k] Sepher Shoraſh. rad. כפר. [l] Maimon. Biath Hamikdaſh, c. 2. §. 1, 2. [m] Pirke Abot, c. 1. §. 2. [n] Maimon. & Bartenora in ib. [o] Miſn. Yoma, c. 3. §. 3. [p] T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 32. 1. [q] T. Hieroſ. Yoma, fol. 42. 4. & 43. 1. Bab. Peſachim, fol. 86. 1.

not but that he went in more than once on that day, for he went in no leſs than four times[r]; the firſt time he went in to offer incenſe; the ſecond time with the blood of the bullock, to ſprinkle it; the third time with the blood of the goat; and the fourth time to bring out the cenſer[s]; and if he entered a fifth time, they ſay he was worthy of death; wherefore *Philo* the *Jew*[t] ſeems to be miſtaken when he affirms that, if he went in three or four times on the ſame day, he ſuffered death, nor was there any pardon for him; and as it was but one day in a year he might enter, ſo when he did, no other man, either *Iſraelite* or prieſt, might go in along with him; he went in alone without any attendance: the *Jews* ſay[u], that a cord or thong was bound to the feet of the high-prieſt when he went into the holy of holies, that if he died there, the reſt might be able to draw him out; for it was not lawful for another prieſt to go in, no not an high-prieſt, none beſides him on the day of atonement. *Pauſanias*[w] makes mention of a temple of *Minerva* into which the prieſts entred once every year; which very likely was obſerved in imitation of this cuſtom of the *Jewiſh* high-prieſt; who in it was a type of Chriſt, and of his entrance into heaven, and of his conſtant and continued interceſſion there: *not without blood*; for he went in with the blood of the bullock and the blood of the goat; which was typical of the blood of Chriſt, by which he entred in once into the holy place, into heaven, when he had obtained eternal redemption by it, ver. 12. *which he offered for himſelf and for the errors of the people*; the bullock was offered by the high-prieſt for himſelf and his family; and the goat for the ſins of the people of *Iſrael*, even all their iniquities, tranſgreſſions, and ſins, *Lev.* xvi. 11, 15, 16, 21. but Chriſt the antitype having no ſin, had no need to offer for himſelf, only for the ſins of the people; ſee the note on ch. vii. 27.

Ver. 8. *The Holy Ghoſt this ſignifying*, &c.] This ſhews that the Holy Ghoſt exiſted under the Old Teſtament; that he is a diſtinct perſon in the Godhead, a perſonal act being here aſcribed to him; that he is truly and properly God, the God whoſe ſervice the prieſts accompliſhed in the tabernacle; and by whom *Moſes* was admoniſhed to make all things in it according to the pattern, and by whom the high-prieſt was warned not to come at all times within the veil; moreover, that the *Levitical* ordinances were of God, and that they had a ſpiritual ſignification; that the Old Teſtament ſaints were not without ſome knowledge of the ſpiritual meaning of them; and that the Holy Ghoſt was the author of that knowledge; particularly by enjoining the high-prieſt to enter within the vail but once a year, he gave a plain and ſtrong intimation, *that the way into the holieſt of all was not yet manifeſt while as the firſt tabernacle was yet ſtanding*; by which is meant, not only the firſt part of the tabernacle, as in ver. 2, 6. but the whole of it; and not only that, but the temple built in its room, and alſo the whole *Levitical* ſervice is included; and the ſenſe is, that while the tabernacle and tabernacle worſhip, the temple and temple ſervice were in being, *the way into the holieſt of all was not yet manifeſt*: the *Vulgate Latin*, and all the *Oriental* verſions render it, *the way of the ſaints*; of the prieſts who miniſtred in holy things, and were holy to the Lord, and of all the ſaints that lived before Chriſt; not that they did not go to heaven, but their way to it was not ſo manifeſtly known; life and immortality were not ſo clearly brought to light, as now by the Goſpel; tho' rather it deſigns holy places, even heaven itſelf which was typified by the holy place within the vail; and may be called the holieſt of all, it being the reſidence of the holy God, holy angels, and holy men, and is ſanctified by the preſence of Chriſt, for his people, and where perfect holineſs will be the glory of it: the way to it is not by works of righteouſneſs done by men, which being imperfect cannot juſtify, and ſo not ſave, tho' this is the way men naturally ſeek and take; but Chriſt is the only way, and he is the plain, pleaſant, and ſafe one: now let it be obſerved, that heaven was not ſhut to the Old Teſtament ſaints; there was a way into it for them, and they went the ſame way New Teſtament ſaints do; and that way was in ſome meaſure known, but it was not fully manifeſted; it lay hid in obſcure prophecies, types, ſhadows, and ſacrifices; hence being more clearly revealed under the Goſpel-diſpenſation, in compariſon of its former obſcurity, and with reſpect to the manifeſtation of it, it is called *a new way*.

Ver. 9. *Which* was *a figure for the time then preſent*, &c.] The tabernacle in general was a figure of Chriſt's human nature, ch. viii. 2. and the moſt holy part of it was a figure of heaven itſelf, ver. 24. the whole ſervice of it was typical and ſhadowy; but it was but a temporary figure; it was for that preſent time only; the things of it were ſuited to that diſpenſation, and are now aboliſhed, and ought not to be revived, the ordinances of the Goſpel being greatly preferable to them; and whilſt it did continue, it was only a parable, as the word here uſed ſignifies; it was like a dark ſaying; it had much obſcurity and darkneſs in it; or, as the *Vulgate Latin* verſion renders it, it was a *figure of the preſent time*; that is, of the Goſpel-diſpenſation; it was a ſhadow of good things to come under that; it prefigured what is now accompliſhed; or rather it was a *figure unto*, or *until the preſent time*; 'till Chriſt came, when all figures, types, and ſhadows fled away, and were of no more real uſe and ſervice: *in which were offered both gifts and ſacrifices*; that is, in which tabernacle, or at which then preſent time, or καθ' ἣν, *according to which*, figure or parable, as the *Alexandrian* copy, and *Vulgate Latin* verſion read, gifts and ſacrifices were offered by the prieſts; ſee ch. v. 1. and viii. 3. *that could not make him that did the ſervice perfect*; neither the prieſt that offered them, nor the people whom he repreſented, and for whom he did the ſervice; they could not make real and perfect expiation for ſin, nor juſtify from it, nor cleanſe and ſanctify; the ſpiritual worſhippers had their ſins expiated by the ſacrifice of Chriſt; and their perſons were juſtified by his righteouſneſs, and they were cleanſed by his blood: the particular inſtance in which legal ſacrifices did not make perfect is, *pertaining to the conſcience*; there is in every man a conſcience, and when ſin is charged home upon it, that is filled with a ſenſe of divine wrath; nor can it be pacified with any thing ſhort of what will anſwer the law and juſtice of God, and which is only done by the blood and righteouſneſs of Chriſt.

Ver. 10. Which ſtood *only in meats and drinks*, &c.] That is, along with the gifts and ſacrifices offered, there only were meat-offerings and drink-offerings; things which only reſpect the body, and can't therefore make perfect, as to the conſcience;

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[r] Bemidbar Rabba, §. 7. fol. 188. 4. Maimon. Biath Hamikdaſh, c. 2. §. 3. Moſes Kotſenſis Mitzvot Tora, pr. neg. 303.

[s] Maimon. & Bartenora in Miſna Celim, c. 1. §. 9.

[t] De Legatione ad Caium, p. 1035.

[u] Zohar in Lev. fol. 43. 3. & Imre Binah in ib.

[w] Arcadica, ſive l. 8. p. 531.

to which may be added, that while the tabernacle was ſtanding, and the typical ſervice was in being, there was a prohibition of certain meats, as unclean, and an allowance of others, as clean, *Lev.* xi. 2—31. and there were certain drinks which were unlawful to certain perſons, at certain times, as to the prieſts and *Nazarites*, *Lev.* x. 9. *Numb.* vi. 3. and which, for the above reaſon, could make no man perfect: *and divers waſhings* or *baptiſms*; the doctrine of which, the Apoſtle would not have laid again, ch. vi. 2. theſe were the waſhings of the prieſts and of the *Iſraelites*, and of ſacrifices, and of garments, and of veſſels and other things; and which, becauſe they were performed by immerſion, they are called *baptiſms*; and now ſince theſe only ſanctified to the purifying of the fleſh, or what was outward, they could not reach the conſcience, or make perfect with reſpect to that: *and carnal ordinances*; which belonged to the fleſh, and not the ſpirit or ſoul, and therefore could not affect that; beſides, theſe were only *impoſed* on them *until the time of reformation*; they were enjoined, the *Jews* only, tho' by God himſelf; and were put upon them as a burden, or a yoke, and which was on ſome accounts intolerable, but were not to continue any longer than the time of the Goſpel, here called *the time of reformation*, or of *correction*, and emendation; in which, things that were faulty and deficient are amended and perfected, and in which, burdenſome rites and ceremonies are removed, and better ordinances introduced: or rather *of direction*; in which ſaints are directed to Chriſt, the ſum and ſubſtance of all types, ſhadows, and ſacrifices, and in whom alone perfection is.

Ver. 11. *But Chriſt being come an high-prieſt*, &c.] Chriſt is come, as appears from the ceſſation of civil government among the *Jews*, which was not to be till *Shiloh* came; from the deſtruction of the ſecond temple, into which the Meſſiah was to come, and did; from the expiration of *Daniel*'s weeks, at which he was to appear, and be cut off; from the coming of *John* the *Baptiſt*, his forerunner, and from the preaching of the Goſpel to the *Gentiles*, and the calling and converſion of them, and the effuſion of the Spirit upon them: and he is come an high-prieſt; he was called to be one, and was conſtituted as ſuch in the council, and covenant of peace; and he agreed to do the work of one; he was typified by the high-prieſt under the law; and he came as ſuch into this world, and has done the work of an high-prieſt, by offering himſelf a ſacrifice for ſin, and by his entrance into the holieſt of all, with his own blood: and he is come an high-prieſt *of good things to come*; ſuch as, peace, reconciliation and atonement, a juſtifying righteouſneſs, pardon of ſin, eternal life and ſalvation, which the law was a ſhadow, and figure of; and which under the former diſpenſation were to come, as to the actual impetration of them by Chriſt; who is called the high-prieſt of them, to diſtinguiſh him from the high-prieſts under the law, who could not bring in theſe good things, nor make the comers to them and to their offerings perfect; but Chriſt is the author and adminiſtrator of them; and theſe things are owing to the performance of his prieſtly office; and ſuch rob Chriſt of his glory, as a prieſt, who aſcribe theſe good things to their own merits, or the merits of others: and the way in which he is come is, *by a greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is to ſay, not of this building*; meaning the human body of Chriſt, which was greater than *Moſes*'s tabernacle; not in bulk and quantity, but in value, worth, and dignity; and was more perfect than that, that being only an example, figure, ſhadow, and type, this being the antitype, the ſum and ſubſtance of that; and by it things and perſons are brought to perfection, which could not be, in and by that; and this is a tabernacle which God pitched, and not man; which was reared up without the help of man: Chriſt was not begotten by man, but was conceived in the womb of a virgin, under the power of the Holy Ghoſt; he came not into the world in the way of ordinary generation, but in a ſupernatural manner; and ſo his human body is a tabernacle, not of the common building, or creation, as the word may be rendred, as other human bodies are.

Ver. 12. *neither by the blood of goats and calves*, &c.] With which the high-prieſt entered into the holy place, within the vail, on the day of atonement, *Lev.* xvi. 14, 15. for Chriſt was not an high-prieſt of the order of *Aaron*, nor could the blood of theſe creatures take away ſin, nor would God accept of ſuch ſacrifices any longer: *but by his own blood he entred in once into the holy place*; which ſhews the truth of his human nature, and the virtue of its blood, as in union with his divine perſon; by which he opened the way into the holieſt of all, as the ſurety of his people, and gives them boldneſs and liberty to follow him there; he carried his blood not in a baſon, as the high-prieſt carried the blood of goats and calves, but in his veins; and by it, having been ſhed by him, he entred not into the holy place made with hands, but into heaven itſelf; and that not every year, as the high-prieſt, but *once* for all, having done his work; or as follows, *having obtained eternal redemption*; for us, from ſin, ſatan, the law, and death, to which his people were in bondage, and which he obtained by paying a ranſom price for them; which was not corruptible things, as ſilver and gold, but his precious blood: in the original text it is, *having found eternal redemption*; there ſeems to be an alluſion to *Job* xxxiii. 24. This was what was ſought for long ago by the Old Teſtament ſaints, who were wiſhing, waiting, and longing for this ſalvation; it is a thing very precious and difficult to find; it is to be had no where but in Chriſt, and when found in him, is matter of great joy to ſenſible ſinners; God found it in him, and found him to be a proper perſon to effect it; and Chriſt has found it by being the author of it: this is called an eternal redemption, becauſe it extends to the ſaints in all ages, backwards and forwards; it includes eternal life and happineſs; and ſuch as are ſharers in it ſhall never periſh, but ſhall be ſaved with an everlaſting ſalvation; it is ſo called in oppoſition to the carnal expiations of the high-prieſts, and in diſtinction from temporal redemptions, deliverances, and ſalvations. Remarkable is the paraphraſe of *Jonathan ben Uzziel* on *Gen.* xlix. 18. "*Jacob* ſaid, when he ſaw *Gideon* the "ſon of *Joaſh*, and *Sampſon* the ſon of *Manoah*, "who ſhould be redeemers; not for the redemp"tion of *Gideon* am I waiting, nor for the redemp"tion of *Samſon* am I looking, for their redemp"tion is a temporal redemption; but for thy re"demption am I waiting and looking, O Lord, "becauſe thy redemption is פורקן עלמין *an ever"laſting redemption*:" another copy reads, for the redemption of Meſſiah the ſon of *David*; and to the ſame purpoſe is the *Jeruſalem* paraphraſe on the place; in *Talmudic* language it would be called פרייה עולמית[a].

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[a] T. Shebuot, fol. 11. 2.

Ver. 13. *For if the blood of bulls and of goats*, &c.] Shed either on the day of atonement, or at any other time: the former of theſe *Pauſanias*[y] relates, was drank by certain prieſteſſes among the *Grecians*, whereby they were tried, whether they ſpoke truth or no, if not, they were immediately puniſhed; and the latter, he ſays[z], will diſſolve an adamantſtone; but neither of them can purge from ſin: *and the aſhes of an heifer ſprinkling the unclean*; the Apoſtle refers to the red heifer, *Numb.* xix. which being burnt, its aſhes were gathered up and put into a veſſel, and water poured upon them, which was ſprinkled with a bunch of hyſſop on unclean perſons; the aſhes and the water mixed together made the water of ſeparation, or of ſprinkling; for ſo it is called by the *Septuagint*, υδωρ ῥαντισμȣ, *the water of ſprinkling*, and in the *Targum* in a following citation: this was the purification for ſin, tho' it only *ſanctifieth to the purifying of the fleſh*; the body, or only in an external and typical way, but did not really ſanctify the heart, or purify and cleanſe the ſoul from ſin. The *Jews* ſay, that the waters of purification for ſin were not waters of purification for ſin, without the aſhes[a]; and to this the *Targumiſt*, on *Ezek.* xxxvi. 25. and on *Zech.* xiii. 1. refers, paraphraſing both texts thus; "I will forgive their ſins as they are cleanſed with "*the water of ſprinkling*, and with the aſhes of the "heifer, which is a purification for ſin."

Ver. 14. *How much more ſhall the blood of Chriſt*, &c.] Which is not the blood of a mere man, but the blood of the Son of God; and the argument is from the leſſer to the greater; that if the aſhes of the burnt heifer, which was a type of Chriſt in his ſufferings, mixed with water, typically ſanctified to the purifying of men externally, in a ceremonial way, then much more virtue muſt there be in the blood of Chriſt, to cleanſe the ſoul inwardly: *who through the eternal ſpirit offered himſelf without ſpot to God*; Chriſt is a prieſt, and the ſacrifice he has offered up is *himſelf*; not his divine nature, but his human nature, ſoul and body, as in union with his divine perſon; which gives his ſacrifice the preference to all others; and is the reaſon of its virtue and efficacy, and is expreſſive of his great love to man: and this ſacrifice was offered up *to God*, againſt whom his people had ſinned, and whoſe juſtice muſt be ſatisfied, and which is of a ſweetſmelling ſavour to him; beſides, he called him to this work, and engaged him in it, and is well pleaſed with this offering, as he muſt needs be, ſince it is offered up *without ſpot*; which expreſſes the purity of Chriſt's nature and ſacrifice, and the perfection of it, which is ſuch, that no fault can be found in it by the juſtice of God; and hence, the ſaints, for whom it is offered, are unblameable and irreprovable. There is an alluſion in the clauſe, both to the prieſts and to their ſacrifices, which were neither of them to have any ſpot or blemiſh on them; and this unblemiſhed ſacrifice was offered unto God by Chriſt, *through the eternal ſpirit*; not the human ſoul of Chriſt; for tho' that is a ſpirit, yet not eternal, and beſides, was a part of the ſacrifice; but rather the divine nature of Chriſt, which is a ſpirit, and may be ſo called in diſtinction from the fleſh, or human nature, as it ſometimes is, and this is eternal; it was from everlaſting, as well as is to everlaſting; and this ſupported him under all his ſufferings, and carried him through them, and put virtue into them; and Chriſt was a prieſt, in the divine, as well as human nature: tho' by it may be better underſtood *the Holy Ghoſt*; and ſo the *Vulgate Latin* verſion reads, and alſo ſeveral copies; ſince the divine nature rather acts by the human nature, than the human nature by the divine; and Chriſt is often ſaid to do ſuch and ſuch things by the Holy Spirit; and as the Holy Ghoſt formed and filled the human nature of Chriſt, ſo he aſſiſted and ſupported it under ſufferings. This whole clauſe is inſerted by way of parentheſis, ſhewing the efficacy of Chriſt's blood, and from whence it is: *to purge your conſcience from dead works*; that is, *from the works of ſin*, as the *Ethiopic* verſion renders it; which are performed by dead men, ſeparate and alienated from the life of God, are the cauſe of the death of the ſoul, and expoſe to eternal death, and are like dead carcaſſes, nauſeous and infectious; and even duties themſelves performed without faith and love, are dead works; nor can they procure life, and being depended on, iſſue in death; and even the works of believers themſelves are ſometimes performed in a very lifeleſs manner, and are attended with ſin and pollution, and need purging: the alluſion is to the pollution by the touch of dead bodies; and there may be ſome reſpect to the ſacrifices of ſlain beaſts, after the ſacrifice and death of Chriſt, by believing *Jews*, who were ſticklers for the ceremonies of the law, and thereby contracted guilt; but immoralities are chiefly deſigned, and with theſe the conſcience of man is defiled; and nothing ſhort of the blood of Chriſt can remove the pollution of ſin; as that being ſhed procures atonement, and ſo purges away the guilt of ſin, or makes reconciliation for it, ſo being ſprinkled on the conſcience by the Spirit of God, it ſpeaks peace and pardon, and pacifies and purges it, and removes every incumbrance from it: the *Alexandrian* copy, the *Vulgate Latin*, and *Syriac* verſions read, *our conſcience*. The end and uſe of ſuch purgation is, *to ſerve the living God*; ſo called to diſtinguiſh him from the idols of the *Gentiles*, and in oppoſition to dead works; and becauſe he has life in himſelf, eſſentially and independently, and is the author and giver of life to others; and it is but the reaſonable ſervice of his people, to preſent their ſouls and bodies as a living ſacrifice to him; and who ought to ſerve him in a lively manner, in faith, and with fervency, and not with a ſlaviſh, but a godly filial fear; and one that has his conſcience purged by the blood of Chriſt, and is ſenſibly impreſſed with a diſcovery of pardoning grace, is in the beſt capacity for ſuch ſervice. The *Alexandrian* copy reads, *the living and true God*.

Ver. 15. *And for this cauſe he is the mediator of the New Teſtament*, &c.] See the notes on ch. vii. 22. and viii. 6, 8. This may refer both to what goes before, and what follows after; for Chriſt, that he might offer himſelf to God, and by his blood purge the conſciences of his people from dead works, that ſo they might ſerve the living God, became the mediator of the New Teſtament, or covenant; and alſo he took upon him this character and office, *that by means of death for the redemption of the tranſgreſſions that were under the firſt teſtament, they which are called, might receive the promiſe of eternal inheritance*; Chriſt became the mediator of the New Teſtament, and aſſumed human nature that he might die, and by dying might obtain redemption for his people; not only for thoſe that were then in the world, or ſhould be in it, but alſo for all thoſe that had been in it. *The firſt Teſtament* is the firſt diſpenſation of the covenant of grace, reaching from the firſt promulgation of it to *Adam* after the fall, to the death of Chriſt; *the tranſgreſſions* that were under it are the ſins of the ſaints who lived under that diſpenſation, from *Adam* to *Moſes*, and from *Moſes* to Chriſt, and takes in all their iniquities of every kind: and the *redemption* of theſe, or from theſe, by Chriſt, at and through his death, does not ſuppoſe that there was no remiſſion of ſins, or juſtification from them, under that diſpenſation; or that the Old Teſtament ſaints did not go to heaven, but were detained in a priſon, till redeemed by the death of Chriſt; or that their ſins were only redeemed, not their perſons; for tranſgreſſions may ſtand for tranſgreſſors; and ſo the *Syriac* verſion renders it, *that by his death he might be a redemption for them who tranſgreſſed the firſt Teſtament*; ſo the *Jews* ſay, that the Meſſiah muſt die לפרות את אבות, *to redeem the fathers* [b]: but the ſenſe is, that tho' legal ſacrifices could not atone for ſin, nor ceremonial ablutions cleanſe from them; yet the ſins of Old Teſtament ſaints were expiated, their iniquities pardoned, and they juſtified and ſaved, through the blood of Chriſt, the lamb ſlain from the foundation of the world; whoſe death is a redemption from tranſgreſſions paſt, preſent, and to come; whoſe blood is the ranſom price for them, and was ſhed for the remiſſion of them, even of ſins that are paſt through the forbearance of God; who took the ſurety's word for the performance of all this, which in the fullneſs of time he ſtrictly fulfilled, to the ſatiſfaction of law and juſtice; ſee *Rom.* iii. 25. and the ultimate end of Chriſt's being a mediator, and dying for ſuch purpoſes, was, that called ones might receive the promiſed inheritance: by the *eternal inheritance*, is meant heaven, which is by gift and bequeſt, belongs to children only, and comes through the death of Chriſt; and is a very ſubſtantial, plentiful, and glorious one; it is incorruptible and undefiled, and that fades not away, and as here, *eternal*; it was prepared from the foundation of the world, and will continue for ever; and it may be ſo called, to diſtinguiſh it from the inheritance of the land of *Canaan*, or any temporal one: *the promiſe* of this was made before the world began, and was put into the hands of Chriſt, the ſurety of the better Teſtament, by whoſe death the heirs of it come to enjoy both the promiſe, and the thing promiſed; and they are ſuch who are *called*, not merely externally, but internally and effectually; by whom were meant, not *Abraham* and his natural ſeed, nor the Old Teſtament ſaints only, but all that are called with an holy calling, whether *Jews* or *Gentiles*, and who will enjoy both the promiſe of the inheritance, and that itſelf, in a way of *receiving*: every word ſhews this affair to be all of grace; it is an *inheritance*, and therefore the father's gift; it is by *promiſe*, and ſo of grace; and it is *received*, and ſo freely given, and not merited; and only ſuch who are *called* by grace poſſeſs it; and yet it is through the death of Chriſt, that ſo it might be received, in a way conſiſtent with the juſtice of God.

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[y] Achaica, ſive l. 7. p. 450.

[z] Arcadica, ſive l. 8. p. 485.

[a] Miſn. Temura, c. 1. §. 5. Maimon. & Bartenora in ib.

Ver. 16. *For where a teſtament is*, &c.] The covenant of grace, as adminiſtred under the Goſpel diſpenſation, is a teſtament or will. The *Jews* have adopted the *Greek* word, here uſed, into their language, and pronounce it, דייתיקי, and by it underſtand a dying man's laſt will and teſtament [d]. Some of them make it to be of *Hebrew* derivation; as if it was ſaid, דא תהי למיקם, *this ſhall be to confirm* [e]; or this ſhall be ſtable and firm; though others own it to be the ſame with this *Greek* word διαθηκη [f]. The covenant of grace, is properly a covenant to Chriſt, and a teſtament or will to his people; it is his, and their father's will, concerning giving them both grace and glory; it conſiſts of many gifts and legacies; in it Chriſt is made heir of all things, and his people are made joint-heirs with him; they are given to him as his portion; and they have all things pertaining to life and godlineſs bequeathed to them, even all ſpiritual bleſſings; the witneſſes of it are Father, Son, and Spirit; and the ſeals of it are the blood of Chriſt, and the grace of the Spirit; and this is regiſtred in the ſcriptures by holy men as notaries; and is unalterable and immutable: and this being made, *there muſt alſo of neceſſity be the death of the teſtator*; who is Chriſt; he has various parts in this will or teſtament; he is the ſurety and mediator of it; and he is the executor of it; what is given in it, is firſt given to him, in order to be given to others; all things are put into his hands, and he has a power to give them to as many as the Father has given him; and here he is called the *teſtator*: Chriſt, as God, has an equal right to diſpoſe of the inheritance, both of grace and glory; and as mediator, nothing is given without his conſent; and whatever is given, is given with a view to his *death*, and comes through it, and by virtue of it: hence there is a *neceſſity* of that, and that on the account of the divine perfections; particularly for the declaration of God's righteouſneſs, or by reaſon of his juſtice; and alſo becauſe of his purpoſes and decrees, which have fixed it, and of his promiſes, which are yea and amen in Chriſt, and are ratified by his blood, called therefore the blood of the covenant; and likewiſe on account of the engagements of Chriſt to ſuffer and die; as well as for the accompliſhment of ſcripture prophecies concerning it; and moreover, on account of the bleſſings which were to come to the ſaints thro' it, as a juſtifying righteouſneſs, pardon of ſin, peace and reconciliation, adoption and eternal life.

Ver. 17. *For a teſtament is of force after men are dead*, &c.] The neceſſity of Chriſt's death is here urged, from the nature and force of a teſtament or will, among men, which does not take place, and cannot be executed till a man is dead. *Otherwiſe it is of no ſtrength at all whilſt the teſtator liveth*; no claim can be made by the legatees for the part they have in it, nor can any diſpoſition be made by the executor of it; not that hereby is ſuggeſted, that the teſtament or will of God was uncertain and precarious till the death of Chriſt, and ſubject to change and alteration as mens wills are till they die; nor that the inheritance could not be enjoyed by the Old Teſtament ſaints; for 'tis certain, it was entred upon by them before the death of Chriſt; but the ſenſe is, that there was a neceſſity of it, that the ſaints right unto it, upon the foot of juſtice, might be evident by it.

Ver. 18. *Whereupon neither the firſt* teſtament, &c.] Or the firſt adminiſtration of the covenant of grace under the law: *was dedicated without blood*; or *confirmed* without it, that diſpenſation being a typical one; and that blood was typical of the blood of Chriſt, by which the new covenant or teſtament is ratified; ſee *Exod.* xxiv. 7, 8.

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[b] R. Moſes Haddarſan apud Galatin. l. 8. c. 20.

[d] T. Hieroſ. Peah, fol. 17. 4. & T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 152. 2.

[e] T. Bab. Bava Metzia, fol. 19. 1. Maimon. & Bartenora in Miſn. Moed Katon, c. 3. §. 3. & in Bava Metzia, c. 1. §. 7. & in Bava Bathra, c. 8. §. 6.

[f] Cohen de Lara Ir David, p. 30.

Ver. 19. *For when Moſes had ſpoken every precept,* &c.] Contained in the decalogue, in the book of the covenant, every one of the precepts in *Exod.* xx, xxi, xxii, xxiii. for this is to be underſtood of the written law, and not of the oral law, the *Jews* talk of, which they ſay *Moſes* firſt delivered by word of mouth to *Aaron*, then to his two ſons, *Eleazar* and *Ithamar*, then to the ſeventy elders of *Iſrael*, and then to the whole congregation; ſo that *Aaron* heard it four times, his ſons thrice, the ſeventy elders twice, and all *Iſrael* once [g]: but this is the written law which he ſpoke audibly, and in a known language, *to all the people according to the law*; which God gave him on the mount: this may inſtruct perſons concerned in the publick miniſtry, to ſpeak out plainly and clearly the whole counſel of God, to all to whom they are ſent, according to the word of God, which is the rule of faith and practice: *he took the blood of calves, and of goats*; in the relation of this affair in *Exod.* xxiv. 5. which is referred to, only mention is made of oxen, bullocks, or heifers, here called calves, which were ſacrificed for peace-offerings, and not of goats; tho' perhaps they may be intended by the burnt-offerings there ſpoken of, ſince they were ſometimes uſed for burnt-offerings, *Lev.* i. 10. The *Syriac* verſion only reads, *he took the blood of an heifer*; and the *Arabic* verſion, *he took the blood of calves*; but all the copies, and other verſions, read both. *With water, and ſcarlet wool, and hyſſop*; neither of theſe are mentioned in *Exod.* xxiv. but ſince ſprinkling is there ſaid to be uſed, and blood and water mixed together, and ſcarlet and hyſſop were uſed in ſprinkling, as in ſprinkling the leper, and the unclean houſe, *Lev.* xiv. 5, 6, 7, 49, 50, 51. The Apoſtle juſtly concludes the uſe of them here; the blood, with water, was typical of the blood and water which ſprung from the ſide of Chriſt pierced on the croſs, the one ſignifying juſtification by him, the other ſanctification; the ſcarlet wool, which is originally white, but becomes ſcarlet by being dyed, may denote the native purity of Chriſt, and his bloody ſufferings and death; the hyſſop may ſignify his humility, and the purging vertue of his blood, and the ſweet-ſmelling ſavour of his perſon, righteouſneſs, and ſacrifice. The Apoſtle calls ſcarlet, ſcarlet wool; tho' whenever the word is uſed in the *Jewiſh* laws of the Old Teſtament, wool is not expreſſed, but it is always intended; for it is a rule with the *Jews* [h], that "the blue, "which is ſpoken of in every place, is wool dyed "of a ſky colour; purple is wool dyed red, and "ſcarlet is wool dyed in ſcarlet." *And ſprinkled both the book, and all the people*, in *Exod.* xxiv. 8. No mention is made of the ſprinkling of the former, only of the latter, which the Apoſtle either concludes from the ſprinkling of the blood upon the altar, upon which the book might lie, or from tradition, or from divine revelation: ſome think it does not neceſſarily follow from the text, that the book was ſprinkled; and repeating the word λαϐων, *he took*, read the words, *and he took the book and ſprinkled all the people*; but this ſeems not natural, but forced; and beſides, all the *Oriental* verſions are expreſs for the ſprinkling of the book: the book of the law was ſprinkled, not becauſe of any impurity in it, but to ſhew the imperfection of it, and its inſufficiency to juſtify men; or rather the imperfection of man's obedience to it, and to point out what the law requires in caſe of diſobedience, even the blood and life of men; and what it would be, was it not ſprinkled with blood, or ſatisfied by the blood of Chriſt, namely, an accuſing, curſing, and condemning law: the people, all of them, being ſprinkled with the blood, were typical of God's peculiar people, even all the elect of God, being ſprinkled with the blood of Chriſt, called the blood of ſprinkling, by which they are redeemed, and which ſpeaks peace and pardon to them. Some have thought only the ſeventy elders were ſprinkled, as perſonating the whole congregation; and others, that the twelve pillars were only ſprinkled, as repreſenting the twelve tribes of *Iſrael*; but *Moſes*, and the Apoſtle agree, that they were the people that were ſprinkled.

Ver. 20. *Saying, this is the blood of the teſtament,* &c.] The firſt teſtament or covenant; this proves what the Apoſtle had aſſerted in ver. 18. that it was dedicated with blood, or confirmed by it; compare with this *Matt.* xxvi. 28. *which God hath enjoined unto you*; the people of *Iſrael*, to obſerve, and which they promiſed to do; ſee *Exod.* xxiv. 7, 8.

Ver. 21. *Moreover, he ſprinkled likewiſe both the tabernacle,* &c.] Not at the ſame time that he ſprinkled the book and the people, for then there was no tabernacle; but afterwards, at the time that it was ſet up, when it was anointed with oil, *Exod.* xl. 9. and tho' no mention is there made of blood, yet *Joſephus*, in agreement with the Apoſtle, aſſerts [i], that the tabernacle, and its veſſels, were not only anointed with oil, but ſprinkled with the blood of bulls and goats, as well as the garments of *Aaron*, and his ſons: the tabernacle was typical of the church, in which God dwells, being purified and cleanſed by the blood of Chriſt; and this ſhows, that there is no coming into the preſence of God, the place where he dwells, without blood. *And all the veſſels of the miniſtry*; which were uſed in the ſervice of the tabernacle: theſe may denote the veſſels of grace and mercy, the elect of God, whoſe hearts are ſprinkled by the blood of Chriſt from an evil conſcience, and whoſe garments are waſhed in it, and made white by it.

Ver. 22. *And almoſt all things are by the law purged with blood,* &c.] All *except a few things*, as the *Arabic* verſion renders it; for ſome things were cleanſed by water, and others purged by fire, *Numb.* xxxi. 23. Some join the word *almoſt* with the word *purged*, as if the ſenſe was, that all things were purged by blood, but not perfectly, only almoſt; but the former ſenſe is beſt. *And without ſhedding of blood is no remiſſion*; that is, of ſin; there was no typical remiſſion without it; and there can be no real remiſſion but by the blood of Chriſt; no inſtance can be given of pardon without it; if it could have been otherwiſe, the blood of Chriſt had not been ſhed; for ſo it would ſeem to be ſhed in vain, and his ſatisfaction to be unneceſſary; nor is it agreeable to the juſtice of God to forgive ſin without ſatisfaction; nor is it conſiſtent with his veracity, and faithfulneſs to his word, *Gen.* ii. 17. It is a common ſaying with the *Jews*, and often to be met with in their writings, אין כפרה אלא בדם, *there is no atonement but by blood* [k]; by the ſhedding of blood; not by the ſhedding of it, as it flows

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[g] Maimon. Præfat. ad Yad Chazaka.

[h] Ib. Hilchot Cele Hamikdaſh, c. 8. §. 13.

[i] Antiq. l. 3. c. 8. §. 6.

[k] T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 5. 1. Zebachim, fol. 6. 1. & Menachot, fol. 93. 2.

out of the body of the ſacrifice, but as it is poured out on the altar; for the pouring of the blood at the four corners, and at the bottom of the altar, were the chief rites required in ſacrifices; nor did they reckon expiation, expiation, unleſs the altar was moiſtened by the blood of the ſacrifice [l].

Ver. 23. It was *therefore neceſſary*, &c.] On account of the divine appointment, and that types and antitypes might correſpond; and eſpecially it was neceſſary with reſpect to the Meſſiah, the ſubſtance and body of all types. So *Jonathan ben Uzziel* paraphraſes the text in *Exod.* xl 9. "and thou "ſhalt take the anointing oil, and thou ſhalt anoint "the tabernacle, and all that is in it; and thou "ſhalt *ſanctify* it, מטול, *becauſe* of the crown of "the kingdom of the houſe of *Judah*, and *the* "*king Meſſiah*, who ſhall redeem *Iſrael* in the lat-"ter days." Upon his account it was neceſſary, *that the patterns of things in the heavens ſhould be purified with theſe*; that is, that all the people, and the book of the covenant, and the tabernacle, and its veſſels, which were types and patterns of perſons and things in Goſpel churches, ſhould be purified with blood and water, and with ſcarlet wool and hyſſop. *But the heavenly things themſelves, with better ſacrifices than theſe*; the ſum and ſubſtance of the above patterns, ſhadows, and examples, ſuch as heaven itſelf; which tho' not impure in itſelf, yet ſome think it may be ſaid to be purified, becauſe ſaints are made meet for it, by being purged with the blood of Chriſt; others obſerve, that ſin reaches to heaven, and provokes God that dwells there; hence atonement for it may be called a purification of heaven; but rather this may be ſaid of it, inaſmuch as by the blood of Chriſt an entrance and preparation is made for the ſaints into it. Likewiſe, the human nature of Chriſt is among theſe heavenly things; not that it is heavenly, as to the matter and ſubſtance of it, but may be ſo called, becauſe of its wonderful formation; and which has been purified, not from any real internal pollution that was in it, but from what was imputed to it, the ſin of his people. Alſo the whole church, triumphant and militant, may be intended by heavenly things: the Old Teſtament ſaints went to heaven before Chriſt came; and tho' they were not impure, but were the ſpirits of juſt men made perfect, yet their iniquities were purged by the blood and ſacrifice of Chriſt, after they were gone to heaven; ſee ver. 15. and *Rom.* iii. 25. The church militant, or believers on earth, may be ſaid to be heavenly, ſince they are partakers of an heavenly birth and calling; their head is in heaven, and their converſation is there; and they have a right unto it, and are making meet for it; and they are in themſelves defiled with ſin, and are purified by the blood of Chriſt, and ſanctified by the offering up of his body once for all: to which may be added, that ſpiritual bleſſings are heavenly things; they are from heaven, and ſaints are bleſſed with them in heavenly places; and theſe come to them thro' the blood and ſacrifice of Chriſt; yea, the Goſpel, which is from heaven, and the doctrines of it, are ſealed and confirmed by the blood of Chriſt: his ſacrifice is expreſſed in the *plural* number; not that there has been a repetition of it, for it is but one ſacrifice, and but once offered up, and will never be reiterated; but to ſhew the excellency of it, it being uſual with the *Jews* to uſe the plural number of things the moſt excellent; ſo Chriſt is called wiſdoms, *Prov.* i. 20. beſides, reſpect may be had to the many ſacrifices under the law, which were types of it, and were anſwered and fulfilled by it; and to the many perſons on whoſe account it was offered; and to the parts of it, the ſoul and body of Chriſt: and this is a *better* ſacrifice than the legal ones, in its own nature, and in its uſe and efficacy to take away ſin, and make perfect, which they could not.

Ver. 24. *For Chriſt is not entred into the holy places made with hands*, &c.] The moſt holy place in the tabernacle of *Moſes*, or in the temple built by *Solomon*, and rebuilt by *Zorobabel*, and repaired by *Herod*, which are *the figures of the true*; that is, the moſt holy place in the tabernacle and temple, was a figure of heaven, the truth of that type; ſee ver. 9. as follows. *Joſephus* [m] ſuggeſts the ſame, when ſpeaking of the moſt holy place, he ſays, that it was inacceſſible to the prieſts, that it might be as heaven to God. *But into heaven itſelf*; not the viſible heavens, the airy and ſtarry ones, thro' which he paſſed, but the third heaven, the habitation of God, angels, and glorified ſaints: this ſhows that heaven is a place; that Chriſt, as man, was out of it when on earth; and that at his aſcenſion he entred into it, having done the work he came about, and that with acceptance: the end of his entrance was *now to appear in the preſence of God for us*; Chriſt, as God, was always in his preſence, from everlaſting; as mediator, he was with him in the council of peace; while he was here on earth his father was with him, he was not alone; but now in his human nature he is at his right hand, where he appears before him, as a favourite before his prince, on the behalf of another, or as an advocate on the behalf of his client: Chriſt appears in the court of heaven for his elect, by repreſenting their perſons; by preſenting himſelf, his blood, ſacrifice, and righteouſneſs before God on their account; by introducing them into the preſence of God, and offering up their prayers with the incenſe of his mediation; by preſenting them to himſelf, and to his Father, and obtaining every bleſſing for them. And this he does *now*, ſince his entrance; not that he did not appear before God for the ſaints of the Old Teſtament, for he was the angel of God's preſence then, tho' he did not appear then in the manner he does now, as the Lamb in the midſt of the throne, as if it had been ſlain; but it denotes the continuance and perpetuity of his appearance for his people; he is ever interceding for them.

Ver. 25. *Nor yet that he ſhould offer himſelf often*, &c.] Or at all again; which ſhows the perfection of his ſacrifice, for juſtice was ſatisfied, the law fulfilled, ſin done away, and compleat ſalvation obtained at once; which lies againſt the error of the *Socinians*, who ſay he offers himſelf now in heaven; and of the *Papiſts*, who pretend to offer the body of Chriſt daily: *as the high-prieſt entreth into the holy place every year with blood of others*; not his own, nor other mens, but the blood of goats and calves; but Chriſt entred into heaven with his own blood, he having been altar, prieſt, and ſacrifice: the high-prieſt went into the moſt holy place every year, but Chriſt has entred into heaven once for all, where he ſits down and continues, having done his work effectually.

Ver. 26. *For then muſt he often have ſuffered ſince the foundation of the world*, &c.] For if it was neceſſary that he ſhould often offer up himſelf now, which is the ſame as to ſuffer, ſince the ſacrifice of himſelf, the ſame was neceſſary before; ſeeing ſin was in the world from the beginning, and the ſaints from the foundation of the world had their ſins expiated by the ſacrifice of Chriſt; but the truth is, Chriſt's ſufferings were but once, tho' the virtue of them is always, both before and after; nor can he ſuffer more, or again, becauſe of his power over death and the grave, and becauſe he has effectually obtained what he ſuffered for: *but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away ſin by the ſacrifice of himſelf*; this is to be underſtood, not of his appearance in heaven, of which mention is made in ver. 24. but of his incarnation on earth, called an appearance; not as tho' his human nature was a mere phantom or apparition, for it was a real thing; or as if he was then manifeſted to be what he really was before; for before his incarnation he was not truly and actually man; but this is ſaid with reſpect to the manifeſtation of his inviſible deity; or of him as the Son of God in human nature; and in regard to the types of the old law, under which he was hid; and with reſpect to the propheeies of his coming; and it deſigns the ſame thing with his deſcent from heaven, and coming into this world, in which he appeared in faſhion as a man, as a mean man, as an afflicted one; yea, he looked like a ſinful man, bearing the infirmities and ſins of his people; his appearance was but to a very few, and for a little time; and the time of it was, *in the end of the world*; the ſame with the laſt days; the laſt age of the world; the end of the *Jewiſh* œconomy; at the cloſe of their civil and eccleſiaſtical ſtate, according to *Hab.* ii. 3. ſo the *Jews* expect their Meſſiah, לקץ ימים, *at the end of days*[n]: and this appearance was but *once*; there were many appearances of him in an human form, under the Old Teſtament diſpenſation; and there were many after his reſurrection; but this is ſaid to be but once, in oppoſition to the many types and ſacrifices under the law, and agrees with his one oblation, and once ſuffering: the end of his appearance was, *to put away ſin*; the filth of it, by his blood; the guilt of it, by his atoning ſacrifice; and the puniſhment of it, by his ſufferings and death, the penalty of the law; and in conſequence of all this, the dominion of it by the power of his grace, and the very being of it hereafter: and this putting it away is ſignified by his bearing, carrying, and taking it away; by removing it as far as the eaſt is from the weſt; by finiſhing and making an end of it; by crucifying the old man, deſtroying the body of ſin, and by an utter diſannulling and aboliſhing it, as a debt, and as a law; and all this is done by the ſacrifice of himſelf; by the offering up of his body and ſoul, an offering for ſin; as in ver. 14.

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[l] Reland. Heb. Antiq. par. 3. c. 2. §. 8.

[m] Antiq. l. 3. c. 5. §. 4 & c. 7. §. 8.

Ver. 27. *And as it is appointed unto men once to die*, &c.] Not a moral, or what is commonly called a ſpiritual death, nor an eternal one, but a corporal one; which does not ariſe from the conſtitution of nature, but from the ſin of man, and God's decree on account of it; by which it is fixed that men ſhall die, and how long they ſhall live, and when they ſhall die; ſo that they can't die ſooner nor later; all things antecedent to death, which lead on to it, and iſſue in it, are appointed by God, and ſo is death itſelf, with all its circumſtances; mens days can neither be lengthened nor ſhortened, either by Chriſt himſelf, or others: and this ſtatute and appointment of God concerns men, not angels, and reaches to all men, wicked and righteous; and tho' there have been ſome exceptions, as *Enoch* and *Elijah*; and all will not ſleep, or die, ſome will be found alive at Chriſt's appearing; yet ſuch will undergo a change which is equivalent to death, as *Enoch* and *Elijah* have done: and generally ſpeaking men die but once; it is not uſual for men to die, and live again, and then die again; there have been ſome extraordinary inſtances of this kind, but they are rare; it is the ſtatute law of heaven in common for men to die, and that but once; ſo *Cicero*[o] the heathen ſays, *omnibus definitam eſſe mortem*: Chriſt died once, he'll die no more; and it is the comfort of the ſaints, that tho' they die the firſt death, they ſhall not be hurt of the ſecond death; and the conſideration of this decree ſhould excite to diligence and induſtry: death is certain to God, but uncertain to us, as to the time, nor ſhould we curiouſly enquire into it, but patiently wait for it, and quietly ſubmit unto it: *but after this the judgment*; the laſt and general judgment, which will reach to all men, quick and dead, righteous and wicked, and in which Chriſt will be judge. There is a particular judgment which is immediately after death; by virtue of which, the ſouls of men are adjudged to their proper ſtate of happineſs or woe; and there is an univerſal judgment, which will be after the reſurrection of the dead, and is called eternal judgment, and to come; this is appointed by God, tho' the time when is unknown to men; yet nothing is more certain, and it will be a righteous one.

Ver. 28. *So Chriſt was once offered to bear the ſins of many*, &c.] As man dies but once, Chriſt was offered but once, or he ſuffered and died but once; and that was not on his own account, or for his own ſins, but *to bear the ſins of many*; not of angels but of men, and theſe not a few, but *many*; which is ſaid to magnify the grace of God, to exalt the ſatisfaction and righteouſneſs of Chriſt, and to encourage ſouls to hope in him: hence many are brought to believe in him, and many are juſtified by him, have their ſins forgiven them, and are glorified; tho' Chriſt bore not the ſins of all men; for as all men have not faith, all are not juſtified, pardoned, and ſaved: what he bore were *ſins*; all kind of ſin, every act of ſin, and all that belongs to it; its filth, guilt, and puniſhment, even the iniquity of all his people; which muſt be a prodigious weight, and than which nothing could be more nauſeous: his bearing them ſuppoſes they were upon him, tho' not in him, imputed, tho' not inherent; that he did not ſink under them; that he made an entire ſatisfaction for them, and bore them wholly away, both from the perſons of his people, and from the ſight of juſtice. The way in which he came to bear them was this; he became a ſurety for all the elect; his father imputed to him all their ſins, and he voluntarily took them upon himſelf; where juſtice found them, and demanded ſatisfaction of him for them, and he gave it; which is an inſtance both of his great love, and of his great ſtrength: *and unto them that look for him*; with affection, faith, and patience: *ſhall he appear the ſecond time without ſin unto ſalvation*; this is to be underſtood of Chriſt's viſible and perſonal appearance on earth, which will be a glorious one; he will appear in his own glory, and in his father's glory, and in the glory of the holy angels, and in the glory of his power, to the joy of ſaints, and to the terror of the wicked; for every eye ſhall ſee him: and this is ſaid to be *the ſecond time*; that is, that he appears on earth, and perſonally; for tho' he often appears to his people, it is in a ſpiritual way; and tho' he appeared to *Stephen* and to *Paul*, yet not on earth, but in heaven; and this is called the ſecond time, with reference to his firſt appearance in human nature at his incarnation, and after that he aſcended to heaven; and as this will be the ſecond, it will be the laſt: the manner in which he will appear, will be, *without ſin*; without ſin itſelf; without any thing like it; without any infirmities, which tho' not ſinful, are the effects of ſin; without ſin imputed to him, with which he appeared before; without being a ſacrifice for ſin; and without ſin upon his people that come with him, or he ſhall meet, whom he ſhall raiſe, or change, and take to himſelf: and the end of his appearance with reſpect to them, will be *unto ſalvation*; the end of his firſt appearance was to obtain ſalvation for his people, and he has obtained it, and there is a comfortable application of it made unto them by the Spirit of God; but the full poſſeſſion of it will be hereafter, and into this will Chriſt put them, when he ſhall appear: the *Alexandrian* copy adds, *by faith*, and alſo ſome other copies.

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[n] Seder Tephillot, Ed. Amſtelod. fol. 2. 1.

[o] Pro Sextio.

CHAP. X.

IN this chapter the Apoſtle purſues his argument, ſhewing the weakneſs and imperfection of the *Levitical* prieſthood, and the ſuperior excellency of Chriſt's, which he cloſes with ſuitable exhortations to faith on Chriſt, as the alone high-prieſt, and to a conſtant profeſſion of him. The imperfection of the *Levitical* prieſthood is proved, from the law by which it was eſtabliſhed, being only a ſhadow of good things to come; from the inſufficiency of annual ſacrifices to perfect the comers to them, or to purge the conſciences of the worſhippers from ſin; and from the non-ceſſation of theſe ſacrifices which would have been, if the above ends could have been anſwered by them, ver. 1, 2. but on the contrary, by the annual return of theſe ſacrifices, ſins are afreſh remembred, and very good reaſon there is for it, ſince it is an impoſſible thing that the blood of ſlain beaſts ſhould take away ſin, ver. 3, 4. moreover, the Apoſtle proves the inſufficiency of ſuch ſacrifices, by a divine teſtimony, out of *Pſ.* xl. 6, 7, 8. by which it appears, that they are not agreeable to the will of God, and are rejected by him as uſeleſs, ver. 5, 6, 7, 8. and this leads the Apoſtle to diſcourſe of the excellency of Chriſt's ſacrifice above them; that they are taken away, and his is ſubſtituted in their room; that as they are not agreeable to the will of God, his is a fulfilment of it; that tho' they could not expiate ſin, yet by the offering up of the body of Chriſt, once for all, his people are ſanctified, or their ſins are expiated, ver. 9, 10. and this is further illuſtrated by a compariſon between the prieſts under the law, and Chriſt; they were many, he but one; they daily offered the ſame ſacrifices, he offered but one ſacrifice; theirs could not take away ſin, by his offering he has perfectly expiated the ſins of his people; they ſtood daily miniſtring, their work being never at an end; he is ſet down at the right hand of God, expecting his enemies to be made his footſtool, having done his work to perfection, ver. 11, 12, 13, 14. and that legal ſacrifices are ceaſed, and no more to be uſed, is proved by a teſtimony of the Holy Ghoſt, out of *Jer.* xxxi. 33, 34. relating to the covenant of grace, among the promiſes of which, ſtands that of the forgiveneſs of ſin; from whence the Apoſtle juſtly concludes, that where remiſſion of ſin is, there is, and there needs no more offering for it, ver. 15, 16, 17, 18. and from hence the Apoſtle paſſes to exhortations to the exerciſe of grace, and diſcharge of duty, which he ſtrongly urges from the conſideration of Chriſt's prieſthood, and the efficacy of it: and firſt, he preſſes them to the duty of prayer, to draw nigh to God to the throne of his grace. The manner in which he would have them approach to God, is in the ſincerity of their hearts, in a plerophory of faith, an high and full exerciſe of it, and in purity of ſoul and body: the motives or encouragements to it are taken from their having boldneſs and liberty to enter by faith into heaven itſelf with their prayers, thro' the blood of Jeſus; from there being a new and living way opened for them thro' the fleſh of Chriſt; and from their having ſuch an high-prieſt over the houſe of God, as he is, ver. 19, 20, 21, 22. and next he exhorts them to a conſtant and ſtedfaſt profeſſion of their faith, to which he animates them by the faithfulneſs of a promiſing God, who will never leave nor forſake his people, ver. 23. and then to conſider one another in their church relation, and to ſtir up one another to the exerciſe of the grace of love, and to the performance of good works, ver. 24. and alſo not to forſake their public aſſemblies, as was the cuſtom of ſome, but to exhort each other to greater diligence in attending there, eſpecially ſince they might obſerve that a time of great tribulation was at hand, ver. 25. and in order to deter from apoſtacy, which is expreſſed by a ſinning wilfully, after a man has received and profeſſed the knowledge of the truth, the Apoſtle obſerves that the deſtruction of ſuch is inevitable; ſince there never will be another propitiatory ſacrifice offered up, and therefore there can be no other than a dreadful expectation of an awful judgment, and of the wrath of God, which, like a conſuming fire, will deſtroy ſuch adverſaries of Chriſt, ver. 26, 27. the juſtice of which is argued from the leſs to the greater; that if the tranſgreſſors of the law of *Moſes* had no mercy ſhown them, but died when there were proper and ſufficient witneſſes of their crimes, then ſuch muſt be deſerving of a far greater puniſhment, who treat with the greateſt rudeneſs the perſon of the Son of God, and his precious blood, and with the greateſt contempt the perſon and grace of the Holy Spirit, ver. 28, 29. and ſuch perſons have reaſon to expect the vengeance of God will fall on them, ſince it is threatened them in the word of God, *Deut.* xxxii. 35, 36. and a dreadful thing it is to fall into his hands, ver. 30, 31. But in order to encourage theſe believing *Hebrews* to hold on and out unto the end, the Apoſtle puts them in mind of their good beginning, how well they ſet out, and how bravely they behaved, by bearing afflictions and reproaches themſelves; by being the companions of thoſe that were afflicted and reproached; by having compaſſion on the Apoſte when in bonds; and by chearfully ſuffering the loſs of their goods upon this conſideration, that they had in heaven a better and a more enduring ſubſtance, ver. 32, 33, 34. wherefore it would be exceeding wrong and very unbecoming, after all this to drop their faith and a profeſſion of it, which otherwiſe would iſſue in the enjoyment of the great recompence of reward, ver. 35. and as patience is neceſſary, it is right to exerciſe it under ſufferings for Chriſt's ſake, partly becauſe it is doing the will of God, and partly becauſe that after that is done, ſuch ſhall receive the promiſed happineſs; and what may ſerve the more to engage to the exerciſe of it is, it is but a little while and Chriſt will come and put an end to all the ſufferings of his people, ver. 36, 37. and that faith ſhould be in exerciſe, is proved from a divine teſtimony, *Hab.* ii. 4. and ſo muſt be pleaſing to God, when the contrary is highly reſented by him, ver. 38. and now, leſt the believing *Hebrews* ſhould conclude from all this that the Apoſtle ſuſpected them as going into apoſtacy, he declares his belief, that he and they were not in the number of apoſtates, but of believers, whoſe ſouls would be ſaved, ver. 39.

Ver. 1. *For the law having a ſhadow of good things to come*, &c.] By which is meant not the moral law, for that is not a ſhadow of future bleſſings, but a ſyſtem of precepts; the things it commands are not figuratively, but really good and honeſt; and are not obſcure, but plain and eaſy to be underſtood; nor are they fleeting and paſſing away, as a ſhadow, but laſting and durable: but the ceremonial law is intended; this was a *ſhadow*, a figure, a repreſentation of ſomething true, real, and ſubſtantial; was dark and obſcure, yet had in it, and gave ſome glimmering light; and was like a ſhadow, fleeting and tranſitory: and it was a ſhadow *of good things*; of Chriſt himſelf, who is the body, the ſum and ſubſtance of it, and of the good things to come by him; as the expiation of ſin, peace, and reconciliation, a juſtifying righteouſneſs, pardon of ſin, and eternal life; theſe are ſaid to be *to come*, as they were under the former diſpenſation, whilſt the ceremonial law was in force, and that ſhadow was in being, and the ſubſtance not as yet. And *not the very image of the things*; as it had not neither the things themſelves, nor Chriſt, the ſubſtance of them, ſo it did not give a clear revelation of them, as is made in the Goſpel, nor exhibit a diſtinct delineation of them, ſuch as an image expreſſes; it only gave ſome ſhort and dark hints of future good things, but did not exactly deſcribe them: and therefore *can never with thoſe ſacrifices which they offered year by year continually*; namely, the ſacrifices of bullocks and goats, which were offered on the day of atonement, year after year, in ſucceſſive generations, from the firſt appointment of that day, to the writing of this Epiſtle: ſacrifices of ſuch a kind, and ſo often repeated, could never *make the comers thereunto perfect*; either the people that came to the temple, and brought them to the prieſts to offer them for them, or the prieſts that offered them; ſo the *Syriac* and *Ethiopic* verſions render it, *perfect them that offer*; and if not one, then not the other: legal ſacrifices could not make perfect expiation of ſin; there's no proportion between them and ſin; nor did they extend to all ſin, and at moſt only typically expiated; nor could they juſtify and cleanſe from ſin. Contrary to this the *Jews*[p] ſay, "when *Iſrael* was in the "holy land, there was no iniquity found in them, "for the ſacrifices which they offered every day "atoned for them;" but ſpiritual ſacrificers and worſhippers were expiated, juſtified, and cleanſed another way, even by the blood of Chriſt, ſlain from the foundation of the world in purpoſe, promiſe, and type, and to which their faith had reſpect in every ſacrifice.

Ver. 2. *For then would they not have ceaſed to be offered*, &c.] The *Complutenſian* edition, and the *Syriac* and *Vulgate Latin* verſions leave out the word *not*; and the ſenſe requires it ſhould be omitted, for the meaning is, that if perfection had been by the legal ſacrifices, they would have ceaſed to have been offered; for if the former ones had made perfect, there would have been no need of others, or of the repetition of the ſame; but becauſe they did not make perfect, therefore they were yearly renewed; unleſs the words are read with an interrogation, as they are in the *Arabic* verſion, *for then would they not have ceaſed to be offered?* yes, they would; they are indeed ceaſed now, but this is owing to Chriſt and his ſacrifice, and not to the efficacy of theſe ſacrifices; for yearly ſacrifices were offered for former ſins, as well as for freſh ones, as appears from the following verſe. *Becauſe the worſhippers, once purged, would have had no more conſcience of ſins*; there are external and internal worſhippers; the latter are ſuch who worſhip God in ſpirit and in truth: but here ceremonial worſhippers are meant, who, if they had been really purged from ſin by legal ſacrifices, and purifications, would have had no more conſcience of ſins, and ſo have had no need to have repeated them; as ſuch ſpiritual worſhippers, who are once purged from ſin by the blood and ſacrifice of Chriſt; not that they have no ſin, or no ſenſe of ſin, or that their conſciences are ſeared, or that they never accuſe for ſin, or that they are to make no confeſſion and acknowledgment of ſin; but that they are diſcharged from the guilt of ſin, and are not liable to condemnation for it; and thro' the application of the blood of Chriſt to them, have peace with God, and joy in the Holy Ghoſt.

Ver. 3. *But in thoſe* ſacrifices, &c.] The *Arabic* verſion reads, *but in it*; that is, in the law; but the *Syriac* verſion reads, and ſupplies, as we do, בחון בדבחא, *in thoſe ſacrifices*, which were offered every year on the day of atonement: there is *a remembrance of ſins* made *again every year*; of all the ſins that were committed the year paſt, and even of thoſe that were expiated typically by the daily ſacrifice, and others that had been offered; which proves the imperfection and inſufficiency of ſuch ſacrifices: there was a remembrance of ſins by God, before whom the goats were preſented, their blood was ſprinkled, and the people cleanſed, *Lev.* xvi. 7, 14, 15, 30. and there was a remembrance of them by the people, who, on that day, afflicted their ſouls for them, ver. 29, 31. and there was a remembrance of them by the high-prieſt, who confeſſed them over, and put them upon the head of the goat, ver. 21. by which it was owned, that theſe ſins were committed; that they deſerved death, the curſe of the law; that the expiation of them was undertook by another, typified by the goat; that this was not yet done, and therefore there was no remiſſion, but a typical one, by theſe ſacrifices; but that ſins remained, and required a more perfect ſacrifice, which was yet to be offered up. Legal ſacrifices were ſo far from inducing an oblivion of ſins, that they themſelves brought them to remembrance, and were ſo many acknowledgments of them. Tho' *Philo* the *Jew* thinks the contrary, and gives this as a reaſon why the heart and brain were not offered in ſacrifice, becauſe "it would be fooliſh, that the ſacrifices "ſhould cauſe, not a forgetfulneſs of ſins, but a "remembrance of them[q]."

Ver. 4. *For it is not poſſible*, &c.] There is a neceſſity of ſin being taken away, otherwiſe it will be remembred; and there will be a conſcience of it, and it muſt be anſwered for, or it will remain marked, and the curſe and penalty of the law muſt take place: but 'tis impoſſible *that the blood of bulls and goats ſhould take away ſins*; which was ſhed on the day of atonement: ſin is a breach of the moral law, but theſe ſacrifices belong to the ceremonial law, which are leſs acceptable to God than moral duties; ſin is committed againſt God, and has an objective infiniteneſs in it, and therefore can never be atoned for by the blood of ſuch creatures; it leaves a ſtain on the mind and conſcience, which this blood cannot reach; beſides, this is not the ſame blood, nor of the ſame kind with the perſon that has ſinned; yea, if this could take away ſin, it would do more than the blood of the man himſelf could do; ſuch blood ſhed can never anſwer the penalty of the law, ſatisfy divine juſtice, or ſecure the honour of divine holineſs: but what the blood of theſe creatures could not do, the blood of Chriſt has done, and does; that takes away ſin from the ſight of juſtice, and from the conſciences of the ſaints. Compare with this the *Septuagint* verſion of *Jer.* xi. 15. "what has the beloved committed "abomination in my houſe? ſhall prayers, and "the holy fleſh take away thy wickedneſſes from "thee, or by theſe ſhalt thou eſcape?"

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[p] Zohar in Gen. fol. 107. 1.

[q] De Victimis, p. 841.

Ver. 5. *Wherefore when he cometh into the world he ſaith*, &c.] In *Pſ.* xl. 7, 8. This was ſaid by *David*, not of himſelf, and his own times, for ſacrifice and offering were deſired and required in his times; nor was he able to do the will of God, ſo as to fulfil the law, and make void legal ſacrifices; nor did he engage as a ſurety to do this; nor was it written of him in the volume of the book that he ſhould; beſides, he ſpeaks of one that was not yet come, tho' ready to come, when the fulneſs of time ſhould be up; and who is here ſpoken of as coming into the world, and who is no other than Jeſus Chriſt; and this is to be underſtood, not of his coming into *Judea*, or the temple at *Jeruſalem*; or out of a private, into a public life; nor of his entrance into the world to come, into heaven, into life eternal, as the *Targum* on *Pſ.* xl. 7. paraphraſes it, after he had done his work on earth, for the other world is never expreſſed by the world only; nor did Chriſt go into that to do the will of God, but to ſit down there, after he had done it; beſides, Chriſt's entrance into heaven was a going out of the world, and not into it. To which may be added, that this phraſe always ſignifies coming into this terrene world, and intends mens coming into it at their birth; ſee *John* i. 9. and the note there; and muſt be underſtood of Chriſt's incarnation, which was an inſtance of great love, condeſcenſion, and grace; and the reaſon of it was to do what the law, and the blood of bulls and goats could not do. For it follows, *ſacrifice and offering thou wouldſt not*; or didſt not deſire and delight in, as the word חפץ, uſed in *Pſ.* xl. 7. ſignifies; meaning not the ſacrifices of wicked men, or ſuch as were offered up without faith in Chriſt; but the ceremonial ſacrifices God himſelf had inſtituted, and which were offered in the beſt manner; and that not merely in a comparative ſenſe, as in *Hoſ.* vi. 6. 1 *Sam.* xv. 22. but the meaning is, that God would not have theſe continue any longer, they being only impoſed for a time, and this time being come; nor would he accept of them, as terms, conditions, and cauſes of righteouſneſs, pardon, peace, and reconciliation; but he willed that his Son ſhould offer himſelf an offering, and a ſacrifice for a ſweet-ſmelling ſavour to him. But a *body haſt thou prepared me*; or *fitted for me*; a real natural body, which ſtands for the whole human nature; and is carefully expreſſed to ſhew that the human nature is not a perſon. This was prepared in the book of God's purpoſes and decrees, and in the council and covenant of grace; and was curiouſly formed by the Holy Ghoſt in time, for the ſecond perſon, the Son of God, to cloath himſelf with, as the *Syriac* verſion renders it, *thou haſt clothed me with a body*; and that he might dwell in, and in it do the will of God, and perform the work of man's redemption: in *Pſ.* xl. 7. it is, *mine ears thou haſt opened*; digged or bored, the ear being put for the whole body; for if he had not had a body prepared, he could not have had ears opened: beſides, the phraſe is expreſſive of Chriſt's aſſuming the form of a ſervant, which was done by his being found in faſhion as a man, *Phil.* ii. 7. and of his being a voluntary ſervant, and of his chearful obedience as ſuch, the opening, or boring of the ear was a ſign, *Exod.* xxi. 5, 6. And thus by having a true body prepared for him, and a willing mind to offer it up, he became fit for ſacrifice.

Ver. 6. *In burnt-offerings and* ſacrifices *for ſin*, &c.] Which were the principal kinds of offerings under the law: *thou haſt had no pleaſure*; not only in compariſon of moral duties, or ſpiritual ſacrifices, ſuch as thoſe of praiſe and thankſgiving, *Pſ.* lxix. 30, 31. but ſo as to accept of the offerers for the ſake of them, and ſmell a ſweet ſavour in them; for theſe could not ſatisfy his juſtice, appeaſe his anger, or expiate ſin; and when they were in full force, and offered in the moſt agreeable manner, they were no otherwiſe well-pleaſing to God, than as they were types of, and had reſpect unto the ſacrifice of his Son. In the *Hebrew* text it is, *thou didſt not require*, or *aſk for*; for them, when the time was up that Chriſt ſhould come into the world.

Ver. 7. *Then ſaid I, lo I come*, &c.] Chriſt obſerving that legal ſacrifices were not acceptable to God; that there was a body prepared for him; and that it was written of him in the book of God, that he ſhould come; and the time being now come, with a note of attention and admiration, the matter being of great moment and concern, he chearfully expreſſes his readineſs to come, immediately, without any compulſion, even he himſelf, and not another. *In the volume of the book it is written of me*; in the book of the law, as the *Targum* and *Kimchi* on *Pſ.* xl. 8. interpret it; and which may deſign the bible in general, the whole book of the ſcriptures of the Old Teſtament: ſo ספר, *the book*, is uſed for the whole bible[r]; and it is ſaid[s], all the whole law, that is, all ſcripture is called, מגילה, *a volume*; accordingly there are things written of Chriſt in all the writings of the Old Teſtament, in the law, and in the prophets, and in the pſalms. *Jarchi* interprets it of the law of *Moſes*, and ſo it may deſign the pentateuch, or the five book of *Moſes*; and there are ſeveral places therein, in which it is written of Chriſt, and particularly in *Geneſis*, the firſt of theſe books, and in the head, the beginning, the frontiſpiece, the firſt part of that book; namely, ch. iii. 15. which may be principally deſigned. Books were formerly written in rolls of parchment, and hence called volumes; ſee the notes on *Luke* iv. 17, 20. The end of his coming is next expreſſed by him, *to do thy will, O God*; which, when he came, he ſet about with the utmoſt delight, diligence, and faithfulneſs, in preaching the Goſpel, performing miracles, doing good to the bodies and ſouls of men, and in finiſhing the great work of man's redemption, which was the main part of his Father's will he came to do; and which he did, by fulfilling the law in its precept and penalty; by offering himſelf a ſacrifice to God; by ſuffering death, the death of the croſs; by deſtroying all his, and our enemies, and ſo working out everlaſting ſalvation.

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[r] T. Hieroſ. Megilla, fol. 73. 4.

[s] T. Bab. Gittin, fol. 60. 1.

Ver. 8. *Above, when he ſaid,* &c.] In the afore-cited place, *Pſ.* xl. 7, 8. *Sacrifice and offering, and burnt-offerings, and* offering *for ſin thou wouldſt not, neither hadſt pleaſure* therein; this is a recapitulation of what is before ſaid; and all kind of ſacrifices are mentioned, to ſhew that they are all imperfect, and inſufficient, and are aboliſhed; and the abrogation of them is expreſſed in the ſtrongeſt terms, as that God *would not* have them, and that he took *no pleaſure* in them: *which are offered by the law*; according as that directs and enjoins: this clauſe is added, to diſtinguiſh theſe ſacrifices from ſpiritual ones, under the Goſpel diſpenſation, and which are well-pleaſing to God; and to prevent an objection againſt the abolition of them, taken from hence, that they are according to the law; and yet notwithſtanding this, God will not have them, nor accept of them.

Ver. 9. *Then ſaid he, lo, I come to do thy will, O God,* &c.] See the note on ver. 7. *he taketh away the firſt, that he may eſtabliſh the ſecond*; the ſenſe is, either that God has taken away, and aboliſhed the law, that he might eſtabliſh the Goſpel; or he has cauſed the firſt covenant to vaniſh away, that place might be found for the ſecond, or new covenant; or he has changed and abrogated the prieſthood of *Aaron*, that he might confirm the unchangeable prieſthood of Chriſt; or rather he has taken away that which was firſt ſpoken of in the above citation, namely, ſacrifice, offering, burnt-offerings, and ſin-offerings; theſe he has removed and rejected as inſignificant and uſeleſs, that he might eſtabliſh what is mentioned in the ſecond place; namely, the will of God, which is no other than the ſacrifice of Chriſt, offered up according to the will of God, and by which his will is done.

Ver. 10. *By the which will we are ſanctified,* &c.] That is, by the ſacrifice of Chriſt, which was willingly offered up by himſelf, and was according to the will of God; it was his will of purpoſe that Chriſt ſhould be crucified and ſlain; and it was his will of command, that he ſhould lay down his life for his people; and it was grateful and well-pleaſing to him, that his ſoul ſhould be made an offering for ſin; and that for this reaſon, becauſe hereby the people of God are ſanctified, their ſins are perfectly expiated, the full pardon of them is procured, their perſons are compleatly juſtified from ſin, and their conſciences purged from it: even *through the offering of the body of Jeſus Chriſt once* for all; this is ſaid, not to the excluſion of his ſoul; it deſigns his whole human nature, and that as in union with his divine perſon; and is particularly mentioned, in alluſion to the legal ſacrifices, the bodies of ſlain beaſts, which were types of him, and with a reference to his Father's preparation of a body for him, for this purpoſe, ver. 5. Moreover, his obedience to his Father's will was chiefly ſeen in his body; this was offered upon the croſs; and his blood, which atones for ſin, and cleanſes from it, was ſhed out of it: and this oblation was *once for all*; which gives it the preference to *Levitical* ſacrifices; deſtroys the *Socinian* notion of Chriſt's continual offering himſelf in heaven; and confutes the error of the *Popiſh* maſs, or of the offering of Chriſt's body in it.

Ver. 11. *And every prieſt ſtandeth daily miniſtring,* &c.] The *Alexandrian* copy, one of *Stephens*'s, the *Complutenſian* edition, the *Syriac* and *Ethiopic* verſions read, *every high-prieſt*; who might miniſter daily, if he would; but ſince the daily ſacrifice was generally offered by the common prieſts, theſe are rather deſigned. The Apoſtle paſſes from the anniverſary ſacrifices offered by the high prieſt on the day of atonement, having ſhewn the inſufficiency and imperfection of them, to the lambs of the daily ſacrifice which were offered morning and evening, and whatſoever elſe might be daily offered on other accounts; and which he alſo ſhews, are equally ineffectual to take away ſin; almoſt every word he uſes ſhews the imperfection of the prieſthood of *Aaron*, and ſerves to illuſtrate the prieſthood of Chriſt. When he ſays *every prieſt*, it ſuppoſes there were more than one, as indeed there were many, not only in ſucceſſion to one another, but together, having different parts of ſervice to perform; and every one of them *ſtandeth* at the altar, ſhewing that his work was not done; and the preſent tenſe is uſed, becauſe ſacrifice in fact had not ceaſed at the writing of this Epiſtle, tho' of right it ought to have done; and he ſtood *daily miniſtring*; every day, and ſometimes often in a day, and always morning and night, *Exod.* xxix. 38, 39. The prieſt always ſtood to miniſter, *Deut.* xviii. 5. Hence the *Jews* ſay [t], there is no miniſtration or ſervice, אלא מעומד, *but ſtanding*; and perhaps ſome reference may be had to מעמדות, the *ſtations* [u], or ſtationary men, who were always upon the ſpot at *Jeruſalem*, to offer for ſuch as were at a diſtance. *And offering oftentimes the ſame ſacrifices*; as a lamb in the morning, and another at evening; and if it was a burnt-offering, or a ſin-offering, or an offering for the purification of a woman, or for the cleanſing of the leper, they were always the ſame: and this frequent offering, and the offering of the ſame things, ſhow, that they were ſuch *which can never take away ſins*; for notwithſtanding theſe many and repeated offerings, even the ſins of Old Teſtament ſaints remained to be atoned for by Chriſt; ſee *Rom.* iii. 25. *Heb.* ix. 15.

Ver. 12. *But this man,* &c.] Jeſus Chriſt, for he is a man, tho' not a mere man; or this great high-prieſt, who came to do the will of God, and whoſe body was offered once for all: *after he had offered one ſacrifice for ſins*; the ſacrifice of himſelf, body and ſoul, and this but once: *for ever ſat down on the right hand of God*; as having done his work effectually, and that with acceptance; and therefore is placed as a token of honour at the right hand of God, where he ſits enjoying reſt, eaſe, and pleaſure, and that for ever; all which is oppoſed to the prieſts under the law; they were many, he but one; they offered many ſacrifices, he but one; they offered theirs often, every day, he but once; they ſtood miniſtring, he ſat down; his ſacrifice being effectual to take away ſin, when theirs was not.

Ver. 13. *From henceforth expecting,* &c.] According to God's promiſe and declaration to him, *Pſ.* cx. 1. *Till his enemies be made his footſtool.* See the note on chap. i. 13.

Ver. 14. *For by one offering,* &c.] The ſame as before; himſelf, body and ſoul; this is a reaſon why he is ſet down, and will continue ſo for ever, and why he expects his enemies to be made his footſtool; becauſe, by one ſacrifice for ſin, which he has once offered, *he hath perfected for ever them that are ſanctified*; that is, who are ſanctified by God the Father, *Jude* i. or, who are ſet apart by him in eternal election, from the reſt of the world, for his own uſe, ſervice, and glory, to a ſtate of grace and holineſs here, and happineſs hereafter; for this is not to be underſtood either of their being ſanctified in Chriſt, though the *Syriac* verſion reads, *that are ſanctified in him*, or by his Spirit, though both are true of the ſame perſons; theſe Chriſt, by his ſacrifice, has perfected, and has perfectly fulfilled the law for them; he has perfectly expiated their ſins; he has obtained the full pardon of all their ſins, and compleat redemption; he has perfectly juſtified them from all things, and that for ever; which ſhews the continued virtue of Chriſt's ſacrifice, in all generations, to all the elect of God, and the fulneſs and duration of their ſalvation; and ſo Chriſt by his one ſacrifice did, what the law, and all its ſacrifices, could not do, ver. 1.

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[t] Jarchi in Deut. xviii. 5. Maimon. Biath Hamikdaſh, c. 5. §. 16.

[u] Miſn. Taanith, c. 4. §. 2.

Ver. 15. *Wherefore the Holy Ghoſt alſo is a witneſs to us*, &c.] In *Jer.* xxxi. 33, 34. This preface to the following citation ſhows, that the books of the Old Teſtament are of divine original and authority; that the penmen of them were inſpired by the Holy Ghoſt; that he exiſted in the times of the Old Teſtament; that he is truly and properly God, the Lord, or Jehovah, that ſpeaks in the following verſes; and that he is a diſtinct divine perſon, and the author of the covenant of grace; and in what he ſays in that covenant, he bears teſtimony to the truths before delivered, concerning the inſufficiency and abolition of legal ſacrifices, and of full and perfect remiſſion of ſin, by the blood and ſacrifice of Chriſt: *for after that he had ſaid before*; what is expreſſed in the following verſe.

Ver. 16. *This is the covenant that I will make with them*, &c.] See the note on ch. viii. 10.

Ver. 17. *And their ſins and iniquities will I remember no more.*] See the note on ch. viii. 12. The words are cited to a different purpoſe here than there; the principal thing for which they are cited here, is to obſerve God's promiſe of non-remembrance of ſin; which is no other than remiſſion of ſin, and which is not conſiſtent with legal ſacrifices, in which there is a remembrance of ſin every year, ver. 3. and conſequently, ſince this new covenant has taken place, legal ſacrifices muſt be aboliſhed, as the Apoſtle argues in the next verſe. In one of *Beza*'s copies are inſerted, at the beginning of this verſe, theſe words, *then he ſaid*, which ſeem neceſſary to anſwer to the laſt clauſe of ver. 15.

Ver. 18. *Now where remiſſion of theſe is*, &c.] That is, of theſe ſins; and that there is remiſſion of them, is evident from this promiſe of the covenant, juſt now produced; from God's gracious proclamation of it; from the ſhedding of Chriſt's blood for it; from his exaltation at the Father's right hand to give it; from the Goſpel declaration of it; and from the ſeveral inſtances of perſons favoured with it: *there is no more offering for ſin*; there may be other offerings, as of praiſe and thankſgiving, but none for ſin; *there is no need*, as the *Syriac* verſion; or *there is not required*, as the *Arabic* verſion; there is no need of the reiteration of Chriſt's ſacrifice, nor will he be offered up any more, nor of the repetition of legal ſacrifices, nor ought they to continue any longer. The *Jews* themſelves ſay[w], that "in the time "to come (*i. e.* in the times of the Meſſiah) all "offerings ſhall ceaſe, but the ſacrifice of praiſe." And one of their writers ſays[x], when "the king "Meſſiah, the ſon of *David* ſhall reign, there will "be no need of כפרה, *an atonement*, nor of deli"verance, or proſperity, for all theſe things will "be had."

Ver. 19. *Having therefore brethren*, &c.] As they were to the Apoſtle, in a natural and civil ſenſe, being *Hebrews*, as well as in a ſpiritual relation, being believers in Chriſt; which is obſerved, to teſtify his affection to them, and to engage their regard to the duties hereafter urged, particularly brotherly love, and to ſignify their common and equal right to the privilege next mentioned, which is, *boldneſs to enter into the holieſt, by the blood of Jeſus:* the place ſaints have boldneſs to enter into is heaven, called *the holieſt*, in reference to the holy of holies, in the tabernacle; which was a type of it, for the ſacredneſs and inviſibility of it, and for what was in it, went into it, or was brought thither; as the Shekinah, or divine majeſty, which reſided there; the high-prieſt who went into it once a year; the blood of ſacrifices which was carried into it; the ſweet incenſe; the ark of the teſtimony, in which was the law; and the mercy-ſeat; all which were typical of Chriſt, his perſon, blood, ſacrifice, righteouſneſs, interceſſion, and the grace and mercy which come thro' him. Heaven was ſymbolically ſhut by the ſin of man, when he was drove out of the garden of *Eden*; it was typically opened by the entrance of the high-prieſt into the holy of holies, on the day of atonement; Chriſt has in perſon entred into it by his blood, and opened the way for his people; and believers in him may *enter* now, and they do, when they exerciſe grace on him, who is there, and when they come and preſent their prayers and praiſes to God by him; and they have now an actual right to enter, into the place itſelf, and will hereafter enter in perſon: and the manner of their preſent entrance is, *with boldneſs*; which ſignifies their right unto it, the liberty granted them by God, and the liberty which they ſometimes have in their own ſouls, and great courage and intrepidity of mind; which ariſes from a ſenſe of remiſſion of ſins, as may be concluded from the connexion of theſe words with the preceding; and is found to be true by experience; and ſuch boldneſs is conſiſtent with reverence, humility, and ſubmiſſion. The way of entrance is *by the blood of Jeſus*; and which gives both entrance and boldneſs; for hereby ſin is removed both from the ſight of God, and the conſcience of the believer; peace is made with God, and ſpoken to him; pardon is procured, law and juſtice ſatisfied, and neither to be feared, and the everlaſting covenant confirmed.

Ver. 20. *By a new and living way*, &c.] Which is Chriſt, the God-man and mediator; who is called the *new* way, not as to contrivance, revelation, or uſe; for it was contrived before the world was, and was revealed to our firſt parents, immediately after the fall, and was made uſe of by all the Old Teſtament ſaints; but in diſtinction to the old way of life, by the covenant of works; and becauſe newly revealed with greater clearneſs and evidence; ſee ver. 8. and becauſe it is always new, it never will be old, nor otherwiſe, there never will be another way: ſome render it, *a new ſlain way*; becauſe Jeſus was but newly ſlain, and his blood lately ſhed, by which the way is, and entrance is with boldneſs: and Chriſt is a *living way*; in oppoſition to the dead carcaſſes of ſlain beaſts, and to the dead and killing letter of the law; Chriſt gives life to all his people; and all that walk in him, the way, live; and none in this way ever die; it leads to eternal life, and infallibly brings them thither: *which he hath conſecrated for us*; either God the Father, and ſo it intends the deſignation of Chriſt to be the way to life and happineſs,

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[w] Vajikra Rabba, §. 9. fol. 153. 1.

[x] R. Abendana Not. in Miclol Yophi in Pſ. lxxii. 20.

neſs, and the qualification of him for it, by preparing a body, an human nature for him, and anointing it with the Holy Spirit, and the inſtalment of him into his prieſtly office, called a conſecration, ch. vii. 28. or elſe Chriſt himſelf, and ſo deſigns his compliance with his Father's will, and his devoting of himſelf to this ſervice; his preparation of himſelf to be the way, by the ſhedding of his blood, and by his entrance into heaven, and by giving a clearer diſcovery of this way in the Goſpel, by which life and immortality are brought to light: and this is done *thro' the vail, that is to ſay, his fleſh*; the human nature of Chriſt, thro' which the way to heaven is opened, renewed, and conſecrated, is compared to the vail of the tabernacle, *Exod.* xxvi. 31, 32, 33. the matter of which that was made, was fine-twined linnen, which the *Jews* [y] ſay was of thread ſix times doubled; which may denote the holineſs of Chriſt's human nature; the ſtrength, courage, and ſtedfaſtneſs of it, under all its ſorrows and ſufferings; and the purity and duration of his righteouſneſs: the colours of it were blue, purple, and ſcarlet, which may ſignify the ſufferings of the human nature; the preciouſneſs of Chriſt's blood, and the dignity of his perſon, and his royalty; purple and ſcarlet, being wore by kings: the vail was of cunning work, which may intend the curious workmanſhip of Chriſt's human nature, and the graces of the Spirit, with which it is adorned; and it was made with *cherubim*, pointing to the miniſtration of angels, both to Chriſt, and to his people. The pillars of it may ſignify the deity of Chriſt, the ſupport of his human nature, in which it has its perſonal ſubſiſtence; and being of *Shittim* wood, may denote his eternity; and being covered with gold, his glory: its hooks and ſockets may be ſymbolical of the union of the two natures in him.

Ver. 21. *And* having *an high-prieſt over the houſe of God.*] The church of God, over which Chriſt is as prophet, prieſt, and king, and as the ſon and owner of it; ſee the notes on ch. iii. 6. and iv. 14. In the *Greek* text it is, a *great prieſt*; ſo the Meſſiah is called by the *Targum* on *Zach.* vi. 12. כהן רב, *a great prieſt*, as he is; even a great high-prieſt, as in ch. iv. 14. and greater than *Aaron*, and any of his ſons.

Ver. 22. *Let us draw near with a true heart*, &c.] Either to the holieſt of all, into which the ſaints have boldneſs to enter; or to Chriſt the high-prieſt who is entered there; or to the houſe of God, over which he is an high-prieſt; or rather to God himſelf, as on a throne of grace, on the mercy-ſeat in heaven, the moſt holy place: to *draw near* to him is a ſacerdotal act, common to all the ſaints, who are made prieſts to God; and includes the whole of divine worſhip, but more eſpecially deſigns prayer; to which believers are encouraged from the liberty and boldneſs they may have and uſe, of entring into the holieſt by the blood of Jeſus; from Chriſt's being the new and living way into it, and from his being an high-prieſt over the houſe of God: the manner of drawing near, is, *with a true heart*; not with the body only, but with the heart principally; with a renewed one, one that is right with God, and is ſingle and ſincere, is hearty in its deſires, and upright in its ends. *In full aſſurance of faith*; in God, Father, Son, and Spirit; without faith, drawing near to God, can neither be acceptable to him, nor of ſervice to men; and a full aſſurance of faith, with reſpect to the object drawn nigh unto, and of the way unto him, and of acceptance with him thro' Chriſt, and of having the petitions put up to him granted, is very comfortable to believers, greatly becomes them, and is well-pleaſing to God: *having our hearts ſprinkled from an evil conſcience*; which is blind, inactive, partial, ſtupid, or guilty; and 'tis the blood of Chriſt, which being ſprinkled on it by the Spirit of God, purges it from dead works, cleanſes it from all ſin, and ſpeaks peace and pardon to it; and ſuch may draw near with freedom and boldneſs, with readineſs and chearfulneſs, and with reverence and godly fear: *and our bodies waſhed with pure water*; not baptiſmal water, but the grace of the Spirit, which is often compared to water, in ſcripture: the body, as well as ſoul, needs waſhing, and renewing; internal grace influences outward actions, which adorn religion, and without which bodies cannot be preſented holy to God. The alluſion is to a cuſtom of the *Jews*, who were obliged to waſh their bodies, and make them clean, when they prayed. So *Aben Ezra* obſerves on *Gen.* xxxv. 2. "that every "*Iſraelite*, when he went to pray at a fixed place, "was obliged to have, גופו נקי, *his body pure*, and "his garments pure." So a prieſt might not enter into the court for ſervice, tho' clean, until he had waſhed himſelf all over [z]; and it is to ſacerdotal acts that the reference is here.

Ver. 23. *Let us hold faſt the profeſſion of our faith without wavering*, &c.] Either in the grace or doctrine of faith, or in the profeſſion of both; ſee the note on ch. iv. 14. *For he is faithful that promiſed*; that is, God; and it is true of Father, Son, and Spirit; but God the Father may be more eſpecially deſigned: he is a promiſing God, and is known to be ſo by his people; he is eminently and emphatically the promiſer; and all other promiſers, and the promiſes made by them, ſignify little; but the promiſes of God are exceeding great and precious, very ancient, free, and unconditional, irrevocable and immutable, and are admirably ſuited to the caſes of his people, and will be fulfilled every one of them: they include in them things temporal, ſpiritual, and eternal; things temporal, as that his people ſhall not want, that their afflictions ſhall work for good, and that he will ſupport them under all their troubles; things ſpiritual, as that he will be their God, which takes in his everlaſting love to them, and his gracious preſence with them, and his protection of them; and that all grace ſhall be wrought in them, and every bleſſing of grace beſtowed on them: and things eternal; as everlaſting glory and happineſs; the promiſe of eternal life was in God's heart, made in the covenant, and put into Chriſt's hands before the world began, and is declared in the Goſpel: now God is faithful to all his promiſes, nor can he fail, or deceive; he is all-wiſe and fore-knowing of every thing that comes to paſs; he never changes his mind, nor forgets his word; and he is able to perform, and is the God of truth, and cannot lye; nor has he ever failed in any one of his promiſes, nor will he ſuffer his faithfulneſs to fail; and this is a ſtrong argument to hold faſt a profeſſion of faith.

Ver. 24. *And let us conſider one another*, &c.] Saints ſhould conſider one another as men, that they are but men, of like paſſions and infirmities; they ſhould conſider their different tempers, and make allowance for them, and their outward ſtate and condition in the world: they ſhould conſider one another as ſaints, partakers of the ſame grace;

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[y] Maimon. Cele Hamikdaſh, c. 8. §. 14. Jarchi in Exod. xxvi. 1. Kimchi in Sepher Shoraſh. rad. שזר.

[z] Miſn. Yoma, c. 3. §. 3. Vid. Philo de Victimas Offerent. p. 848.

as that they are all loved with the ſame love, all conceived and brought forth in the womb of God's eternal electing grace, intereſted in the ſame covenant, redeemed by the ſame blood, and have the ſame graces and privileges, and an equal right to glory; having one and the ſame ſpirit, the ſame grace of faith, the ſame righteouſneſs, the ſame fountain to waſh in, the ſame fulneſs to partake of, the ſame throne of grace to go to, and the ſame inheritance to enjoy: they ſhould conſider one another as church members, the grace and gifts of one another, their different age and ſtanding in the church, their relation to each other as brethren; they ſhould conſider them under ſuffering or ſorrowful circumſtances, under afflictions, temptations, deſertions, declenſions, and as attended with infirmities and ſins: and the end of ſuch conſideration ſhould be, *to provoke unto love*; to brotherly love, to ſtir it up, and ſtir up to it, which is apt to wax cold, that ſo it may be rekindled, and give a moſt vehement flame; for this is Chriſt's new commandment, the bond of perfection, the evidence of regeneration, that which makes the ſaints communion comfortable and delightful, and without which a profeſſion of religion is in vain. *And to good works*; not for juſtification before God, and in order to procure ſalvation; but that God may be glorified, the Goſpel adorned, the mouths of gainſayers ſtopped, faith evidenced to the world, and gratitude to God for his benefits ſhewn, and for the profit and advantage of fellow-creatures, and fellow-chriſtians.

Ver. 25. *Not forſaking the aſſembling of ourſelves together*, &c.] Or the epiſynagogue of one another; which word is uſed to diſtinguiſh chriſtian aſſemblies from *Jewiſh* ſynagogues, and to denote the coalition of *Jews* and *Gentiles* in one church-ſtate, and to expreſs the ſaints gathering together to Chriſt; ſee 2 *Theſſ.* ii. 1. and their act of meeting together in ſome one place to attend his worſhip, word, and ordinances. Now to *forſake* ſuch aſſembling, ſignifies a great infrequency in attending with the ſaints, a rambling from place to place, and takes in an entire apoſtacy. It is the duty of ſaints to aſſemble together for public worſhip, on the account of God, who has appointed it, who approves of it, and whoſe glory is concerned in it; and on the account of the ſaints themſelves, that they may be delighted, refreſhed, comforted, inſtructed, edified, and perfected; and on account of others, that they may be convinced, converted, and brought to the knowledge and faith of Chriſt; and in imitation of the primitive ſaints. And an aſſembling together ought not to be forſaken; for it is a forſaking God, and their own mercies, and ſuch are like to be forſaken of God; nor is it known what is loſt hereby; and it is the firſt outward, viſible ſtep to apoſtacy, and often iſſues in it. *As the manner of ſome* is; or cuſtom; and this prevailing cuſtom among theſe *Jews* might ariſe from contempt of the *Gentiles*, or from fear of reproach and perſecution: and in our day, this evil practice ariſes ſometimes from a vain conceit of being in no need of ordinances, and from an over-love of the world, and from a great declenſion in the exerciſe of grace; the conſequence of it is very bad. The *Jews*[a] reckon among thoſe that go down to hell, and periſh, and have no part in the world to come, הפורשים מדרכי צבור, *who ſeparate from the ways of the congregation*; that is, who do not do the duties thereof, attend with it, and faſt when that does, and the like: *but exhorting* one another; to prayer, to attend public worſhip, to regard all the duties of religion, to adhere to Chriſt, and a profeſſion of him, and to conſider him, and walk on in him: or *comforting one another*; by meeting privately together, and conferring about experience, and the doctrines of grace; and by obſerving to one another the promiſes of God, relating to public worſhip; and by putting each other in mind of the bright day of the Lord, that is coming on: *and ſo much the more, as ye ſee the day approaching*; either of death, or the laſt judgment, or rather of *Jeruſalem*'s deſtruction; which at the writing of this Epiſtle was near at hand; and was an affair that greatly concerned theſe *Hebrews*; and by various ſymptoms might be obſerved by them, as approaching; and which was no inconſiderable argument to engage them to a diligent diſcharge of their duty; unleſs the day of darkneſs, infidelity, and blaſphemy in the laſt days of the world, ſhould be intended, after which will ſucceed the latter day glory.

Ver. 26. *For if we ſin wilfully*, &c.] Which is not to be underſtood of a ſingle act of ſin, but rather of a courſe of ſinning; nor of ſins of infirmity thro' temptation, or even of groſſer acts of ſin, but of voluntary ones; and not of all voluntary ones, or in which the will is engaged and concerned, but of ſuch which are done on ſet purpoſe, reſolutely and obſtinately; and not of immoral practices, but of corrupt principles, and acting according to them; it intends a total apoſtacy from the truth, againſt light and evidence, joined with obſtinacy. *After that we have received the knowledge of the truth*; either of Jeſus Chriſt, or of the ſcriptures, or of the Goſpel, or of ſome particular doctrine, eſpecially the principal one, ſalvation by Chriſt; of which there may be a notional knowledge, when there is no experimental knowledge; and which is received not into the heart, but into the head: and whereas the Apoſtle ſpeaks in the firſt perſon plural *we*, this is uſed not ſo much with regard to himſelf, but others; that ſo what he delivered might come with greater weight upon them, and be more readily received by them; when they obſerved he entertained no hard thoughts or jealouſies of them, which would greatly diſtreſs the minds of thoſe that were truly gracious. Moreover, the Apoſtles uſe this way of ſpeaking, when they don't deſign themſelves at all, but others, under the ſame viſible profeſſion of religion, and who belonged to the ſame community of believers; ſee 1 *Pet.* iv. 3. *Tit.* iii. 3. *Eph.* ii. 3. compared with *Acts* xxii. 3. and xxvi. 5. *Phil.* iii. 6. Beſides, theſe words are only hypothetical, and don't prove that true believers could, or ſhould, or do ſin in this manner: to which may be added, that true believers are manifeſtly diſtinguiſhed from theſe perſons, ver. 38, 39. *there remaineth no more ſacrifice for ſins*; meaning, not typical ſacrifice; for tho' the daily ſacrifice ought to have ceaſed at the death of Chriſt, yet it did not in fact until the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*; but the ſacrifice of Chriſt, which will never be repeated; Chriſt will die no more; his blood will not be ſhed again; nor his ſacrifice reiterated; nor will any other ſacrifice be offered; there will be no other ſaviour; there is no ſalvation in any other, nor any other name whereby we muſt be ſaved. Theſe words have been wrongly made uſe of to prove that perſons ſinning after baptiſm, are not to be reſtored to communion again upon repentance; and being underſtood of immoral actions wilfully committed, have given great diſtreſs to conſciences burdened with the guilt of ſin, committed after a profeſſion of religion: but the true ſenſe of the whole is this, that after men have embraced and profeſſed the truths of the Goſpel, and particularly this great truth of it, that Jeſus Chriſt is the only ſaviour of men by his blood and ſacrifice; and yet after this, againſt all evidence, all the light and convictions of their own conſciences, they wilfully deny this truth, and obſtinately perſiſt in the denial of it; ſeeing there is no more, no other ſacrifice for ſin, no other ſaviour, nor any ſalvation in any other way, the caſe of theſe men muſt be deſperate; there is no help for them, nor hope of them; for by this their ſin they ſhut up againſt themſelves, in principle and practice, the way of ſalvation, as follows.

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[a] T. Bab. Roſh Haſhanah, fol. 17. 1. Maimon. Hilch. Teſhuba, c. 3. §. 6, 11.

Ver. 27. *But a certain fearful looking for of judgment*, &c.] Either of ſome outward viſible judgment in this life, which ſometimes falls on ſuch perſons; or of the particular judgment, which immediately follows after death; or of the univerſal judgment after the reſurrection, and the dreadful ſentence of condemnation which will then paſs, and be immediately executed; and which will be done by Chriſt, and according to truth, and in ſtrict juſtice; it is certain, and there will be no eſcaping it, for it will be general. Now there is in this life an expectation in men of a future judgment, and in wicked men it is a fearful one; it is dreaded by them, and more eſpecially in ſuch men before deſcribed, when their conſciences are awakened; it is a very dreadful one, inexpreſſibly ſo: *and fiery indignation which ſhall devour the adverſaries*; which is to be underſtood, not of the fire of purgatory, for this is after judgment, that is pretended to be before it; this devours, that only purges, according to the papiſts; this is for adverſaries, that, as is ſuppoſed, is for friends: but perhaps ſome fiery judgment, expreſſive of the wrath and indignation of God, ſuch as befel *Sodom* and *Gomorrha*, the two ſons of *Aaron*, *Nadab*, and *Abihu*, and the men that roſe up with *Korah* againſt *Moſes* and *Aaron*: or rather the fire of hell, which is not corporal and material, but is the wrath of God let down into the conſcience; which ſhews the vile nature of ſin, the ſtrictneſs of God's juſtice, and the intolerableneſs of future puniſhment: and this is ſaid to *devour the adverſaries*; not only open ones, but ſecret, under-hand enemies, as the word here ſignifies; as ſuch apoſtates are, before deſcribed, to God, and Chriſt, and the Spirit; to the Goſpel, its doctrine, diſcipline, and ordinances; and to the children of God, and to the power of godlineſs in them: and with the fire of God's wrath, they ſhall be devoured; not ſo as to be annihilated, but ſhall be eternally deſtroyed both ſoul and body; that is, everlaſtingly puniſhed, or puniſhed with everlaſting deſtruction.

Ver. 28. *He that deſpiſed Moſes's law*, &c.] By breaking it wilfully, and preſumptuouſly, for which there was no ſacrifice; meaning the law which *Moſes* was the miniſter of, not the author; and it reſpects the whole body of laws given by him, from God; and is inſtanced in for the ſake of the compariſon between him and Chriſt, and between the law and the Goſpel, and for the illuſtration of the caſe in hand. Now one that tranſgreſſed that law, either in whole, or in part, by denying it entirely, or by breaking any particular precept of it, preſumptuouſly, *died without mercy*; a corporal death; there was no atonement nor ſacrifice for him, nor pity to be ſhewn him, *Deut.* xiii. 8. and xix. 13. *Under two or three witneſſes*; who *ſtood by*, or were preſent, as the *Arabic* verſion renders it, when the tranſgreſſion was committed; or that *accuſed him*, as the *Ethiopic* verſion; that were witneſſes againſt him, and plainly and fully proved the fact, *Deut.* xvii. 6. and xix. 15.

Ver. 29. *Of how much ſorer puniſhment*, &c.] Than a mere corporal death, which was the puniſhment inflicted on the tranſgreſſors of the law of *Moſes*. *Suppoſe ye*; the Apoſtle appeals to the *Hebrews* themſelves, and makes them judges of what puniſhment *ſhall he be thought worthy*; who is deſcribed as follows: *who hath trodden under foot the Son of God*: this ſeems to be a ſtronger expreſſion than crucifying him again, ch. vi. 6. and is to be underſtood, not of what was in fact committed, but in will by perſons; who could they have had their will of him, would have pulled him from his throne, and trampled upon him: it is a phraſe expreſſive of the utmoſt ſcorn, contempt, and ill uſage; and which ſuch are guilty of, who deny his deity, and eternal Sonſhip; who render him uſeleſs in his offices, undervalue his ſacrifice, deſpiſe his righteouſneſs, and ſtrip him of the glory of his perſon, office, and grace. And this is aggravated by his being the Son of God, who is thus uſed, who became the ſon of man for the ſake of men, is ſuperior to men, and equal with God: *and hath counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was ſanctified, an unholy thing*; or *common thing*; putting it upon a level with the blood of a bullock, or at moſt counting it, איך דכלנש, *as that of another man*, as the *Syriac* verſion renders it; yea, reckoning it as unclean and abominable, as the blood of a very wicked man: this is aggravated by its being *the blood of the covenant*; of the covenant of grace, becauſe that is ratified and confirmed by it, and the bleſſings of it come thro' it; and from ſanctification by it: either of the perſon, the apoſtate himſelf, who was ſanctified or ſeparated from others by a viſible profeſſion of religion; having given himſelf up to a church, to walk with it in the ordinances of the Goſpel; and having ſubmitted to baptiſm, and partook of the Lord's ſupper, and drank of the cup, *the blood of the New Teſtament*, or *covenant*; tho' he did not ſpiritually diſcern the body and blood of Chriſt in the ordinance, but counted the bread and wine, the ſymbols of them, as *common* things; or who profeſſed himſelf, and was looked upon by others, to be truly ſanctified by the Spirit, and to be juſtified by the blood of Chriſt, tho' he was not really ſo: or rather the Son of God himſelf is meant, who was ſanctified, ſet apart, hallowed, and conſecrated, as *Aaron* and his ſons were ſanctified by the ſacrifices of ſlain beaſts, to miniſter in the prieſt's office: ſo Chriſt, when he had offered himſelf, and ſhed his precious blood, by which the covenant of grace was ratified, by the ſame blood he was brought again from the dead, and declared to be the Son of God with power; and being ſet down at God's right hand, he ever lives to make interceſſion, which is the other part of his prieſtly office he is ſanctified by his own blood to accompliſh. This clauſe, *wherewith he was ſanctified*, is left out in the *Alexandrian* copy: *and hath done deſpight unto the Spirit of grace*; by denying his being, deity, and perſonality; deſpiſing his powerful operations as enthuſiaſm; treating his extraordinary gifts as illuſions; and aſcribing his miracles to ſatan, and repreſenting the Goſpel dictated by him, as a fable, or a lye: and this is aggravated by his being *the Spirit of grace*; the author, giver, and applier of all grace to the ſaints; and who therefore ought not to be in the leaſt ſlighted, but highly eſteemed and honoured; nor will ſuch affronts go unpuniſhed.

Ver. 30. *For we know him that hath ſaid,* &c.] That is God, whom the Apoſtle and the *Hebrews* knew; not merely by the works of creation and providence, but by the ſcriptures, which they were favoured with, and by which they were diſtinguiſhed from the *Gentiles,* and by which they knew his being, nature, and perfections; particularly, that what he ſaid he was able to perform, and that he was true and faithful to every word of his, and to what he has ſaid, *Deut.* xxxii. 35. *vengeance* belongeth *unto me, I will recompenſe, ſaith the Lord.* Vengeance belongs to God, not as to the affection, as if there was any ſuch paſſion in him; but as to the effect, there being that produced by him, which anſwers to the effect of ſuch a paſſion among men, namely puniſhment: and puniſhment for ſin belongs to God, againſt whom it is committed; and not to heathen deities, one of which goes by the name of vengeance, *Acts* xxviii. 4. nor to ſatan, and his ſpiteful angels; nor to men, to exerciſe it in a private and perſonal way; though civil magiſtrates, being in God's ſtead, are allowed to exerciſe it in a public way, according to the laws of God: and there is good reaſon to believe, that what the Lord here ſays, *I will recompenſe,* or revenge ſin, ſhall be done; which may be concluded from his hatred of ſin; from his purity, holineſs, and juſtice; from his faithfulneſs to his word; from his omnipotence; from the notice he takes of ſin, in his own people, in a way of chaſtiſement, and correction; and from the vengeance he has poured on his own Son, as their ſurety. *And again,* in *Deut.* xxxii. 36. *the Lord ſhall judge his people*; ſuch as are truly ſo, his choſen and covenant people, his redeemed and called ones; theſe he judges by chaſtizing them in a fatherly way, that they may not be condemned with the world; and by governing and protecting them; and by vindicating and pleading their cauſe, and avenging them on their enemies: or elſe ſuch as are only his people by profeſſion; on theſe he'll write a *lo-ammi*; he diſtinguiſhes them from his own, and judges between them, and his people, and will condemn them; nor will their profeſſion ſkreen them from his wrath and vengeance.

Ver. 31. It is a *fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*] For this is to be underſtood not in a good ſenſe; ſo in general all mankind may be ſaid to fall into, or be in the hands of God, as they are the work of his hands, the care of his providence, and are ſubject to his ſovereignty; and in eſpecial manner, believers, whoſe times and perſons are in God's hand, which beſpeaks his great affection for them, their nearneſs to him, the ſupport they have by him, and protection from him; and they chuſe to fall into the hands of him as a chaſtizing father, rather than into the hands of men, and at death commend themſelves into his hands: but here it is taken in a bad ſenſe, and ſignifies to be arreſted by juſtice as a criminal, and be brought to the bar of God, and receive the ſentence of condemnation; when ſuch will feel the weight of his hand, and the fierceneſs of his wrath; and this is a *fearful thing*: it is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of men, injured and affronted, and that have power, and will ſhew no mercy; it is very tremendous to fall into the hands of God, in the way of his judgments in this world; the apprehenſions of a future judgment are terrible before hand; and the apparatus of the judgment, when it comes, will be very ſtriking and ſurprizing; but to ſtand before the judge, charged with ſin, naked, and without a righteouſneſs, ſpeechleſs, and no one to ſpeak in favour of them; to hear the dreadful ſentence pronounced, and feel the wrath of God to the uttermoſt, how horrible muſt this be! the aggravations of this are, that it is into the hands *of God,* that ſuch fall, and not into the hands of men, or mere creatures; but of God, who is omniſcient, and ſees thro' all pretences; omnipotent, and none can reſcue out of his hands by force; omnipreſent, and [illegible] no eſcaping from him; juſt and faithful, and not to be bribed, inexorable, immutable and unalterable: and that he is *the living God*; in oppoſition to the lifeleſs deities of the *Gentiles,* and to mortal men; and is expreſſive of his eternity, and ſo of the duration of the ſinner's puniſhment, that falls into his hands.

Ver. 32. *But call to remembrance the former days,* &c.] The words may be conſidered, either as a declaration of what they had done, and be read, *but ye do call to remembrance,* &c. or as an exhortation to remember the days of their eſpouſals, the times of their firſt converſion: and the Apoſtle's deſign in this, is, to mitigate the terror the preceding words might ſtrike them with; and to aggravate the diſgrace of turning back, when they had behaved ſo bravely in former times; and to encourage their faith and truſt in God: *in which after ye were illuminated,* by the ſpirit of God, to ſee their impurity, impotence, and unrighteouſneſs, and their loſt and miſerable ſtate by nature; and to behold Chriſt and ſalvation by him; and to have ſome light into the doctrines of the Goſpel; and ſome glimmering of the glories of another world. The *Syriac* and *Ethiopic* verſions render it *baptized*; now ſuch as are converted, and are brought to make a publick profeſſion of their faith, and ſubmit to the ordinances of Chriſt, are, in common, immediately called to ſuffer reproach and perſecution of one kind or another; ſo Chriſt, after his baptiſm, was led into the wilderneſs to be tempted by the devil: Satan is ſpiteful and malicious, and God ſuffers afflictions to befall his people to try their graces, and to inure them to troubles betimes, as follows; *ye endured a great fight of afflictions*; meaning ſome violent perſecution from their own countrymen, either at the death of *Stephen,* in which the Apoſtle, being then unconverted, was concerned himſelf; or rather ſome other time of trouble, after the Apoſtle was converted, to which he ſeems to have reſpect in 1 *Theſſ.* ii. 14, 15. theſe *Hebrews,* being enliſted as ſoldiers under Chriſt, the captain of their ſalvation, were quickly engaged in a warfare, and were called forth to fight a fight of afflictions, and a very great one; and which they endured with patience, courage, and intrepidity.

Ver. 33. *Partly whilſt ye were made a gazingſtock,* &c.] Brought upon the ſtage or theatre, and made a ſpectacle to the world, angels, and men, 1 *Cor.* iv. 9. *both by reproaches and afflictions*; ſuffering both in their characters and reputations, and in their perſons and ſubſtance: *and partly whilſt ye became companions of them that were ſo uſed*; they maintained their communion with them, relieved them in diſtreſs, and ſympathized with them.

Ver. 34. *For ye had compaſſion of me in my bonds,* &c.] When he was bound at *Jeruſalem,* by the chief captain *Lyſias,* with two chains, *Acts* xxi. 33. or when he was in bonds elſewhere; which they did by ſympathizing with him in their hearts; by their prayers for him, and in their letters to him; and by ſending preſents to him for his relief and ſupport.

The *Alexandrian* copy, and two of *Stephens*'s, the *Vulgate Latin*, and *Syriac* verſions, read, *had compaſſion on the priſoners*; or *them that were bound*; meaning priſoners in general, remembring them that were in bonds, as bound with them; or particularly ſuch, as were priſoners for the ſake of Chriſt, and his Goſpel; and it may be ſome of them, which the Apoſtle himſelf committed to priſon, in his ſtate of unregeneracy: *and took joyfully the ſpoiling of your goods*; the furniture of their houſes, their worldly ſubſtance, of which they were ſtripped by their perſecutors; and this they took quietly and patiently, yea, joyfully; rejoicing that they were counted worthy to ſuffer the confiſcation of their goods, for the ſake of Chriſt: the reaſon of which joy, was, *knowing in yourſelves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring ſubſtance*: that which is laid up for the ſaints in heaven is *ſubſtance*; it is ſignified by an houſe, a city, a kingdom; and ſo it is rendred here in the *Ethiopic* verſion; and by riches, true, glorious, and durable; and by a treaſure and an inheritance: and this is *better* than any thing in this world; as to the quality of it, it being celeſtial; and as to the quantity of it, it being all things; and as to the place where it is, *in heaven*; tho' this clauſe is left out in the *Alexandrian* copy, and in the *Vulgate Latin*, and *Ethiopic* verſions; and as to the company with whom it is enjoyed, ſaints in light; yea, God himſelf is the portion of his people: and this is an *enduring* ſubſtance; it cannot be waſted by the ſaints themſelves; nor taken away from them by others; nor can it decay in its own nature; and the ſaints will always endure to enjoy it: and this they may be ſaid to *have*; it is promiſed to them, and prepared for them; they have a right unto it, and the earneſt of it; and they have it already in Chriſt, their head and repreſentative; ſo that it is, upon all accounts, ſure unto them: and this they *know in themſelves*; from what they find and feel in their own hearts; from the ſealing teſtimony and earneſt of the ſpirit, and from the promiſe of Chriſt, *Matt.* v. 10.

Ver. 35. *Caſt not away therefore your confidence*, &c.] The ſame word is uſed here, as in *ver.* 19. where it is tranſlated *boldneſs*; and may deſign here, as there, an holy boldneſs in prayer, free from a ſervile and baſhful ſpirit; and which appears in a liberty of ſpeaking to God, and in a confidence of being heard; prayer itſelf ſhould not be left off, nor ſhould freedom, boldneſs, and confidence in it be ſlackened, or laid aſide: or elſe a profeſſion of faith is intended, which ought to be free and open, bold and courageous, firm and conſtant; and which ought by no means to be let go and dropped: or the grace of faith in its full aſſurance, with reſpect to intereſt in God, as a covenant God and father, and in his love; and with reſpect to intereſt in Chriſt, and in his grace, and a right to the glorious inheritance, the better and enduring ſubſtance; and this ſhield of faith is by no means to be caſt away; it was reckoned infamous and ſcandalous in ſoldiers, to loſe or caſt away their ſhield; with the *Grecians* it was a capital crime, and puniſhed with death[b]; to which the Apoſtle may here allude. There are two ſorts of believers, nominal and real; and there are two ſorts of faith; an hiſtorical one, which may be in perſons deſtitute of the grace of God, and is in devils; and a true and unfeigned one, which has ſalvation connected with it; the former may be caſt away and loſt; the latter, though it may be remiſs and weak in its exerciſe, yet it cannot be wholly and finally loſt; and this exhortation may be deſigned, as a means of continuing it, and of perſeverance in it: the reaſon urging it follows, *which hath great recompence of reward*; freedom and boldneſs in prayer has its reward, for ſuch that aſk in faith ſhall have; and ſo has a firm and conſtant profeſſion of religion, for he that endures to the end ſhall be ſaved; and ſo has a true and ſtrong faith in Chriſt; everlaſting ſalvation is connected with it; the reward of the inheritance follows upon it; and this reward is the recompence of God's own grace: and it is a very great one; it is the fruit of great love and grace; yea, it is no other than God himſelf, who is the exceeding great reward of his people; it is Chriſt and his glory, and the riches of it; it is a reward exceeding, and beyond all deſerts of men, and beyond all thought and expreſſion.

Ver. 36. *For ye have need of patience*, &c.] Not that they were deſtitute of the grace of patience; for where God is the God of all grace, he is the God of patience; and ſuch, who are called by grace, are conformed to the image of Chriſt, and, among other things, are like him in this; and thoſe who are born of the Spirit, have the fruits of the Spirit, and this, among the reſt; to whom the word of God is effectual, this fruit is produced in them, that being the word of patience; and ſuch who are brought into the kingdom of Chriſt, are alſo in the patience of Jeſus; where there is one grace, there is every grace; ſaints are immediately called to ſufferings and trials, which require patience; and, without this, there can be no enjoyment of a man's ſelf: but the meaning is, that they needed the continuance, exerciſe, and increaſe of it; in general, to run the race ſet before them; to bear afflictions from the hand of God, and reproaches and perſecutions from men; to wait for God, when he hides his face, and for anſwers of prayer, when they are deferred; and to bear up, and not to ſink under temptations; and to live in the conſtant expectation of heaven and happineſs: and, in particular, it is neceſſary for the following, *that after ye have done the will of God*: there is the purpoſing will of God, which is done by himſelf; and there is his revealed will, touching the ſalvation of men, which is done by his ſon; and there is his will of precept to be done by men; and which, when done aright, is done according to the rule of his word, in faith, from love, through the ſtrength of Chriſt, and by the aſſiſtance of his Spirit and grace, with a view to his glory, and without any dependance on what is done: and the will of God regards ſuffering, as well as doing; for to that the ſaints are alſo called, to which patience is neceſſary: *ye might receive the promiſe*; that is, of eternal life; not the promiſe itſelf, which they had received already, but the thing promiſed; which is the ſenſe, in which this word is often uſed in this book, chap. vi. 12, 17. and xi. 13, 39. which is ſo called, to ſhew that it is not of works, for promiſe and merit do not agree together; but that it is of grace, and will certainly be enjoyed, but muſt be patiently waited for.

Ver. 37. *For yet a little while, and he that ſhall come will come*, &c.] That the perſon ſpoken of, is the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, is evident from the prophecy in *Hab.* ii. 3. here referred to, and from the character of him that is to come, *Matt.* xi. 3. and from parallel places, *Jam.* v. 7, 8, 9. and this is to be underſtood, not of his coming in the fleſh, for he was come in the fleſh already; though *Habakkuk* indeed refers to his firſt coming, yet not to that only, but including his ſecond coming alſo; but of his coming in his kingdom and power to deſtroy *Jeruſalem*, and take vengeance on the *Jews*, for their rejection of him: the kingdom of Chriſt was at hand, when he began to preach; upon his aſcenſion to heaven, it began to appear more viſible; but ſtill the temple was ſtanding, and that worſhip continued, which ſtood in the way of the glory of his kingdom; during which time the ſaints ſuffered much: but in a little while, from the writing of this Epiſtle, he, who was to come, did come, even within about ten years after this, and ſhewed his power and his glory, in delivering his people, and deſtroying his enemies; ſee *Matt.* xvi. 28. *Mark* ix. 1. It may be applied to his coming to help his people in time of need; the afflictions of the ſaints are many; they are all for an appointed time, and but for a while; and Chriſt has promiſed to come, and viſit them; and which he does often, and ſpeedily, and ſeaſonably: it may alſo be accommodated to Chriſt coming to take his people to himſelf by death; Chriſt may be ſaid to come in this ſenſe, and he will certainly come; and this will be in a little while; man is but of few days; death is certain, and ſhould be patiently expected: and it may likewiſe be ſuitably improved, with reſpect to Chriſt's coming to judgment; that he will come is certain, from prophecies, particularly from the prophecy of *Enoch*, from his own words, from the teſtimony of angels, from the inſtitution of the Lord's ſupper, 'till he comes, and from the general expectation of the ſaints; and this coming of his is deſirable, becauſe it will be the marriage of the lamb, and the redemption of the ſaints, and becauſe of the grace and glory, that will be brought unto them, and becauſe they ſhall then be for ever with him; and this will be quickly, in a little time, in compariſon of the time that went before his firſt coming, and of the eternity that will follow after this; and tho' it may ſeem long, yet with God it is but a little while, with whom a thouſand years are as one day; and however, ſince it is certain that he will come, *and will not tarry*, beyond the appointed time, patience ſhould be exerciſed.

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[b] Alex. ab Alexand. Genial. Dier. l. 2. c. 13.

Ver. 38. *Now the juſt ſhall live by faith*, &c.] The *juſt* man is one not in appearance only, but in reality; not by his obedience to the law, but by the obedience of Chriſt; and he is evidently ſo by the Spirit, and by faith: and he is one, who lives ſoberly and righteouſly; and the life he lives, and ſhall live, at preſent, is not eternal life; for tho' he ſhall live that life, yet this is not intended; for it is a living by faith, that is ſpoken of, and as antecedent to the coming of Chriſt; but a ſpiritual life is meant, a life of juſtification in Chriſt, a life of communion with Chriſt, and a life of holineſs from Chriſt, with peace, joy, and comfort through him: and the manner of this juſt man's living is *by faith*; not upon his faith, but upon Chriſt, the object of it; and by *his faith*, as in *Hab.* ii. 4. his own, and not another's; or by the faith of Chriſt: the *Syriac* verſion here renders it, *by the faith of my ſelf*; that is, by the faith of Chriſt, who ſpeaks, and who is the author and object of faith: the *Alexandrian* copy and the *Vulgate Latin* verſion read, *my juſt man ſhall live by faith*; and this life is to be *now*, in the mean while, until Chriſt comes, and becauſe he will certainly come: *but if* any man *draw back*, *my ſoul ſhall have no pleaſure in him.* The *Hebrew* Word עפלה, uſed in *Hab.* ii. 4. and which, by the *Septuagint* there, and by the Apoſtle here, is tranſlated by υποϛειληται, and rendred *draw back*; according to *R. David Kimchi*[c], ſignifies pride and haughtineſs of heart; and, according to *R. Sol. Jarchi*[d] it ſignifies impudence; *R. Moſes Kimchi*[e] takes it to be the ſame with עפל, which is uſed for a tower, or fortified place; and thinks, it deſigns one, who betakes himſelf to ſuch a place for ſafety from the enemy, and ſeeks not to God for deliverance: ſo that ſuch a perſon ſeems to be deſigned, who ſwells with pride and confidence in his own righteouſneſs; who betakes himſelf to ſome fortreſs of his own for ſafety; who withdraws from the aſſembly of the ſaints, thro' fear of reproach and perſecution; who witholds the truth, ſhuns to declare it, or maintain a profeſſion of it; plays the hypocrite, and deals deceitfully in religious things; and, in ſhort, it may intend one, who finally and totally apoſtatizes from the doctrine of faith, and the profeſſion of it: and in ſuch perſons God has no pleaſure, never had, nor never will have; but, on the contrary, they are abominable to him, and will lie under his ſore diſpleaſure, and feel the keen reſentments of it; ſuch ſtand oppoſed to the juſt man, that lives by faith, walks humbly with God, in a dependance, not on his own righteouſneſs, but on the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, in which he is ſafe from condemnation, and ſecure of the divine favour; for drawing back is not ſuppoſed of the juſt man, but of any man, as we, with the *Ethiopic* verſion, rightly ſupply; and is to be underſtood of any one of the external profeſſors of religion, who forſake the aſſembling of the ſaints, ver. 25. and is denied of the truly righteous in the following words.

Ver. 39. *But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition*, &c.] There is a drawing back which is not unto perdition; perſons may be attended with much unbelief, may be very cold and indifferent to Goſpel ordinances, may fall into great ſins, and may greatly backſlide, and yet be recovered, as *David*, *Peter*, and others: and there is a drawing back to perdition; when Chriſt is rejected as the alone ſaviour; when he is not held to as the head; when falſe doctrines, and damnable hereſies are given into; and when men draw back, and never return, nor are they, nor can they be returned, and their apoſtacy is total, and final: but true believers do not, and cannot draw back in this ſenſe; becauſe they are held faſt in the arms, and with the cords of everlaſting love, are choſen of God unto ſalvation, are given unto Chriſt, and ſecured in him; they are redeemed and purchaſed by him; they are united to him, and built upon him; they are intereſted in his prayers and preparations, and are his jewels, and his portion; they are regenerated, ſanctified, inhabited, and ſealed by the Spirit of God, and have the promiſes and power of God on their ſide. *But of them that believe to the ſaving of the ſoul*; or *of faith*, *to the ſalvation of the ſoul*; not of faith of miracles, nor of an hiſtorical faith; but of that faith, which is the faith of God's elect, is the gift of God, and the operation of his Spirit; by which a ſoul ſees Chriſt, goes to him, lays holds on him, commits all to him, and expects all from him: this ſtands oppoſed to drawing back; for by faith a man lives, walks, and ſtands; and with this is connected the ſalvation of the ſoul, as oppoſed to perdition; not as tho' it is a cauſe of ſalvation, but as a means of God's appointing to receive the bleſſings of ſalvation, and which is entirely conſiſtent with the grace of God; and ſince ſalvation and faith are inſeparably connected together, ſo that he that has the one ſhall have the other, it follows, that true believers can never periſh. The nature and excellency of this grace is largely treated of in the following chapter.

CHAP.

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[c] In Hab. ii. 4.

[d] In ib.

[e] Apud R. David Kimchi in ibid. & in Sepher Shoraſhim, rad. עפל.

CHAP. XI.

THE Apoſtle having, in the preceding chapter, ſpoken in commendation of the grace, and life of faith, and of its uſefulneſs to preſerve from apoſtacy, proceeds in this to give ſome account of the nature and actings of it; and which he illuſtrates by the examples of many of the Old Teſtament ſaints: he begins with a definition of it, which conſiſts of two parts, ver. 1. and with an account of the uſefulneſs of it to the elders in general, who by it obtained a good report, ver. 2. and of the ſervice it is of in underſtanding the creation of the worlds, the author and original of them, ver. 3. and then goes on to give particular inſtances and examples of faith among the elders, or ancient believers, which are reduced into ſeveral claſſes; and the firſt is of the ſaints before the flood, *Abel*, *Enoch*, and *Noah*. *Abel*'s faith lay in offering a more excellent ſacrifice than *Cain*, in obtaining a teſtimony from God that he was righteous, and in yet ſpeaking, tho' dead, ver. 4. *Enoch*'s faith is evidenced by his tranſlation of God, that he ſhould not ſee death, and by the teſtimony he received from him before it, that he was acceptable to him; by which it is clear he had faith, ſince without it, it is impoſſible to pleaſe God; nor can any come aright unto him, without believing that he is, and has a gracious reſpect to all that diligently ſeek him, ver. 5, 6. *Noah*'s faith was ſeen in preparing an ark, by the order of God, for the ſaving of his family, and in condemning the world by ſo doing, and by becoming an heir of righteouſneſs thro' faith, ver. 7. The next claſs is, that of the ſaints from the flood, to the times of *Moſes*, in which are *Abraham* and *Sarah*, *Iſaac*, *Jacob*, and *Joſeph*. *Abraham*'s faith is celebrated for his obedience to the divine call, quitting the country where he was, and going he knew not where; and for his ſojourning in the promiſed land, as in a ſtrange one, in which *Iſaac* and *Jacob* dwelt with him in tabernacles; and for looking by faith for the heavenly city built by the Lord; and for his offering up his ſon at the command of God, who was the ſon of promiſe, believing God was able to raiſe him from the dead, from whence he received him by faith, ver. 8, 9, 10, 17, 18, 19. *Sarah*'s faith lay in receiving ſtrength thro' it to conceive, bear, and bring forth a child when paſt age, which was founded upon the faithfulneſs of a promiſing God; hence from *Abraham*, by her, ſprung a large poſterity, like the ſtars of the ſky, and the ſand on the ſea-ſhore, ver. 11, 12. Now all theſe patriarchs, both before and after the flood, as they lived by faith, they died in it; who, though they had not received the things promiſed, yet by faith ſaw them at a diſtance, were very well perſuaded they would come to paſs, and ſo, in ſome ſenſe, enjoyed them; hence, whilſt they lived, they lived like pilgrims and ſtrangers, ſhewing that they had no regard to the country they came from, and had no mind to return thither, but ſought another, a better, and an heavenly one; ſo that God is not aſhamed to be called their God, he having prepared a city for them, ver. 13, 14, 15, 16. *Iſaac*'s faith is commended in bleſſing his two ſons with reſpect to things future, ver. 20. and *Jacob*'s faith is well ſpoken of for bleſſing both the ſons of *Joſeph* in his laſt moments, worſhipping on the top of his ſtaff, ver. 21. and *Joſeph*'s faith is inſtanced in two things; in making mention of the departure of the *Iſraelites* out of *Egypt*, as a certain thing; and in giving them ſtrict orders to carry his bones along with them, when they went from thence, ver. 22. the third claſs of men, famous for faith, is that of ſuch from the times of *Moſes* to the *Judges*, in which are the parents of *Moſes*, *Moſes* himſelf, the *Iſraelites* in general, and the harlot *Rahab*. The parents of *Moſes* ſhewed their faith in hiding him three months, ſeeing him to be a lovely child, contrary to the king's edict, ver. 23. *Moſes*'s faith lay in refuſing to be called the ſon of *Pharaoh*'s daughter; in preferring afflictions to the pleaſures of ſin, and the reproach of Chriſt, to the riches of *Egypt*; he having, by faith, a reſpect to the heavenly glory, another inſtance of it; and by forſaking *Egypt*, without fear of the king's diſpleaſure, by faith ſeeing a king who is inviſible; and by keeping the paſſover, with the ſprinkling of blood, that ſo the deſtroyer of the firſt-born of *Egypt* might not touch the *Iſraelites*, ver. 24, 25, 26, 27, 28. The inſtances of the faith of the *Iſraelites* are their paſſage thro' the red ſea, as on dry land, when the *Egyptians*, who attempted it, were drowned; and their compaſſing the walls of *Jericho* ſeven days, believing they would fall, as accordingly they did, ver. 29, 30. The faith of *Rahab*, the harlot, is commended for two things; for peaceably receiving the ſpies that came to her; and for the ſalvation ſhe believed ſhe ſhould have, and had, when the unbelieving inhabitants of *Jericho* periſhed, ver. 31. And the laſt claſs of heroes for faith, includes the times of the judges, kings, prophets, and the *Maccabees*; the judges, kings, and prophets are lumped together, and only a few of their names are obſerved as a ſpecimen of the reſt, the Apoſtle not having time to mention every particular one, ver. 32. and various inſtances of faith, without reference to particular perſons to whom they belong, are recorded; ſome which lay in doing things greatly heroic, and even miraculous, ver. 33, 34, 35. and others in ſuffering things the moſt cruel and torturing, and death itſelf in divers ſhapes, ver. 35, 36, 37, 38. And thus, by an induction of particulars, the Apoſtle proves both his definition of faith, ver. 1. and the uſefulneſs of it to the elders, ver. 2. they by it obtaining a good report, tho' they did not receive the thing promiſed, ver. 39. wherefore New Teſtament ſaints have great encouragement, and much more reaſon, to exerciſe this grace; ſince God has provided for them the better thing he promiſed to others, that the one without the other might not be perfect, ver. 40.

Ver. 1. *Now faith is the ſubſtance of things hoped for*, &c.] The *faith* here ſpoken of is not a mere moral virtue, which is a branch of the law; nor a bare aſſent to any thing revealed, declared, and affirmed in the Goſpel; nor a faith of doing miracles; nor an implicit one; nor a mere profeſſion of faith, which ſometimes is but temporary; nor the word or doctrine of faith; but that which is made mention of in the preceding chapter, by which the juſt man lives, and which has the ſalvation of the ſoul annexed to it: and it does not ſo much deſign any particular branch, or act of faith, but as that in general reſpects the various promiſes, and bleſſings of grace; and it chiefly regards the faith of Old Teſtament ſaints, tho' that, as to its nature, object, and acts, is the ſame with the faith of New Teſtament ones; and is a firm perſuaſion of the power, faithfulneſs, and love of God in Chriſt, and of intereſt therein, and in all ſpecial bleſſings: it is deſcribed as *the ſubſtance of things hoped for*; and which, in general, are things unſeen, and as yet not enjoyed; future, and yet to come; difficult to be obtained, tho' poſſible, otherwiſe there would be no hope of them; and which are promiſed and laid up; and in particular, the things hoped for by Old Teſtament ſaints, were Chriſt, and eternal glory and happineſs; and by New Teſtament ones, more grace, perſeverance in it, the reſurrection of the dead, and eternal life. Now faith is the *ſubſtance* of theſe things; it is the ground and foundation of them, in which there is ſome ſtanding for hope; in which ſenſe the word υποστασις is uſed by the *Septuagint* in *Pſ.* lxix. 2. The word of promiſe is the principal ground and foundation of hope; and faith, as leaning on the word, is a leſs principal ground; it is a confident perſuaſion, expectation, and aſſurance of them. The *Syriac* verſion renders it, the *certainty* of them; it is the ſubſiſtence of them, and what gives them an exiſtence, at leaſt a mental one; ſo with reſpect to the faith and hope of the Old Teſtament ſaints, the incarnation, ſufferings, and death of Chriſt, his reſurrection, aſcenſion, and ſeſſion at God's right hand, are ſpoken of, as if they then were; and ſo are heaven, and glory, and everlaſting ſalvation, with regard to the faith and hope of New Teſtament ſaints: yea, faith gives a kind of poſſeſſion of thoſe things before hand, *John* vi. 47. *Philo* the *Jew* [e] ſays much the ſame thing of faith; "the "only infallible and certain good thing, ſays he, "is, that faith which is faith towards God; it is "the ſolace of life, πληρωμα χρηστων ελπιδων, *the* "*fulneſs of good hopes*, &c." It follows here, *the evidence of things not ſeen*; of things paſt, of what was done in eternity, in the council and covenant of grace and peace; of what has been in time, in creation, and providence; of the birth, miracles, ſufferings, death, reſurrection, and aſcenſion of Chriſt; of things preſent, the being, perfections, love, *&c.* of God; of the ſeſſion of Chriſt at God's right hand, and his continual interceſſion; and of the various bleſſings of grace revealed in the Goſpel; and of future ones, as the inviſible realities of another world: faith has both certainty and evidence in it.

Ver. 2. *For by it the elders obtained a good report.*] By whom are meant, not merely old men, or elders in age, but ſuch who lived in ancient times; ſome before the flood, and to a great age, and others who were in office, civil or eccleſiaſtical, and were the anceſtors and predeceſſors of the *Hebrews*; who in general obtained, or received a good report from God; that they were the choſen of God, and were juſtified and accepted with him; that they were the children and friends of God, and ſhould be glorified; and from men, from good men, for their faith and holineſs; and from evil men, for their good works: and theſe alſo believed the report of the Goſpel, and gave a good report of God, and of the good land, and adorned their profeſſion; particularly, *Abel* received a good report, that he was righteous; and *Enoch*, that he pleaſed God, and walked with him; and *Noah*, that he was a juſt man, perfect in his generation, and alſo walked with God; and *Abraham*, that he was a believer, a friend of God, and one that feared and obeyed him; and *Job*, that he was a man that feared God, and ſhunned evil; and *Moſes*, that he was a meek man, and a faithful one; and *David*, that he was a man after God's own heart, and fulfilled his will; and ſo others: and they received this report by faith, and as a fruit of it; which ſhows that faith is no new thing, and that the character of a believer is an old and honourable one. The Apoſtle mentions this, to take off the *Hebrews* from any eſteem of their traditionary elders, who had got a name, not by their faith, but by their traditions; and to engage their imitation of men of antiquity, authority, and wiſdom ſuperior to them; and to let them know, unleſs they had the ſame faith with their anceſtors, it would be a vain thing to boaſt of deſcent from them.

Ver. 3. *Through faith we underſtand that the worlds were framed by the word of God*, &c.] The celeſtial world, with its inhabitants, the angels; the ſtarry and etherial worlds, with all that is in them, the ſun, moon, ſtars, and fowls of the air; the terreſtrial world, with all upon it, men, beaſts, *&c.* and the watry world, the ſea, and all that is therein: perhaps ſome reſpect may be had to the diſtinction of worlds among the *Jews*; ſee the note on ch. 1, 2. tho' the Apoſtle can ſcarce be thought to have any regard to their extravagant notions of vaſt numbers of worlds being created: they often ſpeak of three hundred and ten worlds, in all which, they ſay, there are heavens, earth, ſtars, planets, *&c* [f]. and ſometimes of eighteen thouſand [g]; but theſe notions are rightly charged by *Philo* [h] with ignorance and folly. However, as many worlds as there are, they are made *by the word of God*; by Chriſt, the eſſential Word of God, to whom the creation of all things is aſcribed in *John* i. 1, 2, 3. And this agrees with the ſentiments of the *Jews*, who aſcribe the creation of all things to the Word of God, as do the *Targumiſts* [i], and *Philo* the *Jew* [k]. And theſe are *framed* by the Word, in a very beautiful and convenient order; the heavens before the earth; things leſs perfect, before thoſe that were more ſo in the viſible world, or terraqueous globe; and things for men, before men, for whom they were; and it is by divine revelation and faith, that men form right notions of the creation, and of the author of it, and particularly of the origin of it, as follows; *ſo that things which are ſeen*; as the heaven, earth, and ſea, and in which the inviſible things of God, the perfections of his nature, are diſcerned: *were not made of things which do appear*; they were not made from pre-exiſtent matter, but out of nothing, out of which the rude and indigeſted chaos was formed; and from that inviſible maſs, covered with darkneſs, were all viſible things brought into a beautiful order; and all from ſecret and hidden ideas in the divine minds; and this alſo is the faith of the *Jews*, that the creation of all things is, מאין, *out of nothing* [l]. There ſeems to be an alluſion to the word ברא, uſed for creation, which ſignifies to make appear a thing unſeen; and is rendered in the *Septuagint* verſion by δεικνυμι, *Numb.* xvi. 30. and καταδεικνυμι, *Iſ.* xl. 26. and xli. 20. *to ſhew*, or *make appear*; and thus God created, or made to appear, the heavens and earth, which before were not in being, and unſeen, *Gen.* i. 1, 2. *and created to make*, as in *Gen.* ii. 3. that is, made them to appear, that he might put them into the form and order they now are.

Ver. 4. *By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent ſacrifice than Cain*, &c.] The Apoſtle proceeds to examples of faith, and begins with *Abel*: it may ſeem ſtrange that *Adam* and *Eve* are not mentioned; this omiſſion is not becauſe they were not believers; but either becauſe of the fall and ruin of mankind by them; or becauſe the Apoſtle ſpeaks only of ſuch who had received ſome eminent teſtimony by faith, and therefore paſſes by many believers, and haſtens to *Abraham*, the father of the *Jews*. The ſuperior excellency of *Abel*'s ſacrifice to *Cain*'s, lay both in the matter, and in the manner of it; the one was offered heartily to the Lord, the other only in ſhow; the one was offered in faith, the other not; *Abel* looked thro' his ſacrifice to the ſacrifice of Chriſt, not ſo *Cain*. *Abel*'s ſacrifice was a lamb, a type of Chriſt, the Lamb of God; a firſtling, a figure of him who is the firſt-born of every creature; one of the fatteſt of his flock, expreſſive of the excellency of Chriſt; and this was offered up at the end of days, as Chriſt at the end of the world; and the ſuperior excellency of the ſacrifice of the one to that of the other, appears from God's regard to the one, and not to the other, *Gen.* iv. 3, 4, 5. from whence it may be obſerved, that ſacrifices were of divine inſtitution, and were very early types of Chriſt; and that there always were two ſorts of worſhippers, ſpiritual and carnal ones, whom God can diſtinguiſh, for he ſeeth not as man ſeeth; that the acceptance of perſons is in Chriſt, and is previous to their offerings; that whatſoever works do not ſpring from faith, are unacceptable to God; that no dependence is to be had on birth-privileges, or outward actions; and that electing and diſtinguiſhing grace very early took place, and appeared. *By which he obtained witneſs that he was righteous*; not righteous by his offering, nor by his faith, but by the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, which his faith in his ſacrifice looked unto; tho' it was by his faith that he obtained, or received a witneſs in his own conſcience, from the Spirit of God, teſtifying that he was a juſtified perſon; and in conſequence of this, he had an outward teſtimony bore to him in the ſcriptures, that he was a righteous perſon; hence he is called righteous *Abel*, *Matt.* xxiii. 35. *God teſtifying of his gifts*; not of his own gifts, temporal or ſpiritual, but of *Abel*'s gifts, which he offered to the Lord; that is, his ſacrifices; of theſe he teſtified, when he ſhowed reſpect either by an audible voice, declaring his acceptance of them; or by ſending down fire from heaven, upon his ſacrifice, which in after-times was a ſymbol of acceptance. *And by it, he being dead, yet ſpeaketh*; good men die, and ſome of them die a violent death, as did *Abel*, yet he ſpeaks in the ſcriptures, which have a voice in them, *Luke* xvi. 29. or by his blood, which calls for vengeance; or rather by, or becauſe of his faith, tho' he is dead, he *is yet ſpoken of*, as the word may be rendered.

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[e] De Abrahamo, p. 387.

[f] Miſn. Oketzim, c. 3. §. 12. Targum Jon. in Exod. xxviii. 30. Kettoreth Haſſamim in Targum Jon. in Gen. fol. 4. 4. Lex. Cabal. p. 60, 61.

[g] T. Bab. Avoda Zara, fol. 3. 2. Yalkut, par. 2. fol. 50. 4.

[h] De Opificio, p. 39.

[i] Targum Onk. in Deut. xxxiii. 27. & Ben Uzziel in Iſ. xlviii. 13.

[k] De Opificio, p. 4 Leg. Alleg. l. 1. p. 44.

[l] Tzeror Hammor, fol. 1. 1. Kettoreth Haſſamim in Targ. Jon. in Gen. fol. 5. 1, 2.

Ver. 5. *By faith Enoch was tranſlated*, &c.] Which is to be underſtood, not of a ſpiritual tranſlation from the power of darkneſs, into the kingdom of Chriſt, as all converted perſons are tranſlated, and doubtleſs *Enoch* was; nor of a rapture, or removal from one part of the earth to another, or from one part of a country to another, as *Philip* was caught away by the Spirit, after the baptiſm of the enunch; but of a tranſlation from earth to heaven; and not for a while only, as *Paul* was caught up to the third heaven; but as *Elijah* was, there to continue, and as the living ſaints will be at the laſt day; and this was a tranſlation of him, ſoul and body, to heaven, to eternal glory and happineſs, by a change from mortality to immortality, which paſſed upon him; and which is a pledge of the reſurrection of the dead, and a proof of the Old Teſtament ſaints knowing, expecting, and enjoying eternal life. And with this agrees the ſenſe of ſome of the *Jewiſh* writers concerning this affair. *Jonathan ben Uzziel*, in his paraphraſe on *Gen.* v. 24. has theſe words: "and *Enoch* worſhipped in truth before the Lord; and behold he "was not with the inhabitants of the earth, אתנגיד, "*he was tranſlated*, and aſcended *to the firmament*, "(or heaven) by the Word before the Lord." And the *Jeruſalem Targum* to the ſame purpoſe; "and *Enoch* worſhipped in truth before the Lord; "and lo he was not, for he was tranſlated by the "Word from before the Lord;" or by the Word of the Lord, which went out from him; for this tranſlation was of God, as our Apoſtle afterwards aſſerts. *R. Eleazar* ſays[m], "the holy bleſſed God "took *Enoch*, and cauſed him to aſcend to *the* "*higheſt heavens*, and delivered into his hands all "the ſuperior treaſures, *&c.*" He is ſaid[n] to be one of the ſeven which entred into paradiſe in their life; and ſome of them ſay[o], that God took him, בגוף ונפש, *body and ſoul*; ſee the wiſdom of *Solomon*, iv. 10. and *Eccleſiaſt.* xliv. 16. And this tranſlation is ſaid to be *by faith*; not thro' any virtue and efficacy in that grace to procure it; nor thro' faith, in that particular point; but God put an honour upon the faith of *Enoch*, and on him as a believer, this way. *That he ſhould not ſee death*; meaning not a ſpiritual or moral death; nor an eternal one, tho' ſome have ſuggeſted this to be the ſenſe; and which is favoured by the character ſome of the *Jewiſh* writers give of *Enoch*, which will be hereafter taken notice of; but a corporal death, which he died not; to which agrees the *Targum* of *Onkelos* on *Gen.* v. 24. "and *Enoch* walked in the "fear of the Lord, and he was not, for the Lord, "לא אמית, *did not kill him*, or cauſe, or ſuffer "him to die:" though an exemplar of that paraphraſe is cited[p], without the negative particle, thus, "and he was not, for the Lord killed him," or inflicted death on him: and it is the ſenſe of ſeveral of the *Jewiſh* commentators, that he did die a common death, as *Jarchi*, *Aben Ezra*, and others; who by the phraſe, *God took him*, underſtand death, for which they cite the following places, 1 *Kings* xix. 4. *Ezek.* xxiv. 16, 18. *and was not found, becauſe God had tranſlated him*; that is, he was not found among men, in the land of the living; he appeared no more there, for God had removed him from earth to heaven; ſo *Elijah*, after his rapture and tranſlation, was ſought for, but could not be found, 2 *Kings* ii. 16, 17. *for before his tranſlation he had this teſtimony, that he pleaſed God*; he did thoſe things which pleaſed him; he walked with God before, *Gen.* v. 22, 24. which the *Targumiſts* explain by worſhipping in truth, and walking in the fear of the Lord, which are things well-pleaſing to God; he walked with God by faith in the ways of his worſhip and ſervice; and he was acceptable to him in Chriſt; the ſame phraſe is uſed in the *Wiſdom of Solomon* iv. 10. and *Eccleſ.* xliv. 16. This teſtimony he received from God, from men, and in his own conſcience, and which now ſtands in the ſacred ſcriptures, *Gen.* v. 24. Some of the *Jewiſh* writers very wickedly, and without any ground and foundation, give a different

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[m] Zohar in Gen. fol. 44. 3. [n] Derech Erets Zuta, c. 1. fol. 19. 1. [o] Juchaſin, fol. 134. 2. [p] In Toſaphta in T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 16. 2. & in not. ad triplex Targum in Gen. v. 24. Ed. Hanov.

rent character of him; ſome of them ſay, that he was a hypocrite, ſometimes righteous, and ſometimes wicked, and that the holy bleſſed God removed him, while he was righteous [p]; and others [q], that allow him to be a righteous and worthy man, yet repreſent him, as fickle and inconſtant; and, therefore, God, foreſeeing that he would do wickedly, and to prevent it, made haſte, and took him away, by death, before his time: and, which is not only contrary to what the Apoſtle here ſays, but to the account of *Moſes*, concerning him; from whence, it appears, that he was a walker with God; that the courſe of his converſation was holy and upright; and, which was the reaſon of his being taken, or tranſlated; and, which was an high honour beſtowed upon him: and, upon the whole, he has obtained a better teſtimony, than thoſe men give him.

Ver. 6. *But without faith* it is *impoſſible to pleaſe him*, &c.] Or do things, well-pleaſing in his ſight; or, any of the duties of religion, in an acceptable way; as prayer, praiſe, attendance on the word and ordinances, or any good works whatever; becauſe ſuch are without Chriſt, and without his Spirit; and have neither right principles, nor right ends; for this is not to be underſtood of the perſons of God's elect, as conſidered in Chriſt; in whom they are well-pleaſing to him before faith; being loved by him, with an everlaſting love; and choſen in Chriſt, before the foundation of the world; ſee the note on *Rom.* viii. 8. *for he that cometh to God*; to the throne of his grace, to pray unto him, to implore his grace and mercy, help and aſſiſtance; to the houſe of God, to worſhip, and ſerve him, and in order to enjoy his preſence, and have communion with him; which coming ought to be ſpiritual, and with the heart; and ſuppoſes ſpiritual life; and muſt be through Chriſt, and by faith: wherefore ſuch a comer to God, *muſt believe that he is*; or *exiſts*, as the *Arabic* verſion; and he muſt not barely believe his exiſtence, but that, as it is revealed in the word: he muſt believe in the three perſons in the Godhead; that the firſt perſon is the Father of Chriſt; that the ſecond perſon is both the Son of God, and Mediator; and that the third perſon is the Spirit of them both, and the applier of all grace; for God the Father is to be approached unto, thro' Chriſt the Mediator, by the guidance and aſſiſtance of the Spirit: and he muſt believe in the perfections of God; that he is omniſcient, and knows his perſon and wants; is omnipotent, and can do for him, beyond his thoughts and petitions; is all-ſufficient, and that his grace is ſufficient for him; that he is immutable, in his purpoſes and covenant; that he is true and faithful to his promiſes; and is the God of grace, love, and mercy: and he muſt believe in him, not only as the God of nature and providence, but as his covenant God and Father in Chriſt: *and* that *he is a rewarder of them that diligently ſeek him*; who are ſuch, as are firſt ſought out by him; and who ſeek him in Chriſt, where he is only to be found; and that with their whole hearts, and above all things elſe: and, of ſuch, God is a rewarder, in a way of grace; with himſelf, who is their exceeding great reward; and with his Son, and all things with him; with more grace; and, at laſt, with eternal glory, the reward of the inheritance.

Ver. 7. *By faith Noah being warned of God*, &c.] In the *Greek* text, *Noah* is called *Noe*, and ſo the *Septuagint* interpreters of the Old Teſtament call him; but *Joſephus* calls him *Noeos*: or *having received an oracle from God*; in which he was admoniſhed, how to make an ark, as *Moſes* was, in like manner, how to make a tabernacle, ch. viii. 5. This oracle or warning is extant, in *Gen.* vi. 13—22. and it was *of things not ſeen as yet*; as the univerſal deluge; the building of an ark or ſhip, which was the firſt that ever was in the world; the entrance of all creatures into it; their preſervation in it, and the deſtruction of all without it: and this divine warning, or oracle, concerning things of ſuch a nature, delivered to *Noah*, and received by him, ſhews, that he was a favourite of God; that his faith reſted in the word of God; and that it agreed with the Apoſtle's definition of faith, ver. 1. *moved with fear*; not with a fear of his own damnation; nor with a diſtruſt of the ſalvation of himſelf and his family in the ark; but with an awful ſenſe of the judgments of God upon the wicked; and with reverence of God, from whom he received the oracle; and with a religious fear, with which he worſhipped God, and which he diſcovered by a regard to his word and ordinances; and which fear does not ariſe from nature, but from grace; and is increaſed by the diſcoveries of divine love; and is conſiſtent with faith, goes along with it, and is a fruit of it: hence he *prepared an ark for the ſaving of his houſe*. Immediately, and without delay, he ſet about the building of the ark, and made it exactly according to the pattern, which was given him; and his end in it was to ſecure his family, himſelf and his wife, his three ſons and their wives, from the flood, which he believed would ſhortly come upon the world, according to the word of God; and in this his faith was ſeen: and from hence it may be obſerved, that, tho' God can ſave without means, yet, generally ſpeaking, it is his will to ſave by them; and that, as God ſaved *Noah* and his family in the waters, ſo he can, and does, ſave his people in afflictions; and alſo, that true faith is attended with obedience: *by the which he condemned the world*; the inhabitants of the world, the world of the ungodly: as a preacher, he declared they would be condemned, in caſe of impenitence and unbelief; and his words heard, and his actions ſeen by them, were aggravations of their condemnation; for by his works, as well as by his words, he reproved, and condemned them; by building the ark, as he declared his own faith, ſo he condemned their unbelief; ſee the note on *Matt.* xii. 41. *and became heir of the righteouſneſs which is by faith*; not of the law, but of the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, and of eternal life through that; for he was not only heir of this world, as *Abraham*, but of that which is to come; and not through works of righteouſneſs done by him, but through the righteouſneſs of Chriſt received by faith, or through faith in Chriſt, the antitype of the ark.

Ver. 8. *By faith Abraham, when he was called*, &c.] The *Alexandrian* copy, and the *Vulgate Latin* verſion read, *by faith he who was called Abraham*; but this call is not to be underſtood of his name; for though his firſt name *Abram* might be given him, in the faith of his being a great man, and his ſecond name *Abraham*, when he himſelf was a believer; yet this change was made ſome years after the call referred to; which is that in *Gen.* xii. 1. when he was called out of his own country, kindred and father's houſe; which was an emblem of the call of God's people out from among the men of the world, and from their friends, relations, and acquaintance, and even out of themſelves; and, as *Abraham* was called from *Ur* of the *Chaldees*, ſo they, from darkneſs, bondage, idolatry, and communion with wicked men; that, as he, they might not periſh with idolaters, being choſen veſſels, and for whom God has peculiar bleſſings in ſtore: and ſo the grace of God is ſeen in calling them, without any reſpect to their deſerts, as in calling *Abraham*: and the care and goodneſs of God may be obſerved, in raiſing up fit inſtruments to propagate his cauſe and intereſt. Now *Abraham*, being called *to go out into a place*; from *Ur* of the *Chaldees*, to the land of *Canaan*; *which he ſhould afterwards receive for an inheritance*; not in his own perſon, but in his ſeed and poſterity, unleſs after the reſurrection, in the New *Jeruſalem* church-ſtate, and which inheritance was typical of heaven; *obeyed* the divine call; and which was a fruit and evidence of his faith, and may be called the obedience of faith: *and he went out not knowing whither he went*: for though he went forth to go into the land of *Canaan*, and into the land of *Canaan* he came, *Gen.* xii. 5. yet, when God called him to go forth, and he prepared to obey his call, he knew not what land he was to go into; for it is only ſaid, *Gen.* xii. 1. *unto a land that I will ſhew thee*: upon which words, a *Jewiſh* commentator [r] has this note; "he (God) did not "immediately make known the land unto him, "that ſo it might be lovely in his eyes;" and it is, elſewhere, ſaid by the *Jews* [s], that *Abraham* "came "from *Aſpamia*, (i. e. *Meſopotamia*) and its companions, ולא היה יודע היכן, *and he knew not "where* he was, as a man that is in the dark;" all which agrees with our Apoſtle: and, from hence, it may be obſerved, that God ſometimes leads his people in ways they have not known, though they are known to him, and are always right; and that it is the property of faith to follow God, when it cannot ſee its way; and a great mercy it is to have God for a guide. This alſo ſhews, that *Abraham*'s faith agrees with the Apoſtle's definition of it, v. 1.

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[p] Bereſhit Rabba, §. 25. fol. 21. 3.

[q] Zohar in Gen. fol. 44. 2. 3. Jarchi in Gen. v. 24. Wiſd. c. iv. 11,12,13,14.

Ver. 9. *By faith he ſojourned in the land of promiſe*, &c.] The land of *Canaan*, ſo called, becauſe it was promiſed to *Abraham* and his ſeed; and is typical of heaven, which is not by the works of the law, but by the free promiſe and grace of God: here *Abraham* ſojourned for a while, *as in a ſtrange country*; which was not his native place, and not his own, but another's; ſee *Acts* vii. 5. and an idolatrous one; here he ſojourned by faith, believing, that as it was promiſed, it would be given to him, and his ſeed: ſo all God's people are ſojourners in this world, ſtrangers and pilgrims in it; this is not their dwelling-place; they do not belong to it, but to another; their ſtay in it, is but for a while; and, whilſt they are in it, don't look upon themſelves at home, but are looking out for another, and better country; they are unknown to the men of the world, and the men of the world are ſtrangers to them; tho' they have a civil converſation with them, they ſeparate from them, both as to prophaneneſs and ſuperſtition, and live by faith, in the expectation of the heavenly country, as *Abraham* alſo did: *dwelling in tabernacles with Iſaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the ſame promiſe*; the ſame promiſed land, the ſame promiſed bleſſings, and the ſame promiſed ſeed, the Meſſiah; ſee *Gen.* xii. 3. and xxvi. 3, 4. and xxviii. 13, 14. with theſe *Abraham* dwelt, for he lived until *Iſaac* was ſeventy-five years of age, and *Jacob* fifteen; he was an hundred years old, when *Iſaac* was born, *Gen.* xxi. 5. and he lived one hundred and ſeventy-five years, *Gen.* xxv. 7. and *Iſaac* was ſixty years old, when *Jacob* was born, *Gen.* xxv. 26. and *Abraham* dwelt with them in tabernacles, or tents, which they pitched at pleaſure, and moved from place to place. So true believers, as they are *Abraham*'s ſeed, they are heirs with him, according to the promiſe; and are heirs together of the grace of life; and dwell in earthly tabernacles, in houſes of clay, which are erected for a while, and then taken down.

Ver. 10. *For he looked for a city which hath foundations*, &c.] Not the city of *Jeruſalem*, nor the Goſpel church-ſtate; but either the city of the new *Jeruſalem*, ſaid to have twelve foundations, *Rev.* xxii. 14. and in which glorious ſtate, *Abraham*, with the reſt of the ſaints, being raiſed from the dead, will in perſon poſſeſs the promiſed land; or elſe the ultimate glory of the ſaints in heaven, where God dwells, and keeps his palace; and which will be the dwelling-place of the ſaints, and will have in it many habitations; and which will be, both peaceable and ſafe, and full of glory, riches, joy and pleaſure; and, into which, none but holy and righteous perſons will enter; the *foundations* of which, are the everlaſting love of God, eternal election, the covenant of grace, the promiſe and preparation of it by God, from the foundation of the world, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, his blood and righteouſneſs; which ſhew the immoveableneſs of it, it being oppoſed to the tabernacles *Abraham*, *Iſaac* and *Jacob* dwelt in, and to the tranſitory enjoyments of this world: and for this ſure, immoveable and comfortable ſtate of things, *Abraham* was *looking* by faith; he looked through, and above temporal things, to ſpiritual things; he went through difficulties with chearfulneſs, did not greedily covet earthly things, but looked with diſdain upon them, and to heaven with faith, affection, and earneſt deſire; and this proves his faith to be, as that is defined, ver. 1. *whoſe builder and maker is God*: God the Father has prepared this glory from the foundation of the world, and has promiſed it, before the world began, and has choſen his people to it; the Spirit of God makes it known, and prepares them for it; and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt is the forerunner entred, who is gone to get it ready for them, and will put them into the poſſeſſion of it: this ſhews the ſuperior excellency of this city, or glorious ſtate; and, that God has the ſole right to diſpoſe of it.

Ver. 11. *Through faith alſo Sarah herſelf*, &c.] Some copies add *being barren*; and ſo read the *Vulgate Latin*, and all the *Oriental* verſions; which is a circumſtance, which makes her faith appear the greater: but it is a queſtion, whether the Apoſtle ſpeaks of the faith of *Sarah*, or of *Abraham*; ſome think, he ſpeaks of *Abraham*'s faith; and that it was through his faith, that *Sarah* conceived; and obſerve, that the laſt clauſe may be rendred, *becauſe he judged him faithful*, &c. and the rather, becauſe the Apoſtle, both before, and after, is ſpeaking of *Abraham*'s faith, ver. 8, 9, 10, 17. and in ver. 12. mention is made only of one, even of *Abraham*; and in *Rom.* iv. 17. only notice is taken of *Abraham*'s faith, reſpecting this matter; nor is *Sarah*'s faith obſerved in the hiſtory of it, but her diffidence: but why may not *Sarah* be joined with *Abraham*, in this commendation, as well as *Iſaac* and *Jacob*? and though, at firſt, ſhe diſtruſted, yet ſhe, afterwards, feared, and believed: other women are mentioned in this catalogue of believers; and they ſhare in the ſame grace and priviledges, as men: and *Sarah*, being a believer, as well as *Abraham*, *received ſtrength to conceive ſeed*: ſometimes, *ſtrength* itſelf ſignifies *ſeed*, as in *Prov.* xxxi. 3. and ſo to receive ſtrength, is to receive ſeed;

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[r] Jarchi in Gen. xii. 1.

[s] Bereſhit Rabba, §. 60. fol. 52. 3.

which the female does as from the male; hence that ſaying of the *Jews*[t], the male does not receive ſtrength from another, but the female, מקבלת כח, *receiveth ſtrength* from another; but here it is to be underſtood of receiving power from God to retain ſeed, received from men, and conceive by it; which *Sarah*, in her circumſtances, without the interpoſition of the almighty power, could never have done. The nymph *Anobret* is ſo called, in imitation of this conception of *Sarah*'s; or as ſhe is called in the *Phœnician* language, חן ענברת, which ſignifies *conceiving by grace*; as this conception muſt be entirely aſcribed to the power and grace of God: *and was delivered of a child when ſhe was paſt age*; of bearing and bringing forth children, being ninety years of age, *Gen.* xvii. 17. Now tho' the conception, bearing, and bringing forth of children are things natural, ordinary, and common, yet here was a particular promiſe reſpecting this matter; and there were great difficulties in nature attending it, and ſuch as to reaſon were inſuperable; but theſe were got over, thro' the power and grace of God, and which is aſcribed to faith in the faithfulneſs of a promiſing God: *becauſe ſhe judged him faithful who had promiſed*; that ſhe ſhould have a ſon at the time of life; ſee the note on ch. x. 23.

Ver. 12. *Therefore ſprang there even of one*, &c.] That is, *Abraham*: the *Arabic* verſion has here a ſtrange interpolation; "this faith *Iſaac* and *Rebecca* conceived in mind, and ſo there were born "of one, *Eſau* and *Jacob*." *And him as good as dead*; being an hundred years of age; ſee the note on *Rom.* iv. 19. The *Ethiopic* verſion reads, *the bodies of both were like a dead carcaſs*; both of *Abraham* and *Sarah*: ſo many *as the ſtars of the ſky in multitude, and as the ſand which is by the ſea-ſhore innumerable*; as was promiſed to *Abraham*, *Gen.* xv. 5. and xxii. 17. which has been fulfilled, *Iſ.* x. 22. and will ſtill have a further fulfillment, *Hoſ.* i. 10.

Ver. 13. *Theſe all died in faith*, &c.] Not all the ſeed of *Abraham*, but all the believers in the preceding verſes, excepting *Enoch*, particularly the three patriarchs, with *Sarah*; theſe died a corporal death, which is common to all, to the righteous, and to the wicked; and yet ſaints die not as other men; they die in faith, having the grace itſelf, which being once implanted, can never be loſt; and ſometimes in the exerciſe of it, as theſe believers did: they died in the faith of their poſterity, inheriting the land of *Canaan*, and in the faith of the promiſed Meſſiah, and in the believing views of the heavenly glory; and ſo to die, is comfortable to themſelves, and a confirmation of the truth of religion to others, and is very precious, deſirable, and gainful. It may be rendered, *according to faith*; they died according to the life of faith they lived, and the doctrine of faith they profeſſed, being the Lord's both living and dying. *Not having received the promiſes*; the things promiſed, the land of *Canaan*, the Meſſiah, and the bleſſings of the Goſpel diſpenſation; they had the promiſes of theſe things, and though they were not fulfilled in their days, they believed they would be fulfilled, and died in the faith of them: *having ſeen them afar off*; the things themſelves in the promiſe; as *Abraham* ſaw the going forth of his poſterity out of *Egypt*, after they had been afflicted four hundred years, and ſaw the day of Chriſt at a greater diſtance ſtill, *Gen.* xv. 13, 14. *John* viii. 56. *And were perſuaded of* them, *and embraced* them; they had a full aſſurance of faith, that what was promiſed would be fulfilled; and they took a kind of poſſeſſion of them before hand, as *Abraham* did of the land of *Canaan*, by ſojourning in it; as did alſo *Iſaac* and *Jacob*; and all of them by faith embraced the Meſſiah, and dealt with, and laid hold upon his blood, righteouſneſs, ſacrifice, and grace, by which they were ſaved, as New Teſtament ſaints are. *And confeſſed that they were ſtrangers and pilgrims on the earth*; for they ſojourned in the land of *Canaan*, as in a ſtrange land, as the ſaints do in this world; ſee ver. 9. And they were pilgrims, travelling thro' this world to the heavenly country, and they confeſſed themſelves to be ſuch, *Gen.* xlvii. 9. nor are believers aſhamed to own and confeſs their mean eſtate in this world; for it is only with reſpect to earth, and earthly things, that they are ſtrangers and pilgrims, and only whilſt they are on earth; and it is therefore but for a little time, that they are ſo, ere long they'll be at home, and know as they are known.

Ver. 14. *For they that ſay ſuch things*, &c.] That they are ſtrangers and pilgrims on earth: *declare plainly that they ſeek a country*; heaven, ſo called, for the largeneſs of it; it is a good land, a land of uprightneſs; a pleaſant land, a land of reſt, tho' a land afar off; here the Father of Chriſt, and Chriſt himſelf, and all his people dwell: the *Syriac* verſion renders it, *their own city*; the place of their nativity, of which they were citizens: the act of *ſeeking* it ſuppoſes ſome things, with reſpect to the place where they were, as that they were in a ſtrange land, had no ſettlement there, nor ſatisfaction in it, and that they ſat looſe to the world, and the things of it; and ſome things reſpecting the country ſought after, as that they were not in it; that it was at a diſtance from them; that they had ſome knowledge of it, and of the way to it; that their deſires were after it, and that they had a ſtrong affection and value for it: the right way to this country is not mere civility and morality, nor legal righteouſneſs, nor birth privileges, nor ſubmiſſion to outward ordinances, nor a mere profeſſion of religion, but the Lord Jeſus Chriſt; he is the true way to eternal life; it is his righteouſneſs which gives a title to it, and on account of which believers expect it, tho' not without holineſs, nor without trouble. The right manner of ſeeking it, is, in the firſt place, above all things elſe, with the whole heart, by faith, and by patient continuance in well-doing. Many are the reaſons which may induce believers to ſeek it; it is their own, and their Father's country; it is a better one than that in which they are; and becauſe of the company they ſhall there enjoy, and the work they ſhall be employed in; and becauſe of the happineſs they will be poſſeſſed of; and becauſe their inheritance, riches, and treaſures lie here.

Ver. 15. *And truly if they had been mindful of that* country, &c.] *Chaldea*, which was *Abraham*'s country: *from whence they came out*; as *Abraham* and *Sarah* did, in perſon, and their poſterity in them: *they might have had opportunity to have returned*; for the way from *Canaan* or *Egypt*, where they ſojourned, was ſhort and eaſy: and though *Abraham* ſent his ſervant thither to take a wife for his ſon *Iſaac*, yet he would not go thither himſelf, nor ſuffer his ſon; nay, made his ſervant ſware that he would not bring him thither, if even the woman ſhould refuſe to come; ſo unmindful was he of that country; ſo little did he regard it; yea, ſo much did he deſpiſe it: ſo when men are called by grace, and converted, they come out of a country, this world, which is a land of ſin and iniquity, of great folly and ignorance, of darkneſs, and of the ſhadow of death; a deſert, a mere wilderneſs; a country where ſatan reigns, full of wicked and ungodly men; and which is the land of their nativity, as to their firſt birth: and they may be ſaid to come out of it, not in a natural and civil ſenſe, but in a ſpiritual one; and it is the character of a converted man, or one that is come out of the world, and is ſeparated from it, to be unmindful of it; not ſo as not to conſider from whence he came out, as owing to rich grace; nor ſo as not to lament the iniquities of it; nor ſo as not to pray for the converſion of the inhabitants of it; but he is unmindful of it, ſo as to be deſirous of the company of the men of it, or to have the affections ſet upon it, and the heart tickled with the pleaſures of it, or ſo as to deſire to return to it, for which there is a great deal of reaſon: for this country is not worth minding; and there is much in it to ſet a gracious mind againſt it; a good man has better things to mind; and it is below, and unworthy of a chriſtian, to mind the world; and beſides, worldly-mindedneſs is attended with bad conſequences. Moreover, tho' the ſaints have opportunities of returning, yet they do not; they are near it, and the country they are ſeeking is afar off; many things in it are alluring and enſnaring; a corrupt and deceitful heart often lingers after them, and ſatan is not wanting to tempt unto, and by them. And yet they do not return; ſome that bear the name of chriſtians, but are not truly ſuch, may wholly return, and never come back more; and true believers may ſtrangely go back again in ſome inſtances; but they ſhall not return finally and totally: for they are held and drawn with the cords of love; they are in the hands of Chriſt, and are ſecured in the covenant of grace; they are returned to Chriſt, in effectual vocation, who will keep them; they are of the houſhold of God, and ſhall be no more foreigners; ſhould they return in ſuch ſenſe, they would be condemned with the world, which cannot be.

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[t] Caphtor, fol. 21. 2.

Ver. 16. *But now they deſire a better country,* &c.] Which is not to be underſtood of the then preſent time, in which the Apoſtle wrote; for the patriarchs, of whom he ſpeaks, were not then on earth, nor in any third place between heaven and earth; they were then in heaven: and though there are indeed in heaven deſires after perfect happineſs, in ſoul and body; yet this intends the deſires of theſe ſaints when on earth, and which are common to all believers in the preſent ſtate of things; who, as the patriarchs deſired a better country than *Chaldea*, or even *Canaan* itſelf, ſo they deſire a better country than this world; and ſuch is heaven: it is on high; here are no noxious and peſtilential vapours, no miſts or fogs beclouding, no ſtorms and tempeſts, but it is full of light and glory; having the delightful breezes of divine love, and the comfortable gales of the bleſſed Spirit; here's no heat of perſecution, nor coldneſs, nor chills of affection; here is plenty of moſt delicious fruits, no hunger nor thirſt; and here are riches, which are ſolid, ſatisfying, durable, ſafe and ſure: many are the liberties and privileges here enjoyed; here's a freedom from a body ſubject to diſeaſes and death, from a body of ſin and death, from ſatan's temptations, from all doubts, fears, and unbelief, and from all ſorrows and afflictions; the inhabitants of it are the ſpirits of juſt men made perfect, angels, God, Father, Son, and Spirit, and Chriſt in human nature; upon all which accounts it is abundantly the better country, and as it is explained, *that is, an heavenly*; an inheritance in heaven, an houſe eternal in the heavens, the kingdom of heaven; and it is no wonder that it ſhould be deſired by ſuch who know it, and the nature of it: the word denotes a vehement deſire; and it is ſuch, that the ſaints deſire to depart from this world, and go unto it; which ſhows that they are weaned from this, and have ſeen ſomething glorious in another. Remarkable is the ſaying of *Anaxagoras* [v], who, when one ſaid to him, haſt thou no regard to thy country? anſwered, I have, and that the greateſt, pointing with his fingers towards heaven: and, ſays *Philo* the *Jew* [w], the ſoul of every wiſe man has heaven for his country, and the earth as a ſtrange place: *wherefore God is not aſhamed to be called their God*; their covenant God and Father; ſee the note on ch. viii. 10. even though he is the God of the whole earth: *for he hath prepared for them a city*; in his council and covenant, and by his Son; ſee the note on ver. 10. This proves, that he is not aſhamed of the relation he ſtands in to them, ſince he has made a proviſion for them to dwell with him to all eternity.

Ver. 17. *By faith Abraham when he was tried,* &c.] Or tempted; that is, by God, *Gen.* xxii. 1. This temptation or trial reſpects the command given by God to *Abraham*, to offer up his ſon *Iſaac*; which lays no foundation for a charge againſt God, either of ſin or cruelty; for God's will is the rule of juſtice and goodneſs, and whatever he requires is juſt and good; and tho' his creatures are bound by the laws he preſcribes them, he himſelf is not: beſides, he is the Lord of life, the giver and preſerver of it; and he has a right to diſpoſe of it, and to take it away, when, and by what means, and inſtruments, he thinks fit; to which may be added, that the ſecret will of God was not that *Iſaac* ſhould die, but a command was given to *Abraham* to offer him up, for the trial of his faith and love; this was a temptation of probation, not of ſeduction, or to ſin, as are the temptations of ſatan; for God tempts no man with ſin. The *Jews* ſpeak [x] of ten temptations, with which *Abraham* was tried, and in all which he ſtood; and ſay, that this of the binding of *Iſaac* was the tenth and laſt. *Offered up Iſaac*; he ſhewed great readineſs to do it; as ſoon as he had the command given him, he travelled three days journey in order to it; took the wood of the burnt-offering, and laid it on his ſon; took fire, and a knife in his hand, with the one to burn the wood, with the other to ſlay his ſon; he built an altar, laid the wood in order on it, and bound his ſon, and laid him on that; and took the knife, and ſtretched forth his hand to ſlay him, and fully intended to do it, had he not been prevented: and all this he did by faith; he believed the equity, juſtice, and wiſdom of the divine command; he was fully aſſured of the truth and faithfulneſs of God in his promiſes, however contrary this might ſeem thereunto; and he was ſtrongly perſuaded of the power of accompliſhing them in ſome way or another. This was great faith, and it was greatly tried, as follows: *and he that had received the promiſes offered up his only-begotten ſon*; he had a promiſe made him that he ſhould have a ſon, and that a numerous iſſue ſhould ſpring from him, which ſhould inherit the land of *Canaan*; yea, that the Meſſiah himſelf ſhould be of his ſeed: and he had *received* theſe promiſes; given credit to them, and firmly believed them, and fully expected the performance of them; as he had reaſon to do, ſince the firſt was fulfilled, the ſon was born; and yet now he is called to offer him up, on whom his expectation was placed: every thing was trying; it was an human creature he was called to offer, whoſe blood is not to be ſhed by man; a child of his own, a part of himſelf; a ſon, an own ſon; an only-begotten ſon; a ſon whom he loved; an *Iſaac*, a ſon of joy; a ſon of promiſe; and his heir, the ſon of his old age, and who was now a grown-up perſon. The *Jews* are divided about the age of *Iſaac* at his binding; *Joſephus*[y] ſays he was twenty-five years of age; others ſays twenty-ſix[z]; ſome ſay[a] thirty-ſix: but the more prevailing opinion is[b], that he was thirty-ſeven years of age; only *Aben*[c] *Ezra* makes him to be about thirteen; rejecting the more commonly received account, as well as that he was but five years old, that being an age unfit to carry wood. Some chriſtian writers have thought he might be about three and thirty years of age, the age of Chriſt when he ſuffered, of whom he was a type.

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[v] Laert. in Vit. Anaxag. p. 92.

[w] De Agricultura, p. 196. Vid. ib. de Confuſ. Ling. p. 331.

[x] Targum in Cant. vii. 8. Pirke Eliezer, c. 26. & c. 31. Maimon. Jarchi & Bartenora in Miſn. Abot, c. 5. §. 3.

Ver. 18. *Of whom it is ſaid*, &c.] That is, of *Iſaac*, *Abraham*'s own ſon, whom he offered up; or rather, *to whom it was ſaid*, as the *Vulgate Latin* and *Syriac* verſions render it; that is, to *Abraham*, for to him was this ſaid, *Gen.* xxi. 12. *that in Iſaac ſhall thy ſeed be called*; that numerous natural ſeed of his, which ſhould inherit the land of *Canaan*; and his ſpecial famous ſeed the Meſſiah, to whom the promiſes were made; ſee the note on *Rom.* ix. 7.

Ver. 19. *Accounting that God was able to raiſe him up, even from the dead*, &c.] *Abraham* did not go about this affair without thought; and yet he did not conſult with fleſh and blood; his reaſoning was the reaſoning of faith; and the concluſion of it was, not that he believed that God would raiſe his ſon from the dead, but that he was able to do it. He knew that he had received him at firſt, as it were, from the dead; he ſprung from his own dead body, and out of *Sarah*'s dead womb; and tho' his faith did not preſcribe to God, yet as he believed the doctrine of the reſurrection of the dead, he might believe that God would raiſe up his ſon from the dead, rather than that his promiſe ſhould fail; and this concluſion proceeded upon the power and faithfulneſs of God: *from whence alſo he received him in a figure*; or for an *example* of faith and obedience; or for a *parable* or *proverb*, that ſuch a proverbial expreſſion might be made uſe of, for the comfort and encouragement of ſaints in diſtreſſed and difficult circumſtances, as is in *Gen.* xxii. 14. or as a *type* of the death and reſurrection of Chriſt, whoſe type he was in other things, as well as in this; as in his birth, and the circumſtances of it; he was long promiſed and expected, as Chriſt was; his birth was beyond the ordinary courſe of nature, and attended with great joy; he was circumciſed the eighth day; at his weaning a great feaſt was made, typical of the Goſpel feaſt; and as he was perſecuted by *Iſhmael*, ſo was Chriſt by *Herod*, in his infancy: and he was a figure of him in his oblation; they were both ſons of *Abraham*; both only-begotten and beloved ſons; both heirs; both carried the wood on which they were offered; both were offered on a mount, and by their father, by whom neither of them were ſpared; and both by the command of God, and alone, none were with them: and *Iſaac* prefigured him in his deliverance; *Abraham* ſtretched out his hand, but was reſtrained, and not a bone of Chriſt muſt be broken; not *Iſaac*, but the ram was ſlain, not the divine, but the human nature ſuffered; both were delivered on the third day, the one as from death, the other really from death; and both returned to their father's houſe. Moreover, *Abraham* received his ſon in the ſimilitude of a reſurrection; it was as life from the dead; it was like the return of the prodigal, *Luke* xv. 32. *Abraham* looked upon him as dead to him, and *Iſaac* thought himſelf a dead man; ſo that he that was accounted as one dead, was received alive. The *Jews* ſpeak of this matter agreeable to the Apoſtle; they ſay, a man has two breaths or ſouls, one in this world, and another in the world to come; and of *Iſaac* they ſay[d], that "in the time "that he was offered upon the altar, his ſoul (or "*breath*) which he had in this world, *went out*; "and when it was ſaid to *Abraham* (or by him) "bleſſed be he that quickeneth the dead, his ſoul "(or breath) which he had in the world to come, "returned to him —— for אתחשב כמת, *he was* "*accounted as dead.*" They ſpeak of him, as if he was juſt dead; they ſay[e], "when he ſaw "the ſword over his neck, his breath fled from "him, and came to the place of the ſoul, כאילו חיה, "*as if he was at the point of giving up the ghoſt.*" So that a *Jew* can't find fault with the Apoſtle for expreſſing himſelf in this manner.

Ver. 20. *By faith Iſaac bleſſed Jacob and Eſau*, &c.] The hiſtory of this is in *Gen.* xxvii. 33—39. The former of theſe was a good man, and tho' the youngeſt ſon, he is ſet before, and was bleſſed before the eldeſt; and the latter was a wicked man, and yet had a bleſſing; for temporal bleſſings are enjoyed in common: and this bleſſing was prophetical, it was *concerning things to come*. *Jacob*'s bleſſing was plenty of temporal things, and under which may be ſignified the dews of divine grace, the fatneſs of God's houſe, the bread of life, and wine of divine love, which true *Iſraelites* partake of; alſo dominion over his brother, and government over nations, which had their accompliſhment in his poſterity; and may be expreſſive of the ſpiritual reign of the ſaints, and their dominion, by grace; and of the kingdom that ſhall hereafter be put into their hands; and of the extenſiveneſs of Chriſt's kingdom in the latter day, who was to ſpring from him. *Eſau*'s bleſſings were merely temporal ones, and reſpected things future, which were fulfilled in his poſterity; and theſe ſeveral bleſſings *Iſaac* pronounced upon them by faith, believing they would be beſtowed on them; and ſo his faith anſwered to the account of faith in ver. 1. It may be aſked how *Iſaac* can be ſaid to have bleſſed *Jacob* by faith, when he was deceived by him? it is certain he took him to be *Eſau*, when he bleſſed him, wherefore it was not the deſign of *Iſaac*, tho' it was the will of God, that he ſhould bleſs him, *Gen.* xxvii. 18—30. but yet notwithſtanding this, *Iſaac* might do it in faith, believing that the perſon he bleſſed, would be bleſſed, tho' he was miſtaken in him; and which he confirmed when he did know him, ver. 33, 37.

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[y] Antiq. l. 1. c. 13. §. 2.

[z] Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 6. 1.

[a] Targum Jon. in Gen. xxii. 1.

[b] Zohar in Gen. fol. 68. 2. & 74. 4. & 76. 2. Targ. Hieroſ. in Ex. xii. 42. Pirke Eliezer, c. 31. Juchaſin, fol. 9. 1. Prefat. Echa Rabbati, fol. 40. 2. Seder Olam Rabba, c. 1. p. 3. Shalſhelet Hakabala, fol. 3. 1.

[c] In Gen. xxii. 4.

[d] Toſaphta in Zohar in Gen. fol. 46. 21.

[e] Tzeror Hammor, fol. 58. 2. Pirke Eliezer, c. 31.

to which the Apoſtle may have reſpect; and beſides, he bleſſed him after this, *Gen.* xxviii. 1, 2, 3.

Ver. 21. *By faith Jacob, when he was a dying,* &c.] Which was the uſual time of bleſſing with the patriarchs; and the reaſon of it was, that what was ſaid might be more attended to and regarded, and more ſtrongly impreſſed upon the mind; and this is a proof that it was done in faith by *Jacob*, when there was no appearance of the fulfillment of theſe things, and it was not likely that he ſhould ſee them; and this ſhews the truth of what the Apoſtle ſays in ver. 1, 13. *bleſſed both the ſons of Joſeph*; whoſe names were *Ephraim* and *Manaſſeh*; the form of bleſſing them is recorded in *Gen.* xlviii. 15, 16. and which was done in faith, and under the direction and inſpiration of the Spirit of God, as appears by his ſetting *Ephraim* before *Manaſſeh*, ver. 13, 14, 17, 18, 19. and when he delivered the bleſſing he firmly believed it would be fulfilled, tho' they were then in a ſtrange land: *and worſhipped*, leaning *upon the top of his ſtaff*; not that he *worſhipped the top of his ſtaff*, as the *Vulgate Latin* verſion renders it, either his own, or *Joſeph's*, or any little image upon the top of it; which would be an inſtance of idolatry, and not faith, contrary to the ſcope of the Apoſtle; nor is there any need to interpret this of civil worſhip and reſpect paid to *Joſeph*, as a fulfillment of his dream, and with a peculiar regard to Chriſt, of whom *Joſeph* was a type; whereas, on the contrary, *Joſeph* at this time bowed to his father, as was moſt natural and proper, *Gen.* xlviii. 12. nor is there any neceſſity of ſuppoſing a different punctuation of *Gen.* xlvii. 31. and that the true reading is not *Mittah*, a bed, but *Matteh*, a ſtaff, contrary to all the *Targums* [f], and the *Talmud* [g], which read *Mittah*, a bed, ſeeing it is not that place the Apoſtle cites or refers to; for that was before the bleſſing of the ſons of *Joſeph*, but this was at the ſame time; and the Apoſtle relates what is no where recorded in *Geneſis*, but what he had either from tradition, or immediate revelation; or elſe he concludes it from the general account in *Gen.* xlviii. and the ſenſe is, that *Jacob*, having bleſſed the two ſons of *Joſeph*, being ſat upon his bed, and weak, he leaned upon the top of his ſtaff, and worſhipped God, and gave praiſe and glory to him, that he had lived to ſee, not only his ſon *Joſeph*, but his ſeed alſo; ſee *Gen.* xlviii. 2, 11, 20.

Ver. 22. *By faith Joſeph, when he died,* &c.] The riches and honours of *Joſeph*, as they could not ſecure him from death, ſo they did not make him unmindful of it; nor was he afraid of dying, or uneaſy about it; nor did his proſperity make him proud, or above ſpeaking to his brethren, nor revengeful to them, nor unthoughtful of their future afflictions; nor did his affluence of temporal things take off his regards to divine promiſes, nor weaken his faith in them, which is here commended in the following inſtances; as that at the time of his death, he *made mention of the departing of the children of Iſrael*; that is, out of the land of *Egypt*: he remembred it himſelf, and put his brethren in mind of it, by ſpeaking of it to their comfort, with great aſſurance; he knew they were well ſituated in the land of *Egypt*, and yet ſpeaks of their departure out of it; he foreſaw, and firmly believed they would be greatly afflicted in it, and that God would look upon them, and viſit them, and bring them out of it, into the land of *Canaan*; all which ſhows the ſtrength of his faith, and that it was about things not ſeen. *And gave commandment concerning his bones*; and the command was a very ſtrict one when he gave it; he took an oath of his brethren to fulfil it; it was concerning his bones, not his body; which ſhows, that he believed their departure out of *Egypt* was at a great diſtance, when his fleſh would be conſumed, and only his bones left, as it was about two hundred years after his death; it reſpects the carrying them out of *Egypt* with them, and burying them, in the land of *Canaan*, when they came there; and this is an inſtance of his humility, in chuſing to lie with his fathers, rather than with the kings, and great men in *Egypt*, and of his care to prevent idolatry, which he might obſerve the *Egyptians* would be prone unto: and this command was a great inſtance of *Joſeph's* faith, that the children of *Iſrael* would return to *Canaan*, and which might ſerve greatly to confirm their faith in it; it alſo ſhows his belief of the reſurrection of the dead, and of his enjoying the heavenly inheritance, ſignified by the land of *Canaan*; ſee *Gen.* l. 24, 25. the papiſts, from hence, plead for the reliques of ſaints; but it ſhould be obſerved, that it was at the requeſt, and by the command of *Joſeph*, that his bones were preſerved, which is not the caſe of the ſaints, whoſe reliques are pleaded for; beſides, theſe were the true and real bones of *Joſeph*, whereas the reliques of the ſaints are only pretended; to which may be added, that the bones of *Joſeph* were ordered to be buried, not to be ſhewed for a ſight, much leſs worſhipped, as popiſh reliques are. *Joſeph's* coffin, the *Jews* ſay [h], was put into the river *Nile*; and ſo ſays *Patricides* [i], an *Arabic* writer: others ſay, it was in the burying-place of the kings, until it was taken up and removed by *Moſes*.

Ver. 23. *By faith Moſes, when he was born,* &c.] Which is to be underſtood, not of the faith of *Moſes*, but of the faith of his parents, at the time of his birth; which was when *Pharaoh* had publiſhed an edict, ordering every male child to be caſt into the river; but inſtead of obeying this order, *Moſes was hid three months of his parents*; that is, in his father's houſe, as it is ſaid in *Acts* vii. 20. and is here expreſſed in the *Ethiopic* verſion. According to the *Targumiſt* [k], his mother went with him but ſix months, at the end of which he was born, and that ſhe hid him three months, which made up the nine, the time in which a woman uſually goes with child; and after that ſhe could conceal him no longer: the hiding of him is here aſcribed to both his parents, tho' in *Exod.* ii. 2 it is repreſented as the act of his mother; which, no doubt, was done, with the knowledge, advice, and conſent of his father; and the *Septuagint* there renders it, εσκεπασαν, *they hid him*; tho' the order of the hiſtory makes it neceſſary, that it ſhould be read in the ſingular. Parents ought to take care of their children; and perſons may lawfully hide themſelves, or others, from the cruelty of tyrants, and that as long as they can, for their ſafety; and this was ſo far from being wrong in the parents of *Moſes*, that it is commended, as an inſtance of faith: they believed the promiſe in general, that God would deliver the people of *Iſrael*; they believed this to be about the time of their deliverance, and had ſome intimation, that this child in particular would be the deliverer, *becauſe they ſaw he was a proper child*; not only of a goodly and beautiful countenance, but that he was peculiarly grateful and accceptable to God; they perceived ſomething remarkable in him, which to them was a token, ſhould be of his ſeed: and he had *received* theſe promiſes; given credit to them, and firmly believed them, and fully expected the performance of them; as he had reaſon to do, ſince the firſt was fulfilled, the ſon was born; and yet now he is called to offer him up, on whom his expectation was placed: every thing was trying; it was an human creature he was called to offer, whoſe blood is not to be ſhed by man; a child of his own, a part of himſelf; a ſon, an own ſon; an only-begotten ſon; a ſon whom he loved; an *Iſaac*, a ſon of joy; a ſon of promiſe; and his heir, the ſon of his old age, and who was now a grown-up perſon. The *Jews* are divided about the age of *Iſaac* at his binding; *Joſephus* [y] ſays he was twenty-five years of age; others ſays twenty-ſix [z]; ſome ſay [a] thirty-ſix: but the more prevailing opinion is [b], that he was thirty-ſeven years of age; only *Aben* [c] *Ezra* makes him to be about thirteen; rejecting the more commonly received account, as well as that he was but five years old, that being an age unfit to carry wood. Some chriſtian writers have thought he might be about three and thirty years of age, the age of Chriſt when he ſuffered, of whom he was a type.

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[f] Onkelos, Jonathan, & Jeruſalem in Gen. xlvii. 31.

[g] T. Bab. Megilla, fol. 16. 2.

[h] T. Bab. Sota, fol. 13. 1.

[i] Apud Hottinger. Smegma Oriental. l. 1. c. 8. p. 379.

[k] Jonathan Ben Uzziel in Exod. ii. 2.

Ver. 18. *Of whom it is ſaid, &c.*] That is, of *Iſaac*, *Abraham*'s own ſon, whom he offered up; or rather, *to whom it was ſaid*, as the *Vulgate Latin* and *Syriac* verſions render it; that is, to *Abraham*, for to him was this ſaid, *Gen.* xxi. 12. *that in Iſaac ſhall thy ſeed be called*; that numerous natural ſeed of his, which ſhould inherit the land of *Canaan*; and his ſpecial famous ſeed the Meſſiah, to whom the promiſes were made; ſee the note on *Rom.* ix. 7.

Ver. 19. *Accounting that God was able to raiſe him up, even from the dead, &c.*] *Abraham* did not go about this affair without thought; and yet he did not conſult with fleſh and blood; his reaſoning was the reaſoning of faith; and the concluſion of it was, not that he believed that God would raiſe his ſon from the dead, but that he was able to do it. He knew that he had received him at firſt, as it were, from the dead; he ſprung from his own dead body, and out of *Sarah*'s dead womb; and tho' his faith did not preſcribe to God, yet as he believed the doctrine of the reſurrection of the dead, he might believe that God would raiſe up his ſon from the dead, rather than that his promiſe ſhould fail; and this concluſion proceeded upon the power and faithfulneſs of God: *from whence alſo he received him in a figure*; or for an *example* of faith and obedience; or for a *parable* or *proverb*, that ſuch a proverbial expreſſion might be made uſe of, for the comfort and encouragement of ſaints in diſtreſſed and difficult circumſtances, as is in *Gen.* xxii. 14. or as a *type* of the death and reſurrection of Chriſt, whoſe type he was in other things, as well as in this; as in his birth, and the circumſtances of it; he was long promiſed and expected, as Chriſt was; his birth was beyond the ordinary courſe of nature, and attended with great joy; he was circumciſed the eighth day; at his weaning a great feaſt was made, typical of the Goſpel feaſt; and as he was perſecuted by *Iſhmael*, ſo was Chriſt by *Herod*, in his infancy: and he was a figure of him in his oblation; they were both ſons of *Abraham*; both only-begotten and beloved ſons; both heirs; both carried the wood on which they were offered; both were offered on a mount, and by their father, by whom neither of them were ſpared; and both by the command of God, and alone, none were with them: and *Iſaac* prefigured him in his deliverance; *Abraham* ſtretched out his hand, but was reſtrained, and not a bone of Chriſt muſt be broken; not *Iſaac*, but the ram was ſlain, not the divine, but the human nature ſuffered; both were delivered on the third day, the one as from death, the other really from death; and both returned to their father's houſe. Moreover, *Abraham* received his ſon in the ſimilitude of a reſurrection; it was as life from the dead; it was like the return of the prodigal, *Luke* xv. 32. *Abraham* looked upon him as dead to him, and *Iſaac* thought himſelf a dead man; ſo that he that was accounted as one dead, was received alive. The *Jews* ſpeak of this matter agreeable to the Apoſtle; they ſay, a man has two breaths or ſouls, one in this world, and another in the world to come; and of *Iſaac* they ſay [d], that "in the time "that he was offered upon the altar, his ſoul (or "*breath*) which he had in this world, *went out*; "and when it was ſaid to *Abraham* (or by him) "bleſſed be he that quickeneth the dead, his ſoul "(or breath) which he had in the world to come, "returned to him —— for אתחשב כמת, *he was* "*accounted as dead.*" They ſpeak of him, as if he was juſt dead; they ſay [e], "when he ſaw "the ſword over his neck, his breath fled from "him, and came to the place of the ſoul, כאילו חיה, "*as if he was at the point of giving up the ghoſt.*" So that a *Jew* can't find fault with the Apoſtle for expreſſing himſelf in this manner.

Ver. 20. *By faith Iſaac bleſſed Jacob and Eſau, &c.*] The hiſtory of this is in *Gen.* xxvii. 33—39. The former of theſe was a good man, and tho' the youngeſt ſon, he is ſet before, and was bleſſed before the eldeſt; and the latter was a wicked man, and yet had a bleſſing; for temporal bleſſings are enjoyed in common: and this bleſſing was prophetical, it was *concerning things to come*. *Jacob*'s bleſſing was plenty of temporal things, and under which may be ſignified the dews of divine grace, the fatneſs of God's houſe, the bread of life, and wine of divine love, which true *Iſraelites* partake of; alſo dominion over his brother, and government over nations, which had their accompliſhment in his poſterity; and may be expreſſive of the ſpiritual reign of the ſaints, and their dominion, by grace; and of the kingdom that ſhall hereafter be put into their hands; and of the extenſiveneſs of Chriſt's kingdom in the latter day, who was to ſpring from him. *Eſau*'s bleſſings were merely temporal ones, and reſpected things future, which were fulfilled in his poſterity; and theſe ſeveral bleſſings *Iſaac* pronounced upon them by faith, believing they would be beſtowed on them; and ſo his faith anſwered to the account of faith in ver. 1. It may be aſked how *Iſaac* can be ſaid to have bleſſed *Jacob* by faith, when he was deceived by him? it is certain he took him to be *Eſau*, when he bleſſed him, wherefore it was not the deſign of *Iſaac*, tho' it was the will of God, that he ſhould bleſs him, *Gen.* xxvii. 18—30. but yet notwithſtanding this, *Iſaac* might do it in faith, believing that the perſon he bleſſed, would be bleſſed, tho' he was miſtaken in him; and which he confirmed when he did know him, ver. 33, 37.

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[y] Antiq. l. 1. c. 13. §. 2.

[z] Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 6. 1.

[a] Targum Jon. in Gen. xxii. 1.

[b] Zohar in Gen. fol. 68. 2. & 74. 4. & 76. 2. Targ. Hieroſ. in Ex. xii. 42. Pirke Eliezer, c. 31. Juchaſin, fol. 9. 1. Prefat. Echa Rabbati, fol. 40. 2. Seder Olam Rabba, c. 1. p. 3. Shalſhelet Hakabala, fol. 3. 1.

[c] In Gen. xxii. 4.

[d] Toſaphta in Zohar in Gen. fol. 46. 21.

[e] Tzeror Hammor, fol. 58. 2. Pirke Eliezer, c. 31.

to which the Apoſtle may have reſpect; and beſides, he bleſſed him after this, *Gen.* xxviii. 1, 2, 3.

Ver. 21. *By faith Jacob, when he was a dying,* &c.] Which was the uſual time of bleſſing with the patriarchs; and the reaſon of it was, that what was ſaid might be more attended to and regarded, and more ſtrongly impreſſed upon the mind; and this is a proof that it was done in faith by *Jacob*, when there was no appearance of the fulfillment of theſe things, and it was not likely that he ſhould ſee them; and this ſhews the truth of what the Apoſtle ſays in ver. 1, 13. *bleſſed both the ſons of Joſeph*; whoſe names were *Ephraim* and *Manaſſeh*; the form of bleſſing them is recorded in *Gen.* xlviii. 15, 16. and which was done in faith, and under the direction and inſpiration of the Spirit of God, as appears by his ſetting *Ephraim* before *Manaſſeh*, ver. 13, 14, 17, 18, 19. and when he delivered the bleſſing he firmly believed it would be fulfilled, tho' they were then in a ſtrange land: *and worſhipped*, leaning *upon the top of his ſtaff*; not that he *worſhipped the top of his ſtaff*, as the *Vulgate Latin* verſion renders it, either his own, or *Joſeph*'s, or any little image upon the top of it; which would be an inſtance of idolatry, and not faith, contrary to the ſcope of the Apoſtle; nor is there any need to interpret this of civil worſhip and reſpect paid to *Joſeph*, as a fulfillment of his dream, and with a peculiar regard to Chriſt, of whom *Joſeph* was a type; whereas, on the contrary, *Joſeph* at this time bowed to his father, as was moſt natural and proper, *Gen.* xlviii. 12. nor is there any neceſſity of ſuppoſing a different punctuation of *Gen.* xlvii. 31. and that the true reading is not *Mittah*, a bed, but *Matteh*, a ſtaff, contrary to all the *Targums* [f], and the *Talmud* [g], which read *Mittah*, a bed, ſeeing it is not that place the Apoſtle cites or refers to; for that was before the bleſſing of the ſons of *Joſeph*, but this was at the ſame time; and the Apoſtle relates what is no where recorded in *Geneſis*, but what he had either from tradition, or immediate revelation; or elſe he concludes it from the general account in *Gen.* xlviii. and the ſenſe is, that *Jacob*, having bleſſed the two ſons of *Joſeph*, being ſat upon his bed, and weak, he leaned upon the top of his ſtaff, and worſhipped God, and gave praiſe and glory to him, that he had lived to ſee, not only his ſon *Joſeph*, but his ſeed alſo; ſee *Gen.* xlviii. 2, 11, 20.

Ver. 22. *By faith Joſeph, when he died,* &c.] The riches and honours of *Joſeph*, as they could not ſecure him from death, ſo they did not make him unmindful of it; nor was he afraid of dying, or uneaſy about it; nor did his proſperity make him proud, or above ſpeaking to his brethren, nor revengeful to them, nor unthoughtful of their future afflictions; nor did his affluence of temporal things take off his regards to divine promiſes, nor weaken his faith in them, which is here commended in the following inſtances; as that at the time of his death, he *made mention of the departing of the children of Iſrael*; that is, out of the land of *Egypt*: he remembred it himſelf, and put his brethren in mind of it, by ſpeaking of it to their comfort, with great aſſurance; he knew they were well ſituated in the land of *Egypt*, and yet ſpeaks of their departure out of it; he foreſaw, and firmly believed they would be greatly afflicted in it, and that God would look upon them, and viſit them, and bring them out of it, into the land of *Canaan*; all which ſhows the ſtrength of his faith, and that it was about things not ſeen. *And gave commandment concerning his bones*; and the command was a very ſtrict one when he gave it; he took an oath of his brethren to fulfil it; it was concerning his bones, not his body; which ſhows, that he believed their departure out of *Egypt* was at a great diſtance, when his fleſh would be conſumed, and only his bones left, as it was about two hundred years after his death; it reſpects the carrying them out of *Egypt* with them, and burying them, in the land of *Canaan*, when they came there; and this is an inſtance of his humility, in chuſing to lie with his fathers, rather than with the kings, and great men in *Egypt*, and of his care to prevent idolatry, which he might obſerve the *Egyptians* would be prone unto: and this command was a great inſtance of *Joſeph*'s faith, that the children of *Iſrael* would return to *Canaan*, and which might ſerve greatly to confirm their faith in it; it alſo ſhows his belief of the reſurrection of the dead, and of his enjoying the heavenly inheritance, ſignified by the land of *Canaan*; ſee *Gen.* l. 24, 25. the papiſts, from hence, plead for the reliques of ſaints; but it ſhould be obſerved, that it was at the requeſt, and by the command of *Joſeph*, that his bones were preſerved, which is not the caſe of the ſaints, whoſe reliques are pleaded for; beſides, theſe were the true and real bones of *Joſeph*, whereas the reliques of the ſaints are only pretended; to which may be added, that the bones of *Joſeph* were ordered to be buried, not to be ſhewed for a ſight, much leſs worſhipped, as popiſh reliques are. *Joſeph*'s coffin, the *Jews* ſay [h], was put into the river *Nile*; and ſo ſays *Patricides* [i], an *Arabic* writer: others ſay, it was in the burying-place of the kings, until it was taken up and removed by *Moſes*.

Ver. 23. *By faith Moſes, when he was born,* &c.] Which is to be underſtood, not of the faith of *Moſes*, but of the faith of his parents, at the time of his birth; which was when *Pharaoh* had publiſhed an edict, ordering every male child to be caſt into the river; but inſtead of obeying this order, *Moſes was hid three months of his parents*; that is, in his father's houſe, as it is ſaid in *Acts* vii. 20. and is here expreſſed in the *Ethiopic* verſion. According to the *Targumiſt* [k], his mother went with him but ſix months, at the end of which he was born, and that ſhe hid him three months, which made up the nine, the time in which a woman uſually goes with child; and after that ſhe could conceal him no longer: the hiding of him is here aſcribed to both his parents, tho' in *Exod.* ii. 2 it is repreſented as the act of his mother; which, no doubt, was done, with the knowledge, advice, and conſent of his father; and the *Septuagint* there renders it, *εσκεπασαν*, *they hid him*; tho' the order of the hiſtory makes it neceſſary, that it ſhould be read in the ſingular. Parents ought to take care of their children; and perſons may lawfully hide themſelves, or others, from the cruelty of tyrants, and that as long as they can, for their ſafety; and this was ſo far from being wrong in the parents of *Moſes*, that it is commended, as an inſtance of faith: they believed the promiſe in general, that God would deliver the people of *Iſrael*; they believed this to be about the time of their deliverance, and had ſome intimation, that this child in particular would be the deliverer, *becauſe they ſaw he was a proper child*; not only of a goodly and beautiful countenance, but that he was peculiarly grateful and accceptable to God; they perceived ſomething remarkable in him, which to them was a token, that he would be the deliverer of God's people, and therefore they hid him; ſee the note on *Acts* vii. 20. *And they were not afraid of the kings commandment*; nor did they obſerve it, for it was contrary to nature, and to the laws of God, and to the promiſe of God's multiplying of that people, and to their hopes of deliverance: there is a great deal of courage and boldneſs in faith; and tho' faith may be weakned, it cannot be loſt; and a weak faith is taken notice of, as here; for tho' they feared not at firſt, they ſeem to be afraid afterwards; but when God deſigns to work deliverance, nothing ſhall prevent.

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[f] Onkelos, Jonathan, & Jeruſalem in Gen. xlvii. 31.

[g] T. Bab. Megilla, fol. 16. 2.

[h] T. Bab. Sota, fol. 13. 1.

[i] Apud Hottinger. Smegma Oriental. l. 1. c. 8. p. 379.

[k] Jonathan Ben Uzziel in Exod. ii. 2.

Ver. 24. *By faith Moſes, when he was come to years*, &c.] Or *was great*; a nobleman in *Pharaoh*'s court; or when he was arrived to great knowledge, being learned in all the wiſdom of the *Egyptians*; or rather, when he was well advanced in years, being full forty years of age, *Acts* vii. 22, 23. *refuſed to be called the ſon of Pharaoh*'s *daughter*; by whom *Moſes* was taken up out of the water; by whom he was named, and provided for; ſhe reckoned him as her own ſon, and deſigned him for *Pharaoh*'s ſucceſſor, as *Joſephus* reports [l]: he refuſed all this honour, both in words, and by facts; he denied that he was the ſon of *Pharaoh*'s daughter, as the words will bear to be rendered; for to be *called*, often ſignifies only to *be*; and by taking part with the *Iſraelites*, and againſt the *Egyptians*, he plainly declared, that his deſcent was from the former, and not the latter: and this diſcovered great faith; and ſhowed, that he preferred being called an *Iſraelite* to any earthly adoption, and the care of the church, and people of God, to his own worldly honour and intereſt; and that he believed the promiſes of God, before the flatteries of a court; and eſteemed afflictions and reproaches, with the people of God, and for his ſake, better than ſinful pleaſures, and earthly riches, as in the following words. Of *Pharaoh*'s daughter, ſee the note on *Acts* vii. 21.

Ver. 25. *Chuſing rather to ſuffer affliction with the people of God*, &c.] The *Iſraelites*, who were God's choſen and peculiar people, and were the true worſhippers of him; *Moſes* choſe to be with thoſe: the company and converſation of ſuch, is moſt eligible to every good man, becauſe God is with them; his word and ordinances are with them; there are large proviſions of grace in the midſt of them; ſo that it is profitable, delightful, and honourable, to be among them, and is attended with comfort, peace, and ſatisfaction: but then thoſe are a poor, and an afflicted people; affliction is with them, for the ſake of God, and Chriſt, and the truths, which they profeſs, and the worſhip and ſervice they are engaged in; and their afflictions are many and grievous: and now *Moſes* choſe to ſuffer theſe with them, to ſuffer the ſame afflictions they did, and to ſympathize with them: and this was more eligible to him, *than to enjoy the pleaſures of ſin for a ſeaſon*; meaning, either the pleaſures, honours, and riches in *Pharaoh*'s court, attended with ſin; as indulging himſelf in the luxury of a court, when his brethren were in diſtreſs; approving *Pharaoh*'s cruelty and perſecution, at leaſt conniving at it, and not oppoſing it, which could not be without ſin; carrying himſelf as the ſon of *Pharaoh*'s daughter, when he was an *Hebrew*; and preferring his own eaſe to the deliverance of his people; and now theſe, had he continued at court, would have been but for a ſhort ſeaſon: or elſe ſinful luſts in general are intended, in which men promiſe themſelves much pleaſure, when it is only imaginary, and laſts but for a while neither; and both may be intended, and are what the *Jews* call [m], תענוגי רגע, *pleaſures for a moment*, or momentary ones. And the reaſons which might induce *Moſes*, and ſo every good man, to ſuch a choice, may be taken partly from the nature of afflictions themſelves, which are ſuch that God has choſen for them, and appointed them unto, and which he gives them to ſuffer for his name, and which are an honour to them, and iſſue in their good, and in the glory of God; and partly from the nature of ſinful pleaſures; there is no ſolidity, nor ſatisfaction, in the beſt of worldly enjoyments; there can be no true pleaſure in ſin; there is always bitterneſs in the end, and it iſſues in death, if grace prevent not: now it was by faith *Moſes* made this choice, for it is manifeſtly contrary to fleſh and blood; it ſhowed him to be a man thoroughly acquainted with the nature of ſin; and that he looked beyond the things of ſenſe and time, to thoſe of eternity.

Ver. 26. *Eſteeming the reproach of Chriſt*, &c.] That is, either Chriſt perſonal; meaning not any reproach that lay upon Chriſt, as the immediate object of it; nor upon the people of *Iſrael* for the delay of his coming; but rather for the ſake of Chriſt: Chriſt was made known to the Old Teſtament ſaints, and they believed in him; he was typified by ſacrifices which they offered; and they were reproached for his ſake, for the ſacrifices they offered, and for the worſhip they performed, for their faith in the Meſſiah, and their expectation of him: or this may be underſtood of Chriſt myſtical, the church; called Chriſt, becauſe of the union, communion, ſympathy, and likeneſs there is between them, inſomuch that what is done to the one, is done to the other: when the ſaints are reproached, Chriſt himſelf is reproached; and therefore all reproaches of this nature ſhould be bore willingly, chearfully, courageouſly, patiently, and conſtantly: and ſuch *Moſes* reckoned *greater riches than the treaſures in Egypt*; he counted reproach itſelf riches; that is, he eſteemed that riches for which he was reproached, as Chriſt, his word, and ordinances, and communion with the ſaints in them; all which are comparable to gold, ſilver, and precious ſtones; yea, are more valuable and deſirable than thouſands of gold and ſilver, or than the treaſures in *Egypt*, which were very large; money, cattle, and lands coming into the hands of the king, thro' the ſeven years famine in it, *Gen.* xlvii. 14, 17, 20. and for which immenſe treaſure, treaſure-cities were built, *Exod.* i. 11. which would have become *Moſes*'s, had he been *Pharaoh*'s ſucceſſor, to which he bid fair, before he diſcovered himſelf. *For he had reſpect unto the recompence of the reward*; by which is meant, either the deliverance of the *Iſraelites* from their bondage, which he judged a ſufficient recompence for all his afflictions and reproaches he endured, as the Apoſtle *Paul* did for the elect's ſake, for the ſake of Chriſt's body the church, *Col.* i. 24. 2 *Tim.* ii. 10. or the enjoyment of the land of *Canaan*, promiſed for an inheritance to the ſeed of *Abraham*; or the enjoyment of God's preſence among his people, who is their ſhield, and exceeding great reward; or rather eternal glory, which is the reward of the inheritance, and is a reward of grace, and not of debt; this he had reſpect unto, looked for, and believed he ſhould enjoy; ſo that his faith was of things unſeen; and this cauſed him to prefer even afflictions with the ſaints, and reproaches for Chriſt, to all worldly riches and grandeur.

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[l] Antiq. l. 2. c. 9. §. 7.

[m] Aben Ezra in Pſ. xxiii. 4.

Ver. 27. *By faith he forſook Egypt*, &c.] Either when he fled to *Midian*; this was before the eating of the paſſover, and ſo it ſtands in its proper order; whereas, his going out of *Egypt* with the children of *Iſrael* was after it, and mentioned in ver. 29. The word, *forſook*, implies fleeing; and then it was, when *Pharaoh*'s wrath was kindled againſt him: but it may be ſaid, that *Moſes* ſeemed then to be afraid of it, ſeeing he fled: to which it may be anſwered; that he ſhewed great courage and intrepidity, in ſlaying the *Egyptian*; and he took no methods to gain the king's favour, when the thing was known: his fleeing was conſiſtent with courage, and was a point of prudence, and in obedience to the will of God: his departure ſhews, that he would not deſiſt from the work, he was called unto; but that he waited God's time, when he ſhould be again employed; wherefore he endured affliction and meanneſs in *Midian*, and waited, patiently, 'till God ſhould call him again to ſervice: or this is to be underſtood of the time, when he led the children of *Iſrael* out of *Egypt*; when he had many difficulties on the part of that people: they were ſeated and ſettled in the land of *Egypt*; they knew nothing of *Canaan*, nor of the way to it; and, beſides, that was in the poſſeſſion of others; they were a very moroſe, impatient, ſtiff-necked, and an ungovernable people, whom he led into a wilderneſs, without food or arms; and their number was very large; and he had many difficulties, on the part of *Pharaoh*, and the *Egyptians*. The *Iſraelites* were in the midſt of them; he brought them out from among them, with the ſpoil of them in their hands; he knew the changeableneſs and fury of *Pharaoh*'s mind, and yet he led them out, and left *Egypt*, *not fearing the wrath of the king*; of *Pharoah*, king of *Egypt*; tho' it was, as the roaring of a lion: ſo ſuch as are called by grace, from a ſtate of darkneſs and bondage, and out of a ſtrange land, forſake this world, and leave their ſituation in it, their ſinful luſts and pleaſures, the company of wicked men, and every thing that is near and dear, when it is in competition with Chriſt; not fearing the wrath of any temporal king or prince; nor of Satan, the prince of this world: *for he endured*; afflictions, reproach and menaces, with patience and courage; his mind was not broken with them, nor overborn by them; he expected divine help, and perſevered; and ſo do ſuch, who are called by the grace of God: *as ſeeing him who is inviſible*; that is God, as the *Syriac* verſion expreſſes it; who is not to be ſeen corporally, tho' intellectually; not in his eſſence, tho' in his works of creation and providence; not immediately, tho' mediately in and through Chriſt; not perfectly now, tho' face to face hereafter. *Moſes* ſaw him viſionally, and ſymbolically in the buſh; he ſaw him by faith, and with the eyes of his underſtanding; and ſo believing in his power, faithfulneſs, *&c.* did what he did.

Ver. 28. *Through faith he kept the paſſover*, &c.] Which *Moſes* made, or appointed by divine direction; he kept it, with all its rites and ceremonies, and cauſed the people of *Iſrael* to obſerve it; and which he did, in faith of the ſpeedy deliverance of the children of *Iſrael*, from the houſe of bondage; and in the faith of the Meſſiah, of whom the paſſover was a type; ſee the note on 1 *Cor.* v. 7. The *Syriac* verſion reads, *through faith they kept the paſſover*; that is, the *Iſraelites*: *and the ſprinkling of blood*; of the paſchal lamb; which was received into a baſon, and was ſprinkled upon the lintel, and two ſide-poſts of the doors of the houſes, in which the *Iſraelites* dwelt; which was done with a bunch of hyſſop dipped into it: *leſt he that deſtroyed the firſt-born ſhould touch them*; for the Lord, ſeeing the blood ſprinkled, as above, when he ſmote the firſt-born of *Egypt*, paſſed by the houſes of the *Iſraelites*, ſo diſtinguiſhed; and they were all ſafe within, and not one of them touched: this was typical of the blood of Chriſt being ſprinkled upon the hearts and conſciences of his people; whereby they are purified through faith; which blood is looked upon by *Jehovah*, ſo that juſtice paſſes by them; and they are all ſafe and ſecure, and will be, when others are deſtroyed; nor can they be hurt by the ſecond death.

Ver. 29. *By faith they paſſed through the red-ſea, as by dry* land, &c.] Not through a river, but through the ſea, the red-ſea, the ſea of *Suph*, or weeds; ſee the note on *Acts* vii. 36. Some ſay, they came out on the ſame ſide, they went in; but, it ſhould ſeem rather, by the phraſe here uſed, that they paſſed through it, from one ſide to the other; and, that all one, as if it had been on dry ground; even *Moſes*, and all the children of *Iſrael*: and this they did by faith, believing, that God would make a paſſage quite through it for them, and deliver them out of the hands of their enemies, who were cloſely purſuing them: *which the Egyptians aſſaying to do, were drowned.* Theſe, were *Pharoah*, and his numerous army; who, obſerving the *Iſraelites* march on through the ſea, as on dry land, thought they could do the ſame; and ſo made an attempt, but were every one of them drowned; in juſt retaliation for the cruel edict for drowning the male infants of the *Iſraelites*, as ſoon as born.

Ver. 30. *By faith the walls of Jericho fell down*, &c.] Of themſelves, not from any natural cauſe: the *Jews* ſay [n], they ſunk right down into the ground, and were ſwallowed up; even the whole wall fell round about, as the *Septuagint* verſion in *Joſh.* vi. 20. expreſſes it: or, it may be only that, which was over-againſt the camp of *Iſrael*, as *Kimchi* obſerves; ſince *Rahab*'s houſe was built upon the wall, and yet fell not. And this was by the faith of *Joſhua*, and the *Iſraelites*, who believed the walls would fall, at the ſound of the rams horns, as God ſaid they ſhould: *after they were compaſſed about ſeven days*; which was a trial of their faith and patience: the *Jews* ſay [o], it was on the ſabbath-day, that they fell: this was a preternatural act, and can't be aſcribed to any ſecond cauſe; nothing is impoſſible with God; no defences, ever ſo ſtrong, are any thing againſt him; unlikely means are ſometimes made uſe of by him; faith ſticks at nothing, when it has the Word of God to reſt upon; and what God does, he does in his own time, and in his own way. This may be an emblem, of the fall of the walls of the hearts of unregenerate men; of their unbelief, hardneſs, enmity, and vain confidence; and of the converſion and ſubjection of them unto Chriſt, thro' the preaching of the Goſpel; which, in the eyes of men, is, as mean and deſpicable, and as unlikely to bring about ſuch an event, as the ſounding of the rams horns might be to the inhabitants of *Jericho*: and, it may be alſo an emblem of the fall of *Babylon*, and other antichriſtian cities, *Rev.* xvi. 19.

Ver. 31. *By faith the harlot Rahab*, &c.] The *Targum* on *Joſh.* ii. 1. calls her אתתא פונדקיתא *a woman, that kept a victualling houſe*: this paraphraſe

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[n] Targum Jon. Jarchi & Kimchi in Joſh. vi. 5.

[o] Jarchi & Kimchi in ver. 15.

phraſe is taken notice of by *Jarchi* and *Kimchi* on the place, who interpret it, *a ſeller of food:* and even the *Hebrew* word זונה is ſo explained by a conſiderable *Jewiſh* writer [p]; and this may rather ſeem to be the ſenſe of the word, and to be her proper buſineſs, from the ſpies going to her houſe, as being an houſe of entertainment; and from *Salmon*'s marrying her, which might be thought ſtrange, that a prince of *Iſrael* would, had ſhe been a perſon of ill fame; to which may be added, the encomiums of her, for her faith and works, both by our Apoſtle, and by *James:* but yet, the conſtant uſe of the word, in this form, the teſtimonies of two Apoſtles, and her making no mention of her huſband and children, when ſhe agreed with the ſpies, confirm the generally received character of her, that ſhe was an harlot. Some *Jewiſh* writers ſay [q], that ſhe was ten years of age, when the *Iſraelites* came out of *Egypt*; and, that all the forty years they were in the wilderneſs, זנתה, *ſhe played the harlot*; and was one and fifty years of age, when ſhe was proſelyted. She is called an harlot; not with reſpect to her preſent, but paſt life. In the *Greek* text, ſhe is here called *Raab*, as alſo in *Jam.* ii. 25. and ſo in the *Septuagint* in *Joſh.* ii. 1. and i. 5. *Rachab*, which exactly anſwers to the *Hebrew* word רחב, *Joſh.* ii. 1. and by *Joſephus* [r] *Rachabe.* This woman was a wonderful and ſingular inſtance of the free, ſovereign, diſtinguiſhing, powerful, and efficacious grace of God; being one, that ſprung from *Canaan*, and was of the nations, that were abhorred; but, being called by grace, became an eminent believer: ſhe believed, that the God of the *Iſraelites*, was God in heaven and on earth; that he had given the land of *Canaan* to them; ſhe received the ſpies, and hid them thro' that faith; ſhe cauſed them to ſwear by the Lord, that they would ſhew mercy to her, and her family; and gave credit to them; and obſerved their inſtructions: and ſo ſhe *periſhed not with them that believed not*; the inhabitants of *Jericho*, who were unbelievers, and diſobedient, and all periſhed by the ſword: but *Rahab* periſhed not, neither temporally, nor eternally; her temporal ſalvation, was an emblem and type of her ſpiritual ſalvation; her receiving the ſpies, was an emblem of a ſoul's receiving the Goſpel, and the miniſters of it; the ſcarlet thread, that was hung out, was an emblem of the blood of Chriſt, by which, ſins, tho' as ſcarlet, are made white, as wool; and the ſaving of her whole family, is an emblem of the compleat ſalvation of all the elect, ſoul and body by Chriſt: *when ſhe had received the ſpies with peace*; and had hid them, for ſome time, in her houſe, and then let them down by the wall; and who, at the taking of the city, ſaved her, and hers, according to their promiſe and oath: the number of theſe ſpies were two, according to *Joſh.* ii. 1. The *Jews* [s] ſay, one of them, was *Phinehas*, the ſon of *Eleazar*, the high-prieſt; and others [t] of them ſay, they were *Phinehas* and *Caleb*.

Ver. 32. *And what ſhall I more ſay*, &c.] Intimating he had ſaid enough, to prove the definition of faith, he had given; and that the elders, by it, had obtained a good report; and yet he had not ſaid all, he could; and that he had ſo much to ſay, that he could not ſay all: *for the time would fail me*; either the time of life, and ſo it is an hyperbolical expreſſion; or the time convenient for the writing this epiſtle: to enumerate all the inſtances of faith, and enlarge upon them, would take up too much of his time, and make the epiſtle prolix and tedious: this form of ſpeech is often uſed by *Philo*, the *Jew* [u], and by *Julian*, the emperor [w]. It may be obſerved, that many, who are not mentioned by name, do not ſtand excluded from being believers; and that the number of believers, under the Old Teſtament, was very large: *to tell of Gedeon*; ſo *Gideon* is called in the *Septuagint* verſion of *Judg.* vi. 11. and other places; and by *Joſephus* [x], and *Philo* [y], the *Jew*, as here: he was a man, but of a mean extract, and had his infirmities; and, even in the exerciſe of that particular grace, for which he is mentioned; but was, no doubt, a good man, and is commended for his faith; which appeared in aſcribing former mercies and preſent afflictions to the Lord; in deſtroying the altar of *Baal*; in crediting the Word of the Lord, that *Iſrael* ſhould be ſaved by him; which he ſhewed, by the preparation he made, and in marching, againſt a numerous army, with only three hundred men, and they but weak: all which may be ſeen in the book of *Judges*, chapters vi, vii, and viii. and of *Barak*; who was before *Gideon*, as *Jephtha* was before *Sampſon*, and *Samuel* before *David*; for the Apoſtle does not obſerve ſtrict order, reciting theſe in haſte. *Barak*, when the Word of the Lord came to him, ſhewed ſome diffidence, yet acted, in obedience to it, under the ſole direction and counſel of a woman; he engaged *Siſera*'s vaſt army, with a ſmall number, and gave the glory of the victory to the Lord, *Judg.* iv. and v. *and* of *Sampſon*; who was a child of promiſe, and devoted to the Lord; he was famous for his great ſtrength; he had his infirmities, but was, without doubt, a good man: the laſt act of his life ſeems to be a great inſtance of faith; he did it, with calling upon the Lord; he was ſtrengthened for it, by the Lord; he acted, not as a private perſon, but as the judge of *Iſrael*; nor did he act from private revenge, but from zeal for God, and love to his country; and his intention was not to deſtroy himſelf, but his enemies; in which he acted as a type of Chriſt: *and* of *Jephtha*; the *Syriac* verſion calls him *Nepthe*, and the *Arabic* verſion *Naphtah*; he was baſe born; and, for a time, joined himſelf to vain men, but became a believer; and is remarked for his faith, in aſcribing the conqueſts of *Iſrael* in the wilderneſs to the Lord; in fighting with the *Ammonites*, whom he conquered; and in his conſcientiouſneſs, in obſerving his vow, *Judg.* xi. of *David alſo*; a man after God's own heart, raiſed up to fulfil his will; whoſe faith appeared in his dependence on God, when he fought with *Goliah*; in encouraging himſelf in the Lord his God, when in exile and diſtreſs; and in believing his intereſt in the covenant of grace, when his houſe and family were in a diſagreeable ſituation, and he juſt going out of the world: *and Samuel*; a child of prayer, and early devoted to the Lord, who miniſtred to him, when a child; was always ready to hearken to his voice; was uſed very familiarly by him, and behaved with great uprightneſs, all his days; and had a good report of God and man: *and of the prophets*; from *Samuel* to *John* the *Baptiſt*, who were famous for their truſt in God, their faith in the Meſſiah, and and for their honourable walk and converſation.

Ver. 33. *Who through faith ſubdued kingdoms*, &c.] As *David* did particularly; who ſubdued *Syria*, *Moab*, *Ammon*, *Amaleck*, *Edom*, and the *Philiſtines*,

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[p] R. Sol. Urbin. Ohel Moed, fol. 24. 1.

[q] T. Bab. Zebachin. fol. 116. 2. Shalſhalet Hakabala fol. 7. 2.

[r] Antiq. l. 5. c. 1. §. 2.

[s] Laniado in Joſh. ii. 1.

[t] Tanchuma apud Maſum in ib.

[u] De Creat. Princip. p. 735. Merced. Meret. p. 863. De Legat. ad Caium p. 1037. De Somniis, p. 1116.

[w] Orat. I. p. 50, 62. 75.

[x] Antiq. Jud. l. 5. c. 6. §. 2. &c.

[y] De Confuſione Ling. p. 339.

liſtines, 2 *Sam.* viii. 12, 14. War, in ſome caſes, is lawful; and kingdoms may be ſubdued; and faith makes uſe of means to do it: theſe kingdoms, tho' ſubdued by faith, yet not without fighting. Believers have no reaſon to be afraid of kings, or kingdoms; and this ſhould encourage the ſaints, in their combats with the powers of darkneſs. *Wrought righteouſneſs*; exerciſed vindictive juſtice, in taking vengeance on the enemies of God, and his people; civil righteouſneſs, in the diſcharge of their offices; and moral righteouſneſs, in their converſation before God and men; which, being imperfect, was not juſtifying: wherefore they ſtood in need of another, and better righteouſneſs, which is perfect and durable; and, in conſequence of which being known, embraced and received, men work righteouſneſs: it may be obſerved, that to do works of righteouſneſs in faith, and by it, is ſomething very conſiderable; it is reckoned here among actions of the greateſt fame; and, that true faith is an operative grace, it works by love, and is always attended with works of righteouſneſs; and that righteouſneſs is a fruit and evidence of faith; and that faith is not the believer's righteouſneſs; and that the righteouſneſs of faith is not that which faith works, but which it receives. *Obtained promiſes*; the promiſe of the land of *Canaan*; particular promiſes of victory over their enemies; promiſes concerning the Meſſiah, and of everlaſting life and happineſs: their faith was not the cauſe of promiſes being made, nor of their being fulfilled; but was the grace, by which theſe believers received them, believed them, and waited for the accompliſhment of them; and, in ſome ſenſe, enjoyed the things promiſed before-hand; their faith realizing things future and inviſible to them: to obtain a promiſe from God, is a great and marvellous thing; it is an inſtance of rich grace; and there is never a promiſe, but what is great in itſelf, and precious to the ſaints: all God's promiſes are obtained; they are ſure, and are certainly fulfilled; and it is the work and buſineſs of faith to receive, and enjoy them. *Stopped the mouths of lions:* a lion was ſlain by *Sampſon*, and another by *David*; but the moſt remarkable inſtance of ſtopping the mouths of lions, was in the den, into which *Daniel* was caſt; and this may encourage the faith of God's people, when they are in the midſt of men, comparable to lions; and may animate them not to fear the devouring lion, ſatan.

Ver. 34. *Quenched the violence of fire*, &c.] Which may be ſaid to be done, when a believer, or a righteous man, is delivered out of it, as *Lot* from *Sodom*, when God rained fire and brimſtone on it; when, by prayer, it is ſtopped, as by *Moſes*, at *Taberah*, *Numb.* xi. 1, 2. when perſons are not hurt by it, as *Shadrach*, *Meſhach*, and *Abednego*, when caſt into *Nebuchadnezzar*'s fiery furnace; and many of the martyrs have triumphed in the flames: ſo believers are delivered out of the fire of afflictions, and are not conſumed thereby; and quench the fiery darts of ſatan, thrown at them; and are untouched by the fire of God's wrath, in every ſtate and caſe; and ſhall not be hurt of the ſecond death, which is a lake of fire, burning with brimſtone. *Eſcaped the edge of the ſword*; and were not deſtroyed by it; as *Lot*, *Abraham*, *Moſes*; *Joſhua*, the *Judges*, *David*, *Elijah*, *Eliſha*, and others. *Out of weakneſs were made ſtrong*; being recovered from bodily diſeaſes, as *David*, *Hezekiah*, &c. by an increaſe of bodily ſtrength, as *Samſon*; by being filled with courage, and ſtrength of mind, when before timorous, as *Barak*, &c. ſo believers, when they have been weak, in the exerciſe of grace, have been made ſtrong: *waxed valiant in fight*; as *Barak*, *Gideon*, *David*, &c. ſo believers, in the ſpiritual fight of faith, have waxed valiant; being engaged in a good cauſe, and under a good captain; being well provided with armour, and aſſured of victory, and a crown. *Turned to flight the armies of the aliens*; ſuch, as the *Canaanites*, the *Moabites*, *Ammonites*, *Philiſtines*, and others; who, were put to flight, by *Joſhua*, the *Judges*, *David*, and others.

Ver. 35. *Women received their dead raiſed to life again*, &c.] As the widow of *Sarepta*, and the *Shunamite*, 1 *Kings* xvii. 22. 2 *Kings* iv. 34, 35. Their ſons were really dead, and they received them alive again, from the hands of the prophets, *Elijah* and *Eliſha*, in the way of a reſurrection, and by faith; by the faith of the prophets: *and others were tortured*; racked, or tympanized; referring to the ſufferings of ſeven brethren, and their mother, in the times of *Antiochus*, recorded in 2 *Maccab.* vii. as appears, from the kind of torment endured by them; from the offer of deliverance rejected by them; and from their hope of the reſurrection: for it follows, *not accepting deliverance*; when offered them by the king, 2 *Maccab.* vii. 24, 25. *that they might obtain a better reſurrection*; which they died in the faith of, 2 *Maccab.* vii. 9, 11, 14. The reſurrection of the ſaints, which is unto everlaſting life, is a better reſurrection, than mere metaphorical, and figurative ones, as deliverances from great afflictions, which are called deaths; or real ones, which were only to a mortal ſtate, and in order to die again, as thoſe under the Old Teſtament, and under the New, before the reſurrection of Chriſt; or then the reſurrection of the wicked: for the reſurrection, the ſaints will obtain, will be firſt, at the beginning of the thouſand years; the wicked will not live, 'till after they are ended; it will be by virtue of union to Chriſt, whereas, the wicked will be raiſed, merely by virtue of his power; the ſaints will riſe with bodies glorious, powerful, and ſpiritual, the wicked with baſe, vile, and ignoble ones; the righteous will come forth to the reſurrection of life, the wicked to the reſurrection of damnation. The conſideration of the better reſurrection is of great uſe to ſtrengthen faith, under ſufferings, for righteouſneſs ſake, and this is obtained by ſuffering; not that ſuffering is the meritorious cauſe of it, but ſaints in this way come to it; it is promiſed to ſuch, and it will be attained unto, and enjoyed by ſuch; for all that live godly, do, and muſt ſuffer perſecution in one way or another.

Ver. 36. *And others had trial of* cruel *mockings*, &c.] As *Sampſon* by the *Philiſtines*; *Eliſha* by the children, whom the bears devoured; *Jeremiah* by *Paſhur*, and others; the *Jews* by *Sanballat* and *Tobiah*, when rebuilding the temple; the prophets, whom God ſent to the *Jews*, as his meſſengers, *Judg.* xvi. 25—28. 2 *Kings* ii. 23, 24. *Jer.* xx. 7, 8. *Nehem.* iv. 1.—6. 2 *Chron.* xxxvi. 15, 16. and *ſcourgings*; or ſmitings, as *Jeremiah* and *Micajah*, *Jer.* xx. 2. 2 *Chron.* xviii. 23, 24. *yea moreover of bonds and impriſonment*; as *Joſeph*, *Sampſon*, and *Jeremy*, *Gen.* xxxix. 20. *Judg.* xvi. 21. *Jer.* xx. 2. and xxxvii. 15. Now, of theſe things they had trial, or experience; their graces were tried by them, and they patiently endured them.

Ver. 37. *They were ſtoned*, &c.] As *Naboth*, by the order of *Ahab*, 1 *Kings* xxi. 13,---19. *Zachariah* in the court of the Lord's houſe; 2 *Chron.* xxiv. 21. and the character of *Jeruſalem* is, that ſhe ſtoned the Prophets that were ſent unto her, *Matt.* xxiii. 37. *They were ſawn aſunder*; to which there ſeems to be an alluſion in *Matt.* xxiv. 51. There is no inſtance of any good men being ſo uſed in Scripture: perhaps reference is had to ſome that ſuffered thus in the time of *Antiochus*. The *Jews* have a tradition, that the Prophet *Iſaiah* was ſawn aſunder in the times of *Manaſſeh*, and by his order; which ſome think the Apoſtle refers unto; though it ſeems to be all fictitious, and ill put together. The tradition is in both *Talmuds*: in the one, the account is this; [z] that "*Manaſſeh* ſought to kill *Iſaiah*, and he fled "from him, and fled to a cedar, and the cedar "ſwallowed him up, all but the fringe of his garment; they came and told him (*Manaſſeh*), "he ſaid unto them, go and ſaw the cedar, ונסרו "*and they ſawed* the cedar, and blood was ſeen to "come out." And in the other [a] thus, "ſays "*R. Simeon ben Azzai*, I found a book of genealogies in *Jeruſalem*, and in it was written, that "*Manaſſeh* ſlew *Iſaiah*." And after relating the occaſion of it, being ſome Paſſages in *Iſaiah*, *Manaſſeh* was diſpleaſed with and objected to; and the Prophet not thinking it worth his while to return an anſwer, or attempt to reconcile them with other paſſages objected, knowing that the king would uſe him contemptuouſly; he is made to ſay, "I "will ſwallow (or put myſelf into) a cedar, they "brought the cedar, ונסרו *and ſawed it aſunder*, "and when it (the ſaw) came to his mouth, he "expired." Another *Jewiſh* writer [b] out of the *Midraſh*, reports it thus; "*Manaſſeh* ſought to "ſlay him, and *Iſaiah* fled, and the Lord remembred him, and he was ſwallowed up in the "middle of a tree; but there remained without "the tree the fringe of his garment; and then "*Manaſſeh* ordered the tree to be cut down, and "*Iſaiah* died." And it is become a generally received opinion of the antient chriſtian writers, that *Iſaiah* was ſawn aſunder; as of *Juſtin Martyr* [c], *Origen* [d], *Tertullian* [e], *Lactantius* [f], *Athanaſius* [g], *Hilary* [h], *Cyril* of *Jeruſalem* [i], *Gregory Nyſſene* [k], *Jerom* [l], *Iſidorus Peluſiota* [m], *Gregentius* [n], *Procopius Gazæus* [o], and others; but more perſons ſeem to be deſigned: *were tempted*; either by God, as *Abraham* and *Job*; or by the Devil, as all the ſaints are; or rather by cruel tyrants, to deny the faith, and renounce the worſhip of God, as *Eleazar*, and the ſeven brethren with their mother; at leaſt ſome of them were, *Maccab.* vi. and vii. chapters. Some think the true reading is ἐπρήσθησαν, *were burned*, as one of the ſeven brethren were, 2 *Maccab.* vii. 5. and as *Zedekiah* and *Ahab* were roaſted in the fire, by the king of *Babylon*, *Jer.* xxix. 22. though they were lying prophets, and cannot be referred to here; ſee *Dan.* xi. 33. This clauſe is wanting in the *Syriac* verſion: *were ſlain with the ſword*; as the prieſts at *Nob*, by the order of *Saul*; 1 *Sam.* xxii. 18, 19. the Prophets of the Lord by *Jezabel*, 1 *Kings* xviii. 23. and xix. 10. and many in the times of the *Maccabees*; *Dan.* xi. 33. 2 *Maccab.* v. 14. *they wandered about in ſheeps ſkins and goats ſkins*; with the wool or hair upon them; and with ſuch *Elijah* and *Eliſha* might be arrayed; ſince the former is ſaid to be a hairy man, or covered with a hairy garment, as *John* the *Baptiſt* was, who came in his ſpirit and power, and alſo in his form; and the latter wore the mantle of the other; 2 *Kings* i. 8. and ii. 8, 14. and to theſe, reference may be had, who were obliged to wander about, becauſe of thoſe who ſought their lives; and was the caſe of others who were forced, by reaſon of perſecution, to quit their habitations, and wander abroad; and ſome cloathed themſelves in this manner, to ſhew their contempt of the world, and their contentment with mean apparel; and others, becauſe they could get no other raiment: being *deſtitute*; of bodily food, as *Elijah*, who was fed by ravens, and by the widow of *Sarepta*; 1 *Kings* xvii. 6,—15. *afflicted*; preſſed, drove to the greateſt ſtraits, deſpairing of life, and weary of it, as the ſame prophet, 1 *Kings* xix. 4,---10. *tormented*; or evilly treated, reproached, vilified, perſecuted, and made the filth of the world, and the offscouring of all things.

Ver. 38. *Of whom the world was not worthy*, &c.] Theſe words are inſerted in a parentheſis, to remove or prevent ſuch objections as theſe; that they were reſtleſs and unquiet perſons, that made diſturbance in the world, and ſo unfit to live in it; and that they were deſervedly puniſhed for crimes they were guilty of; and to ſhew the great worth and ineſtimable value of the people of God, which exceeds that of the whole world; and to intimate the removal of them out of the world, or from dwelling among the men of it, is by way of puniſhment to it: *they wandered in deſarts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth*; as *Elijah* did; 1 *Kings* xviii. 4. and xix. 9, 10. and many in the times of the *Maccabees*; 2 *Maccab.* x. 6.

Ver. 39. *And theſe all having obtained a good report through faith*, &c.] This may either be limited to the ſufferers in the preceding verſes, who were martyred, or ſuffered martyrdom for the faith, as the words may be rendred; and who are called martyrs or witneſſes, in ch. xii. 1. and ſo the *Ethiopic* verſion renders the clauſe, *and all theſe were witneſſes concerning the faith*: or it may be extended to all the inſtances of faith throughout the chapter; and ſo the Apoſtle reaſſerts what he had ſaid, *ver.* 2. having proved it by a variety of examples; ſee the note there: *received not the promiſe*; not that they did not receive the promiſe of the land of *Canaan*, for ſo did *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, *Jacob*, *Joſeph*, *Moſes*, &c. nor that they did not receive the promiſe of deliverance and victory, for ſo did *Joſhua*, the *Judges* and others; or that they did not receive the promiſe of eternal life, for that they all did; but the promiſe of the Meſſiah, that is, the Meſſiah promiſed: for they had the promiſe, but not the thing; who is called *the promiſe*, emphatically, becauſe he is the firſt and grand promiſe; and becauſe in him all the promiſes center, and are yea, and amen: him the Old Teſtament ſaints received not; they greatly deſired to ſee him in the fleſh; they ſaw him by faith; they believed in him, and rejoiced in the expectation of his coming; but he was not exhibited to them incarnate. Now ſince theſe ſaints ſo ſtrongly believed, and ſo chearfully ſuffered before Chriſt came; the Apoſtle's Argument is, that much more ſhould the ſaints now, ſince Chriſt is come, and the promiſes received, go on believing in him, and readily ſuffering for his ſake; ſee ch. xii. 1,---4.

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[z] T. Hieroſ. Sanhedrin, fol. 28. 3.

[a] T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 49. 2.

[b] Shalſhelet Hakabala, fol. 12. 2.

[c] Dialog. cum Tryph. p. 249.

[d] In Jer. Homil. 19. p. 197. in Iſ. Homil. 1. fol. 101. & in Matt. Homil. 26. fol. 51.

[e] De Patientia, c. 14. Scorpiace, c. 8.

[f] De vera ſapientia, l. 4. c. 11.

[g] Vol. I. de Incarnat. p. 55, 65. Vol. II, dicta & Interpret. Parab. p. 325, 353.

[h] Contr. Conſtant, p. 199. & enarrat. in Pſ. cxviii. p. 465.

[i] Catecheſ. 2. §. 9. p. 29. & Catecheſ. 13. §. 3. p. 169.

[k] Vol. II. de Caſtigat. p. 749.

[l] In Iſ. lvii. 2.

[m] L. 4. Ep 205.

[n] Diſputat. cum Herbano Judaeo, p. 19.

[o] In Reg. l. 4. c. 21. 16.

Ver. 40. *God having provided ſome better thing for us,* &c.] Not a better ſtate of the church, in ſuch reſpect, as to be free from ſuffering reproach and perſecutions; for this is the caſe of ſaints under the New Teſtament as under the Old; nor the felicity of the ſoul after death; nor any greater degree of happineſs in the other world; nor the perfection of bleſſedneſs in ſoul and body; things common to all believers; but Chriſt, as now exhibited in the fleſh: Jeſus Chriſt was the ſame in the yeſterday of the Old Teſtament, as he is in the preſent day of the Goſpel diſpenſation; he was ſlain from the foundation of the world; and the ſaints then were ſaved as now, by his grace and righteouſneſs: only with this difference between them and us; they had Chriſt in the promiſe, we have him himſelf that was promiſed; they had him in type and ſhadow, we have him in reality and truth; they believed in, and were ſaved by Chriſt, who was to come; we believe in him, and are ſaved by him, as being come. Hence our caſe is, with reſpect to theſe circumſtances, better than theirs; we have a better covenant, or a better adminiſtration of the covenant of grace; we have a better prieſthood, and a better ſacrifice; the goſpel is diſpenſed in a better manner, more clearly and fully: our condition is better than theirs; they were as children under tutors and governours, and were under a ſpirit of bondage; but we are redeemed from under the law, and are clear of its burdenſome rites, as well as of its curſe and condemnation; and have the ſpirit of liberty and adoption. And this God has *provided* for us in his council and covenant: for this denotes God's determination, deſignation, and appointment of Chriſt, to be the propitiatory ſacrifice for ſin; and has reſpect to the nature and circumſtances of his death, which were fixed in the purpoſes of God; as well as the time of his coming into the world, and the ſeaſon of his death; and in all this God has ſhewn his great goodneſs, his amazing love, and the riches of his grace: and his end herein is, *that they without us ſhould not be made perfect*; the Old Teſtament ſaints are perfectly juſtified, perfectly ſanctified, and perfectly glorified; but their perfection was not by the law, which made nothing perfect, but by Chriſt, and through his ſacrifice, blood and righteouſneſs; and ſo were not made perfect without us; ſince their ſins and ours are expiated together by the ſame ſacrifice; their perſons and ours juſtified together, by the ſame righteouſneſs; they and we make up but one church, and general aſſembly; and as yet all the elect of God among the *Jews* are not called, and ſo are not perfect in themſelves, or without us. *Jews* and Gentiles will incorporate together in the latter day; and beſides, they and we ſhall be glorified together, in ſoul and body, to all eternity.

CHAP. XII.

IN this chapter the Apoſtle preſſes to a conſtant exerciſe of faith and patience, amidſt the various afflictions the ſaints are exerciſed with; delivers out ſeveral exhortations uſeful in the chriſtian life; and ſhews the difference between the legal and goſpel diſpenſations. Having in the preceding chapter given many illuſtrious inſtances and examples of faith, he makes uſe of this cloud of witneſſes, as he calls them, to engage the *Hebrews* to drop their unbelief, and run with faith and patience the race ſet before them, ver. 1. and which he further urges from the example of Chriſt; from his concern in faith, being the author and finiſher of it; from what he ſuffered when here on earth, both the contradiction of ſinners, and the death of the croſs, for the joy of having his people with him in heaven; and from his glorious ſtate, being ſet down at the right hand of God. Whereas, as yet, they had not been called to ſhed their blood in their warfare againſt ſin, ver. 2, 3, 4. And that they muſt expect chaſtiſement, and ſhould bear it patiently, he cites a paſſage of ſcripture out of *Prov.* iii. 11, 12. which ſuggeſts, that thoſe who are the children of God, and are loved and received by him, are chaſtened and ſcourged, ver. 5, 6. Wherefore this was no other than dealing with them as children; and ſhould they not be thus dealt with, it would be an argument that they were baſtards, and not ſons, ver. 7, 8. And next the Apoſtle argues from the right of parents to chaſtize their children, and the ſubjection that is yielded to them; that if the corrections of them, who were the fathers of their bodies, were quietly ſubmitted to; then much more ſhould thoſe of the father of their ſouls; and the rather, ſince the chaſtenings of the former are only for temporal good, and according to their fallible judgments; whereas the latter are for ſpiritual profit, and an increaſe of holineſs, ver. 9, 10. And though it muſt be allowed, that no chaſtening, for the preſent time, is matter of joy but of grief; yet the effects of them are the peaceable fruits of righteouſneſs, to them that are exerciſed by them, ver. 11. Wherefore the Apoſtle exhorts the believing *Hebrews* to encourage themſelves and others under afflictions; and to behave in ſuch manner, and carry it ſo evenly, that they might not be an occaſion of ſtumbling to weak believers, ver. 12, 13. He exhorts them in general to follow peace with all men, and particularly holineſs; which is abſolutely neceſſary to the beatific viſion of God, ver. 14. and to take care that no hereſy or immorality ſpring up among them, and be connived at, and cheriſhed by them, to the troubling of ſome, and defiling of others, ver. 15. and particularly, leſt the ſin of uncleanneſs, or any ſort of prophaneneſs ſhould be found among them; of which *Eſau*, the brother of *Jacob*, from whence they ſprung, was guilty; whoſe prophaneneſs lay in ſelling his birthright for a morſel of meat, and whoſe puniſhment was, that he ſhould be deprived of the bleſſing; which decree was irrevocable, notwithſtanding his tears, ver. 16, 17. and to enforce theſe exhortations, the Apoſtle obſerves to theſe believers, that they were not now under the law, but in a goſpel church ſtate. The terror of the legal diſpenſation they were delivered from, is deſcribed by the place where the law was given, a mount burning with fire; by circumſtances attending it, blackneſs, darkneſs, and tempeſt, and the ſound of a trumpet; by the matter of it, a voice of words, which they that heard, intreated they might hear no more; and by the effect the whole had upon *Moſes* himſelf, who quaked and trembled at what he ſaw and heard, ver. 18, 19, 20, 21. The happineſs of the goſpel diſpenſation, or of the goſpel church ſtate, is expreſſed bv the names of it, called mount Zion, the city of the living God, the new *Jeruſalem*; and by the company the ſaints have there, and their fellowſhip with them; angels innumerable; elect men, whoſe names are written in heaven, and whoſe ſpirits are made perfectly juſt; God the judge of all, and Jeſus the mediator of the new covenant; whoſe blood being ſprinkled, on their conſciences, ſpoke peace and pardon to them; ſuch as neither *Abel*'s blood nor ſacrifice could ſpeak, ver. 22, 23, 24. From whence the Apoſtle argues, that care ſhould be taken not to neglect and deſpiſe the voice of Chriſt, who is now in heaven, and ſpeaks from thence in his goſpel and ordinances; ſeeing they eſcaped not who rejected him that ſpake on earth, at mount *Sinai*, which was ſhaken by his voice; and the rather, ſince it appears from a prophecy in *Hagg.* ii. 6, 7. that under the goſpel diſpenſation, not only the earth but the heavens would be ſhaken, ver. 25, 26. which is an emblem of the ſhaking and removing the ordinances of the ceremonial law; that goſpel ordinances might take place, and remain for ever, verſe 27. Upon the whole, the Apoſtle exhorts the believing *Hebrews*, that ſeeing they had received the immoveable kingdom of grace, and were admitted into the goſpel diſpenſation, or church ſtate; that they would hold faſt the goſpel of the grace of God, and ſerve the Lord, according to his revealed will, with reverence and godly fear, which would be acceptable to him; or otherwiſe he would be a conſuming fire; as he is to all the deſpiſers and neglecters of his goſpel and ordinances, ver. 28, 29.

Ver. 1. *Wherefore ſeeing we alſo are compaſſed about*, &c.] As the *Iſraelites* were encompaſſed with the pillar of cloud, or with the clouds of glory in the wilderneſs, as the *Jews* ſay; ſee the note on 1 *Cor.* x. 1. to which there may be an alluſion here, ſince it follows, *with ſo great a cloud of witneſſes*; or *martyrs*, as the Old Teſtament ſaints, the inſtances of whoſe faith and patience are produced in the preceding chapter: theſe, ſome of them, were martyrs in the ſenſe in which that word is commonly uſed; they ſuffered in the cauſe, and for the ſake of true religion; and they all bore a noble teſtimony of God, and for him; and they received a teſtimony from him; and will be hereafter witneſſes for, or againſt us, to whom they are examples of the above graces: and theſe may be compared to a *cloud*, for the comfortable and reviving doctrines which they dropped; and for their refreſhing examples in the heat of perſecution; and for their guidance and direction in the ways of God; and more eſpecially for their number, being like a thick cloud, and ſo many, that they compaſs about on every ſide, and are inſtructive every way. Hence the following things are inferred and urged, *let us lay aſide every weight*; or burden; every ſin, which is a weight and burden to a ſenſible ſinner, and is an hindrance in running the chriſtian race; not only indwelling ſin, but every actual tranſgreſſion, and therefore to be laid aſide; as a burden, it ſhould be laid on Chriſt; as a ſin, it ſhould be abſtained from, and put off, with reſpect to the former converſation: alſo worldly cares, riches, and honours, when immoderately purſued, are a weight depreſſing the mind to the earth, and a great hindrance in the work and ſervice of God, and therefore to be laid aſide; not that they are to be entirely rejected, and not cared for and uſed, but the heart ſhould not be ſet upon them, or be over anxious about them: likewiſe the rites and ceremonies of *Moſes*'s law were a weight and burden, a yoke of bondage, and an intolerable one, and with which many believing *Jews* were entangled and preſſed, and which were a great hindrance in the performance of evangelical worſhip; wherefore the exhortation to theſe *Hebrews*, to lay them aſide, was very proper and pertinent, ſince they were uſeleſs and incommodious, and there had been a diſanulling of them by Chriſt, becauſe of their weakneſs and unprofitableneſs. Some obſerve, that the word here uſed ſignifies a tumour or ſwelling; and ſo may deſign the tumour of pride and vain-glory, in outward privileges, and in a man's own righteouſneſs, to which the *Hebrews* were much inclined; and which appears in an unwillingneſs to ſtoop to the croſs, and bear afflictions for the ſake of the Goſpel; all which is a great enemy to powerful godlineſs, and therefore ſhould be brought down, and laid aſide. The *Arabic* verſion renders it, *every weight of luxury*; all luxurious living being prejudical to real religion: *and the ſin which doth ſo eaſily beſet us*; the *Arabic* verſion renders it, *eaſy to be committed*; meaning either the corruption of nature in general, which is always preſent, and puts upon doing evil, and hinders all the good it can; or rather ſome particular ſin, as what is commonly called a man's conſtitution-ſin, or what he is moſt inclined to, and is moſt eaſily drawn into the commiſſion of; or it may be the ſin of unbelief is intended, that being oppoſite to the grace of faith, the Apoſtle had been commending, in the preceding chapter, and he here exhorts to; and is a ſin which eaſily inſinuates itſelf, and prevails, and that ſometimes under the notion of a virtue, as if it would be immodeſt, or preſumptuous to believe; the arguments for it are apt to be readily and quickly embraced; but as every weight, ſo every ſin may be deſigned: ſome reference may be had to *Lam.* i. 14. where the church ſays, that her tranſgreſſions were *wreathed*, ישתרגו, *wreathed themſelves*, or wrapped themſelves about her. The alluſion ſeems to be to runners in a race, who throw off every thing that incumbers, drop whatſoever is ponderous and weighty, run in light garments, and lay aſide long ones, which entangle and hinder in running, as appears from the next clauſe, or inference. *And let us run with patience the race that is ſet before us.* The ſtadium, or race-plot, in which the chriſtian *race* is run, is this world; the prize run for is the heavenly glory; the mark to direct in it, is Chriſt; many are the runners, yet none but the overcomers have the prize; which being held by Chriſt, is given to them: this race is *ſet before* the ſaints; that is, by God; the way in which they are to run is marked out by him in his word; the troubles they ſhall meet with in it, are appointed for them by him, in his counſels and purpoſes; the mark to direct them, is ſet before them in the Goſpel, even Jeſus, the author and finiſher of faith, whom they are to look unto; the length of their race is fixed for them, or how far, and how long they ſhall run; and the prize is determined for them, and will be given them, and which is held out for their encouragement, to have reſpect unto: and it becomes all the ſaints, and belongs to each, and every one of them, to *run* this race; which includes both doing and ſuffering for Chriſt; it is a motion forward, a preſſing towards the mark for the prize, a going from ſtrength to ſtrength, from one degree of grace to another; and to it ſwiftneſs and agility are neceſſary; and when it is performed aright, it is with readineſs, willingneſs, and chearfulneſs: it requires ſtrength and courage, and a removal of all impediments, and ſhould be done *with patience*; which is very neceſſary, becauſe of the many exerciſes in the way; and becauſe of the length of the race; and on account of the prize to be enjoyed, which is very deſirable: the examples of the ſaints, and eſpecially of Chriſt, the forerunner, ſhould move and animate unto it.

Ver. 2. *Looking unto Jeſus, the author and finiſher of our faith*, &c.] Not with bodily eyes, for at preſent he is not to be looked upon in this manner, but with the eyes of the underſtanding, or with the eye of faith; for faith is a ſeeing of the Son; it is a ſpiritual ſight of Chriſt, which is at firſt but glimmering, afterwards it increaſes, and is of a ſoul-humbling nature; it is marvellous and ſurprizing; it transforms into the image of Chriſt, and fills with joy unſpeakable, and full of glory: a believer ſhould be always looking to Chriſt, and off of every object elſe, as the word here uſed ſignifies. Chriſt is to be looked unto as *Jeſus*, a ſaviour, who being appointed and ſent by God to be a ſaviour, came, and is become the author of eternal ſalvation; and to him only ſhould we look for it: he is able and willing to ſave; he is a ſuitable, compleat, and only ſaviour; and whoever look to him by faith, ſhall be ſaved; and he is to be conſidered, and looked unto, as *the author and finiſher of faith*: he is the author or efficient cauſe of it; all men are by nature without it; it is not in the power of man to believe of himſelf; it is a work of omnipotence; it is an inſtance of the exceeding greatneſs of the power of God; and it is the operation of Chriſt, by his Spirit; and the increaſe of it is from him, *Luke* xvii. 5. and he is the finiſher of it; he gives himſelf, and the bleſſings of his grace, to his people, to maintain and ſtrengthen it; he prays for it, that it fail not; he carries on the work of faith, and will perform it with power; and brings to, and gives that which is the end of it, eternal life, or the ſalvation of the ſoul. *Who for the joy that was ſet before him*; the word αντι, rendered *for*, ſometimes ſignifies, *in the room* or *ſtead of*, as in *Matt*. ii. 22. and xx. 28. and is ſo rendered here in the *Syriac* and *Arabic* verſions; and then the ſenſe is, that Chriſt, inſtead of being in the boſom of the Father, came into this world; inſtead of being in the form of God, he appeared in the form of a ſervant; inſtead of the glory which he had with his Father from eternity, he ſuffered ſhame and diſgrace; inſtead of living a joyful and comfortable life on earth, he ſuffered a ſhameful and an accurſed death; and inſtead of the temporal joy and glory the *Jews* propoſed to him, he endured the ſhame and pain of the croſs: ſometimes it ſignifies the end for which a thing is, as in *Eph*. v. 31. and may intend that, for the ſake of which Chriſt underwent ſo much diſgrace, and ſuch ſufferings; namely, for the ſake of having a ſpiritual ſeed, a numerous offspring with him in heaven, who are his joy, and crown of rejoicing; for the ſake of the ſalvation of all the elect, on which his heart was ſet; and for the glorifying of the divine perfections, which was no ſmall delight and pleaſure to him. And to this agrees the *Chaldee* paraphraſe of *Pſ*. xxi. 1. "O "Lord, in thy power ſhall the king Meſſiah, "יחדי, *rejoice*, and in thy redemption how greatly "will he exult!" And alſo becauſe of his own glory as mediator, which was to follow his ſufferings, and which includes his reſurrection from the dead, his exaltation at the right hand of God, and the whole honour and glory Chriſt has in his human nature; ſee *Pſ*. xvi. 8, 9, 10, 11. and with a view to all this, he *endured the croſs*; which is to be taken not properly for that frame of wood, on which he was crucified; but, improperly, for all his ſufferings, from his cradle to his croſs; and particularly the tortures of the croſs, being extended on it, and nailed unto it; and eſpecially the death of the croſs, which kind of death he endured to verify the predictions of it, *Pſ*. xxii. 16. *Zech*. xii. 10. and to ſhew that he was made a curſe for his people; and this being a *Roman* puniſhment, ſhews that the ſceptre was taken from *Judah*, and therefore the Meſſiah muſt be come; and that Chriſt ſuffered for the *Gentiles*, as well as *Jews*: and this death he *endured* with great courage and intrepidity, with much patience and conſtancy, and in obedience to the will of his Father: *deſpiſing the ſhame*; of the croſs; for it was an ignominious death, as well as a painful one; and as he endured the pain of it with patience, he treated the ſhame of it with contempt; throughout the whole of his life, he deſpiſed the ſhame and reproach that was caſt upon him; and ſo he did at the time of his apprehenſion, and when upon his trial, and at his death, under all the ignominious circumſtances that attended it; which ſhould teach us not to be aſhamed of the reproach of Chriſt, but count it an honour to be worthy to ſuffer ſhame for his name. *And is ſet down at the right hand of the throne of God*; which is in heaven; and is expreſſive of the majeſty and glory of God; and of the honour done to Chriſt in human nature, which is not granted to any of the angels: here Chriſt ſits as God's fellow, as equal to him, as God, and as having done his work as man, and mediator; and this may aſſure us, that when we have run out our race, we ſhall ſit down too, with Chriſt upon his throne, and be at reſt.

Ver. 3. *For conſider him*, &c.] In the greatneſs of his perſon, as God, the Son of God, the heir of all things; and in his offices of prophet, prieſt, and king, as the ſaviour of loſt ſinners, the leader and commander of the people, as the apoſtle and high-prieſt of our profeſſion: conſider him in his human nature, his converſation on earth, and what he did, and ſuffered for men; how that in his nature he was pure and holy, in his converſation harmleſs and innocent, in his deportment meek and lowly; who went about doing good to the ſouls of men, and at laſt ſuffered and died, and is now glorified: conſider the analogy between him and us, and how great is the diſproportion; and therefore if he was ill treated, no wonder we ſhould: conſider him under all his reproaches and ſufferings: *that endured ſuch contradiction of ſinners againſt himſelf*; againſt his perſon, they denying his deity, and ſpeaking againſt his ſonſhip, and againſt his offices; mocking him as a king, deriding him as a prophet, and treating him with the utmoſt contempt as a prieſt and ſaviour; and againſt his actions, his works of mercy to the bodies of men, when done on the ſabbath-day; his converſing with ſinners for the good of their ſouls, as if he was an encourager of them in ſin, and a partner with them; his miracles, as if they were done by the help of the devil; and againſt the whole ſeries of his life, as if it was criminal. Now we ſhould analogize this contradiction, and ſee what proportion there is between this, and what is endured by us: we ſhould conſider the aggravations of it, that it was *againſt himſelf*; ſometimes it was againſt his diſciples, and him thro' them, as it is now againſt his members, and him in them; but here it was immediately directly againſt himſelf: and this he endured *from ſinners*; ſome more ſecret, as the *Scribes*, *Sadducees*, and *Phariſees*; ſome more open, as the common people; ſome of them the vileſt of ſinners, the moſt abandoned of creatures, as the *Roman* ſoldiers, and *Herod*'s men of war: and this ſhould be conſidered, that we can't be contradicted by viler or meaner perſons; and it is worthy of notice, with what courage and bravery of mind, with what patience and invincible conſtancy he endured it: this ſhould be recollected for imitation and encouragement, *leſt ye be wearied*, and *faint in your minds*; contradiction is apt to make perſons weary, and faint, as *Rebekah* was, becauſe of the daughters of *Heth*, and as *Jeremiah* was, becauſe of the deriſion of the *Jews*, *Gen.* xxvii. 46. *Jer.* xx. 8, 9. but a conſideration of Jeſus, and of what he has endured, tends to relieve the ſaints in ſuch a condition; ſee *Matt.* x. 25. *Luke* xxiii. 31.

Ver. 4. *Ye have not yet reſiſted unto blood*, &c.] They had reſiſted ſin, and ſatan, and the world, the men of it, and the luſts of it, and its frowns and flatteries, and alſo falſe teachers, even every adverſary of Chriſt, and their ſouls; but they had not, as yet, reſiſted unto blood, or to the ſhedding of their blood, as ſome of the Old Teſtament ſaints had done; as ſome in the times of the *Maccabees*, and as *James* the Apoſtle of Chriſt, and as Chriſt himſelf: wherefore the Apoſtle ſuggeſts, that they ought to conſider, that they had been indulged; and what they had been ingaged in, were only ſome light ſkirmiſhes; and that they muſt expect to ſuffer as long as they were in the world, and had blood in them; and that their blood, when called for, ſhould be ſpilled for the ſake of Chriſt: *ſtriving againſt ſin*; which is the principal antagoniſt the believer has, and is here particularly pointed out: ſin is here, by ſome, thought to be put for ſinful men; or it may deſign the ſin of thoſe men, who ſolicited the ſaints to a defection from the truth; or the ſin of apoſtacy it ſelf; or that of unbelief; or rather indwelling-ſin, and the luſts of the fleſh, which war againſt the ſoul. Now this is ſaid, to ſharpen and increaſe the ſaints reſentment and indignation againſt it, as being their antagoniſt, with whom they ſtrive and combat, and which is the cauſe of all the evils in the world, expoſes to wrath to come, and ſeparates from communion with God; and to encourage them to bear their ſufferings patiently, ſince they are not without ſin, as Chriſt was; and ſince their afflictions and ſufferings are for the ſubduing of ſin, and the increaſe of holineſs.

Ver. 5. *And ye have forgotten the exhortation*, &c.] Or conſolation, the conſolatory word or doctrine, in *Prov.* iii. 11. This, by their conduct, the Apoſtle feared they had forgotten, and therefore puts them in mind of it; or it may be read by way of queſtion, *and have ye forgotten*, &c? don't ye remember? it would be right to call it to mind: *which ſpeaketh unto you as unto children*; not as the children of *Solomon*, but as the children of God, or of Chriſt, the wiſdom of God: here, by a proſopopeia, the word of exhortation is introduced as a perſon ſpeaking, *my ſon, deſpiſe not thou the chaſtening of the Lord*; by which is meant, not vindictive puniſhment; this would not be ſpeaking to them, nor dealing with them as children, and would be contrary to the love of God towards them; beſides, chaſtiſement in this ſenſe has been upon Chriſt for them, and it would be unjuſt to lay it on them again; but a fatherly correction is deſigned, and which is given in love by God, as a father, and for the inſtruction of his children, as the word uſed ſignifies: and it is called not the chaſtening of men, but of the Lord; every chaſtening, or afflictive providence, is appointed by God, and is looked upon by believers, when grace is in exerciſe, as coming from him; and it is directed, and governed, and limited by him, and is over-ruled by him for his own glory, and their good: and this is not to be deſpiſed, as ſomething nauſeous and loathſome, or as unuſeful and unprofitable, or as inſignificant and unworthy of notice, but ſhould be eſteemed for the good ends, which are ſometimes anſwered by it: *nor faint when thou art rebuked of him*; God has various ways of rebuking, reproving and convincing, ſometimes by his Spirit, ſometimes by his word and miniſters, and ſometimes by afflictive providences; by theſe he rebukes his people for their ſins, convinces them of them, and brings them to acknowledgment and confeſſion; he makes them hereby ſenſible of their duty, in which they have been remiſs, and brings them to a more conſtant and fervent diſcharge of it; he reproves them for, and convinces of their folly in truſting in the creature, or loving it too much, and of every wrong way they have been walking in; and theſe rebukes are not in a way of wrath, but love, and therefore ſaints ſhould not faint at them: there are two extremes they are apt to run into, under ſuch a diſpenſation; either to take no notice, and make light of an affliction, or elſe to be overwhelmed by it, and ſink under it; both are guarded againſt in this exhortation.

Ver. 6. *For whom the Lord loveth he chaſteneth*, &c.] All men are not the objects of God's love, only a ſpecial people, whom he has choſen in Chriſt; for whom he has given his ſon, when they were ſinners and enemies; whom he quickens and calls by his grace, juſtifies, pardons, and accepts in Chriſt; and whom he cauſes to love him; theſe he loves with an everlaſting and unchangeable love, and in a free and ſovereign way, without any regard to any motive or condition in them. Now theſe are chaſtened by him, and loved while they are chaſtened; their chaſtening is in love, as appears from the nature of God's love to them, which changes not; from the nature of chaſtening itſelf, which is that of a father; from the divine ſupports granted under it; from the ends of it, which are, among others, that they might be more and more partakers of holineſs, and not be condemned with the world; and from the iſſue of it, which is a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. So the *Jews*[p] often ſpeak of, יסורין של אהבה, *chaſtiſements of love*, in diſtinction from evil chaſtiſements, or vindictive ones: *and ſcourgeth every ſon whom he receiveth*; by whom are meant, not any of the angels, nor all the ſons of men, but ſuch whom God has predeſtinated to the adoption of children, and in the covenant of his grace has declared himſelf a father to; for whom Chriſt has a ſpecial regard, as children, and therefore partook of human nature, and died to gather them together, and redeemed them, that they might receive the adoption of children; and who appear to be the children of God by faith in Chriſt; and who have the ſpirit of adoption, witneſſing their ſonſhip to them; this is a valuable bleſſing of grace, and ſprings from love: and ſuch are *received* by God, into his heart's love and affection, with complacency and delight; and into the covenant of his grace, to ſhare all the bleſſings and promiſes of it; and into his family, to enjoy all the privileges of his houſe, and into communion with himſelf; and they will be hereafter received by him into glory: now theſe he ſcourges; he ſuffers them ſometimes to be ſcourged by men, and to be buffeted by ſatan; and ſometimes he ſcourges them himſelf with the rod of men, and with the ſtripes of the children of men, but always in love.

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[p] Zohar in Gen. fol 39. 3. & 102. 4. & in Exod. fol. 98. 2. & 102. 2. & in Lev. fol. 19. 3.

Ver. 7. *If ye endure chaſtening*, &c.] In faith, with patience, with courage and conſtancy, with humility and reverence: there are many things which may encourage and animate the ſaints to endure it in ſuch a manner; as that it is but a chaſtening, and the chaſtening of a father; it ſhould be conſidered from whence it comes, and for what ends; that it comes from the Lord, and is for his glory, and their good; the example of Chriſt, and of other ſaints, ſhould excite unto it. The *Jews* have a ſaying[q], that "the doctrine of chaſtiſements is ſilence;" that is, they are to be patiently bore, and not murmured at. The *Vulgate Latin*, and all the *Oriental* verſions, read the words as an exhortation; the former of theſe renders it, *perſevere in diſcipline*; the *Syriac* verſion, *endure correction*; the *Arabic* verſion, *be ye patient in chaſtiſement*; and the *Ethiopic* verſion, *endure your chaſtening*; but then the word, *for*, ſhould be ſupplied in the next clauſe, as it is in the *Syriac* and *Ethiopic* verſions, making that to be a reaſon enforcing this, *for God dealeth with you as with ſons:* chaſtening is owning of them for his children, and it diſcovers them to be ſo, and ſhows that they continue ſuch; he does not chaſten them but when it is neceſſary; and whenever he does, it is in love and mercy, and for good, and in the beſt time, ſeaſonably, and in meaſure: *for what ſon is he whom the father chaſteneth not?* no one can be named, not the Son of God himſelf; he had the chaſtiſement of our peace upon him; nor the more eminent among the children of God, as *Abraham*, *David*, and others; nor any in any catalogue, or liſt of them, ſuch as in the preceding chapter; not one in any age or period of time whatever, in any bodies, ſocieties, or communities of them, either under the Old or New Teſtament.

Ver. 8. *But if ye be without chaſtiſement*, &c.] Or have no affliction: *whereof all are partakers*; that is, all the children of God; they are all alike children; they are all in a ſtate of imperfection, and prone to ſin; God has an impartial reſpect unto them; and tho' they are not all alike chaſtened, nor chaſtened at all times, yet none are exempted from chaſtiſement, but have it in ſome way or another, and at ſome time or another. *Then are ye baſtards, and not ſons*; all are not ſons that are under a profeſſion of religion; all that are under a profeſſion of religion are not chaſtiſed; but then thoſe are not the children of God, but the children of the world, of ſatan, and of the anti-chriſtian harlot; for tho' all that are chaſtiſed are not children, yet all that are children are chaſtiſed: hence we learn, that outward peace and proſperity is not a note of a true church; and that ſuch have reaſon to diſtruſt their ſtate, who know not what it is to have the chaſtiſing rod of God upon them; and that afflictions are rather arguments for, than againſt ſonſhip,

Ver. 9. *Furthermore, we have had fathers of our fleſh*, &c.] Earthly parents; who are ſo called, becauſe they are the immediate cauſes and inſtruments of the generation of their children, and of their fleſhly bodies, and worldly beings; and to diſtinguiſh them from the Father of ſpirits: and this ſhows; that they have not the ſpirit or ſoul from them, only the fleſh or body, and which is frail and corrupt; and therefore goes by this name. *Which corrected us*; betimes, and at proper ſeaſons, in love, and for inſtruction, and to prevent ruin, and death: *and we gave* them *reverence*; by ſubmitting to their correction, and hearkening to it; by taking ſhame to themſelves, and acknowledging the offence committed; by retaining the ſame affection for them; and by a carefulneſs not to offend for the future. *Shall we not much rather be in ſubjection to the Father of ſpirits, and live?* that is to God, who is ſo called; not becauſe he is the creator of angels, who are ſpirits; but becauſe he is the creator of the ſouls of men; the ſoul is the more noble and excellent part of man: it bears a reſemblance to God; it is the life of man, and is immortal; it is exceeding precious, and the redemption of it; this was at firſt immediately created by God; and he ſtill continues to create ſouls, which he preſerves in their being, and has the power of ſaving and deſtroying them. Beſides, God may be ſo called, becauſe he is the author and donor of all ſpiritual gifts, and particularly of regenerating grace; it is he who renews a right ſpirit in men, and puts a new ſpirit into them: now ſuch ought to be in *ſubjection* to him; not only as creatures to a creator, and as ſubjects to their prince; but as children to a father, and particularly to him, as and when correcting; they ſhould bow to his ſovereignty, reſign to his will, be humble under his mighty hand, be ſtill and quiet, and bear all patiently; the advantage ariſing from ſuch a ſubjection, is life: *and live*; or *that ye may live*; or *and ye ſhall live*; more comfortably, and more to the glory of God, in communion and fellowſhip with him here, and in heaven to all eternity.

Ver. 10. *For they verily for a few days chaſtened* us, &c.] Which reſpects not the minority of children, during which time, they are under the correction of parents, and which is but a few days; nor the ſhort life of parents; but rather the end which parents have in chaſtening their children, which is their temporal good, and which laſts but for a few days; which ſenſe, the oppoſition in the latter part of the text requires: and this they do *after their own pleaſure*; not to pleaſe and delight themſelves in the pains and cries of their children, which would be brutiſh and inhuman; tho' corrections are too often given to gratify the paſſions; nor merely in an arbitrary way, and when they pleaſe; but the ſenſe is, they correct as ſeems good unto them; in the beſt way and manner; to the beſt of their judgments, which are fallible: *but he for our profit*; ſaints are no loſers by afflictions; they loſe nothing but their droſs and tin; they don't loſe the love of God; nor their intereſt in the covenant of grace; nor the preſence of God; nor grace in their own hearts; nor ſpiritual peace and comfort; on the contrary, they are real gainers by them; their graces gain by them freſh luſtre and glory; they obtain a greater degree of ſpiritual knowledge, and a larger ſtock of experience; and are hereby reſtored to their former ſtate, duty, and zeal; and become more conformable to Chriſt; yea, their afflictions conduce to their future glory; many are the profits ariſing from them. The *Alexandrian* copy reads in the plural number, *profits:* particularly God's end in chaſtening of his children is, *that we might be partakers of his holineſs*; not the eſſential holineſs of God, which is incommunicable; but a communicative holineſs of his, which it is his determining will his people ſhould have: it comes from him, from whom every good and perfect gift does; it is in Chriſt for them, and is received out of his fulneſs; and is wrought in them by the Spirit; and it bears a reſemblance to the divine nature: now men are naturally deſtitute of this holineſs; they have it not by nature, but by participation, as God's gift; and they firſt partake of it in regeneration; and here an increaſe of it is deſigned, a gradual participation of it; and it may include perfect holineſs in heaven: afflictions are deſigned as means to bring perſons to this end; to bring them to a ſenſe of ſin, an acknowledgment of it, an averſion to it, and to a view of pardon of it; to purge it away; to wean the ſaints from this world; to increaſe their grace, and lead them on to a perfect ſtate of glory, where there will be no more ſin, and no more ſorrow.

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[q] T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 62. 1.

Ver. 11. *Now no chaſtening for the preſent ſeemeth to be joyous*, &c.] Theſe words anticipate an objection, taken from the grief and ſorrow that comes by afflictions; and therefore how ſhould they be for profit and advantage? The Apoſtle anſwers, by granting that no affliction *ſeemeth* to be joyous, in outward appearance to fleſh and blood, and according to the judgment of carnal ſenſe and reaſon; in this view of afflictions, it muſt be owned, they don't appear to be matter, cauſe, or occaſion of joy; though they really are, when viewed by faith, and judged of by ſanctified reaſon; for they are tokens of the love of God and Chriſt; are evidences of ſonſhip; and work together either for the temporal, or ſpiritual, or eternal good of the ſaints: and ſo likewiſe indeed *for the preſent* time, either whilſt under them, or in the preſent ſtate of things, they ſeem ſo; but hereafter, either now when they are over; or however in the world to come, when the grace, goodneſs, wiſdom, and power of God in them, in ſupporting under them, bringing out of them, and the bleſſed effects, and fruits of them, will be diſcerned, they will be looked upon with pleaſure: but for the preſent, and when carnal ſenſe and reaſon prevail, it muſt be allowed, that they are not matter of joy, *but grievous*; or matter, cauſe, and occaſion of grief; they cauſe pain and grief to the afflicted, and to their friends and relations about them; and eſpecially, they are very grieving, and occaſion heavineſs, and are grievous to be born, when ſoul troubles attend them; when God hides his face, and the ſoul is filled with a ſenſe of wrath, looking upon the chaſtening, as being in wrath and hot diſpleaſure; when Satan is let looſe, and caſts his fiery darts thick and faſt; and when the ſoul has loſt its views of intereſt in the love of God, and in the grace of Chriſt, and in eternal glory and happineſs. *Nevertheleſs, afterwards it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteouſneſs unto them that are exerciſed thereby*; who are uſed unto afflictions; *trained* up and inſtructed in the ſchool of afflictions, as the word may ſignify; in which many uſeful leſſons of faith, and hope, patience, and experience, humility, ſelf-denial, and reſignation of will are learned: and to ſuch, afflictions yield *the fruit of peace*; external peace and proſperity ſometimes follow upon them; and oftentimes internal peace is enjoyed in them; and they always iſſue to ſuch in eternal peace and everlaſting happineſs; and this peace ariſes from the *righteouſneſs* of Chriſt, laid hold upon by faith, which produces a true conſcience-peace, and entitles to that everlaſting joy and reſt which remains for the people of God. Moreover, the fruit of holineſs may be deſigned, which ſaints by afflictions are made partakers of, and the peace enjoyed in that; for there is a peace, which tho' it does not ſpring from, yet is found in the ways of righteouſneſs; and tho' this peace may not be had for the preſent, or while the affliction laſts, yet it is experienced *afterwards*; either after the affliction is over, in the preſent life, or however in eternity, when the ſaints enter into peace; for the end of ſuch diſpenſations, and of the perſons exerciſed by them, is peace.

Ver. 12. *Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down*, &c.] Theſe words may be conſidered, as ſpoken to the *Hebrews*, with reſpect to themſelves; accordingly, the *Syriac* verſion reads, *your hands*, and *your knees*; who were ſluggiſh and inactive in prayer, in hearing the word, in attendance on ordinances, in holding faſt their profeſſion, and in the performance of thoſe things which adorn it; they were weary and fatigued with weights and burdens of ſins and afflictions; and were faint, fearful, and timorous, thro' diſtruſt of the promiſed good, becauſe of their perſecutions, being in preſent diſtreſs, and in a view of approaching danger, with which they might be ſurprized, as well as affected with their preſent afflictions: and then the exhortation to *lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees*, is to be active in every duty; to be courageous againſt every enemy; to bear patiently every burden; to take heart, and be of good chear under every afflictive providence: or elſe they may be conſidered as an exhortation to them with reſpect to others, which ſeems to be moſt agreeable to *Iſ.* xxxv. 3. from whence they are taken; and then what is ſignified in them is done by ſympathizing with perſons in diſtreſs; by ſpeaking comfortably to them, and by bearing their burdens.

Ver. 13. *And make ſtraight paths for your feet*, &c.] By *feet* are meant the walk and converſation of the ſaints, both in the church, and in the world, *Cant.* vii. 1. and there are *paths* made ready for theſe feet to walk in; as the good old paths of truth, of the word and worſhip of God, of faith and holineſs: and to make theſe paths *ſtraight*, is to make the word of God the rule of walking; to avoid carefully joining any thing with it as a rule; to attend conſtantly on the ordinances of Chriſt; to go on evenly in a way of believing on him; to walk in ſome meaſure worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called, and by way of example to others. *Leſt that which is lame be turned out of the way*; a lame member, as the *Syriac* verſion, a lame member of the body of Chriſt, the church; or a lame perſon, as the *Arabic* verſion, a weak believer; one that is ready to halt, either thro' the corruption of nature, or thro' the weakneſs of grace, or thro' want of light and judgment, and thro' inſtability and inconſtancy; leſt ſuch an one ſhould, thro' the irregular walk and converſation of others, be ſtumbled and offended, and go out of the way, and leave the paths of righteouſneſs and truth. God takes care of, and has a regard to ſuch, and he would have others alſo, *Mic.* iv. 6. *Zeph.* iii. 19. The *Ethiopic* verſion reads, *that your halting may be healed, and not offended*; that you yourſelves may not halt and ſtumble. *But let it rather be healed*; the faln believer be reſtored, the weak brother be confirmed, the halting profeſſor be ſtrengthened, and every one be built up and eſtabliſhed upon the moſt holy faith, and in the pure ways of the Goſpel.

Ver. 14. *Follow peace with all men*, &c.] That are in a natural and domeſtic relation to one another, being of the ſame family; and that are in a civil and political one, being of the ſame nation, city, or ſociety; and that are in a ſpiritual one, being members of the ſame church; or, if not, yet being ſaints, and tho' in ſome things different in judgment; yea, even peace is to be followed with enemies, as much as in us lies: and perhaps by *all men*, the *Gentiles* may be more eſpecially deſigned, whoſe peace the *Hebrews* thought they were not to ſeek, *Deut.* xxiii. 6. miſtaking the ſenſe of the text, by applying it to the *Gentiles* in general: to *follow peace*, ſignifies an eager purſuit after it, in the uſe of proper means; exerting the utmoſt of a man's power to attain it, in all things poſſible: many things ſerve to enforce this upon the ſaints; this is moſt agreeable to all the three divine perſons; to God, who is the God of peace; to Chriſt, the prince of peace; and to the Spirit, one of whoſe fruits is peace; and to the characters of the ſaints, who are ſons of peace, and who are called to peace, and who make a profeſſion of the Goſpel of peace; and to the privileges they enjoy, being intereſted in the covenant of peace, partaking of ſpiritual peace now, and being entitled to eternal peace hereafter: and this agrees with the ſayings and counſels of the ancient *Jews*. It was a ſaying of *Hillell*[r], who lived about the times of Chriſt; "be thou one of the diſciples of *Aaron*, who loved "peace, ורודף שלום, *and followed peace.*" This is ſaid of *Aaron* in the *Talmud*[s], that "he loved "peace, and *followed peace*, and made peace be"tween a man and his neighbour, as is ſaid, *Mal.* "ii. 6." They recommend peace on many accounts, and ſay, great is peace, and among the reſt, becauſe it is one of the names of God[t]: *and holineſs*; this being added to peace, ſhows, that peace is no further to be followed, than is conſiſtent with holineſs; and holineſs here does not deſign any particular branch of holineſs, as chaſtity of the body and mind, but the whole of holineſs, inward and outward; and intends true holineſs, in oppoſition to ceremonial holineſs, which the *Hebrews* were fond of, and purſued after: it means even perfect holineſs; for tho' holineſs is not perfect in this life, yet it will be in heaven; and there is a perfection of it in Chriſt; and it is to be followed after, by going to Chriſt for more grace, and exerciſing faith upon him, as our ſanctification; and by eager deſires, that the Spirit of God would ſanctify us more and more, and enable us, by his grace and ſtrength, to walk in the way of holineſs, till we get ſafe to heaven: *without which no man ſhall ſee the Lord*; or *God*, as the *Vulgate Latin* and *Ethiopic* verſions read; that is, with the beatific viſion in heaven: or the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, *our Lord*, as the *Syriac* verſion reads; even in this life, ſo as to have communion with him; and hereafter, ſo as to behold his glory, both intellectually and corporally: to ſuch a ſight holineſs is neceſſary; for God is holy, and Chriſt is holy, and ſo is heaven, and ſo are the angels, and the ſouls of men in it.

Ver. 15. *Looking diligently*, &c.] Acting the part of biſhops, or overſeers, as the word ſignifies; and ſo this exhortation either reſpects officers of the church of the *Hebrews*, whoſe buſineſs it was more eſpecially to inſpect into the principles and practices of the members of it, and take care that they did not imbibe falſe doctrines, or live immoral lives; or rather the ſeveral members of the church, whoſe buſineſs it is to watch over one another, ſince this Epiſtle ſeems to be written to the whole church. *Leſt any man fail of the grace of God*; not the free favour and love of God in Chriſt, which is everlaſting, unchangeable, and from whence there is no ſeparation; nor the grace of God implanted in the heart in regeneration, which is incorruptible, never-failing, but always remains, as do faith, hope, and love; but either the whole doctrine of the Goſpel, which is a declaration of the grace of God; or particularly the doctrine of free juſtification by the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, which men may receive in vain, and fall from, 2 *Cor.* vi. 1. *Gal.* v. 4. to which theſe *Hebrews* might be prone: and ſuch *fail of* it, who either come ſhort of it, don't come up to it, receive and embrace it; or who having profeſſed it, drop it and deny it: now ſuch ſhould be looked after, and ſuch a caſe ſhould be diligently looked into; becauſe the glory of God, the honour of Chriſt, the good of ſouls, and the well being, and even the continuance of the church ſtate are concerned: *leſt any root of bitterneſs ſpringing up trouble* you, and *thereby many be defiled*; the *Alexandrian* copy reads οι πολλοι, *the many*, the common people, the private members of the church; tho' it may intend either things or perſons: it may deſign things; and theſe either the corruption of nature in general, which is a root that lies hidden in a man's heart; and is a root or gall of bitterneſs; and is apt to ſpring up, and bring forth bitter fruit, and gives trouble both to a man's ſelf, and others; and is of a defiling nature, in particular ſins; ſuch as malice, ſtrife, and contention, covetouſneſs, luſt, pride, oppreſſion, idleneſs, *&c.* which make bitter work, and occaſion great trouble in churches, oftentimes: or errors, and hereſies, which ſometimes, like roots, lie under ground, ſecret and undiſcovered; and are bitter ones in their effects, bringing ruin and ſwift deſtruction on the ſouls of men; and theſe ſometimes ſpring up in churches, whilſt miniſters and members are aſleep, or not ſo diligent and watchful as they ſhould be; and occaſion great trouble, and are very infectious, and defiling: moreover, perſons may be deſigned; which agrees well with *Deut.* xxix. 18. from whence this phraſe is taken; and with the inſtance in the following verſe, ſuch as all immoral perſons, and falſe teachers, particularly, ſelf-juſticiaries, that preach up the doctrine of juſtification by the works of the law: this was the capital miſtake, and rooted error of the *Jewiſh* nation; and a bitter one it was; it produced many bitter fruits of pride and vain-glory; and this ſprung up in the church, and troubled and defiled many there and elſewhere, being ſpread by the abettors of it; ſee *Acts* xv. 24. *Gal.* i. 6. and v. 9, 10. Now, care ſhould be taken, that no ſuch perſon be in churches, holding ſuch an error; becauſe of the glory of God, Father, Son, and Spirit; the comfort of ſouls; the peace of the church, and the growth and increaſe of it, which muſt be hurt by ſuch men and doctrines; ſo ϱιζα αμαϱτωλος, *a ſinful root*, is uſed for a wicked man, in 1 *Maccab.* i. 11. and שורש המרי, *a root of bitterneſs* ſignifies in *Jewiſh* writings[u], an error, or hereſy, in oppoſition to a *root of faith*, or a fundamental doctrine.

Ver. 16. *Leſt there be any fornicator or prophane perſon*, &c.] The firſt of theſe is guilty of a ſin againſt the ſecond table of the law, as well as againſt his own body; and which is oppoſed to the holineſs, the Apoſtle had before exhorted to; ſuch who are guilty of it, are not to be continued in the communion of the church; and it is a ſin, which lived in unrepented of, excludes from the kingdom of heaven: the latter is one who is a tranſgreſſor of the firſt table of the law; who is an idolater, a ſwearer, a deſpiſer of public worſhip and ordinances, and who behaves irreverently in divine ſervice, and mocks at the future ſtate, as *Eſau*; to whom both theſe characters ſeem to belong: and this agrees with what the *Jews* ſay concerning him: they have a tradition[w], that he committed five tranſgreſſions on the day he came out of the field weary. "He committed idolatry; he ſhed innocent blood; "and *lay with a virgin betrothed*; and denied the "life of the world to come, (or a future ſtate;) "and deſpiſed his birthright." It is elſewhere[x], a little differently expreſſed. "*Eſau* the wicked, "committed five tranſgreſſions on that day: he lay "with a virgin betrothed; and killed a perſon; "and denied the reſurrection of the dead; and denied the root, or foundation, (*i. e.* that there is "is a God;) and deſpiſed his birthright; and beſides, he deſired his father's death, and ſought "to ſlay his brother." It is common for them to ſay of him, that he was an ungodly man; and particularly, that he was a murderer, a robber, ונואף, *and an adulterer*[y]; and that he has no part in the world to come[z]: *who for one morſel of meat ſold his birthright*; the account of which is in *Gen.* xxv. 29—34. this includes all the privileges which he had a right unto, by being the firſt-born; as a peculiar bleſſing from his father; a double portion of goods; and dominion over his brethren: and it is commonly ſaid by the *Jews*, that the prieſthood belonged to the firſt-born, before the *Levitical* diſpenſation; and that for this reaſon, *Jacob* coveted the birthright[a], *Eſau* being a wicked man, and unfit for it. The birthright was reckoned ſacred; it was typical of the primogeniture of Chriſt; of the adoption of ſaints, and of the heavenly inheritance belonging thereunto; all which were deſpiſed by *Eſau*: and ſo the *Jewiſh* paraphraſes[b] interpret the contempt of his birthright, a deſpiſing of his part in the world to come, and a denial of the reſurrection of the dead: and his contempt of it was ſhewn in his ſelling it; and this was aggravated by his ſelling it for *one morſel of meat*; which was, bread, and pottage of lentiles, *Gen.* xxv. 34. The *Jewiſh* writers ſpeak of this bargain and ſale much in the ſame language as the Apoſtle here does; they ſay[c] of him, this is the man that ſold his birthright בעד ככר לחם, *for a morſel of bread*; and apply to him the paſſage in *Prov.* xxviii. 21. *for a piece of bread* that *man will tranſgreſs*.

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[r] Pirke Abot, c. 1. §. 12.
[s] T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 6. 2. & Gloſſ. in T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 71. 2.
[t] Vajikra Rabba, §. 9. fol. 153. 1, 2.
[u] Coſri, Orat. 1. fol. 35. 1.

Ver. 17. *For ye know how that afterwards*, &c.] After he had had his pottage; after he had ſold his birthright for it, and the bleſſing with it; after his father had bleſſed *Jacob*: this the Apoſtle relates to the *Hebrews*, as a thing well known to them; they having read the books of *Moſes*, and being converſant with them, in which the whole hiſtory of this affair is recorded: how that *when he would have inherited the bleſſing, he was rejected*; by his father, who refuſed to give him the bleſſing, but confirmed what he had given to *Jacob*; and alſo by God, he being the object of his hatred; concerning whom he had ſaid, even before his birth, the elder ſhall ſerve the younger, *Rom.* ix. 11, 12, 13. *for he found no place of repentance, tho' he ſought it carefully with tears*, *Gen.* xxvii. 34, 38. tho' he was very ſolicitous for the bleſſing, and ſhed many tears to obtain it, yet he had no true repentance for his ſin in ſelling the birthright. Tears are not an infallible Sign of repentance: men may be more concerned for the loſs and miſchief that come by ſin, than for the evil that is in it; and ſuch repentance is not ſincere; it does not ſpring from love to God, or a concern for his glory; nor does it bring forth proper fruits: or rather, the ſenſe of the words is, that notwithſtanding all his ſolicitude, importunity, and tears, he found no place of repentance in his father *Iſaac*; he could not prevail upon him to change his mind; to revoke the bleſſing he had beſtowed on *Jacob*, and confer it on him, *Gen.* xxvii. 33. for he plainly ſaw it was the mind of God, that the bleſſing ſhould be where it was; whoſe counſel ſhall ſtand, and he'll do all his pleaſure. This latter ſeems to be the better interpretation of the words, tho' the former agrees with the *Targum* on *Job* xv. 20. "all "the days of *Eſau* the ungodly, they expected "that he would have repented, but he repented "not."

Ver. 18. *For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched*, &c.] The deſign of the Apoſtle in the following words is, in general, to engage the *Hebrews* to adhere cloſely to the Goſpel, from the conſideration of the ſuperior excellency of it to the law; and in particular, to enforce his former exhortations, to chearfulneſs under afflictions; to an upright walk in the ways of God; to follow peace with all men, even with the *Gentiles*, and holineſs both of heart and life; and to value the doctrine of the Goſpel; and to take heed that none fail of it, or act unbecoming it: and here the Apoſtle obſerves, what the believing *Hebrews* were not come to, being delivered from it, namely, the legal diſpenſation, which was their privilege; the happineſs of which is expreſſed by a detail of particular circumſtances, which attended the giving of the law to the *Jews*: it was given on a *mount which might be touched*; that is, by God, who deſcended on it, and by touching it cauſed it to ſmoke, quake, and move, *Exod.* xix. 18. Compare with this, *Pſ.* lxviii. 8. and civ. 32. and cxliv. 5. for it was not to be touched by the *Iſraelites*, nor by their cattel, *Exod.* xix. 12, 13. that is, at the time that the law was given, and *Jehovah* was upon it, otherwiſe it might be touched; and the meaning is, that it was an earthly mountain, that might be approached to, and be ſeen and felt, and not of a ſpiritual nature, as *Sion*, or the church of God; and ſo may be expreſſive of the carnality of the law, and alſo of the moveableneſs of it: *and that burned with fire*; as mount *Sinai* did, *Exod.* xix. 18. *Deut.* iv. 11. and v. 23. which ſet forth the majeſty of God, when upon it, at whoſe feet went forth burning coals; and alſo the wrath of God, as an avenging lawgiver and judge; and the terror of that law, which ſtrikes the minds of the tranſgreſſors of it with an expectation of fiery indignation; and ſo points out the end of ſuch tranſgreſſors, which is to be burnt: *nor unto blackneſs and darkneſs*; which covered the mount when God was upon it, *Exod.* xix. 16, 18. *Deut.* iv. 11. and which alſo may expreſs the majeſty of God, round about whom are clouds and darkneſs; and alſo the horror of the legal diſpenſation, and the obſcurity of it; little being known by the *Jews* of the ſpirituality of the law, of the ſtrict juſtice of God, and of the righteouſneſs which the law requires, and of the end and uſe of it; and eſpecially of the way of ſalvation by Chriſt; and ſo dark were they at laſt, as to prefer their own traditions before this law: tis added, *and tempeſt*; there being thunderings and lightnings, which were very terrible, *Exod.* xix. 16. and xx. 18. and tho' there is no expreſs mention made of a tempeſt by *Moſes*, yet *Joſephus*[d] ſpeaks not only of very terrible thunderings and lightnings, but of violent ſtorms of wind, which produced exceeding great rains; and the *Septuagint* on *Deut.* iv. 11. and v. 22. uſe the ſame words as the Apoſtle does here, *blackneſs*, *darkneſs*, *and tempeſt*. This alſo may denote the majeſty of God who was then preſent; the terror of that diſpenſation; the horrible curſes of the law; and the great confuſion and diſquietude raiſed by it in the conſcience of a ſinner.

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[w] Targum Jon. ben Uzziel in Gen. xxv. 29.
[x] Shemot Rabba, §. 1. fol. 89. 3. T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 16. 2.
[y] Tzeror Hammor, fol. 27. 1.
[z] Ib. fol. 26. 3.
[a] Bereſhit Rabba, §. 63. fol. 56. 2.
[b] Targum Hieroſ. & Jon. in Gen. 25. 34. Bereſhit Rabba, ib.
[c] Tzeror Hammor, fol. 26. 4. & 27. 1.

Ver. 19. *And the ſound of a trumpet*, &c.] *Exod.* xix. 16, 19. and xx. 18. which made it ſtill more awful, as, the ſound of the trumpet will at the laſt day: *and the voice of words*; of the ten words, or decalogue; which was an articulate voice, formed by angels; and, therefore, the law, is called the word ſpoken by angels, *Heb.* ii. 2. and is repreſented, as the voice of God himſelf, *Exod.* xx. 1. who made uſe of the miniſtry of angels, to deliver the law to *Moſes*; *which* voice is called קול דברים, *the voice of words*, in *Deut.* iv. 12. and this voice, *they that heard, intreated that the word ſhould not be ſpoken to them any more*; fearing that they ſhould die; wherefore, they deſired *Moſes* to be their mediator, and draw nigh to God, and hear his words, and ſpeak them to them, from him, *Exod.* xx. 19. *Deut.* v. 24—27.

Ver. 20. *For they could not endure that which was commanded*, &c.] In the law; not, that they diſliked and deſpiſed the law, as unregenerate men do; but they could not endure it, or bear it, as a yoke, it being a yoke of bondage; nor as a covenant of works, it requiring perfect obedience, but giving no ſtrength to perform; and as it ſhewed them their ſins, but did not direct them to a ſaviour; as it was an accuſing, curſing and condemning law; and, as a fiery one, revealing wrath, and filling the conſcience with it; unleſs this ſhould have any reſpect to the following edict, more particularly: *and if ſo much as a beaſt touch the mountain, it ſhall be ſtoned or thruſt through with a dart*; and, if a beaſt, much more a man: and, how eaſily, through inadvertence, might this be done? and, how terrible was the puniſhment? nothing leſs than death, by ſtoning, or being ſhot: and this they could not bear to hear, and think of: the laſt clauſe, *or thruſt through with a dart*, is wanting, in the *Alexandrian* and *Beza's Claromontane* copies, in the *Vulgate Latin*, and all the *Oriental* verſions; and yet is neceſſary to be retained, being in the original text, in *Exod.* xix. 12, 13.

Ver. 21. *And ſo terrible was the ſight*, &c.] Of the ſmoke, fire, and lightnings; or of God himſelf, who deſcended on the mount; with which agrees the *Arabic* verſion, which renders the words, *and ſo terrible was he who vouchſafed himſelf to be ſeen*; not in the buſh burning with fire; at which time *Moſes* was afraid to look upon God, *Exod.* iii. 6. but on mount *Sinai*, when the law was given: that *Moſes ſaid, I exceedingly fear and quake*: perhaps, he might ſay this, when he ſpake, and God anſwered him, *Exod.* xix. 19. Theſe words are no where recorded in ſcripture; wherefore the Apoſtle had them, either by divine revelation, or from tradition, confirmed by the former: for the *Jews* have a notion, that *Moſes* did quake and tremble, and when upon the mount; and that he expreſſed his fear and dread. They have ſuch a tradition, as this[e]; "when *Moſes* aſcended on high, the miniſtring angels ſaid before the holy bleſſed God, "Lord of the world, what has this man, born of "a woman, to do among us? he ſaid unto them, "to receive the law he is come; they replied before him, that deſirable treaſure, which is treaſured up with thee, nine hundred, and ſeventy, and "four generations, before the world was created, "doſt thou ſeek to give to fleſh and blood? *What* "*is man that thou art mindful of him, and the ſon of* "*man, that thou viſiteſt him? who haſt ſet thy glory* "*above the heavens!* The holy bleſſed God ſaid "to *Moſes*, return them an anſwer; he ſaid, before "him, Lord of the world, מתיירא אני *I am afraid*, "leſt they ſhould burn (or conſume) me, with the "breath of their mouth." Compare this laſt clauſe with 2 *Theſſ.* ii. 8. and elſewhere[f], thoſe words being cited, *he called unto Moſes*, Exod. xxiv. 16. it is obſerved; "this ſcripture comes not, but "לאיים עליו *to terrify him*; that ſo the law might "be given with fear, fervour, and trembling; as it "is ſaid, *Pſ.* ii. 11." Once more[g], "at the "time, that the holy bleſſed God ſaid to *Moſes*, "*go, get thee down, for thy people have corrupted* "*themſelves*, Exod. xxxii. 7. אזדעזע משה *Moſes* "*trembled*; and he could not ſpeak, *&c.*" And again, it is ſaid[h], that when *Moſes* was on mount *Sinai*, ſupplicating for the people of *Iſrael*, five deſtroying angels appeared, and immediately נתיירא משה *Moſes was afraid.* Now this circumſtance is mentioned, by the Apoſtle, to aggravate the terror of that diſpenſation; that *Moſes*, a great, and good man; and who had much familiarity with God; the general of the people of *Iſrael*; their leader and commander; a man of great courage and preſence of mind; and was their mediator between God and them; and yet feared, and quaked: the beſt of men are not without ſin; and the moſt holy man on earth can't ſtand before a holy God, and his holy law, upon the foot of his own righteouſneſs, without trembling: it is an awful thing to draw nigh to God; and there is no ſuch thing, as doing it, without a mediator; and that mediator muſt be more than a creature: and it is our happineſs, that we have ſuch a mediator, who never feared, nor quaked; who failed not, nor was he diſcouraged.

Ver. 22. *But ye are come unto mount Sion*, &c.] The *Alexandrian* copy reads, as in ver. 18. for *ye are not come*; which may ſeem to favour that interpretation of this paſſage, which refers it to the heavenly ſtate; to which, ſaints, in this preſent life, are not, as yet, come: but, by *mount Sion*, and the other names, here given, is meant the church of God, under the Goſpel-diſpenſation, to which the believing *Hebrews* were come; in diſtinction from the legal diſpenſation, ſignified by mount *Sinai*, from which they were delivered: and this is called *Mount Sion*, becauſe, like that, it is beloved of God; choſen by him; and is the place of his habitation; here his worſhip is, and his word and ordinances are adminiſtred; here he communes with his people, and diſtributes his bleſſings: and this, as mount *Sion*, is a perfection of beauty; the joy of the whole earth; is ſtrongly fortified by divine power, and is immoveable; and is comparable to that mountain, for its height and holineſs: and, to come to *Sion*, is to become a member of a Goſpel-church, and partake of the ordinances, enjoy the privileges, and perform the duties belonging to it: *and unto the city of the living God*; the Goſpel-church is a *city*, built on Chriſt, the foundation; and is full of inhabitants, true believers, at leaſt, it will be, in the latter day; it is pleaſantly ſituated by the river of God's love, and by the ſtill waters of Goſpel ordinances; it is governed by wholeſome laws, of Chriſt's enacting, and is under proper officers, of his appointing; and is well guarded by watchmen, which he has ſet upon the walls of it; and it is endowed with many privileges, as, acceſs to God, freedom from the arreſts of juſtice and from condemnation, adoption, and a right to the heavenly inheritance: and this may be called, *the city of God*, becauſe it is of his building, and here he dwells, and protects, and defends it; and, who is ſtiled, *the living God*, to diſtinguiſh him from the idols of the *Gentiles*, which are lifeleſs, and inanimate, no other than ſtocks and ſtones. *The heavenly Jeruſalem*: the church of God goes by the name of *Jeruſalem* often, both in the Old and in the New Teſtament; with which it agrees in its name, which ſignifies the viſion of peace, or they ſhall ſee peace: Chriſt, the king of it, is the prince of peace; the members of it, are ſons of peace, who enjoy a ſpiritual peace now, and an everlaſting one hereafter: like that, it is compact together, conſiſting of ſaints, cemented together in love, in the order and fellowſhip of the Goſpel; and is well fortified, God himſelf, and his power, being all around it, and having ſalvation, for walls and bulwarks, and being encamped about by angels; and it is a free city, being made ſo by Chriſt, and, through him, enjoying the liberty of grace now, and having a title to the liberty of glory in the world to come; as *Jeruſalem* was, it is the object of God's choice, the palace of the great king, and the place of divine worſhip: it is called, *heavenly*, to diſtinguiſh it from the earthly *Jeruſalem*; and to expreſs the excellency of it, as well as to point out its original: the members of it, are from heaven, being born from above; their converſation is now in heaven; and they are deſigned for that place; and its doctrines and ordinances are all from thence. *And to an innumerable company of angels*; which are created ſpirits, immaterial and immortal; very knowing, and very powerful; and ſwift to do the will of God; they are holy, and immutably ſo, being the elect of God, and confirmed by Chriſt: and ſaints now are brought into a ſtate of friendſhip with them, and into the ſame family; and are ſocial worſhippers with them; and they have acceſs into heaven, where angels are; and with whom they ſhall dwell for ever: and, in the preſent ſtate of things, they ſhare the benefit and advantages of their kind offices; who have, ſometimes, provided food for their bodies; healed their diſeaſes; directed and preſerved in journeys; prevented outward calamities; delivered them out of them, when in danger; reſtrained things hurtful, and cut off their enemies: and, with regard to things ſpiritual, they have, ſometimes, made known the mind and will of God, unto the ſaints; have comforted them under their diſtreſſes; helped them againſt ſatan's temptations; are preſent at death, and carry their ſouls to glory; and will gather the ſaints together, at the laſt day: and, as to the number of them, they are innumerable; they are the armies of heaven; and there is a multitude of the heavenly hoſt; there are more, than twelve legions of angels; their number is ten thouſand times ten thouſand, and thouſands of thouſands: and this makes both for the glory and majeſty of God, whoſe attendants they are; and, for the comfort and ſafety of ſaints, to whom they miniſter, and about whom they encamp: a like phraſe is uſed in 2 *Eſdras* vi. 3.

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[d] Antiq. l. 3. c. 5. §. 2.

[e] T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 88. 2. Yalkut par. 2. fol. 92. 2.

[f] T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 4. 2.

[g] Zohar in Exod. fol. 24. 4.

[h] Midraſh Kohelet, fol. 69. 4.

Ver. 23. *To the general aſſembly*, &c.] A *panegyris*, the word here uſed, was a public and ſolemn aſſembly of the *Greeks*, either at their games, or feaſts, or fairs, or on religious accounts; and ſignifies a large collection and convention of men; and, ſometimes, the place, where they met together[l]; and is here uſed, by the Apoſtle, for the church of God, conſiſting of all his elect, both *Jews* and *Gentiles*, and the meeting of them together: they met together, in the infinite mind of God, from all eternity; and in Chriſt, their head and repreſentative, both then and in time; and at the laſt day, when they are all gathered in, they'll meet together perſonally; and a joyful meeting it will be; and a very general one, more ſo, than the aſſembly of the *Jews*, at any of their ſolemn feaſts, to which the Apoſtle may have ſome reſpect; ſince this will conſiſt of ſome of all nations, that have lived in all places, and in all ages of time: *and church of the firſt-born, which are written in heaven*; by the *church*, is not meant any particular, or congregational church, nor any national one; but the church catholic, or univerſal, which conſiſts only of God's elect, and of all of them, in all times and places; and reaches, even to the ſaints in heaven: this church is inviſible, at preſent, and will never fail; of which Chriſt is the head, and for which he has given himſelf: now the perſons, that belong to this church, are ſtiled *the firſt-born*; who are not the Apoſtles only, who received the firſt-fruits of the Spirit; nor the firſt converts among the *Jews*, who firſt truſted in Chriſt; but all the choſen of God, who are equally the ſons of God, and born of him; are equally loved by him, and equally united to Chriſt, and intereſted in him: they have the ſame privileges, honours, and dignity, and ſhall enjoy the ſame inheritance; they are all firſt-born, and are ſo called, with reſpect to the angels, the ſons of God, as Chriſt is, with reſpect to the ſaints, the many brethren of his: and theſe are ſaid to be *written in heaven*; not in the earth, *Jer.* xvii. 13. ſuch writing abides not; nor in the book of the ſcriptures, for the names of all are not written there; nor in the general book of God's decrees, which relate to all mankind; but in the lamb's book of life, kept in heaven; and is no other, than their election of God: and this way of ſpeaking, concerning it, ſhews it to be perſonal and particular; that it is firm, ſure and conſtant; that it is, out of the reach of men and devils, to eraſe it; it denotes the exact knowledge God has of them, and expreſſes their right to heaven, and the certainty of their coming there: now all ſuch, who are truly come to *Sion*, are openly come to this aſſembly and church, and appear to be a part thereof, and are among the firſt-born, and have their names written in heaven: *and to God the judge of all*: the *Ethiopic* verſion reads, *the judge of righteouſneſs*, or the righteous judge: ſome think, that Chriſt is here meant; who is, truly and properly God, and is the judge: all judgment is committed to him; he is judge of all; he is ordained judge of quick and dead; for which he would not have been fit, had he not been God: true believers come to him by faith, and that, as their judge, king, and governour; and it is their privilege, that Chriſt is, and will be, the judge of all at the laſt day; and hence

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[l] Vid. Philoſtrat. Vita Apollon. l. 8. c. 7.

is his coming to judgment deſirable to them. But ſince Chriſt is ſpoken of, in the next verſe, as a diſtinct perſon, to whom the ſaints come, God the father ſeems rather to be deſigned here: and it is one of the privileges of the ſaints, in the preſent life, that they have acceſs to God: all men are at a diſtance from him, in a ſtate of nature; and they naturally run further and further from him, and have no deſire after him; and, when they are made ſenſible of ſin, they are afraid and aſhamed to come to him; nor is there any coming to God, but through Chriſt; and this is a fruit of God's everlaſting love, what follows upon electing grace, is an effect of Chriſt's death, and is owing to the quickning grace of the ſpirit; it is performed in a ſpiritual way, and is by faith; it is a coming to the throne of God, even to his ſeat, to communion with him, and to a participation of his grace: and it is their privilege that they have acceſs to him as the judge of all; not only as a father, and as the God of all grace, but as a judge, and a righteous one, to whom they can come without terror; for tho' he is juſt, yet he is a Saviour, and the juſtifier of his people, on account of the righteouſneſs of his Son; whoſe ſins he pardons in a way of juſtice, through the blood of Chriſt; and is their patron, protector, and defender, who will right their wrongs, and avenge their cauſe: *and to the ſpirits of juſt men made perfect*; which may be underſtood of the ſaints on earth, who are *juſt men*; not naturally, for ſo no man is, but the reverſe; nor in opinion only, or merely externally, as the ſcribes and phariſees were; nor by the deeds of the law; nor by obedience to the Goſpel; nor by faith, either as wrought in them, or done by them, tho' by the object of it; nor by an infuſion of righteouſneſs into them; but by the imputation of the righteouſneſs of Chriſt unto them: and theſe are *made perfect*; not as to ſanctification, unleſs in Chriſt, or in a comparative ſenſe, and with reſpect to the parts of the new man, but not as to degrees; for no man is without ſin, and the beſt ſtand in need of freſh ſupplies of grace; but as to juſtification, Chriſt has perfectly fulfilled the law for them, and has perfectly expiated their ſins, and perfectly redeemed them from all ſin, and has procured a full pardon of them; and they are compleatly righteous through his righteouſneſs: and the *ſpirits*, or ſouls of theſe are only mentioned, becauſe the communion of ſaints in a Goſpel-church ſtate lies chiefly in the ſouls and ſpirits of each other, or in ſpiritual things relating to their ſouls; and their ſouls are greatly affected, and knit to each other: tho' the ſaints in heaven may be here intended, at leaſt included; whoſe ſpirits or ſouls are ſeparate from their bodies; and they are the ſouls of juſt men, for none but ſuch enter into the kingdom of heaven; where they are made perfect, in knowledge, in holineſs, in peace, and joy; tho' they have not their bodies, nor as yet all the ſaints with them. Now, believers, in the preſent ſtate of things, may be ſaid to be come to them, being come to the church below, which is a part of that above; as alſo in hope, expectation, and deſire. The Apoſtle ſeems to have reſpect to ſome diſtinctions among the *Jews*: they divide mankind into three ſorts; ſome are perfectly wicked; and ſome are perfectly righteous; and there are others that are between both[k]: they often ſpeak of צדיקים גמורים, *juſt men perfect*[l]; and diſtinguiſh between a juſt man perfect, and a juſt man that is not perfect[m]; as they do alſo between penitents and juſt men perfect; ſee the note on *Luke* xv. 7.

Ver. 24. And *to Jeſus, the mediator of the new covenant*, &c.] Of the new covenant, and of Chriſt's being the mediator of it, ſee the notes on ch. viii. 6, 8. Coming to Chriſt is by faith; and is different from a corporal coming to him in the days of his fleſh; and from an outward attendance on ordinances: it is a coming to him under a ſenſe of want, and upon a ſight of fullneſs; and is the produce of God's efficacious grace; and ſouls muſt come to Chriſt as naked ſinners, and without a mediator, without any thing of their own to ingratiate them; and it is free to all ſenſible ſinners to come to him, and is the great privilege of ſaints: it is the bleſſing of bleſſings; ſuch are ſafe, and ſettled, and at peace, who are come to Jeſus; they can want no good thing, for all are theirs; they have free acceſs to God through him, and a right to all privileges: *and to the blood of ſprinkling*; that is, the blood of Chriſt; ſo called, either in alluſion to the blood of the paſſover, which was received in a baſon, and with a bunch of hyſſop was ſprinkled upon the lintel and two ſide-poſts of the doors of the houſes, in which the *Iſraelites* were; which being looked upon by Jehovah, he paſſed over them, and all were ſafe within, ſo that the deſtroyer did not touch them, when the firſt-born in *Egypt* were deſtroyed, *Exod.* xii. which is the caſe of all ſuch as are ſprinkled with the blood of Jeſus: or elſe to the blood of the covenant, ſprinkled by *Moſes* on the book, and on all the people, *Exod.* xxiv. 8. or to the ſeveral ſprinklings of blood in the legal ſacrifices: and the phraſe may denote the application of Chriſt's blood to his people, for juſtification, pardon, and cleanſing, which is their great mercy and privilege: *that ſpeaketh better things than* that of *Abel*; either *than Abel*, as the *Vulgate Latin*, and *Syriac* verſions render it; who being dead, yet ſpeaks; and who was a type of Chriſt in his death, and the puniſhment of it; for as he was ſlain by his own brother, who was puniſhed for it, ſo Chriſt was put to death by his own nation and people, the *Jews*, for which wrath is come upon them to the uttermoſt: but the efficacy of Chriſt's blood for the procuring pardon, peace, reconciliation, and the redemption and purchaſe of his church and people, ſhews him to be greater than *Abel*; and it ſpeaks better things than he did, or does: or elſe, *than the blood of Abel*, as the *Arabic* verſion renders it; *Abel*'s blood cried for vengeance; Chriſt's blood cries for peace and pardon, both in the court of heaven, where it is pleaded by Chriſt, and in the court of conſcience, where it is ſprinkled by his Spirit: or than the ſprinkling of the blood of *Abel*'s ſacrifice, or than *Abel*'s ſacrifice; which was the firſt blood that was ſprinkled in that way, and the firſt ſacrifice mentioned that was offered up, by faith, and was typical of Chriſt's; but then Chriſt's ſacrifice itſelf is better than that; and the ſprinkling of his blood, to which believers may continually apply for their juſtification, remiſſion, and purgation, and by which they have entrance into the holieſt of all, is of greater efficacy than the ſprinkling of blood in *Abel*'s ſacrifice; and calls for, and procures better things than that did; which ſenſe may the rather be choſen, ſince the Apoſtle's view, in

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[k] T. Hieroſ. Roſh haſhanah, fol. 57. 1. & T. Bab. Roſh haſhanah, fol. 16. 2. Derech Erets, fol. 19. 4.

[l] Zohar. in Gen. fol. 28. 2. & 29 1. & 39. 3. T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 18. 2. & Roſh haſhanah, fol. 4. 1. Peſachim, fol. 8. 1. 2.

[m] T. Bab Megilla, fol. 6. 2. & Avoda Zara, fol. 4. 1.

this epiſtle, is to ſhew the ſuperior excellency of Chriſt's ſacrifice to all others, even to the more excellent of them, as *Abel*'s was, ch. xi. 4.

Ver. 25. *See that ye refuſe not him that ſpeaketh*, &c.] Jeſus, the mediator of the new covenant, whoſe blood ſpeaks better things than *Abel*, or than his blood and ſacrifice: he was the ſpeaker in the council and covenant of grace, that ſpoke for the elect; in the creation of all things out of nothing, that ſaid, and it was done; in giving the law to the *Iſraelites*, in the wilderneſs, for he is the angel which ſpake to *Moſes* in mount *Sinai*, he ſpoke to God for the Old Teſtament ſaints, and was the angel of God's preſence to them; he ſpoke in his own perſon, as the prophet of the church, in the days of his fleſh; and he now ſpeaks in heaven, by appearing in the preſence of God for his people, and by preſenting his blood, righteouſneſs, and ſacrifice; he ſpeaks by his Spirit, in and to the hearts of his ſaints; and by his miniſters in the Goſpel, and the ordinances of it: nor ſhould he be refuſed, as he is, when his Goſpel is made light of, and neglected; when men excuſe themſelves from an attendance on it; when they will not hear it; or, when they do, and contradict and blaſpheme, deſpiſe and reproach it, or leave off hearing it. Care ſhould be taken that Chriſt is not refuſed in the miniſtry of the word; which may be enforced from the greatneſs and excellency of the perſon ſpeaking, who is God, and not a mere man; from the excellency of the matter ſpoken, the great ſalvation: and the rather, diligent heed ſhould be had unto him, ſince there is a backwardneſs to every thing that is ſpiritual and heavenly; and ſince ſatan is vigilant and induſtrious to put off perſons from hearing the Goſpel, or to ſteal the word from them: *for if they eſcaped not who refuſed him that ſpake on earth*; the *Ethiopic* verſion renders it, *who appeared to them on the mount*; that is, on mount *Sinai*; meaning either God himſelf, who deſcended on the mount, and ſpoke the ten commandments to the children of *Iſrael*; or Chriſt, the Angel that ſpake to *Moſes*, in it; or rather, *Moſes* himſelf, who was on the earth, and of the earth, earthly; who ſpake from God to the people, being their mediator; him the *Jews* refuſed, would not obey him, but thruſt him away, *Acts* vii. 39. tho' they promiſed to hear and do all that was ſaid to them; wherefore they did not eſcape divine vengeance and puniſhment; their carcaſſes fell in the wilderneſs at ſeveral times, in great numbers, and were not ſuffered to enter into *Canaan*'s land: *much more ſhall not we* eſcape, *if we turn away from him that* ſpeaketh *from heaven*; that is, Chriſt, who came from heaven originally; is the Lord from heaven; whoſe doctrine is from heaven; and who, having done his work, is gone to heaven; where he now is, and from whence he ſpeaks; and from hence he'll come a ſecond time, as judge of all. There have been, and are ſome, that turn away from him; from a profeſſion of him, and his Goſpel and ordinances, and draw back unto perdition; ſuch ſhall not eſcape divine wrath and vengeance; the ſoreſt puniſhment ſhall be inflicted on them; ſee ch. x. 29.

Ver. 26. *Whoſe voice then ſhook the earth*, &c.] That is, at the giving of the law on mount *Sinai*: Chriſt was then preſent; his voice was then heard; which was either the voice of thunder, or the voice of the trumpet, or rather the voice of words: this ſhook the earth, *Sinai*, and the land about it, and the people on it; which made them quake and tremble, even *Moſes* himſelf; ſee *Exod.* xix. 18. *Pſ.* lxviii. 8. *but now he hath promiſed, ſaying in* Hagg. ii. 6. *yet once more I ſhake not the earth only, but alſo heaven*; not only the land of *Judea*, and particularly *Jeruſalem*, and the inhabitants of it, who were all ſhaken, and moved, and troubled at the news of the birth of the Meſſiah, the deſire of all nations, the prophet *Haggai* ſpeaks of, *Matt.* ii. 2, 3. but the heaven alſo; by prodigies in it, as the appearance of a wonderful ſtar, which guided the wiſe men from the eaſt; and by the motions of the heavenly inhabitants, the angels, who deſcended in great numbers, and made the heavens reſound with their ſongs of praiſe, on account of Chriſt's incarnation, *Matt.* ii. 2. *Luke* ii. 10, 13, 14. How the Apoſtle explains and applies this, may be ſeen in the next verſe.

Ver. 27. *And this* word *yet once more*, &c.] Or as it is in *Hagg.* ii. 6. *yet once it is a little while*; which ſuggeſts, that as ſomething had been done already, ſo in a very little time, and at once, ſomething very marvellous and ſurpriſing would be effected: and it *ſignifieth the removing of thoſe things that are ſhaken, as of things that are made*; which ſome underſtand of what will be done at Chriſt's coming to judgment; as the paſſing away of the heavens and the earth, which are things that are made, or created, by the power of God; when there will be a ſhaking of them, ſo as that they ſhall be removed, and paſs away with a great noiſe; and ſo they interpret the next clauſe, of the permanency of the new heavens and the new earth, and of the immoveable kingdom of glory, and the never-fading inheritance of the ſaints; and of their fixed, unalterable, and unſhaken ſtate: but rather this is to be underſtood of Chriſt's coming to the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*; when there was an entire removal of the *Jewiſh* ſtate, both political and eccleſiaſtical; and of the whole *Moſaic* œconomy; and of things appertaining to divine worſhip, which were made with hands, as the temple, and the things in it; and which were made to be removed; for they were to continue no longer than the time of reformation: and this removing of them deſigns the abolition of them, and entire putting an end to them; at which time, not only their civil government was wholly put down, but their eccleſiaſtic ſtate alſo; for the place of their worſhip was deſtroyed, the daily ſacrifice ceaſed, and the old covenant, and the manner of adminiſtring it, vaniſhed away; and all the legal inſtitutions and ordinances which were aboliſhed by the death of Chriſt, were no more performed, in *Jeruſalem*; the temple, and temple-ſervice periſhing together: *that thoſe things which cannot be ſhaken may remain*; the kingdom and prieſthood of Chriſt, which are everlaſting; and the good things which come by him, as remiſſion of ſins, juſtification, adoption, ſanctification, and the heavenly inheritance; as alſo the Goſpel, and the doctrines, and ordinances of it, baptiſm, and the Lord's ſupper, and the mode of Goſpel-worſhip; all which are to continue until Chriſt's ſecond coming.

Ver. 28. *Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved*, &c.] Not the kingdom of glory; eternal glory is a kingdom, and it is an immoveable one; and is a free gift of God, and may be ſaid to be now received; God's people are called unto it, and are made meet for it, and have a right unto it, and have it in faith and hope, and in Chriſt their head and repreſentative: but the kingdom of grace, under the Goſpel-diſpenſation, is meant: there are ſeveral things in this diſpenſation which are called a kingdom; as a Goſpel church, the Goſpel itſelf, and the privileges and bleſſings of grace beſtowed, eſpecially ſpiritual and internal ones, *Matt.* xxv. 1. *Luke* xvi. 16. *Rom.* xiv. 17. and the whole diſpenſation is called the kingdom of heaven, *Matt.* iii. 2. and iv. 17. Chriſt he is king, believers are his ſubjects, the Goſpel is his ſceptre, and the ordinances are his laws and appointments, and all are immoveable; and a man may be ſaid to receive this kingdom, when he is delivered from the power of darkneſs, is regenerated, and has the bleſſings of grace actually beſtowed on him, and is brought to *Zion*: *let us have grace*; by which is meant, not thankfulneſs for ſo great a bleſſing, tho' this is highly requiſite and neceſſary; nor the favour of God, tho' as the reception of the kingdom ſprings from hence, a ſenſe of it ought to abide; nor the habit or principle of grace in the heart, unleſs particularly the grace of faith, and the exerciſe of it, ſhould be deſigned; but rather the doctrine of grace, the Goſpel, is intended; and the ſenſe is, εχωμεν, *let us hold* it, as the *Ethiopic* verſion renders it; let us hold the Goſpel faſt, and a profeſſion of it: the *Vulgate Latin* and *Arabic* verſions read, *we have grace*; this goes along with the immoveable kingdom; all that have truly received the one, have the other: *whereby we may ſerve God*; God is to be ſerved, and not a creature, nor the elements of this world, the ceremonial law, and its rites; nor is he to be ſerved in any form, only in a ſpiritual way; and without holding to the Goſpel, there is no ſerving him in an evangelic manner; the true and right way of ſerving him is as follows: *acceptably*; in Chriſt, in the Goſpel of his Son, and by faith in him, without which it is impoſſible to pleaſe God: *with reverence*; of the majeſty of God, with ſhame for ſin, and with a ſenſe of unworthineſs: *and godly fear*; which has God for its author and object; and which ſprings from his grace, and is increaſed by diſcoveries of his goodneſs; and which is conſiſtent with faith, and ſpiritual joy; ſee *Pſ.* ii. 11. and v. 7.

Ver. 29. *For our God is a conſuming fire.*] Either God perſonally conſidered, God in the perſon of Chriſt; ſo the *Shekinah*, with the *Jews*, is called a conſuming fire [n]. Chriſt is truly God, and he is our God and Lord; and tho' he is full of grace and mercy, yet he will appear in great wrath to his enemies, who will not have him to reign over them: or rather God eſſentially conſidered; whoſe God he is, and in what ſenſe, and how he comes to be ſo, ſee the note on ch. viii. 10. what is here ſaid of him, that he is *a conſuming fire*, may be underſtood of his jealouſy in matters of worſhip, *Deut.* iv. 23, 24. and ſo carries in it a reaſon why he is to be ſerved acceptably, with reverence and godly fear. God, and he only is to be worſhipped; and he is to be worſhipped in a way ſuitable to himſelf; and he has the ſole right of fixing the manner of worſhip, both as to the external and internal parts of it: under the legal diſpenſation, he was worſhipped in a way he then pitched upon, and ſuitable to it; and under the Goſpel-diſpenſation he is to be worſhipped in an evangelical way; and he is to have all the glory in every part of worſhip; and the ordinances of Goſpel-worſhip are immoveable; nor are they to be altered, or others put in their room, without incurring his diſpleaſure. Moreover, this phraſe may be expreſſive of the preſervation of his people, and of the deſtruction of their enemies, *Deut.* ix. 1, 2, 3. We commonly ſay, that God out of Chriſt is a conſuming fire; meaning, that God, as an abſolute God, is full of wrath and vengeance; and it is a truth, but not the truth of this text; for here it is *our God*, our covenant God, our God in Chriſt; not that he is ſo to the ſaints, or to them that are in Chriſt: he is indeed as a wall of fire in his providences, to protect and defend them, and as fire in his word to enlighten and warm them, to guide and direct them, but not a conſuming fire to them; this he is to their enemies, who are as thorns, and briars, and ſtubble before him: and ſo the *Jews* interpret *Deut.* iv. 24. of a fire conſuming fire [o]; and obſerve, that *Moſes* ſays, *thy God*, and not *our God* [p]; but the Apoſtle here uſes the latter phraſe.

CHAP. XIII.

THE Apoſtle having finiſhed the doctrinal part of this Epiſtle, cloſes it with practical exhortations to theſe *Hebrews*, puts up prayers for them, and ſends ſalutations to them. The exhortations are to brotherly love, and the continuance of it, ver. 1. to hoſpitality, by which ſome have entertained angels unawares, ver. 2. to ſympathy with thoſe that are in bonds, and in afflictions, ver. 3. to purity and chaſtity in the honourable ſtate of marriage, urged by the judgment of God on unclean perſons, ver. 4. to avoid covetouſneſs, and to be content with preſent things, enforced by the promiſes of God, which give boldneſs and ſtrength to faith, ver. 5, 6. to remember their ſpiritual guides and governours, the preachers of the Goſpel to them; to follow their faith, and conſider the end of their converſation, which is Chriſt Jeſus, the ſame yeſterday, to-day, and for ever, ver. 7, 8. And then he cautions them from being carried about with the doctrines of men, which are divers and ſtrange; which he urges from the profitable effect of the Goſpel to eſtabliſh the heart, and from the unprofitableneſs of meats to legal worſhippers, and from the chriſtians having an altar, which is Chriſt, which thoſe who are ſeeking life by the ſervice of the law have nothing to do with, ver. 9, 10. And this he illuſtrates in the type of burnt-offerings, which were burnt without the camp, and there was nothing left for the prieſts to eat of, ver. 11. In like manner Chriſt, the antitype, ſuffered without the gates of *Jeruſalem*, for the ſanctification of his people, by his blood; and who only, and not thoſe who ſeek for righteouſneſs by the law, have an intereſt in, ver. 12. However, it becomes the ſaints to quit every thing, and all dependence on themſelves, and fellowſhip with others, and go forth to Jeſus, believing in him, whatſover reproach they ſuffer on his account; for here is nothing permanent and durable in this world; but there is a ſtate of happineſs to come, which will laſt for ever, ver. 13, 14. And ſince Chriſt has offered himſelf for his people, they ought to offer up the ſacrifices of praiſe to God by him, and to do acts of beneficence and goodneſs, which are ſacrifices well-pleaſing to God thro' him, ver. 15, 16. And to theſe exhortations the Apoſtle adds others; as to obey their ſpiritual rulers and governours, and ſubmit unto them; ſince they watch for their ſouls, and muſt give an account, which to do with joy, and not with grief, is beſt and profitable, ver. 17. and to pray for the Apoſtle, and other miniſters, ſince they had a good conſcience, and were willing to live honeſtly; and the rather, that he might be reſtored to them the ſooner, ver. 18, 19. and to engage them to this their duty, he ſets them an example, by putting up prayers for them, ver. 20, 21. and deſires them to take in good part the letter he had wrote unto them, ver. 22. and acquaints them, that *Timothy* was ſet at liberty, with whom he hoped to ſee them in a ſhort time, ver. 23. and then cloſes the Epiſtle with his own, and the ſalutations of others, and with his uſual benediction, ver. 24, 25.

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[n] Tzeror Hammor, fol. 21. 4.

[p] Lexic. Cabaliſt. p. 114.

[o] Zohar in Gen. fol. 35. 3. & 51. 1. & in Exod. fol. 91. 1. & in Lev. fol. 11. 1.

Ver. 1. *Let brotherly love continue.*] The *Vulgate Latin* and *Syriac* verſions add, *in you*; or among you, as a church and ſociety of chriſtians; for this is not to be underſtood of love to all mankind, or to thoſe of the ſame nation, or who are in a ſtrict natural relation brethren, tho' they are all in a ſenſe brethren, and to be loved; but of love to thoſe who are in the ſame ſpiritual relation, to God, as their Father, to Chriſt, as the firſt-born among many brethren; and are in the ſame church-ſtate, at leaſt partakers of the ſame grace: and which love ought to be univerſal, and reach to all the ſaints, and be fervent and unfeigned, and as Chriſt hath loved us; and when it is genuine, it is active and laborious; and ſhews itſelf in praying with, and for one another; in bearing one another's burdens; in forbearing and forgiving one another; in admoniſhing one another in love; in building up each other in the moſt holy faith; and in ſtirring up one another to the ſeveral duties of religion: and without this excellent and uſeful grace, a profeſſion of religion is in vain; this is an evidence of regeneration; it is the bond of perfectneſs, and what renders the ſaints communion delightful and edifying: many are the arguments moving to the exerciſe of it; as the love of God, and Chriſt; the new commandment of Chriſt; the relation ſaints ſtand in to one another; the comfort and joy of Goſpel-miniſters, and our own peace and edification: and this ſhould *continue*; for the love of God and Chriſt continues; the relation between the ſaints continues; and without this, churches can't continue long: the Apoſtle means, not the grace itſelf, the internal principle, for that where it once is, always continues, and can never be loſt; but the exerciſe and increaſe of it, an abounding in it yet more and more. One of the *Jewiſh* prayers is to this purpoſe [q]; "he that dwells in this houſe, let him "plant among you, אחוה ואהבה, *brotherhood* "*and love*, (or brotherly love) peace and friend-"ſhip."

Ver. 2. *Be not forgetful to entertain ſtrangers*, &c.] By whom are meant, not unconverted men, who are ſtrangers to God and Chriſt, and the covenants of promiſe; nor ſaints, who are as pilgrims and ſtrangers in this world; but ſuch as are of another country, and are unknown; and even tho' wicked men, they are not excluded; though ſuch as are obliged to quit their own country for righteouſneſs ſake, are chiefly deſigned; all ſtrangers in diſtreſs are meant, and hoſpitality is to be exerciſed towards them; which lies negatively in doing nothing to diſtreſs them, and poſitively in providing food, raiment, lodging, &c. for them, and in comforting, counſelling, and directing them in all matters in which they may ſtand in need thereof: and that this is a duty, appears from the light of nature, and practices of the heathens, *Acts* xxviii. 2, 7. from the expreſs law of God, *Deut.* x. 19. and many others made in favour of ſtrangers, binding on the *Jews*; from the ſundry exhortations to it in the New Teſtament, *Rom.* xii. 13. 1 *Pet.* iv. 9. and from the exhortation here, not to forget it; and from the great regard which Chriſt will ſhew to ſuch as mind it, and his diſregard to others at the laſt day: the perſons who are to exerciſe it, are not only the miniſters of the Goſpel, who ſhould be given to hoſpitality; but all the ſaints, even the meaner ſort are not exempted, but ſhould uſe it according to their ability; tho' it is chiefly binding on thoſe that are rich. And this ſhould not be forgot, but purſued and followed after; it ſhould be frequently performed; men ſhould be given, and uſed to it; it ſhould be done without grudging, and in a friendly and loving manner: *for thereby ſome have entertained angels unawares*; as *Abraham*, *Gen.* xviii. 1—8. he knew them not to be angels at firſt; they appeared as men, and he treated them as ſuch; but they were angels, yea, one of them was *Jehovah* himſelf; and hereby he received many favours, ver. 10, 17, 23, 33. and *Lot*, *Gen.* xix. 1, 2, 3. who knew not that they were angels, he took into his houſe; but they were, and he was delivered by them from the burning of *Sodom*; yea, ſome have unawares, this way, entertained Chriſt himſelf, *Luke* xxiv. 15—31. and indeed, entertaining of his members, is entertaining him, *Matt.* xxv. 38, 40. It is an obſervation of a *Jewiſh* writer [r] upon the firſt of theſe inſtances; "from "hence we learn, ſays he, how great is the ſtrength "(or virtue) of the reception of travellers (or hoſ-"pitality) as the *Rabbins* of bleſſed memory ſay, "greater is, הכנסת אורחים, *hoſpitality*, than the "reception of the face of the *Shekinah*." And this is ſaid to be one of the ſix things which a man enjoys the fruit of, in this world, and for which there remains a reward in the world to come [s].

Ver. 3. *Remember them that are in bonds*, &c.] Not for criminal actions, or for debt, tho' ſuch ſhould be remembred, and pity ſhowed them, eſpecially the latter; but ſuch as are in bonds for the ſake of Chriſt, and the Goſpel. This has been often the lot of God's people, who ſhould be remembred, by praying for them, ſending comfortable letters to them, perſonally viſiting them, and relieving them under their diſtreſſes: *as bound with them*; as if it were ſo, as if in the ſame condition, and circumſtances; by ſympathizing with them; by conſidering themſelves liable to the ſame bonds; by dealing with them, as it would be deſirable to be dealt with in the ſame caſe: and *them which ſuffer adverſity*; outward afflictions of body, diſtreſs for want of temporal mercies, food and raiment, and perſecution by enemies; or ſpiritual adverſity, as the prevailings of corruptions, and particularly unbelief, the hidings of God's face, and the temptations of ſatan. *As being yourſelves alſo in the body*; as if in their bodies, enduring the ſame things; or as being afflicted in the body with diſeaſes, neceſſities, and perſecutions; or as being in the body, the church, of which theſe afflicted ones are a part, and therefore ſhould have a fellow-feeling with them; or rather, as being in this world, in the fleſh, or in a body and ſtate, ſubject to the like adverſities, temporal and ſpiritual.

Ver. 4. *Marriage is honourable in all*, &c.] Some read theſe words as an exhortation, *let it be ſo*;

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[q] T. Hieroſ. Beracot, fol. 3. 3.

[r] R. Abraham Seba in Tzeror Hammor, fol. 18. 4.

[s] T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 127. 1.

others as an aſſertion, it is ſo. *Marriage* is the conjunction of one man and one woman in wedlock, whereby they become one fleſh; it is a joining together of male and female in this relation, and of two only, and of ſuch as are not within the degrees of blood forbid by the law, *Lev.* xvi. 6—18. and of ſuch as are fit for marriage: and this is *honourable*, as it was inſtituted by God, and has been honoured with the preſence of Chriſt, *Gen.* ii. 22, 24. *John* ii. 1—11. And it is ſo in the ends of it, being to procreate children, multiply the earth, build up families, preſerve a legitimate offspring, and prevent fornication, and all uncleanneſs; and it is ſo, when the duties of the relation are performed on both ſides: and it is honourable *in all*; in all things, in all reſpects, upon all accounts; *every way*, as the *Arabic* verſion renders it; or as the *Ethiopic* verſion, *every where*; it has been honourably eſteemed of among all nations; it becomes perſons of all ranks and degrees, quality, and order; and it is honourable in all that are lawfully married, and do not violate the marriage-contract, or defile the marriage-bed: hereby are condemned, ſuch who deſpiſe marriage, that they may give a looſe to their wandring and unſatiable luſts; and ſuch who, under a pretence of greater ſanctity and perfection, reject it as unlawful; and the *Papiſts*, who deny it to men employed in ſacred work: *and the bed undefiled*; the *Arabic* verſion reads, *his bed*; and the *Syriac* and *Ethiopic* verſions, *their bed*; the bed of ſuch whoſe marriage is honourable; which is not polluted by admitting others into it, or by acts of fornication and adultery: *but*, or *for*, as the *Alexandrian* copy reads, *whoremongers and adulterers God will judge*; the former of theſe may be rendered *fornicators*, as it is by the *Vulgate Latin* verſion: fornication is a ſin committed by ſingle perſons, unmarried ones; and tho' it was reckoned among the *Gentiles* a thing indifferent, yet is contrary to the law of God, and is a work of the fleſh, and makes unfit for the kingdom of God, and brings down the judgments of God both here and hereafter. And this is in oppoſition to marriage, which is appointed to prevent it. The ſin *adulterers* are guilty of, is a ſin committed by perſons, who are either one or both in a married ſtate, and ſo is directly a pollution of the marriage-bed: this was puniſhable with death by the law of God, and light of nature; and tho' men may make light of it, God will judge and puniſh ſuch as commit it, both in this life, with diſeaſes, poverty, and diſgrace, and in the world to come, at the great day of account; for however ſecretly it may be committed, God, who is omniſcient, ſees it, and will bring it into judgment; nor ſhall any be able to eſcape the righteous judgment of God, for he is omnipotent, as well as omniſcient. The *Jews* ſay, "whoever lies with "another man's wife, ſhall not eſcape, דינה, *the* "*judgment*, or damnation of hell[t]."

Ver. 5. Let your *converſation* be *without covetouſneſs*, &c.] Which is an immoderate deſire of riches, an over-anxious care for worldly things, attended with diſſatisfaction, and diſcontent with their preſent ſtate: it diſcovers itſelf many ways; in preferring the world to religion; in laying up treaſure for a man's own ſelf, without being any ways uſeful to others; in with-holding from himſelf the neceſſaries of life, and in making no uſe of his ſubſtance for the glory of God, and the intereſt of religion: this is a very great evil; it is called idolatry, and is ſaid to be the root of all evil; and is very pernicious to true religion: a believer's converſation ſhould be without it; in his family, for whom he ſhould provide things convenient and honeſt; and in the world, where he ſhould deal uprightly, and not defraud and over-reach; and in the church, where he ſhould be liberal, and generouſly communicate, upon all occaſions; and ſuch a converſation is becoming the Goſpel, which is a declaration of things freely given to us of God. The reaſon of the Apoſtle's mentioning this ſin of covetouſneſs is, becauſe the *Jews* were prone to it, and theſe believing *Hebrews* might be inclined to it, and be diſſatisfied with their preſent condition, in which they ſuffered the ſpoiling of their goods; and beſides, unleſs this was avoided, the above-mentioned duties could not be performed aright, as brotherly love, hoſpitality, remembring and relieving perſons in bonds, and adverſity. And be *content with ſuch things as ye have*; or *with preſent things*; with preſent riches, or with preſent poverty; with preſent loſſes and croſſes; with preſent reproaches and afflictions; and contentment with theſe things ſhows itſelf, by thankfulneſs for every mercy, and by ſubmiſſion to the will and providence of God in every ſtate of life: and there are many things which may move and engage unto it; as the conſideration of the ſtate and condition men are in, when they come into the world, and will be when they go out of it; the will of God, and the diſpoſition of his providence according to it, which is unalterable; a ſenſe of their own unworthineſs; a view of intereſt in God and Chriſt; and an eye to the recompence of reward; as well as the many promiſes of God to ſupport and ſupply his: and among the reſt, what follows, *for he hath ſaid, I will never leave thee, nor forſake thee*; which is a promiſe made to *Joſhua*, and belongs to all believers, *Joſh.* i. 5. which may regard things temporal, as, that God will not leave his people in the hands of their enemies, nor forſake them in diſtreſs, nor with-hold any good thing from them needful for them, but will ſupply them with the neceſſaries of life, with which they ſhould be content: and this paſſage is very pertinently cited for this purpoſe, and could be eaſily underſtood in this ſenſe by the *Hebrews*; for the *Jews* explain ſuch places as ſpeak of God's not forſaking men, of the ſuſtenance of them, as *Pſ.* xxxvii. 25. and obſerve that the word עזיבה, *forſaking*, is never uſed but with reſpect to, פרנסה, *ſuſtenance*[u]: tho' the words may alſo relate to things ſpiritual, as that God will not leave them to themſelves, to their own corruptions, which would over-power them; nor to their own ſtrength, which is but weakneſs; nor to their own wiſdom, which is folly; nor to ſatan, and his temptations, who is an over-match for them; nor to the world, the frowns and flatteries of it, by which they might be drawn aſide; nor will he leave them deſtitute of his preſence; for tho' he ſometimes hides his face, and withdraws himſelf, yet not wholly, nor finally; nor will he forſake the work of his own hands, in them, but will perform it until the day of Chriſt; he'll not leave or forſake them, ſo as that they ſhall periſh; he'll not forſake them in life, nor at death, nor at judgment.

Ver. 6. *So that we may boldly ſay*, &c.] Or confidently aſſert; for nothing is more true than this, *the Lord is my helper*; he is able to help, and does help, when none elſe can; he has promiſed to be the helper of his people; he has laid help for them on Chriſt, who is mighty; and he has helped him as man, that he might help them; he has ſet up a throne of grace for them to come to, where they may find help; and experience confirms the truth of this aſſertion; every believer can ſet up an *Ebenezer*, and ſay, hitherto hath the Lord helped me: the people of God are of themſelves helpleſs ones; there is no help for them in man; their help is only in the Lord; who helps them *out* of the pit of ſin and miſery; out of the hands of all their enemies; out of all their afflictions, and out of all the dangers they are expoſed unto, by ſatan and his temptations, by reaſon of a body of ſin and death, and on account of the world, and the men of it: he helps them *in* the exerciſe of grace, and in the diſcharge of duty; in bearing the croſs; in fighting the Lord's battles; and in their journeying thro' the wilderneſs: he helps them *to* temporal bleſſings, and ſpiritual ones; to ſpiritual food and raiment, and to all needful ſupplies of grace, and at laſt, to eternal glory and happineſs: and the help he now affords is quick and preſent, ſuitable and ſeaſonable, and is what is ſufficient; and is ſometimes with, and ſometimes without means. *And I will not fear what man ſhall do unto me.* There is a becoming fear and reverence which is due to men that are our ſuperiors, whether in civil or religious affairs; but men are not to be feared, when oppoſed to God; not a ſingle man only is not to be feared, but even all men; and not they only, but all that they can do; the utmoſt of which is to kill the body; the ground of this fearleſſneſs in believers, are the infinite power, grace, and goodneſs of God. The words ſeem to be taken out of *Pſ.* liv. 4. and lvi. 4. and cxviii. 6.

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[t] T. Bab. Sota, fol. 4. 2.

[u] Bereſhit Rabba, §. 69. fol. 61. 4. Vajikra Rabba, §. 35. fol. 175. 2. Yalkut, par. 2. fol. 103. 2.

Ver. 7. *Remember them which have the rule over you*, &c.] Chriſt's church is a kingdom, and he is king in it; paſtors of churches are ſubordinate governours; who rule well when they rule, not in an arbitrary way, according to their own wills, but according to the laws of Chriſt, with all faithfulneſs, prudence, and diligence. The word may be rendered *guides* or *leaders*; for ſuch point out the way of peace, life, and ſalvation to men, and direct them to Chriſt; and guide them into the underſtanding of the ſcriptures, and the truths of the Goſpel; and lead them in the paths of faith and holineſs, and are examples to them. The *Greek* word, here uſed, is what the *Jews* call chriſtian biſhops by; and ηγεμονια, is, by *Maimonides* [w], ſaid to be the ſame as פקידות, *a biſhoprick*: to *remember* them is to know, own, acknowledge, and reſpect them as their governours; to obey them, and ſubmit to them; to treaſure up in memory their doctrines and exhortations; to be mindful of them at the throne of grace, to pray for them; and to take care of their maintenance and outward ſupply of life: *who have ſpoken unto you the word of God*; of which God is the author, being agreeable to the ſcriptures, given by inſpiration of God; the ſubject of which is the love and grace of God in Chriſt; and which God makes uſeful for converſion and comfort; and which, when ſpoken aright, is ſpoken freely, boldly, and faithfully: *whoſe faith follow*; or *imitate*; meaning either their faithfulneſs, by owning the truths and ordinances of the Goſpel before men; by reproving fellow-chriſtians in love; by diſcharging the ſeveral duties of their place in the church; and by performing the private duties of life: or the grace of faith, their ſtrong exerciſe of it, together with its fruits and effects, love, and good works; alſo the profeſſion of their faith, which they hold faſt unto the end; and the doctrine of faith, by embracing the ſame, as it appears agreeable to the word; by abiding by it, ſtanding faſt in it, ſtriving for it, and perſevering in it to the end. *Conſidering the end of their converſation*; which may intend the whole of their conduct in the diſcharge of the ſeveral duties of their office; the *end* of which deſigns either the manner of it, as *De Dieu* explains it, agreeable to the ſenſe of the *Hebrew* word, תוצאות, in *Pſ.* lxviii. 20. or the drift and ſcope of it, which was Chriſt, his honour and glory, as in connexion with the following verſe; or the event of it in life, being for the glory of God, and the good of men; or rather the iſſue of it in death, or what a comfortable end they made; and ſo the *Ethiopic* verſion renders it, *conſidering* their *laſt manner of living, in* their *exit out of the world*; and this is to be conſidered for imitation and encouragement.

Ver. 8. *Jeſus Chriſt the ſame yeſterday, and today, and for ever.*] Who is the ſubſtance of the word ſpoken by the above-mentioned rulers, the author and object of their faith, and the end in which their converſation terminated. Theſe words may be expreſſive of the duration of Chriſt: he was *yeſterday*, which does not deſign the day immediately foregoing, nor ſome little time paſt, but ancient times, formerly, of old; and tho' it does not extend to eternity, which is true of Chriſt, yet may be carried further than to the days of his fleſh here on earth, even to the whole Old Teſtament diſpenſation; yea, to the beginning of the world, when he exiſted not only as the eternal Word, the everlaſting *I am*, but as the ſaviour and redeemer of his people; during which diſpenſation, he frequently appeared in an human form, and was the ſum of all promiſes and prophecies, and the ſubſtance of all types and ſhadows, and the ſpiritual food of his people: and he is *to-day* under the Goſpel diſpenſation; in his perſon as God-man, and in his offices as prophet, prieſt, and king; and will be ſo *for ever*: he will never die more; his kingdom is an everlaſting kingdom, and his prieſthood an unchangeable one. Moreover, theſe words may regard the immutability of Chriſt; who is unchangeable in his perſon, perfections, and eſſence, as God; and in his love to his people; and in the fulneſs of his grace, and in the efficacy of his blood, and in the virtue of his ſacrifice and righteouſneſs: it may be obſerved, that ο αυτος, tranſlated *the ſame*, anſwers to הוא, *he*, a name of God, *Pſ.* cii. 27. *Iſ.* xlviii. 12. and which is uſed in *Jewiſh* writings [x] for a name of God; and ſo it is among the *Turks* [y]: and it is expreſſive of his eternity, immutability, and independence; and well agrees with Chriſt, who is God over all, bleſſed for ever.

Ver. 9. *Be not carried about with divers and ſtrange doctrines*, &c.] The word *divers* may denote the variety and multitude of other doctrines; referring either to the various rites and ceremonies of the law, or to the traditions of the elders, or to the ſeveral doctrines of men, whether *Jews* or *Gentiles*; whereas the doctrine of the ſcriptures, of Chriſt, and his Apoſtles, is but one; it is uniform, and all of a-piece; and ſo may likewiſe denote the diſagreement of other doctrines with the perfections of God, the perſon and offices of Chriſt, the ſcriptures of truth, the analogy of faith, and even with themſelves: and *ſtrange* doctrines may deſign ſuch as were never taught by God, nor are agreeable to the voice of Chriſt, nor to be found in the word

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[w] In Miſn. Gittin, c. 1. §. 1.

[x] Seder Tephillot, fol. 2. 1. & 4. 1. Ed. Baſil. fol. 6. 2. & 7. 1. Ed. Amſtelod. Zohar in Exod. fol. 35. 4. Maimon. in Miſn. Succa, c. 4. §. 5.

[y] Smith de Moribus Turc. p. 40.

word of God; and which are new, and unheard of, by the Apoſtles and churches of Chriſt; and appear in a foreign dreſs and habit: wherefore, the Apoſtle exhorts the believing *Hebrews*, not to be *carried about with them*; as light clouds and meteors in the air, by every wind: for ſo to be, is to be like children; and diſcovers great ignorance, credulity, levity, inconſtancy, uncertainty, fluctuation, and inconſiſtency: *for* it is *a good thing that the heart be eſtabliſhed with grace*; with the doctrine of grace, which is food for faith, and does not leave men at uncertainties, about things; but eſtabliſhes the heart, with reſpect to the love and favour of God, and builds ſouls upon the foundation, Chriſt; ſo that they are not, at a loſs, about the expiation of ſin, juſtification, and ſalvation; but firmly look for, and expect, eternal happineſs by Chriſt, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God: *not with meats*; referring to the diſtinction of meats among the *Jews*; or the ſacrifices eat both by the prieſts, and by the people; or the whole ceremonial law, which ſtood in divers meats and drinks: *which have not profited them that have been occupied therein*; they were only profitable to the body; and could be of no uſe to the ſoul, when they were in force, than as they led to Chriſt, and were regarded by believers; for they were of no advantage to hypocrites and carnal men; they could not ſanctify, nor juſtify, nor chear the ſpirits, nor eſtabliſh the heart; and are of no manner of ſervice at all, ſince the death of Chriſt, whereby the whole ceremonial law is aboliſhed.

Ver. 10. *We have an altar*, &c.] By which is meant, not the croſs of Chriſt, on which he was crucified; nor the Lord's table, where his fleſh and blood are preſented to faith, as food, tho' not offered; but Chriſt, himſelf, who is altar, ſacrifice, and prieſt: he was typified by the altar, of the burnt-offering, and the ſacrifice, that was offered upon it; the altar was made of *Shittim* wood, and covered with braſs, denoting the incorruptibleneſs, duration and ſtrength of Chriſt: the horns of it, at the four corners, were for refuge; whoever fled to it, and laid hold on them, were ſafe; ſo Chriſt is a refuge to his people, that come from the four corners of the earth; and who believe in him, and lay hold on him, are, preſerved and protected, by his power and grace: the uſe of it, was for ſacrifice to be offered upon it; which being a male, without blemiſh, and wholly burnt with fire, was a ſweet ſavour to God; and which was typical of Chriſt's human nature, offered on the altar of his divine nature; which was pure and holy, ſuffered the fire of divine wrath, and was for a ſweet ſmelling ſavour to God: this altar was but one, and moſt holy, and ſanctified what was put upon it; all which is true of Chriſt: now this altar the ſaints have, and have a right to eat of it; even all Chriſt's friends and beloved ones; all that are made prieſts unto God by him; all that know him, believe in him, have a ſpiritual diſcerning of him, and hunger and thirſt after him: *whereof they have no right to eat that ſerve the tabernacle*: there is ſomething of this altar, or that was offered up upon this altar, that is to be eat, even the fleſh and blood of Chriſt; and to *eat* of it, is to believe, that Chriſt is come in the fleſh, and is become an offering for ſin, and for us that eat; it is to receive, embrace, and poſſeſs the bleſſings, procured by it; which is done by faith, with ſpiritual joy and gladneſs, and with ſincerity and ſingleneſs of heart: now thoſe, who ſerved the tabernacle, or adhered to the ſervice of the ceremonial law, they had no right to eat of this altar: the alluſion is to the prieſts eating of the ſacrifices, and to ſome ſacrifices, of which they might not eat, *Lev.* ii. 10. and vi. 16, 18, 26, 29. and vii. 9. and xvi. 27. and this is not to be underſtood of believers, before the coming of Chriſt, who did attend tabernacle ſervice; for they eat the ſame ſpiritual meat, and drank the ſame ſpiritual drink, as believers do now; but of ſuch, who obſtinately perſiſted in the ceremonies of the law, when they were aboliſhed; and ſo cut off themſelves from all right to the ſubſtance of theſe ſhadows. See *Gal.* v. 2, 3, 4.

Ver. 11. *For the bodies of thoſe beaſts*, &c.] Not the red heifer, *Numb.* xix. nor the ſin-offering in general, *Lev.* vi. 30. nor thoſe for the prieſt and people, *Lev.* iv. 11, 12. and xxi. 6, 7, 18. but the bullock and goat, on the day of atonement, *Lev.* xvi. 11—18, 27. which were typical of Chriſt, in the bringing of their blood into the moſt holy place, by the high-prieſt, for ſin; and in the burning of them without the camp: theſe beaſts were ſlain, their blood was ſhed, and was brought into the moſt holy place, by the high-prieſt; and was ſprinkled on the mercy-ſeat, and the horns of the altar of incenſe; and, by it, atonement was made, for the prieſt, his houſe, and all *Iſrael*; which was a type of the death of Chriſt; the ſhedding of his blood; the carrying of it into heaven; the ſprinkling it upon the throne of grace and mercy; by which reconciliation is made for the ſins of all God's people: *whoſe blood is brought into the ſanctuary*; that is, into the holy of holies, as the *Ethiopic* verſion renders it: *by the high-prieſt for ſin*; to make atonement for it, for his own, and for the ſins of his family, and of all *Iſrael*: *are burnt without the camp*, Lev. xvi. 27. even their ſkins, fleſh, and dung; and the men, that burnt them, were unclean, tho', upon being waſhed, were received: which was typical of the dolorous ſufferings of Chriſt, without *Jeruſalem*, as the next verſe ſhews; and points out the extent of his ſufferings, reaching to all parts of his body, and even to his ſoul; and expreſſes, not only the pains, but the ſhame and reproach he endured, ſignified by the burning of the dung; and hints at the pardon of the wicked *Jews*, who were concerned in his ſufferings; which was applied unto them upon their repentance.

Ver. 12. *Wherefore Jeſus alſo*, &c.] In order to anſwer the type of him; *that he might ſanctify the people with his own blood*: by *the people*, are meant the people, who are the objects of divine love and favour; a choſen and covenant people; a diſtinct and peculiar people; Chriſt's own ſpecial people, by the gift of his father to him: and the ſanctification of them does not deſign the internal ſanctification of them, tho' this is from Chriſt, and in conſequence of his blood; nor does it ſo much regard the cleanſing of the filth of ſin, tho' Chriſt's blood ſanctifies, in this ſenſe; but, rather the expiation of the guilt of ſin, which Chriſt has fully took away; compleat pardon being procured, and a perfect righteouſneſs brought in: and this by *his own blood*; the prieſts ſanctified, to the purifying of the fleſh, with the blood of others, with the blood of bulls and goats; but Chriſt, with his own blood, which he was, really, a partaker of; and his human nature, being in union with his divine perſon, as the Son of God, it had a virtue in it, to ſanctify and cleanſe from all ſin, and to make full expiation of it; in ſhedding of which, and ſanctifying with it, he has ſhown great love to his people: and, that he might do this agreeable to the types of him on the day of atonement, he *ſuffered without the gate*; that is, of *Jeruſalem*: the *Syriac* verſion reads, *without the city*; meaning *Jeruſalem*; which anſwered to the camp of *Iſrael*, in the wilderneſs; without which, the bodies of beaſts were burnt, on the day of atonement: for ſo ſay [z] the *Jews*; "as "was the camp in the wilderneſs, ſo was the camp "in *Jeruſalem*; from *Jeruſalem* to the mountain of "the houſe, was the camp of *Iſrael*; from the "mountain of the houſe to the gate of *Nicanor*, "was the camp of the *Levites*; and from thence "forward, the camp of the *Shechinah*, or the Divine "Majeſty:" and ſo *Joſephus* [a] renders the phraſe, *without the camp*, in *Lev.* xvi. 27. by εν τοις προαστειοις; *in the ſuburbs*; that is, *of Jeruſalem*, where Chriſt ſuffered.

Ver. 13. *Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp*, &c.] Either of legal ceremonies, which are to be quitted; or of this world, which may be compared to a *camp*, for its inſtability, a camp not being always in one place; and for its hoſtility, the world being full of enemies to Chriſt and his people; and for the noiſe and fatigue of it, it being a troubleſome and weariſome place to the Saints, abounding with ſins and wickedneſs; as alſo camps uſually do; and for multitude, the men of the world being very numerous: and a man, may be ſaid to *go forth* from hence, when he profeſſes not to belong to the world; when his affections are weaned from it; when the allurements of it don't draw him aſide; when he forſakes, and ſuffers the loſs of all, for Chriſt; when he withdraws from the converſation of the men of it, and breathes after another world, and to go forth, from hence, *unto him*, unto Chriſt, ſhews, that Chriſt is not to be found in the camp, in the world; he is above, in heaven, at the right hand of God; and, that going out of the camp externally, or leaving the world only in a way of profeſſion, is of no avail, without going to Chriſt: yet, there muſt be, a quitting of the world, in ſome ſenſe, or there is no true coming to Chriſt, and enjoyment of him; and Chriſt is a full recompence, for what of the world may be loſt, by coming to him; wherefore, there is great encouragemnt, to quit the world, and follow Chriſt: now to go forth to him, is to believe in him; to hope in him; to love him; to make a profeſſion of him, and follow him: *bearing his reproach*; or reproach for his ſake: the reproach, which ſaints meet with, for the ſake of Chriſt, and a profeſſion of him, is called *his*, becauſe of the union, there is between them, and the ſympathy and fellow-feeling, he has with them in it; he reckons, what is ſaid and done to them, as ſaid and done to himſelf; and, beſides, there is a likeneſs between the reproach, which Chriſt perſonally bore, and that, which is caſt upon his followers; and this is to be bore, by them, willingly, chearfully, courageouſly, and patiently.

Ver. 14. *For here have we no continuing city*, &c.] Neither for religious worſhip, the city of *Jeruſalem* being quickly to be deſtroyed, nor for civil life to dwell in; and ſo may have a peculiar regard to the *Hebrews*, whoſe temple and city would, in a ſhort time, become deſolate; tho' it was the general caſe of the ſaints, in thoſe times, to be obliged to flee from one city to another, having no certain dwelling-place: and it may reſpect the common inſtability of this world, and of the ſtate of the ſaints in it: this world, and all things in it, are unſtable, and tranſitory, the riches, honours, pleaſures, and profits of it, and the perſons in it, and even the world itſelf; the faſhion of it paſſes away: the ſaints have no ſettlement and abiding here; they are not of it, tho' in it; and tho' they are in it, it is but for a time; and, when they have done the will of God, they are taken out of it; another place is prepared for them; they are but ſojourners, and ſtrangers, and pilgrims; and this they are ſenſible of, and own, and acknowledge: and it is their mercy, that they are not to continue here; ſince, whilſt in it, they are expoſed to a great many ſorrows and afflictions, both of ſoul and body; are often diſturbed with ſatan's temptations; and are liable to the ſnares, inſults, and reproaches of the world; and, ſeeing they have no continuance here, they'll be the ſooner at home: and they have that to ſupport them, under the inſtability of worldly things, which others have not; they are intereſted in an unchangeable God, and in his love; and in an unchangeable Saviour; and in an unchangeable covenant; and have a right to eternal glory and happineſs, a city, which has foundations, as follows: *but we ſeek one to come*; heaven, which is compared to a city; is future, yet to come; tho' certain, being built and prepared by God; and is continuing, will abide, being well founded: hence the ſaints ſeek for it; ſee the note on ch. xi. 10.

Ver. 15. *By him therefore let us offer the ſacrifice of praiſe*, &c.] For temporal and ſpiritual mercies; particularly for ſanctification, or expiation of ſin, by the blood of Chriſt; and for heaven, the continuing city, that is to come: this ſacrifice is not a proper, nor a propitiatory one, but ſpiritual and evangelical; it is enjoined by God, is well pleaſing to him, and glorifies him; and is our reaſonable ſervice, that believe in Chriſt; for being made prieſts by him to God, and having faith in him, ſuch are capable of offering it aright; to do which, they are under the greateſt obligations: and it is to be offered up by Chriſt, who is the ſame, yeſterday, to day, and for ever; and who has ſuffered without the gate, that he might ſanctify the people by his blood; it is to be done, in imitation of him, and by his aſſiſtance; and for him, and bleſſings in him; and on him, as the altar, which ſanctifies the gift; and, through him, as the high-prieſt and mediator; for, as there is no coming to God, but by Chriſt, and all our mercies come to us, through him, and our thankſgivings are only acceptable to God, on his account, it muſt be right to offer them up by him: and that, *to God continually*; as the creator and preſerver of us, in our beings; as the father of mercies; as the father of Chriſt; and as our covenant God and father in him; ſince he is always beſtowing mercies on us, of one kind or another; and, therefore, ſhould be continually praiſed, even in times of adverſity, affliction, and temptation; in the midſt of reproach and perſecution; even, when unſettled in mind, body, and eſtate; ſince there is a continuing city to come; nor can a believer be in any ſtate of life, but he has ſomething to be thankful for: *that is, the fruit of* our *lips*; the ſacrifice of praiſe is ſo called, in alluſion to the offering of the firſt-fruits under the law; and to diſtinguiſh it from legal ſacrifices; and to ſhew, in what way and manner, we are to praiſe God, namely, with our lips: in *Hoſ.* xiv. 3. which is thought to be referred to here, it is, *the calves of* our *lips*; ſacrifices of praiſe, being inſtead of calves: and the Apoſtle interprets it, in great agreement, with the *Jewiſh* writers; the *Chaldee* paraphraſe explains it, by מלי ספותנא, *the words of their lips*: and ſo *Jarchi*, דברי שפתינו, *the words of our lips*; and *Kimchi*, וידוי שפתינו, *the confeſſion of our lips*: and it may be obſerved, that there is a great nearneſs in פרים, *calves*, and פרי, *fruit*; tho' perhaps rather the phraſe is borrowed from *Iſ.* lvii. 19. where it is expreſly had; the *Septuagint* indeed have it in *Hoſ.* xiv. 3. the Apoſtle adds, for further explanation, *giving thanks to his name*; to the name of God; to the glory of his name; to the honour of his divine perfections; for mercies of every kind: the word ſignifies, *a ſpeaking together*; and may deſign not only the conjunction of the heart and tongue together in praiſe, but a ſocial giving thanks to God by the ſaints, as a body together: the phraſe ϑυσια αινεσεως, *the ſacrifice of praiſe*, is uſed by the *Septuagint* in 2 *Chron.* xxix. 31. and xxxiii. 16. The Apoſtle having ſhewn, that legal ſacrifices were all ſuperſeded and aboliſhed by the ſacrifice of Chriſt, which is the deſign of this epiſtle, points out what ſacrifice believers ſhould offer up to God, under the Goſpel-diſpenſation; and the *Jews* themſelves ſay, that "in future time (*i. e.* in the "days of the Meſſiah) all ſacrifices ſhall ceaſe, but "קרבן תודה, *the ſacrifice of praiſe* ſhall not ceaſe [b]."

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[z] T. Bab. Zebachim, fol. 116. 2. Bemidbar. Rabba, §. 7. fol. 188. 3, 4. Maimon. Beth Habbechira, c. 7. §. 11.

[a] Antiq. l. 3. c. 10. §. 3.

Ver. 16. *But to do good and to communicate forget not*, &c.] Which is to be underſtood, not of doing good works in general, but of acts of beneficence, or communicating to *the poor*, as the *Syriac* verſion renders it: the Apoſtle proceeds to take notice of another ſort of ſacrifice, which continues under the Goſpel-diſpenſation; and that is, alms; which ſhould be attended to: alms ſhould be given, or beneficence be exerciſed to all men in need, even to our enemies, as well as to our friends and relations; and eſpecially to poor ſaints, and miniſters of the Goſpel: and this believers ſhould not *forget*; which ſhews that it it is a duty of importance; and that men are too apt to neglect it, and ſhould be ſtirred up unto it: *for with ſuch ſacrifices God is well pleaſed*; not that they are meritorious of the favour of God and of eternal life; for what a man gives in a way of charity, is but what God has given him, and cannot be profitable to God, tho' it is to a fellow-creature; nor is there any proportion between what is given, and grace and glory which the ſaints receive; yet doing good in this way, when it is done in faith, ſprings from love, and is directed to the glory of God, is well-pleaſing to him; yea, theſe ſacrifices are preferred by him to legal ones, *Hoſ.* vi. 6. and the *Jews* alſo ſay, that "greater is he who does alms than (if he offered) "all ſacrifices [c]."

Ver. 17. *Obey them that have the rule over you*, &c.] Not the eccleſiaſtical rulers among the *Jews*, for to theſe they were no longer obliged, they being no longer under ſuch tutors and governors; nor civil magiſtrates, tho' it was their duty to obey them, even heathen ones; for as for chriſtian magiſtrates, as yet there were none; but their ſpiritual guides and governors, the ſame that are mentioned ver. 7. theſe the Apoſtle exhorts them to *obey*; by conſtantly attending upon the word preached by them, and hearkening to it; by receiving it with faith and love, as it appears agreeable to the ſcriptures; for a contrary behaviour is pernicious to ſouls, and highly reſented by God; and by being preſent at, and joining with them in the ordinances of Chriſt, as adminiſtred by them; and by regarding their admonitions, counſels and advice: *and ſubmit yourſelves*; to the laws of Chriſt's houſe, as put in execution by them; and to their cenſures and reproofs, as delivered by the authority of the church; for they are ſpiritual fathers, and children ſhould obey their parents, and ſubmit to them; they are the ambaſſadors of Chriſt, ſtand in his ſtead, and repreſent him, wherefore their authority is great; and they are paſtors or ſhepherds of the flock, whom the ſheep ſhould follow: *for they watch for your ſouls, as they that muſt give account*; they watch not for themſelves, for their worldly gain and advantage, and for the eſtates of men; but for the ſouls of men, to do them good, to comfort and edify them, to feed them with knowledge and underſtanding, and for the ſalvation of them; as ſuch that muſt give an account to their own conſciences, that they diſcharge their work aright, or they can't be ſatisfied; and to the church, to whom they miniſter, to whom they are accountable, if they are dilatory and negligent; and eſpecially, as ſuch as muſt ſtand before the judgment-ſeat of Chriſt, and give an account to him of their miniſtry, of their uſe of talents committed to them, and of ſouls that are put under their care and charge; how they have diſcharged their duty to the ſouls of men, and how theſe have behaved towards them under the miniſtry of the word: the *Alexandrian* copy, and the *Vulgate Latin* verſion read, *for they watch, as thoſe that muſt give an account for your ſouls*; the ſenſe is much the ſame: *that they may do it with joy, and not with grief*; either do their work with joy, chearfully; which they do, when they are obeyed and ſubmited to; when men attend upon the word and ordinances adminiſtred by them, and receive advantage, and grow in grace and ſpiritual knowledge; when they abide by the Goſpel, and walk worthy of it; otherwiſe they do their work heavily, and with ſorrow: or elſe give up their account with joy, and not with grief; either at the throne of grace, where they either rejoice or complain; or at the great day, when they will be witneſſes, either for, or againſt thoſe that have been committed to them: *for that is unprofitable unto you*; for whoſe ſouls they watch; that is, the latter would be ſo, either to do their work ſorrowing, or to give up their account by way of complaint; either of them muſt be to the diſadvantage of ſuch perſons that occaſion grief and ſorrow.

Ver. 18. *Pray for us*, &c.] Who are in the miniſtry; your guides and governors; ſince the work is of ſo much moment, and ſo arduous and awful, and you have ſuch a concern in it; ſee the note on 2 *Theſſ.* iii. 1. *for we truſt we have a good conſcience*; there is a conſcience in every man, but it is naturally evil: a good conſcience is a conſcience ſanctified by the ſpirit of God, and ſprinkled by the blood of Jeſus; here it chiefly reſpects the upright diſcharge of it in the miniſterial work: this the Apoſtle often aſſerts, and appeals to, and which he here expreſſes with modeſty, and yet with confidence; and which he uſes as an argument for prayer for them: *in all things willing to live honeſtly*; not only as men, but as miniſters; faithfully diſpenſing the word of truth, without any regard to the favour or frowns of men, as good ſtewards of the myſteries of God; which contains in it another reaſon for prayer: the phraſe, *in all things*, is ſo placed, that it may be read in connexion with either clauſe; and the ſenſe is either that they exerciſed a good conſcience in all things, in which they were concerned with God, or man, and among all perſons, *Jews* and *Gentiles*; or that they were willing to live honeſtly in every reſpect, as men, chriſtians, and miniſters.

Ver. 19. *But I beſeech you the rather to do this*, &c.] To pray earneſtly; to ſtrive together in their prayers for them, *Rom.* xv. 30, 31, 32. *that I may be reſtored to you the ſooner*; Chriſt's miniſters are ſometimes hindred from being with their people, through ſatan, or his emiſſaries, creating troubles, or caſting them into priſon; which might be the Apoſtle's caſe now; but God can make their way through all; and for this he ſhould be prayed unto.

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[b] Vajikra Rabba, §. 9. fol. 153. 1. & §. 27. fol. 168. 4.

[c] T. Bab. Succa, fol. 49. 2.

Ver. 20. *Now the God of peace*, &c.] This is the concluding part of the epiſtle, which is ended with a prayer, made up of very ſuitable petitions for the *Hebrews*; and as the Apoſtle deſires them to pray for him and other miniſters, he, in turn, and by way of example, prays for them: and he addreſſes God, as *the God of peace*; who is ſo called, becauſe of his concern in the peace and reconciliation of his people; becauſe he is the giver of conſcience-peace to them; becauſe he is the author of all felicity and proſperity, temporal and ſpiritual; the promoter of peace and concord among ſaints, and at laſt brings them to eternal peace; ſee the note on *Rom.* xv. 33. a conſideration of this gives boldneſs at the throne of grace; furniſhes out a reaſon why bleſſings aſked for may be expected; has a tendency to promote peace among brethren; may bear up ſaints under a ſenſe of infirmity and imperfection, in prayer and other duties; and be an encouragement to them under ſatan's temptations, and all afflictions. The *Arabic* verſion, makes the God of peace to be Chriſt himſelf; whereas Chriſt is manifeſtly diſtinguiſhed from him in the next verſe; and even in that verſion, reading the words thus, *now the God of peace raiſed from the dead, Jeſus the ſhepherd of the ſheep, magnified by the blood of the everlaſting covenant*; *Jeſus*, I ſay, *our Lord confirm you*, &c. *through Jeſus Chriſt*; for which verſion there is no foundation in the original text. The God of peace is manifeſtly God the Father, who is diſtinguiſhed from Chriſt his Son: *that brought again from the dead our Lord Jeſus*; who died for the ſins of his people; was buried, and lay under the power of death for ſome time; but was raiſed from the dead by his Father, tho' not excluſive of himſelf, and the ſpirit of holineſs; in the ſame body, in which he ſuffered and died; as the firſt-fruits of his people, and as their Lord and Saviour, head and ſurety, for their juſtification, and as a pledge of their reſurrection. The Apoſtle addreſſes the God and Father of Chriſt in prayer, under this conſideration, to obſerve his power and ability to help in the greateſt diſtreſs, and in the moſt difficult and deſperate caſe; to encourage faith and hope in him, when things are at the worſt, and moſt diſcouraging; to comfort the ſaints under afflictions, in a view of their reſurrection; to engage them to regard a riſen Chriſt, and things above, and to expect life and immortality by him: *that great ſhepherd of the ſheep*; the people of God, whom the Father has choſen, and given to Chriſt; for whom he has laid down his life; and whom the Spirit calls by his grace, and ſanctifies; to whom Chriſt has a right, by his Father's gift, his own purchaſe, and the power of grace: theſe being partakers of his grace, are called *ſheep*, becauſe they are harmleſs and inoffenſive in their lives and converſations; and yet are expoſed to danger; but meek and patient under ſufferings; are weak and timorous of themſelves; are clean, being waſhed in the blood of Chriſt; are ſociable in their communion with one another; are profitable, tho' not to God, yet to men; are apt to go aſtray, and are liable to diſeaſes: they are alſo called ſheep, and are Chriſt's ſheep before converſion; ſee *John* x. 16. and Chriſt, he is the ſhepherd of them, who in all reſpects diſcharges the office of a ſhepherd to them, diligently and faithfully; ſee the note on *John* x. 11. here he is called, *that great ſhepherd*; being the man, God's fellow, equal to him, the great God and our Saviour; and having a flock which, tho' comparatively is a little one, is a flock of ſouls, of immortal ſouls, and is ſuch a flock as no other ſhepherd has; hence he is called the ſhepherd and biſhop of ſouls: and his abilities to feed them, are exceeding great; he has a perfect knowledge of them; all power to protect and defend them; a fullneſs of grace to ſupply them; and he takes a diligent care of them: and this great perſon ſo deſcribed was raiſed from the dead, *through the blood of the everlaſting covenant*; for the ſenſe is not, that God is the God of peace, through that blood, tho' it is true, that peace is made by it; nor that Chriſt becomes the ſhepherd of the ſheep by it, tho' he has with it purchaſed the flock of God; nor that the choſen people become his ſheep through it, tho' they are redeemed by it, and are delivered out of a pit wherein is no water, by the blood of this covenant; but that Chriſt was brought again from the dead through it; and it denotes the particular influence that it had upon his reſurrection, and the continued virtue of it ſince. The *covenant* ſpoken of is not the covenant of works made with *Adam*, as the federal head of his natural ſeed; there was no mediator or ſhepherd of the ſheep that had any concern therein; there was no blood in that covenant; nor was it an everlaſting one: nor the covenant of circumciſion given to *Abraham*; tho' poſſibly there may be ſome reference to it; or this may be oppoſed to that, ſince the blood of circumciſion is often called by the *Jews*, דם ברית, *the blood of the covenant* [d]: nor the covenant on mount *Sinai*, tho' there may be an alluſion to it; ſince the blood which was then ſhed, and ſprinkled on the people, is called the blood of the covenant, *Exod.* xxiv. 8. but that was not an everlaſting covenant, that has waxed old, and vaniſhed away; but the covenant of grace is meant, before called the new and better covenant, of which Chriſt is the ſurety and mediator; ſee ch. vii. 22. and viii. 6. This is an *everlaſting* one; it commenced from everlaſting, as appears from the everlaſting love of God, which is the riſe and foundation of it; from the counſels of God of old, which iſſued in it; from Chriſt's being ſet up from everlaſting, as the mediator of it; from the promiſes of it which were made before the world began; and from the ſpiritual bleſſings of grace in it, which were given to God's elect in Chriſt before the foundation of it: moreover, it will endure for ever; nor will it be ſucceeded by any other covenant: and the blood of Chriſt may be called the blood of it, becauſe the ſhedding of it is a principal article in it; by it the covenant is ratified and confirmed; and all the bleſſings of it come through it, as redemption, peace, pardon, juſtification, and even admiſſion into heaven itſelf; and Chriſt, through it, was brought again from the dead, becauſe by it he fulfilled his covenant-engagements, ſatisfied divine juſtice, and aboliſhed ſin, yea, death itſelf.

Ver. 21. *Make you perfect in every good work to do his will*, &c.] The *Alexandrian* copy reads, *in every good work and word*; as in 2 *Theſſ.* ii. 17. every good work is to be done: a good work is what is done in obedience to the command of God, and in faith, and from a principle of love, in the name and ſtrength of Chriſt, and with a view to the glory of God; and every ſuch work ſhould be

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[d] T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 135. 1. & T. Hieroſ. Yebamot, fol. 9. 1.

diligently attended to; ſuch as concern God, and are of a moral nature, or of poſitive inſtitution; and ſuch as concern each other, whether as men or chriſtians: and the will of God is the rule of every good work, both as to matter and manner; whatever is not agreeable to the revealed will of God, let it have ever ſuch a ſhew of religion and holineſs in it, it is not a good work; continuance in the performance of good works, and the perfection of them are things to be deſired of God; it requires grace to perform good works, and more grace to abound in them, and to keep men from being weary of well-doing; and tho' the beſt of works are imperfect, yet perfection in them is deſirable, and it is God alone that can make the ſaints perfect in any ſenſe; ſee 1 *Pet.* v. 10. The *Arabic* and *Ethiopic* verſions render it, *ſtrengthen you*, or *confirm you*; ſaints need to be ſtrengthened with ſpiritual ſtrength, to perform good works; for they are weak and feeble, and unable of themſelves, to do any thing ſpiritually good; without Chriſt they can do nothing, but through him ſtrengthening them, they can do all things; and they have need to be confirmed in them, that they are the will of God, and that it is their duty to regard them. The *Vulgate Latin* verſion renders it, *fit you:* men are naturally unfit for good works; in order to do them aright, it is neceſſary that they ſhould have knowledge of the will of God; that they be regenerated and created in Chriſt; that they be ſanctified and cleanſed, and ſo meet for the maſter's uſe; that they have the Spirit of God, and ſtrength from Chriſt; and that they be believers in him: nor is there always a fitneſs in ſaints themſelves, or a readineſs to good works, only when God gives both will and power to do them; wherefore ſuch a petition as this is very proper and pertinent; another follows, or the ſame carried on, and more largely expreſſed; tho' it rather ſeems to be a diſtinct one, and that in order to the former: *working in you that which is well-pleaſing in his ſight through Jeſus Chriſt*; the good work of grace being neceſſary to the performance of good works; nor can any man do a good work well, unleſs he has the good work of grace wrought in him: grace is a work not of man, but of God; it is an internal work, ſomething in a man's heart, and not any thing without him, or done by him; and it is a gradual and progreſſive work; it is carried on by degrees, and is not yet perfect, tho' it will be. God is continually working in his people, carrying on his work, and will at length perform it; ſee the note on *Phil.* i. 6. and this is *well-pleaſing in his ſight*; it is in his ſight; it is obvious to his view, when it is not to others, nor to themſelves, being the hidden man of the heart; and it is very agreeable to him; it makes men like unto him; hereby they become a ſuitable habitation for him, and are put into a capacity of ſerving him; to ſuch he gives more grace, and on that grace he entails glory: and all this is *through Jeſus Chriſt*; all the grace neceſſary for the beginning and carrying on, and finiſhing of the good work of grace, and for the performance of every good work, comes through the hands of Chriſt, in whom all fulneſs of it dwells; and through the blood and interceſſion of Chriſt, by virtue of which it is communicated; and all become acceptable to God thro' him, as the perſons of the Lord's people, ſo the grace that is wrought in them, and the works that are done by them: *to whom be glory for ever and ever, Amen*; either to God the Father of Chriſt, and the Father of mercies, and God of ſalvation; and as he is the God of peace, and the bringer of Chriſt from the dead; the appointer, provider, and giver of the great ſhepherd; the author and finiſher of all good in his people: or to Jeſus Chriſt, the great ſhepherd of the ſheep, through whom all grace and good things come; to him does this doxology of right belong; he has a glory both as God, and as mediator; and the glory of both is to be given to him: the glory of his deity, by aſſerting it; by attributing all divine perfections and works unto him; by worſhipping of him, and by aſcribing the efficacy of his mediatorial actions to it: and the glory of ſalvation and redemption is to be given to him, who alone has obtained it; by diſcarding all other ſaviours; by truſting alone in him; by looking to him alone for peace, pardon, juſtification, ſanctification, and eternal life: and this glory ſhould be aſcribed continually, for ever and ever, as it will be by angels and ſaints to all eternity. The word *Amen*, is added, to ſhew that the Apoſtle aſſented to it, and wiſhed it might be, and that he firmly believed it, and ſo aſſerted that it would be; for it is expreſſive of aſſent, aſſeveration, and prayer.

Ver. 22. *And I beſeech you brethren*, &c.] The Apoſtle cloſes his epiſtle to the *Hebrews* in a very tender and affectionate manner, calling them *brethren*, as he often does; and ſpeaking to them, not in an authoritative way, nor by way of advice, but by intreaty: the reaſon may be, becauſe he was the Apoſtle of the *Gentiles*; and becauſe the *Jews* were not ſo well pleaſed with him, on account of his preaching down the ceremonies of the law; tho' ſuch language is uſed by him in other epiſtles; he became all things to all, that he might gain ſome. The ſubject matter of his intreaty is, that they would *ſuffer the word of exhortation*; either from one another, as to prayer, to attendance on the word and ordinances, to a regard to their lives and converſations, and to a cloſe adherence to the Goſpel, and the profeſſion of it; or from their miniſters, their guides, and governors, whoſe buſineſs it was to exhort them to the ſeveral duties of religion; or rather from himſelf; and it deſigns either the particular exhortation in ch. xii. 5. or the continued exhortation to various duties in this chapter; or any, and every one throughout the epiſtle: and this ſhews that the children of God are ſometimes heavy and ſluggiſh, and need ſtirring up; and that there are ſome things often in exhortations and reproofs which are not ſo agreeable to the fleſh, and yet ought to be taken kindly, and patiently endured: the word may be rendred, *conſolation*, or *ſolace*, as it is by the *Vulgate Latin*, *Syriac*, and *Arabic* verſions; and may refer to the whole of this epiſtle, which is of a conſolatory nature: this may ſuggeſt that theſe *Hebrews* were under afflictions, and needed comfort; and yet through unbelief might be tempted to refuſe the comfort adminiſtred to them; which is too often the caſe with God's people: *for I have written a letter unto you in few words*; or, *I have ſent*, or, *wrote to you in brief*; meaning either the exhortatory part of the epiſtle, which lay in few words, and chiefly in this chapter; or the whole of the epiſtle, which was but ſhort in compariſon of the length he might have carried it, and as the ſubject matter of it might ſeem to require; it treating on the great doctrines of the Goſpel, and myſteries of grace; things of the greateſt moment and importance, and which might have been largely inſiſted on; but he had contracted things, and had wrote much in a little; and this he makes a reaſon, why they ſhould ſuffer or bear with the exhortation given, ſince it was not preſſed with a multitude of words, tiring out their patience.

Ver. 23. *Know ye that* our *brother Timothy is ſet at liberty*, &c.] This is the ſame perſon to whom the Apoſtle *Paul* wrote two epiſtles, and whom he often calls his ſon, tho' ſometimes his brother, as here, *Col.* i. 1. 1 *Theſſ.* iii. 2. of him he ſays, that he was *ſet at liberty*, or *diſmiſſed*; either by the Apoſtle, by whom he was ſent into ſome parts, upon ſome buſineſs; or rather was looſed from his bonds, having been a priſoner for the ſake of Chriſt and the Goſpel; and it may be, a fellow-priſoner with the Apoſtle, at *Rome*, as *Ariſtarchus* and others were; and this very great and uſeful perſon being known, very likely, to the *Hebrews*, ſince his mother was a *Jeweſs*, and he himſelf was well reported of by the brethren at *Lyſtra* and *Iconium*, *Acts* xvi. 1, 2. it was a piece of good news to them to hear of his releaſe: *with whom if he come ſhortly, I will ſee you*; by which it ſeems that *Timothy* was now abſent from the Apoſtle, but that he expected him to come in a ſhort time; when, if he ſhould, they would both come together, and viſit the *Hebrews*; which looks as if the Apoſtle was at liberty himſelf, or at leaſt had ſome hopes of his deliverance from priſon; but whether he ever had his liberty after this, and ſaw the *Hebrews* any more, cannot be ſaid; the contrary ſeems moſt probable.

Ver. 24. *Salute all them that have the rule over you*, &c.] The paſtors and officers of the church of the *Hebrews*; the ſame with thoſe in ver. 7, 17. *and all the ſaints*; the ſeveral members of the church, who were ſet apart to holineſs by God; whoſe ſins were expiated by Chriſt; to whom Chriſt was made ſanctification; and who were internally ſanctified by the Spirit of God, and lived holy lives and converſations; to theſe the Apoſtle wiſhed all proſperity, inward and outward, ſpiritual and temporal; and he uſes the word *all* in both clauſes; and including every officer and member, expreſſes his univerſal love to them, whether high or low, rich or poor, greater or leſſer believers: *they of Italy ſalute you*; that is, *the brethren*, as the *Vulgate Latin* verſion reads; the *Italian* brethren; ſuch as were at *Puteoli*, and other places, in that country; ſee *Acts* xxviii. 13, 14. *Italy* is a famous, and well known country in *Europe*; a very fruitful and delightful one; of which, *Rome*, where the Apoſtle very likely now was, is the chief city: it has been called by different names, as *Saturnia*, from *Saturn*; and *Auſonia*, *Ænotria*, and *Heſperia Magna*; and it had its name *Italy*, ſome ſay, from *Italus*, the ſon of *Penelope* and *Telegonus*; others, from *Italus*, a king of the *Arcadians*, or, as ſome ſay, the *Sicilians*; but, according to *Timæus* and *Varro* [n], it was ſo called from the multitude of oxen in it, which in the old *Greek* language were called ιταλοι, *Italoi*, to which comes near in ſound the *Latin* word *vituli*, uſed for *calves*; and *Italy* is frequently, by *Jewiſh* writers [o], called איטליא של יון, *Italy of Greece*; and formerly it was inhabited by *Greeks*, and was called *Great Greece* [p]: it is bounded on the eaſt with the *Adriatic* ſea; and on the weſt by the river *Var*, with the *Alps*, which ſeparate *France* from *Italy*; and on the ſouth with the *Tyrrhene*, or *Tuſcan* ſea, called the lower, and on the north, partly with the *Alps*, which are on the borders of *Germany*, and partly with the *Adriatic* ſea, called the higher. There were chriſtians in this country before the Apoſtle *Paul* came to *Rome*, both at *Rome*, and other places, as before obſerved. It is ſaid [q], that *Barnabas* was firſt at *Rome*, and planted the church there; that he went round *Lombardy*, and lived at *Milain*; that in the *firſt* century, *Apollinaris* preached at *Ravenna*, and *Hermagoras* at *Aquileia*; and there were chriſtian churches in the *ſecond* century, not only at *Rome*, but in many other cities and places; and ſo likewiſe in the *third* century, as at *Verona*, *Spoletum*, *Beneventum*, &c. and in the *fourth* century, there were great numbers of churches in this country; as at *Verona*, and *Capua*, in *Calabria*, *Campania*, and *Apulia*; and which might be traced in following centuries.

Ver. 25. *Grace be with you all, Amen.*] Which is the Apoſtle's uſual ſalutation in all his epiſtles, 2 *Theſſ.* iii. 17, 18. in which he wiſhes renewed diſcoveries of the love and favour of God; freſh communications of grace from Chriſt; an abundant ſupply of the ſpirit of grace; an increaſe of internal grace and external gifts; and a continuance of the Goſpel of the grace of God. Of *Amen*, ſee the note on ver. 21.

The ſubſcription of this epiſtle is, *written to the Hebrews from Italy by Timothy*; in the *Alexandrian* copy it is, *written to the Hebrews from Rome*; which is very probable, ſince the *Italian* brethren ſend their ſalutations in it; and the words, *by Timothy*, are left out; nor is it likely that it ſhould, ſince it is clear, from ver. 23. that he was abſent from the Apoſtle; and if he had ſent it by him, what need was there to inform them that he was ſet at liberty?

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[n] Apud Aul. Gell. Noct. Attic. l. 11. c. 1. Vid. Apolodor. de Orig. Deorum. l. 2. p. 101.

[o] Bereſhit Rabba, §. 67. fol. 59. 4. T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 56. 2. R. Sol. Jarchi in Gen. xxvii. 39.

[p] Iſidor. Hiſpal. Origin. l. 14. c. 4.

[q] Hiſt. Eccl. Magdeburg. Cent. 1. l. 2. c. 2. p. 17. Cent. 2. c. 2. p. 4. Cent. 3. c. 2. p. 4. Cent. 4. c. 2. p. 6.

AN
EXPOSITION, &c.

The General Epiſtle of JAMES.

THIS Epiſtle is called *General*, becauſe not written to any particular perſon, as the epiſtles to *Timothy*, *Titus*, and *Philemon* are; nor to any particular churches, as the epiſtles to the *Romans*, *Corinthians*, &c. but to the believing *Jews* in general, wherever they were. The author of it is *James*; and whereas there were two of this name, who were the Apoſtles of Chriſt; ſome have thought it was written by one, and ſome by another: ſome think it was written by *James* the ſon of *Zebedee*, and brother of *John*, which is favoured by the *Syriac* verſion, which to this epiſtle, and the following, premiſes theſe words; "the three epiſtles of the three "Apoſtles, before whoſe eyes our Lord transfigured himſelf, that is, *James*, and *Peter*, and "*John*." Now, that *James*, who was preſent at the transfiguration of Chriſt, was *James* the ſon of *Zebedee*: but neither the time, nor occaſion, nor matter of this epiſtle, ſeem to agree with him, for he was put to death by *Herod*, about the year 44, *Acts* xii. 1, 2. whereas this epiſtle was written, as ſome think, about the year 60, or as others, 63; and it ſeems pretty manifeſt, that it muſt be written after the Goſpel had been ſpread in the *Gentile* world, and was received by the *Jews*, who were ſcattered abroad in it; and after many hypocrites had crept into the churches, and many falſe teachers, and vain boaſters, and bad livers, had ariſen among them: it ſeems therefore more agreeable, to aſcribe this epiſtle to *James*, the ſon of *Alpheus*, ſometimes called the brother of our Lord, and who was preſent at the aſſembly at *Jeruſalem*, when the neceſſity of the *Gentiles* circumciſion was debated, *Acts* xv. and is the ſame, whom *Euſebius*[a] calls *James* the Juſt, and *Oblias*; and who ſeems to have reſided at *Jeruſalem*, and to have been the biſhop, or overſeer of that church there; and therefore in character writes this epiſtle to the *Jews*, in the ſeveral parts of the world: nor need there be any doubt of the authentickneſs of it. *Euſebius* indeed ſays[b], that it had been accounted ſpurious by ſome, and that not many of the ancient writers had made mention of it: but he himſelf ſays, that it was publickly read in moſt churches; and certain it is, that ſome very early writers have reſpect unto it. *Irenæus*[c] manifeſtly refers to it, and ſo does *Tertullian*[d]; and it is expreſly mentioned by *Origen*[e] among the canonical books of ſcripture. The objections againſt it are of no weight, which are taken from the ſeeming diſagreement between the Apoſtle *Paul*, and the writer of this epiſtle, concerning the doctrine of juſtification; and from his calling the law, the perfect law of liberty, and inſiſting ſo much on the doctrine of works; all which will be ſeen to be agreeable to the other parts of ſcripture, and eaſily reconciled with them; nor is there any thing in it unworthy of an Apoſtle and an inſpired writer. The occaſion of it ſeems to be partly the troubles and perſecutions which attended the ſaints for the ſake of Chriſt and the Goſpel; and the deſign of it is to encourage them to patience under them, and to wait and hope for the ſpeedy coming of Chriſt; and partly the evil practices of ſome that boaſted of their faith and knowledge, tho' they lived very diſſolute lives: and the view of the Apoſtle is to ſhew, that faith, without the fruits of righteouſneſs, is not genuine; and he very largely in it exhorts to ſeveral duties very becoming chriſtians, and inveighs againſt ſeveral vices, which were ſcandalous to them.

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[a] Eccleſ. Hiſt. l. 2. c. 23.
[b] Ib. &l. 3. c. 25.
[c] Adv. Hæreſ. l. 5. c. 1.
[d] Adv. Judæos, c. 2.
[e] Homil. 7. in Joſuam, fol. 156. E.

CHAP.

CHAP. I.

IN this chapter, after the inſcription and ſalutation, the Apoſtle inſtructs the ſaints he writes to, how to behave under afflictions, and in every ſtate of life; teaches them not to impute their ſins to God, but to themſelves; directs them in hearing the word, and cautions againſt ſelf-deception in religion. The inſcription and ſalutation are in ver. 1. in which the author of the Epiſtle is deſcribed by his name and office; and the perſons it is written to, by the tribes of *Iſrael* they belonged to, and by the condition in which they were ſcattered about in the world, to whom the Apoſtle wiſhes all grace. And as they were in an afflicted ſtate, he begins with an exhortation to rejoice in their afflictions; becauſe hereby faith was tried, and that produced patience, and patience being perfect, is the way to be compleat, and want nothing, ver. 2, 3, 4. but if any wanted wiſdom, how to behave under ſuch exerciſes, he adviſes to apply to God for it, from whom it may be expected, ſince he is the giver of it, and gives it to all, and that liberally, and does not upbraid with the former conduct, ver. 5. but then ſuch ſhould aſk in faith, or otherwiſe it can't be thought they ſhould receive, and beſides would juſtly deſerve the characters of fluctuating and unſtable perſons, ver. 6, 7, 8. And the exhortations the Apoſtle had given, he obſerves, ſuited all ſorts of perſons, poor and rich; the one who is exalted amidſt his poverty, and the other who is mean, and frail, and mortal, amidſt all his riches; which is illuſtrated by the flower of the graſs falling off and periſhing, ver. 9, 10, 11. And upon the whole, he concludes the bleſſedneſs of the man that endures affliction patiently, ſince a crown of life is promiſed him, and he will receive it, ver. 12. and from external temptations or afflictions, the Apoſtle proceeds to internal ones, temptations to ſin; and denies them to be of God, and imputes them to the luſts of men, and gives a very accurate account of the beginning, progreſs, and finiſhing of ſin by man; and obſerves, that to place ſin to the account of God, and not man, is a very great error, ver. 13, 14, 15, 16. which he proves from the pure and holy nature of God; and from the good and perfect gifts, which all, and only come from him; and inſtances in regeneration, which is of his will, and by his word, and is the beginning and ſpring of all good in man, ver. 17, 18. And having mentioned the word, as a means of that grace, he gives ſome rules about hearing it; that it ſhould be heard with eagerneſs, and received with meekneſs; and whatſoever is contrary thereunto ſhould be avoided; as a forwardneſs to be teachers of it; wrath and anger at the doctrines of it, which do not work the righteouſneſs of God; and all impurity and naughtineſs of the mind, which muſt render it inattentive to it; and the rather all this ſhould be regarded, ſince the word is the engrafted word, and able to ſave the ſouls of men, ver. 19, 20, 21. and particular care ſhould be had, that what is heard is put in practice, or otherwiſe it will be a ſelf-deception; and ſuch will be like a man that beholds his face in a glaſs, goes away, and forgets what ſort of a man he is; whereas, if a man looks into the glaſs of the Goſpel, hears the word attentively, remembers what he hears, and continues in it, he finds many bleſſed advantages in ſo doing, ver. 22, 23, 24, 25. and then the Apoſtle diſtinguiſhes between a vain religion, and a pure one; a vain religion is only a ſeeming one, and may be known to be ſo by a man's having no guard upon his tongue; wherefore if he thinks himſelf religious, he is miſtaken, and his heart deceived, ver. 26. but pure and undefiled religion, which is ſo in the ſight of God, ſhows itſelf in a holy life and converſation in general, and particularly in viſiting and aſſiſting widows and orphans in diſtreſs, ver. 27.

Ver. 1. *James a ſervant of God*, &c.] That is, of God the Father; not by creation only, as every man is; nor merely by calling grace, as is every regenerate perſon; but by office, as a preacher of the Goſpel, being one that ſerved God in the Goſpel of his Son, and was an Apoſtle of Chriſt; nor is this any ſufficient objection to his being one, ſince others of the Apoſtles ſo ſtile themſelves: *and of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt*; the *Ethiopic* verſion reads this in connexion with the former clauſe, without the copulative *and, James the ſervant of God, our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*; and ſo ſome conſider the copulative as explanative of who is meant by God, even the Lord Jeſus Chriſt: but it ſeems beſt to underſtand them as diſtinct; and that this Apoſtle was not only the ſervant of God the Father, but of his Son Jeſus Chriſt, and that in the ſame ſenſe, referring to his office as an Apoſtle of Chriſt, and miniſter of the word: *to the twelve tribes which are ſcattered abroad*; by whom are meant believing *Jews*, who were of the ſeveral tribes of *Iſrael*, and which were in number *twelve*, according to the number and names of the twelve patriarchs, the ſons of *Jacob*; and theſe were not the chriſtian *Jews*, who were ſcattered abroad upon the perſecution raiſed at the death of *Stephen*, *Acts* viii. 1, 4. and xi. 19. but they were the poſterity of thoſe who had been diſperſed in former captivities, by the *Aſſyrians* and others, and who remained in the ſeveral countries, whither they were carried, and never returned. The *Jews* ſay [f], that the ten tribes will never return, and that they will have no part nor portion in the world to come; but theſe the Goſpel met with in their diſperſion, and by it they were effectually called and converted, and are the ſame that *Peter* writes to, 1 *Pet*. i. 1, 2. and 2 *Pet*. i. 1. and iii. 1. And thus we read of an hundred and forty and four thouſand ſealed of all the tribes of *Iſrael*, *Rev*. vii. 4. and to theſe the Apoſtle here ſends *greeting*; that is, his chriſtian ſalutation, wiſhing them all happineſs and proſperity, in ſoul and body, for time and eternity; and it includes all that grace, mercy, and peace, mentioned in the uſual forms of ſalutation by the other Apoſtles. The ſame form is uſed in *Acts* xv. 23. and ſince it was *James* that gave the advice there, which the reſt of the Apoſtles and elders came into, it is highly probable that the epiſtles ſent to the *Gentiles* were dictated by him; and the likeneſs of the form of ſalutation may confirm his being the writer of this Epiſtle.

Ver. 2. *My brethren*, &c.] Not only according to the fleſh, he being a *Jew* as they were; but in a ſpiritual ſenſe, they being born again of the ſame grace, belonging to the ſame family and houſhold of faith, and having the ſame father, and being all the children of God, by faith in Chriſt Jeſus: *count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations*; not

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[f] T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 110. 2.

the temptations of ſatan, or temptations to ſin; for theſe cannot be matter of joy, but grief; theſe are fiery darts, and give a great deal of uneaſineſs and trouble; but afflictions and perſecutions for the ſake of the Goſpel, which are ſo called here and elſewhere, becauſe they are trials of the faith of God's people, and of other graces of the Spirit of God. God by theſe tempts his people, as he did *Abraham*, when he called him to ſacrifice his ſon; he thereby tried his faith, fear, love, and obedience; ſo by afflictions, God tries the graces of his people; not that he might know them, for he is not ignorant of them, but that they might be made manifeſt to others; and theſe are *divers:* many are the afflictions of the righteous; through much tribulation they muſt enter the kingdom; it is a great fight of afflictions which they endure, as theſe believers did; their trials came from different quarters; they were perſecuted by their countrymen the *Jews*, and were diſtreſſed by the *Gentiles*, among whom they lived; and their indignities and reproaches were many; and their ſufferings of different ſorts, as confiſcation of goods, impriſonment of body, baniſhment, ſcourgings, and death in various ſhapes: and theſe they *fall* into; not by chance, nor altogether at an unawares, or unexpectedly; but they fell into them thro' the wickedneſs and malice of their enemies, and did not bring them upon themſelves thro' any crime or enormity they were guilty of: and when this was their caſe, the Apoſtle exhorts them to count it *all joy*, or matter of joy, of exceeding great joy, even of the greateſt joy; not that theſe afflictions were joyous in themſelves, but in their circumſtances, effects, and conſequences; as they tried, and exerciſed, and improved the graces of the Spirit, and worked for their good, ſpiritual and eternal, and produced in them the peaceable fruit of righteouſneſs; and as they were attended with the preſence and Spirit of God, and of glory; and as they made for, and iſſued in the glory of God; and becauſe of that great reward in heaven which would follow them; ſee *Matt.* v. 11, 12. 1 *Pet.* iv. 14. The *Jews* have a ſaying [g], "whoever rejoices in afflictions that come "upon him, brings ſalvation to the world."

Ver. 3. *Knowing* this, &c.] By experience; as every one that is trained up in the ſchool of affliction does: the Apoſtle appeals to the ſaints, to whom he writes, for the truth of what he was about to ſay; and which he gives as a reaſon why they ſhould rejoice in afflictions, becauſe it is a known fact, *that the trying of your faith worketh patience:* two things afflictions do when ſanctified; one is, they try faith, the truth of it, and make it appear to be true, genuine, and precious, like gold tried in the fire; ſee 1 *Pet.* i. 6, 7. and the other is, that they produce patience: ſaints being inured to afflictions, become by degrees more patient under them; whence it is good for a man to bear the yoke in his youth: this phraſe may be underſtood, both of faith, which being tried by afflictions, produces patience; for where the one is in exerciſe, the other is alſo, and both are neceſſary under afflictive providences; and alſo of afflictions, which try faith, and being ſanctified by the Spirit of God, work patience, which is a fruit of the Spirit; for otherwiſe the effect of them is impatience; and this agrees with the Apoſtle *Paul* in *Rom.* v. 3, 4.

Ver. 4. *But let patience have her perfect work*, &c.] Or effect; or be brought unto perfection; which may denote both the ſincerity and continuance of it unto the end, with conſtancy: patience may be ſaid to be perfect, when it appears to be real and ſincere, and not diſſembled; for as there may be a feigned faith, a diſſembled love, and an hypocritical hope, ſo likewiſe a mere ſhew of patience: and certain it is, that as there is a patience which is commendable, there is one that is not, 1 *Pet.* ii. 20. And this phraſe may alſo deſign the conſtant exerciſe of this grace to the end; for he that endures, or is patient, and continues ſo unto the end, ſhall be ſaved, and enjoy that perfection of glory and happineſs, expreſſed in the next clauſe: *that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing*; which cannot be underſtood of the ſaints in this preſent life; only as they are in Chriſt, and in a comparative ſenſe; or as perfection may denote ſincerity, and uprightneſs; or of a perfection of parts, but not of degrees; for the ſaints are very imperfect in themſelves, and are very far from being compleat in ſoul, body, and ſpirit; and want many things, and are wanting in many things, both in the exerciſe of grace, and in the diſcharge of duty; but when patience has had its perfect work, and has been tried to the uttermoſt, and is found right, and has held out to the end; then ſhall the ſaints be perfect in holineſs and happineſs, and be entire, whole, and compleat; as they will be in the reſurrection morn, both in ſoul and body, and will want no good thing, and will be free from every ſorrow, nor will they be deficient in any ſervice; and to this ſenſe agrees ver. 12.

Ver. 5. *If any of you lack wiſdom*, &c.] This ſhows, that the perfection before ſpoken of, is not to be underſtood as in this life, ſince the Apoſtle immediately ſuppoſes lack of wiſdom in them; for this is not ſaid in a form of doubting, whether they wanted it or not, but rather as ſuppoſing, and taking it for granted that they did; and in the firſt, and primary ſenſe of the words, it intends wiſdom to behave aright under temptations or afflictions. Saints often want wiſdom to conſider God as the author of them, and not look upon them as matters of chance, or impute them merely to ſecond cauſes; but to regard them as coming from the hand of God, and as his hand upon them, as *Job* did; who does not aſcribe his calamities to the thieving *Chaldeans* and *Sabeans*, to the boiſterous wind, and to the malice of ſatan, but to God: they want wiſdom to obſerve the ſovereignty of God in them, and bow unto it, and be ſtill, and know that he is God, who does all things well and wiſely; and likewiſe to ſee and know that all are in love, and in very faithfulneſs, and for good; as well as to ſee his name, to hear his rod, and him that has appointed it, his voice in it, his mind and meaning, and what he deſigns by it; as likewiſe to learn the uſeful leſſons under it, and particularly to take the croſs well, to bear it patiently, and even to count it all joy, and reckon it to be right, neceſſary, and uſeful: it requires much wiſdom to learn all this, and act up to it. Moreover, this may be applied to all other caſes, in which wiſdom is wanted; men want wiſdom to conduct in the common affairs of life, and eſpecially the people of God; for the children of the world are wiſer in their generation, for themſelves and poſterity, and in the management of worldly affairs, than the children of light; and alſo to obſerve the providences of God, and the footſteps of providence, and to follow them; and likewiſe to make a right uſe of providences, and behave ſuitably under them, and not be lifted

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[g] T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 8. 1.

up too much in proſperity, nor be caſt down, and too much diſtreſſed in adverſity; but to conſider, that the one is ſet againſt the other, and both work together for good. Saints have need of wiſdom in things ſpiritual; they want more grace, which is the trueſt wiſdom, and a larger knowledge of the Goſpel, which is the wiſdom of God, the hidden wiſdom of God; and they lack wiſdom to know how to walk towards them that are without, and towards them that are within, ſo as becomes the Goſpel of Chriſt: and as this is more or leſs the caſe of every one, *let him aſk of God* wiſdom; of God the Father, who is the only wiſe God, who has abounded in creation, in providence, and above all, in redemption and grace, in all wiſdom and prudence; and of his Son Jeſus Chriſt, who is the wiſdom of God, and has all the treaſures of wiſdom and knowledge in him; and of the Spirit of God, who is a ſpirit of wiſdom and revelation in the knowledge of Chriſt, and all divine things: *that giveth to all men liberally*; God is the *giver* of all good things, in nature, providence, and grace; every good and perfect gift comes from him, and therefore he, and he only, ſhould be applied unto: and he gives to *all men* the bounties of his providence; and to all that aſk, and call upon him in ſincerity, the riches of his grace; even to *Jews* and *Gentiles*, high and low, rich and poor, greater or leſſer ſinners; all which he gives *liberally*, readily, and at once, freely, and chearfully, and largely, and abundantly; not grudgingly, ſparingly, and with a ſtrait hand, but with an open one, and in a very extenſive manner. *And upbraideth not*; with former ſins and tranſgreſſions, with former miſcarriages and miſconduct; or with former kindneſſes, ſuggeſting that he had given largely already, and his favours had been deſpiſed or abuſed; or he had been treated with ingratitude and neglect; in which manner ſometimes men put off thoſe that apply unto them, but ſo does not God; wherefore every word here uſed is encouraging to go to God for wiſdom: yea, it follows, *and it ſhall be given him*; God has ſaid it, Chriſt has promiſed it, and the Apoſtle might, with certainty, ſay it after them, and all experience confirms the truth of it; ſee *Matt.* vii. 7, 8. *John* xiv. 13, 14. and 16, 23.

Ver. 6. *But let him aſk in faith*, &c.] Not only in the faith of the divine being, that God is; but in the faith of the promiſes he has made; and in the faith of his power and faithfulneſs to perform them; and in the faith of this, that whatever is aſked, according to the will of God, and is for his glory, and his peoples good, ſhall be given. *Nothing wavering*; about the thing aſked for, whether it is right or no to aſk for it; for that ſhould be ſettled before it is aſked for; nor about the power of God to do it; nor about his will, in things he has declared he will do; nor about his faithfulneſs to his promiſes; nor at all queſtioning but what is proper, ſuitable, and convenient will be given in God's own time and way. *For he that wavereth, is like a wave of the ſea, driven with the wind and toſſed*; he is troubled, reſtleſs, unquiet and impatient; and he is fickle, inconſtant, unſtable, and unſettled; and is eaſily carried away with every wind of doctrine, temptation, and luſt.

Ver. 7. *For let not that man think*, &c.] Imagine, conclude, or pleaſe himſelf with ſuch thoughts: *that he ſhall receive any thing from the Lord*; wiſdom, or any thing elſe, he is ſeeking after; for wanting faith, he has nothing to receive with; faith is the grace, which receives the Lord Jeſus Chriſt himſelf, and all grace from him; which receives a juſtifying righteouſneſs, pardon of ſin, adoption of children, and even the everlaſting inheritance, at leaſt, the right unto it; wherefore thoſe who have not faith, as the wavering man, cannot receive any thing.

Ver. 8. *A double-minded man*, &c.] A man of two ſouls, or of a double heart, that ſpeaks and aſks with an heart, and an heart, as in *Pſ.* xii. 2. who halts between two opinions, and is at an uncertainty what to do or ſay, and is undetermined what to aſk for; or who is not ſincere and upright in his requeſts, who aſks for one thing, and means another, and aſks amiſs, and with an ill deſign; does not call upon God in truth, and in the ſincerity of his ſoul; draws nigh to him with his mouth, and honours him with his lips, but his heart is far from him. Such an one, is *unſtable in all his ways*; he is confuſed in his mind; reſtleſs in his thoughts; unſettled in his deſigns and intentions; inconſtant in his petitions; uncertain in his notions and opinion of things; and very variable in his actions, and eſpecially in matters of religion; he is always changing, and never at a point, but at a continual uncertainty, both in a way of thinking and doing: he never continues long either in an opinion, or in a practice, but is ever ſhifting and moving.

Ver. 9. *Let the brother of low degree*, &c.] By *the brother* is meant, not one in a natural, but in a ſpiritual relation; one of Chriſt's brethren, and who is of that family that is named of him; of the houſhold of faith, and is in church communion: and whereas he is ſaid to be *of low degree*, or *humble*, this regards not the affection of his mind, or his conduct and deportment, he being meek and lowly, and clothed with humility, as every brother is, or ought to be; but his outward ſtate and condition, being, as to the things of this world, poor, and mean in his outward circumſtances, and ſo humbled and afflicted. This appears from the rich man, who, in the next verſe, is oppoſed unto him, and diſtinguiſhed from him; ſee *Pſ.* lxii. 9. ſuch an one is adviſed to *rejoice in that he is exalted*; or to *glory in his exaltation*; in that high eſtate, to which he is advanced; for a perſon may be very low and mean, as to his worldly circumſtances, and yet be very high, and greatly exalted in a ſpiritual ſenſe: and this heighth of honour and grandeur, of which he may boaſt and glory, amidſt his outward poverty, lies in his high birth, and deſcent, being born from above, and of God, and belonging to his family; in being an adopted ſon of God, and ſo an heir of God, and a joint-heir with Chriſt, and of the heavenly inheritance and kingdom; in the preſent riches of grace he is poſſeſſed of, as juſtifying, pardoning, and ſanctifying grace; and in the high titles he bears, as beſides the new name, the name better than that of ſons and daughters of the greateſt potentate, even that of a ſon of the Lord God almighty, his being a king, and a prieſt unto God, and for whom a kingdom, crown, and throne are prepared; and alſo in the company he daily keeps, and is admitted to, as of God, and Chriſt, and the holy angels: and this height of honour have all the ſaints, be they ever ſo poor in this world, who can vie with the greateſt of princes for ſublimity and grandeur.

Ver. 10. *But the rich, in that he is made low*, &c.] That is, the rich brother; for there were rich men in the churches in thoſe times, and which *James* often takes notice of in this epiſtle. Such an one ſhould rejoice or glory in his lowneſs, or low eſtate; in the conſideration of the low eſtate, out of which he was raiſed, by the good providence of God, and was not owing to any merit of his; and in the low eſtate into which he may be at preſent reduced, thro' the violence of perſecution, being ſtripped of all his riches for Chriſt's ſake, of which he might make his boaſt, and count it his greateſt glory; or in that low eſtate he may quickly expect he ſhall be brought into, either in the above manner, or by ſome calamity or another, and at leaſt by death, which will put him upon a level with others: or this may have reſpect to the temper of his mind, which he has, thro' the grace of God, and the ſtation he is in, in the church of God, being a brother, and no more than a brother, and upon an equal foot with the meaneſt member in it; and which yet is matter of rejoicing, that he is one, and that he is ſo bleſſed with the grace of humility, as not to lift up himſelf above others, not to mind high things, but to condeſcend to men of low eſtate; and ſuch a deportment the Apoſtle exhorts rich ſaints unto, from the conſideration of the inſtability and inconſtancy of worldly riches. *Becauſe, as the flower of the graſs he ſhall paſs away*; ſhortly, and ſuddenly; either he himſelf by death, or his riches at death, or before, and therefore are not to be gloried in; nor ſhould the poſſeſſors of them be proud and haughty, and elate themſelves with them, but ſhould behave humbly and modeſtly to their fellow-creatures and chriſtians, as knowing that in a ſhort time they will all be upon a par, or in an equal ſtate; ſee *Job* xiv. 2. *Pſ.* xc. 5, 6. and cii. 11. and ciii. 15, 16. The metaphor here uſed is enlarged upon in the following verſe, for the further illuſtration of the fickleneſs, periſhing, and tranſitory nature of earthly enjoyments.

Ver. 11. *For the ſun is* no ſooner *riſen with a burning heat*, &c.] As it is about the middle of the day, when it ſhines in its full ſtrength, and its heat is very great and ſcorching, eſpecially in the ſummer-ſeaſon, and in hot climates: *but it withereth the graſs*; ſtrikes it with heat, cauſes it to ſhrivel, and dries it up: *and the flower thereof falleth*; drops off from it to the ground: *and the grace of the faſhion of it periſheth*; its form and colour, its glory and beauty, which were pleaſant to the eye, are loſt, and no more to be recovered. This ſhows, that earthly riches, like the flower of the field, have an outward ſhow, and glory in them, which attract the mind, and fix an attention to them for a while; they are gay and glittering, and look lovely, are pleaſant to behold, and deſireable to enjoy; but when the ſun of perſecution, or any other outward calamity ariſes, they are quickly deſtroyed, and are no more. *So alſo ſhall the rich man fade away in his ways*; riches are uncertain things now, they often make themſelves wings and flee away; they are things that are not, that are not ſolid and ſubſtantial; they are a vain ſhew; they ſometimes fade away in a man's life-time, before he dies; and he fades away, and comes to decay, amidſt all the ways and means, deſigns and ſchemes, he forms and purſues, and all the actions and buſineſs he does; and if not, when he fades away, and dies amidſt all his riches, his glory does not deſcend after him, but falls off from him, as the flower of the field, before the heat of the ſun.

Ver. 12. *Bleſſed is the man that endureth temptation*, &c.] Or affliction, which is deſigned by temptation, as in ver. 2. and the man that endures it, is he that ſo bears it, and bears up under it, as not to be offended at it, and ſtumble in the ways of Chriſt, and fall away from the truth, and a profeſſion of it, as temporary believers in a time of temptation do; but manfully and bravely ſtands up under it, and does not ſink under the weight of it, or faint on account of it; and endures afflictions in ſuch manner as not to murmur and repine at them, but is quiet and ſtill, and bears them patiently, and conſtantly, and ſo endures to the end. Such expect afflictions, and when they come, they are not moved by them, but notwithſtanding them, continue in the ways and work of the Lord; and ſuch are happy perſons; they are happy now, and ſhall be hereafter. Saints are happy under afflictions, and even on account of them, for they are tokens of God's love to them, and evidences of their Sonſhip; and eſpecially they are happy under them, when they enjoy the preſence of God in them, when they are inſtructive to them, and are ſanctified, when they learn from them the uſeful leſſons of faith, patience, humility, and reſignation to the will of God, and are made more partakers of his holineſs; and they will be happy hereafter, as follows. The *Jews* have a ſaying [h] much like this, "*bleſſed* is the man, שהוא עומד בנסיונו, "*who ſtands in his temptation*, for there is no crea-"ture whom the holy bleſſed God does not tempt." *For when he is tried*; by the fire of afflictions, as gold is tried in the fire; when God hereby has tried what is in his heart, and the truth of grace in him, as faith, love, patience, *&c.* and has purged away his droſs and tin, and has refined and purified him, as gold and ſilver are refined and purified in the furnace, or fining pot: and when being thus tried and proved, and found genuine, and comes forth as gold, after this ſtate of temptation and affliction is over, *he ſhall receive the crown of life*; eternal happineſs, called a *crown*, becauſe of the glory of it, which will be both upon the bodies and ſouls of believers to all eternity; and as ſuitable to their character, they being kings, and having a kingdom and thrones prepared for them; and in alluſion to the crown that was given to the conquerors in the *Olympic* games: and it is called *a crown of life*; becauſe it is for life; which an earthly crown is not always; and becauſe it lies in eternal life, and is an everlaſting crown; it is a crown of glory that fadeth not away, an incorruptible one; and differs from the corruptible crown given to the victors in the above-mentioned games, which were made of fading herbs, and leaves of trees: and now the man that bears up under afflictions, and holds out unto the end, ſhall have this crown put upon him, and he ſhall *receive* it; not as merited by him, by his works or ſufferings, for neither of them are worthy to be compared or mentioned with this crown of life and glory; but as the free gift of God, as it will be given him by the righteous judge, as a reward of grace, and not of debt: *which the Lord hath promiſed to them that love him*; either the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, as in *Matt.* v. 10, 12. and x. 22. or elſe God the Father; the *Vulgate Latin*, *Syriac*, and *Ethiopic* verſions read, *God*; and the *Alexandrian* copy leaves out the word *Lord*, which may be ſupplied by the word *God*; ſee ch. ii. 5. and this promiſe he made before the world was, who cannot lye, nor deceive, and who is able to perform, and is faithful, and will never ſuffer his faithfulneſs to fail; ſo that this happineſs is certain, and may be depended upon: beſides, the promiſe of this crown of life is in Chriſt, where all the promiſes are yea and amen; yea, the crown itſelf is in his hands, where it lies ſafe and ſecure for *them that love him*; either the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, his perſon, his people, his truths, and ordinances, and his glorious appearing, 2 *Tim.* iv. 8. or God the Father; not that their love is the cauſe of this crown of life, or eternal life, for then it would not be the free gift of God, as it is ſaid to be; nor of the promiſe of it, for that was made before the world was, and when they had no love unto him; but this phraſe is deſcriptive of the perſons to whom God manifeſts his love now, admits to near communion and fellowſhip with himſelf, makes all things, even their afflictions, to work for their good, and whom he will cauſe to inherit ſubſtance, and will fill their treaſures.

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[h] Shemot Rabba, §. 31. fol. 133. 3.

Ver. 13. *Let no man ſay when he is tempted*, &c.] Here the Apoſtle uſes the word *tempted*, in another ſenſe than he did before. Before he ſpeaks of temptations, as matter of joy and boaſting, here of temptations, which are criminal, and iſſue in ſhame and death; the temptations he before makes mention of, being patiently endured, denominate men happy, but here ſuch are deſigned, which are to be deprecated, and watched againſt; before he treats of temptations, which were the means of trying and exerciſing grace, and of purging away the droſs of ſin and corruption, but here of temptations to ſin, and which are in themſelves ſinful; before he diſcourſes of temptations in which God was concerned, but here of temptations which he removes from him, and denies of him, as being unworthy of him: wherefore when any man is tempted to ſin, whether when under adverſity, or in proſperity, let him not ſay, *I am tempted of God*; for God is holy, and without iniquity; nor does he delight in ſin, but hates and abhors it; nor can he commit it, it being contrary to his nature, and the perfections of it; whereas no one can tempt another to ſin, unleſs he is ſinful himſelf, and delights in ſin, and in thoſe that commit it, nor without committing it himſelf; and yet ſinful men are apt to charge God with their ſins, and temptations to them, in imitation of their firſt parent, *Adam*, when fallen, *Gen.* iii. 12. who, to excuſe himſelf, lays the blame upon the woman, and ultimately upon God, who gave her to him; and ſuggeſts, that if it had not been for the woman, he ſhould not have eat of the forbidden fruit, nor ſhould he have had any temptation to it, had not God given him the woman to be with him; and therefore it was his fault: and in this ſad manner do his ſons and daughters reaſon, who, when thro' affliction, they murmur againſt God, diſtruſt his providence, or forſake his ways, ſay, if he had not laid his hand upon them, or ſuffered ſuch afflictions to befal them, they had not been guilty of ſuch ſin; he himſelf is the occaſion of them: but let no man talk at this wicked rate, *for God cannot be tempted with evil*; or *evils.* He was tempted by the *Iſraelites* at *Maſſah* and *Meribah*, from which thoſe places had their names, who by their murmuring, diſtruſt and unbelief, proved and tried his patience and his power; and ſo he may be, and has been tempted by others in a like way; he may be tempted by evil men, and with evil things, but he can't be tempted *to evil*, as the *Ethiopic* verſion renders it; he is proof againſt all ſuch temptations; he cannot be tempted by any thing in himſelf, who is pure and holy, or by any creature, or thing without him, to do any ſinful action: *neither tempteth he any man*; that is to ſin; he tempted *Abraham*, to try his faith, love, and obedience to him; he tempted the *Iſraelites* in the wilderneſs, to try them and humble them, and prove what was in their hearts; and he tempted *Job*, and tried his faith and patience; and ſo he tempts and tries all his righteous ones, by afflictions, more or leſs; but he never tempts or ſolicits them to ſin; temptations to ſin come from another quarter, as follows.

Ver. 14. *But every man is tempted*, &c.] To ſin, and he falls in with the temptation, and by it, *when he is drawn away of his own luſt and enticed*; the metaphor is taken either from fiſhes, who are enticed by the bait, and drawn out by the hook; or from a laſcivious woman, who meeting with a young man, entices him, and draws him away after her to commit iniquity with her: by *luſt* is meant, the principle of corrupt nature, which has its reſidence in the heart of man; is natural and hereditary to him, and therefore is called his own; he is conceived and ſhapen in it; he brings it into the world with him, and it continues in him, and is called his own heart's luſt, *Rom.* i. 24. Now this meeting with ſome bait, which entices and draws it out, or with ſome external object, which promiſes pleaſure or profit, a man is allured, and enſnared, and drawn away by it, and ſo the temptation begins: thus, for inſtance, covetouſneſs was the predominant luſt in *Judas*; this meeting with an external object, or objects, which promiſed him profit, he is at once enticed and drawn away to betray his Lord and maſter for the ſake of it: ſo ſin often promiſes pleaſure, tho' it is but an imaginary, and a ſhort-lived one; which takes with a man's own luſt, and corruption within him, and ſo he is allured and drawn aſide; and to this, and not to God, ſhould he attribute temptation to ſin.

Ver. 15. *Then when luſt hath conceived*, &c.] A propoſal of pleaſure or profit being made, agreeable to luſt, or the principle of corrupt nature, ſinful man is pleaſed with it; and inſtead of reſiſting and rejecting the motion made, he admits of it, and receives it, and cheriſhes it in his mind; he dallies and plays with it; he dwells upon it in his thoughts, and hides it under his tongue, and in his heart, as a ſweet morſel, and forſakes it not, but contrives ways and means how to bring it about; and this is luſt's conceiving. The figure is uſed in *Pſ.* vii. 14. on which *Kimchi*, a *Jewiſh* commentator, has this note; "he (the pſalmiſt) compares the thoughts of the "heart, להריון, *to a conception*, and when they go "out in word, this is *travail*, and in work or act, "this is *bringing forth*." And ſo it follows here, *it bringeth forth ſin*; into act, not only by conſenting to it, but by performing it: *and ſin when it is finiſhed*; being ſolicited, is agreed to, and actually committed: *bringeth forth death*; as the firſt ſin of man brought death into the world, brought a ſpiritual death, or moral death upon man, ſubjected him to a corporal death, and made him liable to an eternal one; ſo every ſin is deſerving of death, death is the juſt wages of it; yea, even the motions of ſin work in men to bring forth fruit unto death. Something like theſe ſeveral gradual ſteps, in which ſin proceeds, is obſerved by the *Jews*, and expreſſed in much the like language, in allegorizing the caſe of *Lot*, and his two daughters[i]: "the concupiſcent ſoul (or *luſt*) "ſtirs up the evil figment, and imagines by it, and it "cleaves to every evil imagination, שמתעברת, "*until it conceives* a little, and produces in the "heart of man the evil thought, and cleaves to it; "and as yet it is in his heart, and is not *finiſhed* to do "it, until this deſire or luſt ſtirs up the ſtrength of "the body, firſt to cleave to the evil figment, and "then, תשלום הרעה, *ſin is finiſhed*, as it is ſaid, "*Gen.* xix. 36."

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[i] Midraſh Haneelam in Zohar in Gen. fol. 67. 4.

Ver. 16. *Do not err, my beloved brethren.*] For to make God the author of ſin, or to charge him with being concerned in temptation to ſin, is a very great error, a fundamental one, which ſtrikes at the nature, and being of God, and at the perfection of his holineſs: it is a denying of him, and is one of thoſe damnable errors and hereſies, which bring upon men ſwift deſtruction; and therefore to be guarded againſt, rejected, and abhorred by all that profeſs any regard unto him, his name and glory.

Ver. 17. *Every good gift and every perfect gift,* &c.] Whether of nature, providence, or grace, and eſpecially the latter; ſpiritual gifts given along with Chriſt, or ſpiritual bleſſings in him; every ſuch gift is, as the *Vulgate Latin* verſion reads, the *beſt* gift; better than thoſe which only relate to the preſent life: and is *perfect*; ſuch as the gifts of righteouſneſs, remiſſion of ſins, adoption, regeneration, and eternal life. The *Jews* ſay [k], that the good things of this world are not truly good, in compariſon of the good things of the world to come, and are not, גמור טוב, *a perfect good.* And every ſuch an one *is from above*; is not from a man's ſelf, from the creature, or from below, but from heaven, and from God who dwells there: *and cometh down from the father of lights*; or author of lights; of all corporal light, as the ſun, moon, and ſtars; of all natural, rational, and moral light, in angels and men; of all ſpiritual light, or the light of grace in regenerate perſons; and of eternal light, the light of glory in the ſpirits of juſt men made perfect: *with whom is no variableneſs nor ſhadow of turning*; as there is in that great luminary, the ſun in the firmament, which has its parallaxes, eclipſes, and turnings, and caſts its ſhadow; it riſes and ſets, appears and diſappears every day; and it comes out of one tropic, and enters into another at certain ſeaſons of the year: but with God, who is light it ſelf, and in him is no darkneſs at all, there is no change, nor any thing like it; he is unchangeable in his nature, perfections, purpoſes, promiſes, and gifts; wherefore he being holy, cannot turn to that which is evil; nor can he, who is the fountain of light, be the cauſe of darkneſs, or admit of any in him; and ſince every good and perfect gift comes from him, evil cannot proceed from him, nor can he tempt any to it.

Ver. 18. *Of his own will begat he us,* &c.] The Apoſtle inſtances in one of thoſe good and perfect gifts, regeneration; and he pitches upon a very proper and pertinent one, ſince this is the firſt gift of grace, God beſtows upon his people openly, and in their own perſons; and is what involves other gifts, and prepares and makes meet for the gift of eternal life; and therefore may well be reckoned a *good* one: and it is alſo a *perfect* one; it is done at once; there are no degrees in it, as in ſanctification; a man is born again, at once, and is born a perfect new man in all his parts; no one is more regenerated than another, or the ſame perſon more regenerated at one time than at another: and this comes from above; it is called, a being *born from above*, in *John* iii. 3. as the words there may be rendered; and it comes from God the Father, even the Father of our Lord Jeſus, as well as of all lights, 1 *Pet.* i. 3. and who in it produces light, in darkneſs, and whoſe gifts of grace beſtowed along with it, are without repentance. And ſince this comes from him, he cannot be the author of evil, or tempt unto it. This is a ſettled and certain point, that all the good that is in men, and is done by them, comes from God; and all the evil that is in them, and done by them, is of themſelves. This act of begetting here aſcribed to God, is what is elſewhere called a begetting again, that is, regeneration; it is an implantation of new principles of light and life, grace and holineſs, in men; a quickening of them, when dead in treſpaſſes and ſins; a forming of Chriſt in their ſouls; and a making them partakers of the divine nature; and this is God's act, and not man's. Earthly parents cannot beget in this ſenſe; nor miniſters of the word, not cauſally, but only inſtrumentally, as they are inſtruments and means, which God makes uſe of; neither the miniſtry of the word, nor the ordinance of baptiſm, can of themſelves regenerate any; nor can a man beget himſelf, as not in nature, ſo not in grace: the nature of the thing ſhows it, and the impotent caſe of men proves it: this is God's act, and his only; ſee *John* i. 13. and the impulſive or moving cauſe of it is, *his own will.* God does not regenerate, or beget men by neceſſity of nature, but of his own free choice; Chriſt, the Son of God, is begotten of him by neceſſity of nature, and not as the effect of his will; he is the brightneſs of his glory neceſſarily, as the beams and rays of light are neceſſarily emitted by the ſun; but ſo it is not in regeneration: nor does God regenerate men thro' any conſideration of their will, works, and merits; nor have theſe any influence at all upon it; but he begets of his own free grace and favour, and of his rich and abundant mercy, and of his ſovereign will and pleaſure, according to his counſels and purpoſes of old. And the means he makes uſe of, or with which he does it, is *with the word of truth*; not Chriſt, who is the Word, and truth it ſelf; tho' regeneration is ſometimes aſcribed to him; and this act of begetting, is done by the Father, thro' the reſurrection of Chriſt from the dead; but the Goſpel, which is the word of truth, and truth it ſelf, and contains nothing but truth; and by this ſouls are begotten and born again; ſee *Eph.* i. 13. 1 *Pet.* i. 23. and hence miniſters of it are accounted ſpiritual fathers. Faith, and every other grace in regeneration, and even the Spirit himſelf, the regenerator, come this way: and the end is, *that we ſhould be a kind of firſt-fruits of his creatures*; either of his new creatures, and ſo it has reſpect to ſuch, as *James*, and others; who received the firſt-fruits of the Spirit, who firſt hoped and truſted in Chriſt, and were openly in him, and converted to him before others; or of his creatures, of mankind in general, who, with the *Jews*, are uſually called creatures; ſee the note on *Mark* xvi. 15. and deſigns thoſe who are redeemed from among men, and are the firſt-fruits to God, and to the Lamb, as their regeneration makes appear: and this ſhows that ſuch as are begotten again, or regenerated, are ſeparated and diſtinguiſhed from others, as the firſt-fruits be; and that they are preferred unto, and are more excellent than the reſt of mankind, being made ſo by the grace of God; and that they are by regenerating grace devoted to the ſervice of God, and are formed for his praiſe and glory.

Ver. 19. *Wherefore my beloved brethren,* &c.] Since the Goſpel, the word of truth, is the means and inſtrument which God makes uſe of in regeneration, and in forming people for himſelf: *let every man be ſwift to hear*; not any thing; not idle and unprofitable talk, or filthy and corrupt communication; but wholeſome advice, good inſtructions, and the gracious experiences of the ſaints, and above all, the word of God; to the hearing of which men ſhould fly, as doves to their windows; ſhould make haſte, and be early in their attendance on it, as well

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[k] Tzeror Hammor, fol. 23. 2, 3.

as conſtant; and receive it with all readineſs, and with a ſort of greedineſs of mind, that their ſouls may be profited, and God may be glorified: the phraſe is *Jewiſh*; things eaſy and ſmooth; a man is מהיר לשמען, *ſwift to hear them*[l]: *ſlow to ſpeak*; againſt what is heard, without thoroughly weighing and conſidering what is ſaid; and this may regard ſilence under hearing the word, and is alſo a rule to be obſerved in private converſation: or the ſenſe may be, be content to be hearers of the word, and not forward to be preachers of it; and if called to that work, think before you ſpeak, meditate on the word, and ſtudy to be approved to God and men. Silence is not only highly commended by the *Pythagoreans*, among whom it was enjoined their diſciples five years[m]; but alſo by the *Jews*: they ſay, nothing is better for the body, than ſilence; that if a word is worth one ſhekel, ſilence is worth two, or worth a precious ſtone; that it is the ſpice of ſpeech, and the chief of all ſpices; that it is the hedge of wiſdom; hence it is the advice of *Shammai*; *ſay little, and do much*[n]: and they cry up, as a very excellent precept, *be ſilent, and hear*; and, as containing more than perſons are aware of[o]: *ſlow to wrath*; in hearing; when admonitions and reproofs are given, ſin is expoſed, and vice corrected, and the diſtinguiſhing doctrines of grace are preached; which are apt to fill natural men with wrath, and which muſt greatly hinder the uſefulneſs of the word; ſee *Luk.* iv. 28. This is omitted in the *Ethiopic* verſion.

Ver. 20. *For the wrath of man worketh not the righteouſneſs of God.*] This is ſo far from engaging perſons to do that, which is right and acceptable, in the ſight of God, that it puts them upon doing that, which is evil. The *Alexandrian* copy reads, *with the wrath of men do not work the righteouſneſs of God*; do not attend upon the word and ordinances of God, with a wrathful ſpirit. Compare, with this, 1 *Tim.* ii. 8.

Ver. 21. *Wherefore lay apart all filthineſs*, &c.] All manner of filthineſs, both of fleſh and ſpirit; all pride, vanity, wrath, malice, and evil ſpeaking, under hearing the word: the alluſion ſeems to be to a boiling pot, which caſts up ſcum and filth, which muſt be taken off: and ſuch is the ſpirit of wrathful men; it throws up the filth of haughtineſs and pride, of anger, wrath, and wickedneſs, which muſt be taken off, and laid aſide; or the word will not be heard to any profit or advantage: *and ſuperfluity of naughtineſs*, or *malice*; the abundance and overflow of it, which ariſes from ſuch an evil heart, where wrath prevails, and governs: ſee 1 *Pet.* ii. 1. There ſeems to be an alluſion, to the removing of the ſuperfluous foreſkin of the fleſh, in circumciſion, typical *of the foreſkin of the heart*, ſpoken of in *Jer.* iv. 4. which, the *Targum*, in that place, calls, רשע לבבכון *the wickedneſs*, or *naughtineſs of your hearts* to be removed: *and receive with meekneſs the engrafted word*; which becomes ſo, when it is received; when it is put into the heart, by the Spirit of God, and is mixed with faith by them, that hear it; ſo that it is, as it were, incorporated into them, and becomes natural to them, which before was not; and taking deep root in them, brings forth much fruit: and where it comes with power, it reduces every high thought into the obedience of Chriſt, and makes men meek and humble; and only ſuch receive the truth in the love of it; and to ſuch is the Goſpel preached, *Iſa.* lxi. 1. and none, but ſuch, hear it, with profit and edification: *which is able to ſave your ſouls*; even your whole perſons, both ſoul and body: but the ſoul is only mentioned, as being the more excellent part of man: this muſt not be underſtood of the word, as if it was the author or cauſe of ſalvation, but as an inſtrument; it being a declaration of ſalvation by Chriſt, or what ſhews unto men, the way of ſalvation by him; and is the power of God unto ſalvation to them, when it is attended with the energy of the Spirit, and the efficacy of divine grace. See 2 *Tim.* iii. 15.

Ver. 22. *But be ye doers of the word*, &c.] And they are ſuch, who ſpiritually underſtand it; gladly receive it; and from the heart obey it, and make a ſincere and ingenuous profeſſion of it; and who ſubmit to the ordinances it directs to, and keep them, as they have been delivered; and live, and walk, becoming their profeſſion of it. The *Arabic* and *Ethiopic* verſions read, *be ye doers of the law*; and ſo one of *Stephens*'s copies, as in *Rom.* ii. 13. *and not hearers only*; tho' the word ſhould be heard ſwiftly and readily, and received with meekneſs; yet it ſhould not be barely heard, and aſſented to; but what is heard, ſhould be put in practice; and eſpecially men ſhould not depend upon their hearing, as if that would ſave them: this is *deceiving your own ſelves*; ſuch as reſt upon the outward hearing of the word, will be ſadly deceived, and will find themſelves miſerably miſtaken, another day; ſee *Luk.* xiii. 25, 26. Arguments taken from hence, are like the ſophiſms, paralogiſms, and falſe reaſonings of ſophiſters, which carry a fair ſhew, and enſnare and deceive.

Ver. 23. *But if any man be a hearer of the word, and not a doer*, &c.] The *Arabic* verſion, here again, reads, *a hearer of the law*, and ſo ſome copies; not hearing, but practice, is the main thing; not theory, but action: hence, ſays *R. Simeon*, not the word, or the ſearching into it, and the explanation of it, is the root, or principal thing, אלא המעשה, *but the work*[o]: and if a man is only a preacher, or a hearer, and not a doer, *he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glaſs*; or, *the face of his generation*; the face, with which he was born; his true, genuine, native face; in diſtinction from any counterfeit one, or from the face of his mind: it means his own corporeal face. The *Ethiopic* verſion renders it, *the lineaments of his face.*

Ver. 24. *For he beholdeth himſelf, and goes away*, &c.] He takes a ſlight glance of himſelf, and departs: *and ſtraightway forgetteth what manner of man he was*; he forgets, either his ſpots, blemiſhes, and imperfections; or his comelineſs and beauty; the features of his face, be they comely or not: ſo, a bare hearer of the word, who is not concerned to practiſe what he hears, whilſt he is hearing, he obſerves ſome things amiſs in himſelf, and ſome excellencies in Chriſt; but, when the diſcourſe is over, he goes his way, and thinks no more of either.

Ver. 25. *But whoſo looketh into the perfect law of liberty*, &c.] By which, is meant, not the moral law, but the Goſpel; for only of that, is the Apoſtle ſpeaking in the context: this is no other, than the word of truth, with which God begets men of his own will; and is the engrafted word, which is able to ſave, and, of which, men ſhould be doers, as well as hearers, ver. 18, 21, 22. and, this is compared to a glaſs, by the Apoſtle, *Paul*, 2 *Cor*. iii. 18. and the word, here uſed, for looking into it, is the ſame word, the Apoſtle *Peter* uſes of the angels, who deſired to look into the myſteries of the Goſpel, 1 *Pet*. i. 12. all which ſerve to ſtrengthen this ſenſe: now the Goſpel is called a *law*; not that it is a law, ſtrictly ſpeaking, conſiſting of precepts, and eſtabliſhed, and enforced by ſanctions and penalties; for it is a declaration of righteouſneſs and ſalvation by Chriſt; a publication of peace and pardon by him; and a free promiſe of eternal life, thro' him; but as it is an inſtruction, or doctrine: the law with the *Jews*, is called תורה, becauſe it is teaching, and inſtructive; and every thing, that is ſo, is, by them called, by this name: hence, we find the doctrine of the Meſſiah, which is no other than the Goſpel, is in the Old Teſtament called the law of the Lord, and his law, *Iſa*. ii. 2. and xlii. 4. and in the New Teſtament, it is called the law, or doctrine of faith, *Rom*. iii. 27. and this doctrine is *perfect*, as in *Pſal*. xix. 7. it being a perfect plan of truths, containing in it all truth, as it is in Jeſus, even all the treaſures of wiſdom and knowledge; and becauſe it is a revelation of things perfect; of the perfect righteouſneſs of Chriſt, and of perfect juſtification by it, and of free and full pardon of ſins through him, and of compleat ſalvation by him; and becauſe it directs to Chriſt, in whom perfection is: and it is a law or doctrine *of liberty*; του της ελευθηριας, *that which is of liberty*; which has liberty for its ſubject, which treats of it, even of the liberty, wherewith Chriſt makes his people free: the Goſpel proclaims this liberty, to captive ſouls; and is the word of truth, which makes them free, or is the means of freeing them, from the ſlavery of ſin, from the captivity of *Satan*, and from the bondage of the law; and is what gives ſouls freedom and boldneſs, at the throne of grace; and is that which leads them into the liberty of grace here, and gives them a view and hope of the glorious liberty of the children of God hereafter. This doctrine is as a glaſs to look into; in which is beheld the glory of Chriſt's perſon and office, and grace; and tho' by the law is the knowledge of ſin, yet a man never ſo fully and clearly diſcovers the ſin that dwells in him, and the ſwarms of corruption which are in his heart, as when the light of the glorious Goſpel ſhines into him, and when in it he beholds the beauty and glory of Jeſus Chriſt; ſee *Iſa*. vi. 5. and looking into this glaſs, or into this doctrine, is by faith, and with the eyes of the underſtanding, opened and enlightened by the Spirit of God; and the word here uſed, ſignifies a looking wiſhly and intently, with great care and thought, and not in a ſlight and ſuperficial manner; and ſuch a looking is deſigned, as is attended with effect; ſuch an one, as transforms into the ſame image, that is beheld, from glory to glory; and happy is the man, that ſo looks into it. *And continueth* therein; is not moved away from the hope of the Goſpel, nor carried about with divers and ſtrange doctrines; but is eſtabliſhed in the faith, ſtands faſt in it, and abides by it; or continues looking into this glaſs, and to Chriſt, the author and finiſher of faith, who is beheld in it; and keeps his eye upon it, and the object held forth in it; and conſtantly attends the miniſtration of it: *he being not a forgetful hearer*; but takes heed to the things he hears, and ſees, leſt he ſhould let them ſlip; and, being conſcious of the weakneſs of his memory, implores the divine Spirit to be his remembrancer, and bring to his mind, with freſh power and light, what he has heard: *but a doer of the work*; of the work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope, and of every work and ordinance, the Goſpel miniſtry points unto; doing, and being ſubject to all in faith, from a principle of love, and with a view to the glory of God, and Chriſt. *This man ſhall be bleſſed in his deed*; or *doing*, and whilſt he is doing; not that he is bleſſed, *for* what he does, but *in* what he does; ſee *Pſal*. xix. 11. he having, in hearing the word, and looking into it, and in ſubmitting to every ordinance of the Goſpel, the preſence of God, the diſcoveries of his love, communion with Chriſt, and communication of grace from him by the Spirit; ſo that wiſdom's ways become ways of pleaſantneſs, and all her paths are peace; ſee *Pſal*. lxv. 4. and lxxxiv. 4, 5. moreover, in all, ſuch a man does, he is proſperous and ſucceſsful; in all he does, he proſpers: and ſo he is bleſſed in his deed, by God, whoſe bleſſing makes rich, both in ſpirituals and temporals: there ſeems to be an alluſion to the bleſſed man in *Pſal*. i. 1, 3.

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[l] Gloſs. in T. Bab. Megilla, fol. 21. 1.

[m] Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 2. c. 25.

[n] Pirke Abot, c. 1. §. 15. 17. and 3. 13. T. Bab. Megilla. fol. 18. 1. Vajikra Rabba, §. 16. fol. 158. 3. Midraſh Kohelet, fol. 71. 1.

Philo Quis Rer. Divin. Hæres, p. 482. Vid. T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 7. 1.

[o] Pirke Abot. c. 1. §. 17.

Ver. 26. *If any man among you ſeem to be religious*, &c.] By his preaching, or praying, and hearing, and other external duties of religion, he is conſtant in the obſervance of; and who, upon the account of theſe things, *thinks himſelf to be a religious man*, as the *Vulgate Latin*, *Syriac*, and *Arabic* Verſions render it; or is thought to be ſo by others: *and bridleth not his tongue*; but boaſts of his works, and ſpeaks ill of his brethren; backbites them, and hurts their names and characters, by private inſinuations, and publick charges without any foundation; who takes no care of what he ſays, but gives his tongue a liberty of ſpeaking any thing, to the injury of others, and the diſhonour of God, and his ways: there ſeems to be an alluſion to *Pſal*. xxxix. 1. *But deceiveth his own heart*; with his ſhew of religion, and external performances; on which he builds his hopes of ſalvation; of which he is confident; and ſo gives himſelf to a looſe way of talking, what he pleaſes: *this man's religion is vain*; uſeleſs, and unprofitable to himſelf, and others; all his preaching, praying, hearing, and attendance on the ordinances will be of no avail to him; and he, notwithſtanding theſe, by his evil tongue, brings a ſcandal and reproach, upon the ways of God, and doctrines of Chriſt.

Ver. 27. *Pure religion and undefiled*, &c.] That which is ſincere and genuine, and free from adulteration and hypocriſy: *before God and the Father*; or in the ſight of God, the Father of Chriſt, and all his people; that which is approved of by him, who is the ſearcher of hearts, and the trier of the reins of men, *is this*: not that the Apoſtle is giving a full definition of true religion; only he mentions ſome of the effects of it, by which it is known, and without which it cannot be true and genuine; and they are theſe: *to viſit the fatherleſs and widows in their affliction*; and not only to ſee them, and ſpeak a word of comfort to them, but to communicate to them, and ſupply their wants, as they may require, and according to the ability God has given: where there is true religion in the heart, there is love to God; and where there is love to God, there is love to the ſaints; and this will ſhew itſelf to them, in times of affliction and diſtreſs; and where this is wanting, religion itſelf is not pure and undefiled: *and to keep himſelf unſpotted from the world*; from the men of the world, who defile by their evil communications; and *from the vices of the world*, as the *Arabic* verſion renders it, which are of a defiling nature; and, where religion is in its power and purity, and the Goſpel of the grace of God comes with efficacy; it teaches to ſeparate from the reſt of the world, and to deny ungodlineſs and worldly luſts, and to live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly.

CHAP. II.

IN this chapter the Apoſtle diſſuades from a reſpect of perſons, on account of outward circumſtances; ſhews that the law is to be fulfilled, and that mercy is to be exerciſed, as well as juſtice done; and expoſes the folly of ſuch who boaſt of faith without works: he diſſuades the ſaints from all partiality to the rich and poor, from their relation to one another, as brethren, and from their common faith, of which Chriſt, the Lord of glory, is the object, ver. 1. and ſuppoſes an inſtance of it, either in a court of judicature, or a religious aſſembly, ver. 2, 3. and then makes an appeal unto them, and expoſtulates with them about it, ver. 4. and makes uſe of an argument againſt it, taken from the divine conduct, and an inſtance of his grace in the choice of perſons to eternal life, ver. 5. a conduct very different from ſome perſons here blamed, ver. 6. and other arguments follow, diſſuading from a reſpect of perſons, taken from the characters of rich men, as oppreſſors of the poor, litigious and quarrelſome with their neighbours, and blaſphemers of the name of God, ver. 7. and from the law of God, which requires the love of the neighbour, and which to fulfil is to do well, ver. 8. and from the breach of it, by having reſpect to perſons, whereby its penalty is incurred, ver. 9. for which a reaſon is given; becauſe whoever offends in one point of the law, is guilty of the whole, ver. 10. as is a clear caſe, ſince the ſame law-giver that forbids one ſin, forbids another; ſo that he that is guilty of either of them is a tranſgreſſor of the law, ver. 11. wherefore it is right both to ſpeak and act according to it, ſince men will be judged by it, ver. 12. and he will have no mercy ſhown him that has ſhown none to the poor, but merciful ones will eſcape damnation, ver. 13. and then the apoſtle argues from the unprofitableneſs of faith itſelf without works, ver. 14. and which he exemplifies in the caſe of a poor brother or ſiſter who are wiſhed well, but nothing given them; which good words, without deeds, are of no profit, ver. 15, 16. ſo in like manner, faith without works is a dead faith, ver. 17. nor indeed can it be made out that a man has faith, if he has not works, ver. 18. at leaſt ſuch a faith as has juſtification and ſalvation connected with it; his faith, at moſt, is no better than that of the devils who are damned, ver. 19. and that ſuch a faith is a dead faith, ver. 20. and that true faith is attended with, and evidenced by works, the Apoſtle proves by two inſtances; the one is that of *Abraham*, whoſe faith appeared to be genuine, and he to be a juſtified perſon, by the works he did; particularly by offering up his ſon *Iſaac*; in which way his faith operated, and ſhewed itſelf to be ſincere and hearty; and the ſcripture was fulfilled that *Abraham* was a believer, and had righteouſneſs imputed to him, and was a friend of God, and a juſtified perſon, ver. 21, 22, 23, 24. and the other inſtance is that of *Rahab*, whoſe faith was alſo ſhown by her works, and ſo a juſtified perſon, by receiving the ſpies with peace, and diſmiſſing them with ſafety, ver. 25. and then the Apoſtle explains what he means, by ſaying more than once, that faith without works is dead; which he illuſtrates by the ſimile of a man's body being dead, without the ſpirit or ſoul in it, ver. 26.

Ver. 1. *My brethren,* &c.] As the Apoſtle is about to diſſuade from the evil of having reſpect to perſons; this is a very fit introduction to it, and carries in it an argument why it ſhould not obtain; ſince the ſaints are all brethren, they are children of the ſame father, belong to the ſame family, and are all one, in Chriſt Jeſus, whether high or low, rich or poor: *have not the faith of our Lord Jeſus,* the Lord *of glory with reſpect of perſons*; that is, ſuch as have, and hold, and profeſs the faith of Chriſt, ought not along with it to uſe reſpect of perſons, or to make ſuch a diſtinction among the ſaints, as to prefer the rich to the contempt of the poor; and in this exhortation many things are contained, which are ſo many arguments why ſuch a practice ſhould not be encouraged; for faith, whether as a doctrine, or as a grace, is alike precious, and common to all; and is the faith of Chriſt, which, as a doctrine, is delivered by him to all the ſaints, and as a grace, he is both the author and object of it; and is the faith of their common Lord and Saviour, and who is the Lord of glory, or the glorious Lord; and the poor, as well as the rich, are eſpouſed by him, as their Lord and huſband; and are redeemed by him, and are equally under his government and protection, and members of his body: the *Syriac verſion* reads, *have not the faith of the glory of our Lord Jeſus,* &c. meaning either the glory which Chriſt is poſſeſſed of, whether as the Son of God, in the perfections of his nature, or as man and mediator, being now crowned with glory and honour, and which is ſeen, and known by faith; or elſe that glory which Chriſt has in his hands, to beſtow upon his people, and to which they are called, and will appear in, when he ſhall appear, and about which their faith is now employed: and ſince this glory equally belongs to them all, no difference ſhould be made on account of outward circumſtances, ſo as to treat any believer with neglect and contempt.

Ver. 2. *For if there come unto your aſſembly,* &c.] The place of religious worſhip, where ſaints are aſſembled together for that purpoſe; tho' ſome think a civil court of judicature is intended, and to which the context ſeems to incline; ſee ver. 6. *a man with a gold ring*; on his finger, which ſhews him to be a man of dignity and wealth; ſo thoſe of the *ſenatorian* and *equeſtrian* orders, among the *Romans,* were diſtinguiſhed from the common people by wearing gold rings; tho' in time the uſe of them became promiſcuous[q]; the ancients uſed to wear but one[r], as here but one is mentioned; and only freemen, not ſervants, might wear it: however, by this circumſtance, the Apoſtle deſcribes a rich man; adding, *in goodly apparel*; gay clothing, bright, ſhining garments, gliſtering with gold and ſilver, very rich and coſtly, as well as whole, neat, and clean: *and there come in alſo a poor man in vile raiment*; mean and deſpicable, filthy and ragged: in the courts of judicature with the *Jews*, two men who were at law with one another, might not have dif-

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[q] Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 2. c. 29.

[r] Iſidor. Hiſpal. Originum, l. 19. c. 32. p. 171.

ferent apparel on whilſt they were in court, and their cauſe was trying: their law runs thus[s]; “ two adverſaries (at law with each other) if “ one of them is clothed *with precious garments*, “ (בגדים יקרים, *goodly apparel*,) and the other is “ clothed with בגדים בזויין, *vile raiment*, (the “ judge) ſays to the honourable perſon, either “ clothe him as thou art, whilſt thou contendeſt “ with him, or be clothed as he is, that ye may “ be alike,” or on an equal foot.

Ver. 3. *and ye have reſpect to him that wears the gay clothing*, &c.] Take notice of him, and ſhew favour to him, to the neglect and contempt of the other. This is an inſtance of reſpect of perſons condemned and diſſuaded from: *and ſay unto him, ſit thou here in a good place*; the beſt place; whether it be in a religious aſſembly, or in a civil court of judicature: *and ſay to the poor, ſtand thou there*; or in a lower and meaner place: *or ſit thou here under my footſtool*; this alſo was contrary to the *Jewiſh* canons[t], that one ſhould ſit, and another ſtand, whilſt their cauſe was trying; the law runs thus: “ one ſhall not *ſit*, and another *ſtand*, but both “ ſhall ſtand; but if the *Sanhedrim*, or court, pleaſe “ to let them ſit, they ſit; but one does not ſit “ above, and the other below; but one by the ſide “ of the other.”

Ver. 4. *Are ye not then partial in your ſelves*, &c.] That is, guilty of ſuch partiality as muſt appear to your ſelves, and your own conſciences muſt accuſe you of; or don't ye diſtinguiſh, or make a difference among your ſelves, by ſuch a conduct, towards the rich and the poor: *and are become judges of evil thoughts*; or, *are diſtinguiſhers by evil thoughts*; that is, make a diſtinction between the rich and the poor, by an evil way of thinking, that one is better than the other, and to be preferred before him.

Ver. 5. *Hearken my beloved brethren*, &c.] As to a matter of importance, and worthy of attention and regard; being an inſtance of the divine conduct towards the poor, and carries in it a ſtrong argument againſt reſpect of perſons: *hath not God choſen the poor of this world?* this interrogative is equal to a ſtrong affirmative; and the ſenſe is, that God has choſen the poor of this world; and which is to be underſtood, not of the choice of them to an office, either in church or ſtate; tho' ſometimes this has been the caſe, as the inſtances of *David*, and the Apoſtles of Chriſt, ſhow; nor merely to the Goſpel, and the outward means of grace, tho' the poor have the goſpel preached unto them; nor of effectual vocation, tho' this is true; but of eternal election, which is the act of God the Father, and paſſed before the foundation of the world; and is an act of ſovereign grace, and is irreſpective of faith, holineſs, and good works; and is the ſource of all grace, and remains immutable and irrevocable: now the objects of this are, *the poor of this world*; that is, who are poor with reſpect to the things of this world, but not with reſpect to the things of another world; for they are choſen to be heirs of a kingdom, and ſhall enjoy it; tho' theſe are not all choſen by God, nor are they the only perſons that are choſen; there are ſome poor men that are not choſen, and are miſerable here and hereafter; and there are ſome rich men that are choſen; but for the moſt part, or generally ſpeaking, they are not many mighty, nor noble, but the poorer ſort, which God has made choice of to partake both of grace and glory. It may be, the Apoſtle has ſome peculiar reſpect to the poor among the *Gentiles*, whom God had choſen; it was uſual with the *Jews* to call the *Gentiles* the world, and they were *Jews* the Apoſtle now writes to, and who were ſcattered abroad among the *Gentiles*; and therefore he might very aptly call them, *this world*, among whom they lived; and ſuggeſt to them, that God had choſen ſome of the *Gentiles*, as well as of the *Jews*, and even ſome of the poorer ſort of them; and it was uſual with the *Jews* to diſtinguiſh between עניי ישראל, *the poor of Iſrael*, and עניי עולם, *the poor of the world*, or עניי אומות העולם, *the poor of the nations of the world*[u]: the *Alexandrian* copy, and ſome others, leave out the word *this*, and ſo the *Syriac* and *Arabic* verſions, which makes the phraſe more agreeable to the *Jewiſh* way of ſpeaking. The *Gentiles* in common, were deſpicable with the *Jews*, and eſpecially the poor of them; and yet God choſe theſe: *rich in faith*; not that they were ſo, or were conſidered as ſuch, when choſen, and ſo were choſen becauſe of their faith; for then alſo they were, or were conſidered as heirs of the kingdom, which would be monſtrouſly abſurd; and yet there is as much reaſon, from the text, for the one, as for the other; but the ſenſe is, that they were choſen *to be rich in faith*; and ſo the *Syriac* verſion ſupplies in the next clauſe, *that they might be heirs*; which if it had been placed before this clauſe alſo, would have been right; election to grace is ſignified in the one, and election to glory, in the other: men are choſen, not becauſe they do believe, or ſhall believe, but that they might believe; and which faith they have in conſequence of election; and which when they have, they are rich: faith is a rich precious grace it ſelf; it is a part of the riches of grace, and is more worth than thouſands of gold and ſilver; and it is the means of receiving and enjoying much riches, as Chriſt the pearl of great price himſelf, and all ſpiritual bleſſings along with him; ſuch as the rich robe of his righteouſneſs, full pardon of ſin, which is according to the riches of his grace, and adoption, which makes men heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Chriſt, and even the eternal inheritance itſelf, both the promiſe of it, and a right unto it; all which are ſaid to be received by faith; and therefore believers, how poor ſoever they may be, as to this world's goods, are truly rich men: *and heirs of the kingdom*; of glory, which is prepared for all the choſen ones, from the foundation of the world; and is freely given to them by their Father, and to which they are called in effectual vocation; and hence they are made kings and prieſts unto God, and have crowns and thrones provided for them: the *Alexandrian* copy reads, *heirs of the promiſe which he hath promiſed to them that love him*; that is, which God has promiſed them, as the *Vulgate Latin*, and *Syriac* verſions read; not that their love to God is the cauſe of this kingdom, or of their choice to it, or of the promiſe of it to them; all which, flow from the love of God to them; but this is deſcriptive of the perſons, who ſhall enjoy it, and may expect to enjoy it, as in ch. i. 12.

Ver. 6. *But ye have deſpiſed the poor*, &c.] Or *diſhonoured*, and reproached them, by ſhewing reſpect of perſons, in preferring the rich to them, and in diſtinguiſhing them in ſuch a manner, as was to their contempt and injury; which is a reproaching not only of them, but their maker; and is in effect ſaying, that God has done either a weak or a wrong thing, in chuſing them to be rich in faith, and heirs of a kingdom, it being directly contrary to his conduct: *do not rich men oppreſs you, and draw you before the judgment ſeats?* which may be underſtood either of rich men that were unbelievers; and theſe either the heathen magiſtrates, who ruled over them in a tyrannical way, and with rigour, and often ſummoned them before them, and perſecuted them with violence; or their own countrymen, the *Jews*, who ſtirred up the chief men of the *Gentiles* againſt them, and drew them to their judgment-ſeats, as they drew *Paul* to the judgment-ſeat of *Gallio*, *Acts* xiii. 50. and xviii. 12. or elſe of rich profeſſors of religion, who aſſumed a deſpotic power over the poor brethren of the church, and loved to have the pre-eminence over them, as *Diotrephes* did, and ſet up tribunals in the churches, and tried and condemned them in an arbitrary way; or elſe upon civil accounts had them before heathen magiſtrates, and went to law with them in their courts, before unbelievers, which is a practice condemned in 1 *Cor.* vi. 1. and ſeeing now rich men uſed them ſo ill, the Apoſtle mentions this as an argument to diſſuade them from reſpect of perſons; ſeeing they had but little reaſon to ſhew ſo much regard unto them, who had treated them in ſo evil a manner: this is not to be underſtood of all rich men; nor is the Apoſtle's deſign to deſtroy that natural and civil order there is among men, by reaſon of their different ſtations, offices, and circumſtances; it being highly proper that honour ſhould be given to whom honour is due, but not to the diſhonour of another.

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[s] Maimon. Hilchot Sanhedrin, c. 21. §. 2.

[t] Maimon. ib. §. 3. vid. T. Bab. Shebnot, fol. 30. 1.

[u] T. Bab. Gittin, fol. 30. 1. & Bava Bathra, fol. 10. 2.

Ver. 7. *Do they not blaſpheme that worthy name,* &c.] Of Chriſt, or chriſtians: *by the which ye are called?* and which, as before, may deſign either unbelieving rich men, whether among *Jews*, or *Gentiles*, who blaſphemed and curſed the name of Chriſt, and compelled others to do ſo likewiſe; or ſuch who profeſſed the chriſtian religion, who by their ſupercilious and diſdainful treatment of their poor brethren, and by their dragging of them to the tribunals of the heathens, and diſtreſſing them with vexatious law-ſuits there, cauſed the name of Chriſt, after which they were called chriſtians, to be blaſphemed and evil ſpoken of, among the *Gentiles*.

Ver. 8. *If ye fulfil the royal law,* &c.] Which is the law of love to men, without diſtinction of rich and poor, high and low, bond and free; and is ſo called, becauſe it is the law of the King of Kings; hence the *Syriac* verſion renders it, *the law of God*, it is the law of Chriſt, who is King of ſaints; and becauſe it is a principal law, the chief of laws; as love to God is the ſum of the firſt and great commandment in the law, and may be called the king of laws; ſo love to the neighbour, is the ſecond and next unto it, and may very well bear the name of the queen of laws, and ſo has royalty in it; and indeed this laſt is ſaid to be the fulfilling of the law, *Rom.* xiii. 8, 9, 10. *Gal.* v. 14. and it is alſo ſubmitted to, and obeyed by ſuch who are made kings and prieſts to God; and that in a royal manner, with a princely ſpirit, willingly, and with all readineſs: the ſame word in the *Hebrew* language נדיבים, ſignifies, *princes*, and, to be *willing*. The *Jews* frequently aſcribe royalty to the law, and often ſpeak of כתר תורה, *the crown of the law*[w]; and they ſuppoſe the *Iſraelites* had crowns upon their heads, when the law was given them on mount *Sinai*, in which were engraven the name of God, and which they were ſtripped of, when they made the golden calf[x]: now this royal law is fulfilled, when it is regarded without reſpect of perſons, *according to the ſcripture*, in *Lev.* xix. 18. *thou ſhalt love thy neighbour as thy ſelf*; and which is to be underſtood of every nation, without diſtinction of *Jews* and *Gentiles*, and of perſons of every ſtate and condition, rich and poor, without any difference: and when this law is ſo obſerved, it is commendable: *ye do well*; that which is right, and which is a man's duty to do; this when done from right principles, and to a right end, is a good work, and is doing a good work well.

Ver. 9. *But if ye have reſpect to perſons ye commit ſin,* &c.] This is not doing well, but is a tranſgreſſion of the law, as every ſin is; hence it follows, *and are convinced of the law as tranſgreſſors*; which carries on a formal proceſs againſt ſuch perſons; it accuſes them of ſin, and charges them with it; it proves it upon them, and convicts them of it; it pronounces them guilty, and curſes them for it; and paſſes the ſentence of condemnation and death upon them; wherefore care ſhould be taken not to commit this ſin, and ſo fall under the convictions and reproofs of the law.

Ver. 10. *For whoſoever ſhall keep the whole law,* &c.] Or the greateſt part of it, excepting only in one point, as follows: *Adam*, in a ſtate of innocence, was able to keep the whole law, but by ſin he loſt that power, nor can any of his poſterity now keep it perfectly; they are all tranſgreſſors of it, and liable to its penalty; unregenerate men are unſubjected to it, and have an averſion to it, and deſpiſe it, and caſt it behind their backs; regenerate perſons, who love it, and delight in it, after the inner man, do not keep it perfectly; the ſeveral parts of the law may be indeed kept by a believer, and that ſincerely, but not to a perfect degree, for in many things they all offend; Chriſt only has perfectly kept it, and is the fulfilling end of it for righteouſneſs; men of a phariſaical diſpoſition may fancy they have kept it wholly, as the young man in the Goſpel, and *Saul*, before his converſion; but this is but a fancy, and a ſad miſtake: the caſe in the text is only a ſuppoſed one, and as it is here put, implies imperfection; for it follows, *and yet offend in one point*; ſin, which is a tranſgreſſion of the law, is an offence, to God the Father, who is of purer eyes than to behold it; to Jeſus Chriſt, who loves righteouſneſs, and hates iniquity; and to the bleſſed Spirit, who is grieved and vexed by it; and to the juſtice of God, which being injured by it, demands ſatisfaction; and to the law of God, which accuſes, convinces, reproves, and condemns for it. The word uſed ſignifies, to *fall*, and deſigns more than ſtumbling, even an open breach and violation of the law; and which being made, by any, in a ſingle inſtance, *he is guilty of all*: this ſeems to agree with ſome common ſayings of the *Jews*, that he that is ſuſpected in one thing, is ſuſpected in the whole law[y]; and he that keeps this or the other command, keeps the whole law; and he that breaks this, or the other command, breaks the whole law; as whether it reſpects the ſabbath, or adultery, or that command, thou ſhalt not covet, or any other[z]: and this muſt be underſtood, not of every particular command in the law, as if he that is guilty of murder, is in that inſtance alſo guilty of adultery; or he that is guilty of adultery, is in that inſtance guilty of murder; but the ſenſe is, that he is guilty of the breach of the whole law, tho' not of the whole of the law; as he that breaks any one condition of a covenant, which may conſiſt of many, tho' he does not violate every condition, yet breaks the whole covenant; ſo he that tranſgreſſes in any one point of the law, breaks the whole, commits ſin, and is deſerving of death, and is treated by the law as a tranſgreſſor of it, let it be in what inſtance it will. But it does not follow from hence, that all ſins are equal, as the *Stoicks* ſay[a]; for there are greater and leſſer ſins, *John* xix. 11. tho' not ſome venial, and others mortal, for the wages of every ſin is death; nor that the puniſhment of ſin will be alike, as all ſins were puniſhable alike by *Draco*'s laws, but not by the law of God, *Matt.* xi. 22, 24. but this may be fairly concluded from hence, that there can be no juſtification in the ſight of God, by an imperfect obedience to the law, or by a partial righteouſneſs: the law requires perfect obedience, and in failure of that, tho' but in one point, curſes and condemns; and likewiſe it may be inferred from hence, that a man is not at liberty to obey and neglect what commandments of the law he pleaſes, but ſhould have reſpect to them all; which ſeems greatly the deſign of the Apoſtle, as appears by what follows.

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[w] Pirke Abot, c. 4. §. 13. & Abot R. Nathan, c. 41. T. Bab. Megilla, fol. 28. 2. Bemidbar Rabba, §. 4. fol. 183. 2. & §. 14. fol. 215. 2. & Midraſh Kohelet, fol. 73. 4. Targum Jon. in Deut. xxxiv. 5.

[x] Vid. Targum. Jon. & Jeruſ. in Exod. xxxii. 25. & xxxiii. 4.

[y] T. Bab. Erubin, fol. 69. 1.

Ver. 11. *For he that ſaid do not commit adultery,* &c.] That ſame lawgiver, who is but one, and is God, that gave out the ſeventh command, and forbids adultery, *ſaid alſo, do not kill*; delivered the ſixth command, which forbids murder. *Now if thou commit no adultery*; do not break the ſeventh command; *yet if thou kill,* break the ſixth command, *thou art become a tranſgreſſor of the law*; not of that particular precept of the law, the ſeventh command, for the contrary is ſuppoſed before, but of the ſixth only; and yet by ſo doing, a man becomes a violator of the whole law; for the law is but one, tho' it conſiſts of various precepts; and the breach of one precept, as well as of another, is the breach of the law; and beſides, there is but one lawgiver, who has enjoined one command, as well as another, and whoſe legiſlative power and authority is deſpiſed and trampled upon by the violation of one command, as of another. This is the Apoſtle's argument, and way of reaſoning, proving the above aſſertion, that he that breaks the law in one particular inſtance, is guilty of the breach of the whole law.

Ver. 12. *So ſpeak ye, and ſo do,* &c.] Both words and actions ſhould be taken care of; it becomes men to obſerve what they ſay, and what they do; for both ſinful words and works are tranſgreſſions of the law, and will be brought to judgment; every idle word, as well as every evil work, both open and ſecret, men muſt give an account of in the day of judgment: wherefore it is incumbent on them, ſo to behave, *as they that ſhall be judged by the law of liberty*; ſee the note on ch. i. 25. with which compare *Rom.* ii. 12, 16. Heathens will be judged by the law of nature, *Jews* by the law of *Moſes*, and thoſe who live under the Goſpel-diſpenſation, according to the Goſpel of Chriſt.

Ver. 13. *For he ſhall have judgment without mercy,* &c.] Strict juſtice, and no mercy ſhewn him: *that hath ſhewed no mercy*; to the poor brethren, and diſtreſſed members of Chriſt, but has ſhown reſpect of perſons to the hurt of the poor, and has deſpiſed and oppreſſed them, inſtead of relieving and comforting them; ſo the rich man that neglected *Lazarus* at his gates, is refuſed a drop of water to cool his tongue; and the ſervant that cruelly inſiſted on his fellow-ſervant's paying him all he owed, juſtly incurred the diſpleaſure of his Lord, and was by him delivered to the tormentors; and that ſervant that beats his fellow-ſervants, will be cut aſunder, and have his portion with hypocrites; and ſuch who have ſeen any of the brethren of Chriſt hungry, thirſty, naked, ſick, and in priſon, and have ſhewed no regard for them, will hear, *go ye curſed into everlaſting fire: and mercy rejoiceth againſt judgment*; that is, merciful men, who have ſhewn mercy to the poor ſaints, will not be afraid of the awful judgment, but rather rejoice or glory, as the word ſignifies, in the view of it, ſince they will obtain mercy at that day, and hear, *come ye bleſſed of my Father,* &c. *Matt.* xxv. 34, 35, 36. ſo the *Ethiopic* verſion renders it, *he only ſhall glory in the day of judgment, who hath ſhewed mercy*; the *Alexandrian* copy reads in the imperative, *let mercy glory,* &c. and the *Syriac* verſion, *be ye exalted by mercy over judgment.*

Ver. 14. *What* doth it *profit, my brethren,* &c.] The Apoſtle having finiſhed his diſcourſe on reſpect of perſons, and the arguments he uſed to diſſuade from it, by an eaſy tranſition, paſſes to treat upon faith and works, ſhewing, that faith without works, particularly without works of mercy, is of no profit and advantage: *though a man ſay he hath faith, and have not works?* it is clear, that the Apoſtle is not ſpeaking of true faith, for that, in perſons capable of performing them, is not without works; it is an operative grace, it works by love and kindneſs, both to Chriſt, and to his members; but of a profeſſion of faith, a mere hiſtorical one, by which a man, at moſt, aſſents to the truth of things, as even devils do, ver. 19. and only ſays he has faith, but has it not; as *Simon Magus*, who ſaid he believed, but did not. *Can faith ſave him?* ſuch a faith as this, a faith without works, an hiſtorical one, a mere profeſſion of faith, which lies only in words, and has no deeds, to ſhew the truth and genuineneſs of it. True faith indeed has no cauſal influence on ſalvation, or has any virtue and efficacy in itſelf to ſave; Chriſt, the object of faith, is the only cauſe and author of ſalvation; faith is only that grace which receives a juſtifying righteouſneſs, the pardon of ſin, adoption, and a right to the heavenly inheritance; but it does not juſtify, nor pardon, nor adopt, nor give the right to the inheritance, but lays hold on, and claims theſe, by virtue of the gift of grace; and it has ſpiritual and eternal ſalvation inſeparably connected with it; but as for the other faith, a man may have it, and be in the gall of bitterneſs, and bond of iniquity; he may have all faith in that ſenſe, and be nothing; it is no other than the devils themſelves have; and ſo he may have it, and be damned.

Ver. 15. *If a brother or ſiſter,* &c.] A chriſtian man or woman, a fellow-member of a church of Chriſt; for this relation is to be underſtood in a ſpiritual ſenſe, tho' it does not exclude ſuch who are in this relation in a natural ſenſe: *be naked*; or clothed in rags, or in very mean and ſordid apparel, ſuch as will neither keep them warm, nor clean and decent; for they muſt not be ſuppoſed to be entirely naked, but to be in a very uncomfortable and indecent garb: *and deſtitute of daily food*; have not food ſufficient for the day; or aught to ſupport nature with, and yield them proper refreſhment and nouriſhment.

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[z] Bemidbar Rabba, §. 9. fol. 192. 3. Zohar in Exod. fol. 20. 2. & 37. 1. & in Lev. fol. 32. 3. Shemot Rabba, §. 25. fol. 109. 3. T. Bab. Kidduſhin, fol. 39. 2. & Menachot, fol. 43. 2. & Abkath Rochel, par. 1. p. 3.

[a] Zeno & Chryſippus apud Laert. Vit. Zeno, p. 510.

Ver. 16. *And one of you ſay unto them*, &c.] That is, one of the ſame faith, and in the ſame communion, and church-fellowſhip. *Depart in peace*; wiſhing them all proſperity and happineſs, inward and outward: *be ye warmed and filled*; clothed and fed; ſignifying, that they wiſhed them all the accomodations of life: *notwithſtanding ye give them not thoſe things which are needful for the body*; neither cloaths to wear, nor food to eat; nothing to warm their bodies, or fill their bellies: *what* doth it *profit?* the *Ethiopic* verſion reads, *what doth it profit them?* either the poor brother, or ſiſter, to whom theſe good words are given, and nothing elſe; for theſe will neither warm them, nor fill them; or the perſons themſelves, that ſay theſe things to them: and the Apoſtle, by this inſtance, ſhows, that as that charity which lies only in words, and in tongue, and not in deed, and in truth, is unprofitable, and good for nothing, even to them that profeſs it; ſo that faith, which a man ſays he has, and yet is without works, is alike unprofitable unto him.

Ver. 17. *Even ſo faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.*] It is like a lifeleſs carcaſs, a body without a ſoul, ver. 26. for as works, without faith, are dead works, ſo faith, without works, is a dead faith, and not like the lively hope and faith of regenerated perſons: and indeed, ſuch who have no other faith than this, are dead in treſpaſſes and ſins; not that works are the life of faith, or that the life of faith lies in, and flows from works; but, as Dr. *Ames* obſerves[b], good works are ſecond acts, neceſſarily flowing from the life of faith; to which may be added, and by theſe faith appears to be living, lively and active, or ſuch who perform them, appear to be true and living believers.

Ver. 18. *Yea, a man may ſay, thou haſt faith, and I have works*, &c.] That is, a true believer in Chriſt may very juſtly call upon a vain boaſter of his faith, who has no works, to give proof and evidence of it, and addreſs him after this manner; you ſay, you have faith, be it ſo that you have; I have works, you ſee I have, I ſay nothing about my faith at preſent; now, *ſhew me thy faith without thy works*, if thou canſt; ſee what ways, means, and methods thou canſt make uſe of, to make it appear to me, or any other, that you have the faith you talk of: the words are a ſort of ſarcaſm and jeer upon the man, and yet very juſt, calling upon him to do that which is impoſſible to be done, and thereby expoſing his vain boaſt; for faith is an inward principle in the heart; an hidden thing, and can't be ſeen and known but by external acts; and where it is right, it is operative, and ſhows itſelf by works, which is not practicable in thoſe who have none: *and I will ſhow thee my faith by my works*; there may be indeed an appearance of good works, where there is no faith, as in the heathens, in the *Scribes* and *Phariſees*, and in the *Papiſts*, and others; and on the other hand, there may be the principle of faith implanted, where there is not an opportunity of ſhewing it by a ſeries of good works, or a courſe of godly living, as in elect infants dying in infancy, and in thoſe who are converted in their laſt moments, as the thief upon the croſs; wherefore works are not infallible proofs and evidences of faith, yet they are the beſt we are capable of giving of it to men, or they of receiving. In ſhort, tho' works may deceive, and do not infallibly prove the truth of faith, yet it is certain, that where they are not, but perſons live in a continued courſe of ſinning, there cannot be true faith.

Ver. 19. *Thou believeſt that there is one God*, &c.] Theſe words are a continuation of the addreſs of the man that has works, to him that boaſts of his faith without them, obſerving to him, that one, and a main article of his faith is, that there is one God; which is to be underſtood in the chriſtian ſenſe, ſince both the perſon ſpeaking, and the perſon ſpoken to, were ſuch as profeſſed themſelves chriſtians; ſo that to believe there is one God, is not merely to give into this article, in oppoſition to the polytheiſm of the *Gentiles*, or barely to confeſs the God of *Iſrael*, as believed on by the *Jews*, but to believe that there are three perſons, Father, Son, and Spirit, and that theſe three are the one God; wherefore this article of faith includes every thing relating to God; as to God the Father, his being and perfections, ſo to Chriſt, as God, and the Son of God, and the Meſſiah, *&c.* and to the Holy Spirit; and to believe all this is right: *thou doeſt well*; for that there is but one God, is to be proved by the light of nature, and from the works of creation and providence, and has been owned by the wiſeſt of the heathens themſelves; and is eſtabliſhed, by divine revelation, in the books both of the Old and of the New Teſtament; what has been received by the *Jews*, and is well known by chriſtians to whom it is ſet in the cleareſt light, and who are aſſured of the truth of it: but then *the devils alſo believe*; the *Arabic* verſion reads, *the devils likewiſe ſo believe*; they believe the ſame truth; they know and believe there is but one God, and not many; and they know that the God of *Iſrael* is he; and that the Father, Son, and Spirit, are the one God; they know and believe him to be the moſt high God, whoſe ſervants the miniſters of the Goſpel are; and they know and believe that Jeſus is the holy one of God, the Son of God, and the Meſſiah, *Acts* xvi. 17. and xix. 15. *Luke* iv. 34. 41. *And tremble*; at the wrath of God, which they now feel, and at the thought of future torments, which they expect, *Mark* v. 7. *Matt.* viii. 29. and which is more than ſome men do; and yet theſe ſhall not be ſaved, their damnation is certain and inevitable, 2 *Pet.* ii. 4. *Jude* 6. wherefore, it follows, that a bare hiſtorical faith will not profit, and cannot ſave any; a man may have all faith of this kind, and be damned; and therefore it is not to be boaſted of, nor truſted to.

Ver. 20. *But wilt thou know, O vain man*, &c.] Theſe are the words of the Apoſtle reaſſuming the argument, that faith without works is dead, uſeleſs, and unprofitable; and the man that boaſts of his faith, and has no works to ſhew it, he calls a *vain man*, an empty one; ſounding braſs, and a tinkling cymbal; empty veſſels make the greateſt ſound; ſuch are proud boaſters, vainly puft up by their fleſhly mind; but are empy of the true knowledge of God, and of the faith of Chriſt, and of the grace of the ſpirit: the *Syriac* verſion renders it, *O weak*, or *feeble man*, as he muſt needs be, whoſe faith is dead, and boaſts of ſuch a lifeleſs thing; and the *Ethiopic* verſion renders it, *O fooliſh man*, for ſuch an one betrays his ignorance in ſpiritual things, whatever conceit he has of his knowledge and underſtanding: the character ſeems levelled againſt the *Gnoſticks*, who were ſwelled with a vain opinion of their knowledge, to whom the Apoſtle addreſſes himſelf thus.

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[b] Medulla Theolog. l. 2. c. 7. §. 35.

The phraſe, *vain man*, is a proper interpretation of the word ריקא, *Raca*, or *Reka*, uſed in *Matt*. v. 22. ſee the note there; which tho' not to be ſaid to a man in an angry way, yet may be applied to men of ſuch a character as here deſcribed; who were empty of ſolid good, and yet boaſted of their knowledge. *Wilt thou know?* doſt thou require proofs, *that faith, without works, is dead?* as in ver. 17. and that true faith has alway works accompanying it, and is ſhewn and known by it? then take the following inſtances.

Ver. 21. *Was not Abraham our father juſtified by works*, &c.] Not as the cauſes of his juſtification, that is denied, *Rom*. iv. 2. but as effects of it, ſhewing the truth of his faith, and the reality of his juſtification: he had both faith and works, and the former were known by the latter; and even the faith which he had expreſſed years ago, was manifeſted, demonſtrated, and confirmed to be true and genuine, by the inſtance of his obedience to God, here produced; by which it appeared he was a true believer, a juſtified perſon, approved of God, and loved by him. Now if this was the caſe of *Abraham*, the father of the *Jewiſh* nation, yea the father of the faithful, of all that believe, he is, and muſt be a vain man, that talks of faith without works; and his faith muſt be a dead one, and he be very unlike the father of them that believe: the good work inſtanced in, is the offering up of *Iſaac*; *when he had offered Iſaac his ſon upon the altar*; for when he was bid to take his ſon, his only and beloved ſon, *Iſaac*, and offer him up on one of the mountains, that ſhould be ſhown him, he made haſte to do it; he provided every thing for it; he clave the wood, and carried it with him, and fire in his hand; he built an altar, laid the wood on it, bound his ſon, laid the wood on the altar, and his ſon on the wood, and ſtretched out his hand, with his knife in it, to ſlay him; ſo that it was all one with reſpect to his intention and will, as if he had actually offered him, and was a full trial and proof of his obedience to God. This was not the only act of obedience, or good work, which he performed; but this being a very eminent one, the Apoſtle inſtances in it, as a very conſiderable evidence of his faith in God, and love to him; and which ſhewed him to be a juſtified perſon, as he was long before he performed this action, even before *Iſaac* was born; ſee *Gen*. xv. 6. and therefore it can never be the Apoſtle's meaning, that he was juſtified before God by this, or any other good work or works, as cauſe or cauſes of it; but only that he was declared to be ſo; or, in other words, that his faith was attended with good works, and evidenced by them.

Ver. 22. *Seeſt thou how faith wrought with his works*, &c.] Not to juſtify him before God; for neither faith nor works are ever ſaid in ſcripture to juſtify any man; but his faith being of the right kind, a faith which works by love, it put him upon doing this work, and many others; for this was done in faith, *Heb*. xi. 17, 18, 19. as all good works are, which are properly ſuch; and where there is true faith, it will influence and engage a man to do good works, as it did *Abraham*. *And by works was faith made perfect?* not with an abſolute perfection; for tho' *Abraham*'s faith was very great, yet there were things lacking in it, and he had his fits and times of unbelief; and had he lived till now, his faith, in this ſenſe, would not have been perfect; and he would have had reaſon to have uſed the Apoſtle's petition, *Luke* xvii. 5. much leſs would it have been made thus perfect by works; but the ſenſe is, that hereby his faith was declared to be ſincere, unfeigned, true, and genuine; juſt as love is ſaid to be perfected, 1 *John* iv. 17.

Ver. 23. *And the ſcripture was fulfilled*, &c.] *Gen*. xv. 6. which ſpeaks of *Abraham*'s faith, and the imputation of it to him for righteouſneſs; for the above action of *Abraham*, in offering up his ſon, was a clear proof of the truth of his faith, there commended: by this it was made known, what a ſtrong faith he had in God, and what reaſon there was to believe that he was a juſtified perſon. *Abraham believed God, and it was imputed to him for righteouſneſs*; ſee the note on *Rom*. iv. 3. which ſhows both that *Abraham* was juſtified before he wrought this work, and therefore that could not be the cauſe or matter of his juſtification, but only an effect and evidence of it; and that his juſtification was by faith, or that object which his faith regarded, and had to do with, was his juſtifying righteouſneſs: *and he was called the friend of God*, 2 *Chron*. xx. 7. *Iſ*. xli. 8. he was loved by God with an everlaſting love, who ſhewed acts of friendſhip to him; called him by his grace, and bleſſed him with ſpiritual bleſſings, and increaſed him with the increaſe of God; favoured him with near communion with him, honoured him with high characters, and diſtinguiſhed him by peculiar marks of his favour, and reckoned his enemies and friends as his own, *Gen*. xii. 3. and *Abraham*, on the other hand, loved God, and ſhewed himſelf friendly to him; truſted in him, and believed every word of his; readily complied with his will, and not only yielded a chearful obedience to his commands, but enjoined his children after him to obſerve them: this was a name which *Abraham* was well known by among the *Eaſtern* nations; hence he is called by the *Mahometans*, חליל אללה, *Khalil Allah*, the friend of God; and *Mahomet* ſays himſelf[d], "God "took *Abraham* for his friend."

Ver. 24. *Ye ſee then how that by works a man is juſtified*, &c.] Not as cauſes procuring his juſtification, but as effects declaring it; for the beſt works are imperfect, and cannot be a righteouſneſs juſtifying in the ſight of God, and are unprofitable in this reſpect; for when they are performed in the beſt manner, they are no other than what it is a man's duty to perform, and therefore can't juſtify from ſin he has committed: and beſides, juſtification in this ſenſe would fruſtrate the grace of God, make void the death of Chriſt, and encourage boaſting in men. Good works don't go before juſtification as cauſes or conditions, but follow it as fruits and effects: *and not by faith only*; or as without works, or a mere hiſtorical faith, which being without works is dead, of which the Apoſtle is ſpeaking; and therefore can bear no teſtimony to a man's juſtification; hence it appears, that the Apoſtle *James* does not contradict the Apoſtle *Paul* in *Rom*. iii. 28. ſince they ſpeak not of the ſame ſort of faith; the one ſpeaks of a mere profeſſion of faith, a dead and lifeleſs one; the other of a true faith, which has Chriſt, and his righteouſneſs, for its object, and works by love, and produces peace, joy, and comfort in the ſoul. Moreover, the Apoſtle *Paul* ſpeaks of juſtification before God; and *James* ſpeaks of it as it is known by its fruits unto men; the one ſpeaks of a juſtification of their perſons, in the ſight of God; the other of the juſtification and approbation of their cauſe, their conduct, and their faith before men, and the vindication

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[d] Koran, c. 4.

tion of them from all charges and calumnies of hypocriſy, and the like; the one ſpeaks of good works as cauſes, which he denies to have any place as ſuch in juſtification; and the other ſpeaks of them as effects flowing from faith, and ſhewing the truth of it, and ſo of juſtification by it; the one had to do with legaliſts and ſelf-juſticiaries, who ſought righteouſneſs not by faith, but by the works of the law, whom he oppoſed; and the other had to do with libertines, who cried up faith and knowledge, but had no regard to a religious life and converſation; and theſe things conſidered, will tend to reconcile the two Apoſtles about this buſineſs.

Ver. 25. *Likewiſe was not Rahab the harlot*, &c.] See the note on *Heb.* xi. 31. *juſtified by works*; this woman was an inſtance of the grace of God in calling the chief of ſinners, and was a true believer; and what ſhe did, ſhe did in faith, *Heb.* xi. 31. and her faith was ſhown by her works to be true and genuine; and it was manifeſt that ſhe was a juſtified perſon. This inſtance is produced with the other, to ſhow, that where-ever there is true faith, whether in *Jew* or *Gentile*, in man or woman, in greater or leſſer believers, or in ſuch who have been greater or leſſer ſinners, there will be good works; and therefore that perſon is a vain man that talks and boaſts of his faith, and depends upon it, and ſlights and rejects good works as unneceſſary to be done. *When ſhe had received the meſſengers*; the ſpies that *Joſhua* ſent, into her houſe, with peace and ſafety: *and had ſent them out another way*; than they came in, even thro' the window upon the town-wall, *Joſh.* ii. 1, 15.

Ver. 26. *For as the body without the ſpirit is dead*, &c.] This ſimile is made uſe of to illuſtrate what the Apoſtle had aſſerted in ver. 17, 20. that as a body, when the ſpirit or ſoul is departed from it, or the breath is gone out of it, is dead, and without motion, and uſeleſs; which the *Jews* [d] expreſs in like manner, פגר גוף בלא רוח, *the body without the ſpirit, or breath, is a carcaſs. So faith without works is dead alſo*; a vain thing, uſeleſs and unprofitable, can neither juſtify, nor ſave, nor prove that a man is juſtified, or will be ſaved.

CHAP. III.

IN this chapter the Apoſtle cautions againſt cenſoriouſneſs, and reproving others with a magiſterial air; adviſes to bridle the tongue, and guard againſt the vices of it; and ſhews what true wiſdom is, and from whence it comes. He adviſes the ſaints not to arrogate too much to themſelves, and take upon them to be the cenſorious reprovers of others; which he diſſuades from, by the conſideration of the greater damnation ſuch ſhall receive, and by the frailty of all men, and a common proneneſs to offend by words; for he muſt be a very ſingular man indeed that does not offend by words, ver. 1, 2. wherefore he exhorts them to watch over their words, and bridle their tongues; which he illuſtrates by the methods uſed with horſes to keep them in ſubjection, and with ſhips, to turn them as occaſion ſerves, and the maſter pleaſes, ver. 3, 4. and tho' the tongue is a little member, and not comparable to a horſe, or ſhip, for its bulk; yet it boaſts of great things, has a world of iniquity in it, and much miſchief is done by it, being influenced by the powers of hell; therefore care, and all poſſible means ſhould be uſed to reſtrain it, ver. 5, 6. tho' it is not tameable by man, only by the Lord, when all ſorts of creatures are, even the moſt fierce and ſavage, and therefore are worſe than they, being an unruly evil, and full of deadly poiſon, ver. 7, 8. And what is the moſt monſtrous and ſhocking, bleſſing and curſing come out of the ſame mouth, are pronounced by the ſame tongue, which is uſed in bleſſing God, and curſing men made after his image, which by no means ought to be done, ver. 9, 10. and which is not to be paralleled in nature; no inſtance like it can be given, no fountain ſending forth, in the ſame place, water ſweet and bitter, ſalt and freſh, or any fig-tree bearing olives or vine, figs, ver. 11, 12. And becauſe all this evil ſprings from a vain opinion men have of their own wiſdom, the Apoſtle proceeds to give an account of true wiſdom; and obſerves, that that ſhows itſelf in good works, in a holy converſation, attended with meekneſs and humility, and not in envying, ſtrife, and lyes, ver. 13, 14. Such ſort of wiſdom is not from heaven, but of the earth; it is not rational; it is no better than that of brutes; yea, no other than that of devils, ſince where the above ſins prevail, it is a hell on earth, there is nothing but confuſion, and every thing that is vile and wicked, ver. 15, 16. but, on the other hand, true wiſdom is of an heavenly original, of a pure, peaceable, gentle, and tractable nature, and is full of good fruits or works, in its effects, particularly mercy, and is clear of partiality and hypocriſy, ver. 17. and as one of its fruits is righteouſneſs, that is ſown in peace by the peace-maker, and produces it, ver. 18.

Ver. 1. *My brethren, be not many maſters*, &c.] The Apoſtle having diſpatched the ſubject of faith and good works, which conſtitute the pure and undefiled religion mentioned in ch. i. 27. which gave riſe to this diſcourſe, he proceeds to conſider the evidence of a religious man, ſuggeſted in ver. 26. who is one that bridles the tongue; and enters into an account of the uſe and abuſe of the tongue; and which is introduced by this exhortation; and which ſeems to be oppoſed to an affectation among the *Jews*, to whom *James* writes, of being called *Rabbi*, *Rabbi*, or *Mori*, *Mori*, maſter, maſter, condemned by Chriſt, *Matt.* xxiii. 8, 10. The words may be rendered, *be not many teachers*; or be not fond, and forward, and ambitious of being preachers of the word, but rather chuſe to be hearers of it, agreeable to the advice in ch. i. 19. *be ſwift to hear, ſlow to ſpeak*; not but that the office of a teacher is a good work, and a very deſirable one; and ſpiritual gifts, qualifying for it, are to be coveted with a view to the glory of God, and the good of ſouls; and to have many teachers is a bleſſing to the churches of Chriſt; and a large number of them is often not only proper, but abſolutely neceſſary: but then this office ſhould not be entred upon without ſuitable gifts, a divine miſſion, and a regular call by a church; and when entred into, ſhould not be performed in a magiſterial way, as lords over God's heritage, and as claiming a dominion over the faith of men, but as helpers of their joy, peace, and comfort; nor according to the commandments of men, but according to the oracles of God. Or it may be, this exhortation may have reſpect to cenſorious perſons, rigid and ſevere reprovers of others, who take upon them, in a haughty manner to charge and rebuke others for their faults; reproof for ſin ought to be given; ſin ſhould not be ſuffered upon the brethren; to reprove is not blameworthy, but commendable, when it is done in a right manner, with a good ſpirit, and to a good end: in caſe of private offences, it ſhould be privately given, and for publick ones, men ſhould be rebuked before all; but then this ought to be done in a gentle manner, and in a ſpirit of meekneſs; and when it is a clear caſe, and plain matter of fact, and which ought not to be exaggerated and aggravated; mole-hills are not to be made mountains of, or a man be made an offender for a word, or a matter of human frailty; and reproof ſhould be given by perſons not guilty of the ſame, or worſe crimes themſelves, and always with a good end; not to ſkreen and cover their own vices, or to be thought more holy and religious than others, or to ſatisfy a revengeful ſpirit, but for the glory of God, and the reſtoring of the perſon that has ſinned. *Knowing that we ſhall receive the greater condemnation*; ſhould men enter into the office of teaching others without a call, or perform it negligently, or live not according to the doctrine they teach others, ſuch would be judged out of their own mouths, and by their own words, and their condemnation would be aggravated; and ſhould men judge raſh judgment, they themſelves will be judged at a higher tribunal; and ſhould they be too cenſorious, and bear too hard on others, they will have judgment without mercy.

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[d] Ohel Moed, fol. 15. 1.

Ver. 2. *For in many things we offend all*, &c.] Or *we all offend*, ſlip and fall; no man lives without ſin; in many, in moſt, if not in all things, a good man himſelf does, he ſins; and this extends to the moſt ſolemn ſervices, and beſt works of a good man; there is ſin in his holy things, imperfections in all his performances; his righteouſneſſes are as filthy rags; hence no man can be juſtified by his works before God, nor is any man perfect in this life, ſo as to be without ſin in himſelf: the Apoſtle includes himſelf in this account, and that not out of modeſty merely, or in a complaiſant way, but as matter of fact, and what he found in himſelf, and obſerved in the conduct of his life: and now this is given as a reaſon, why perſons ſhould not be over-forward of teaching others, ſince in many inſtances in common ſpeech and converſation, men are apt to offend, and much more in a work which requires a multitude of words; or why men ſhould be careful how they charge, cenſure, and reprove others, in a raſh, furious, and unchriſtian manner; ſince they themſelves are in the body, and may be tempted, and are attended with many infirmities, ſlips, and falls in common life. *If any man offend not in word*; from ſlips and falls in general, the Apoſtle proceeds to the ſlips of the tongue, and to the uſe and abuſe of that member; and his ſenſe is, that if a man has ſo much guard upon himſelf, and ſuch a command over his tongue, and ſo much wiſdom to uſe it, as to give no offence by it, to his fellow-creatures, and fellow-chriſtians. *The ſame is a perfect man*; not that he is perfect in himſelf, and without ſin, that is denied before; unleſs this is conſidered as a mere hypotheſis, and by way of conceſſion; that could there be found out a man that never, for inſtance, offends in word in any one part of life, that man may be allowed, and be ſet down to be a perfect man; but no ſuch man is to be found, and therefore none perfect: but rather the ſenſe is, that he who in common is ſo careful of his ſpeech, as not to offend his brethren, may be looked upon as a ſincere, and truly religious man; ſee ch. i. 26. or he may be accounted a wiſe and prudent man, ſuch an one as in ver. 13. he is not a babe in underſtanding, a child in conduct, but a grown man; at full age; a perfect man; in which ſenſe the word is uſed in 1 *Cor.* ii. 6. *Heb.* v. 14. *And able alſo to bridle the whole body*; either to govern the whole body, the church, to teach a ſociety of chriſtians, and to feed them with knowledge, and with underſtanding; or rather, as he appears, to be able to bridle that member of the body, the tongue, ſo likewiſe to be able, thro' the grace of God, to keep under the whole body, that ſin ſhall not reign in it, or the luſts of it be in common obeyed.

Ver. 3. *Behold we put bits in the horſes mouths*, &c.] By this, and the following ſimile, the Apoſtle not only expreſſes the ſmallneſs of that member of the body, which is like the bit in the horſe's mouth, and the helm of a ſhip, but the good uſe of it, and the great influence it has over the whole body. Horſes are without underſtanding, and need direction in what path to go, and are ſtrong, and would be unruly, and ungovernable, unleſs bits and bridles were put into their mouths: *that they may obey us*; and go in the way we would have them: *and we turn about the whole body*; of the horſe, this way, and that way, as is thought beſt, by the help of the bit and bridle; and of ſuch uſe is the tongue to the natural body, that being bridled itſelf, bridles, directs, and governs the whole body; and its influence on bodies, and ſocieties of men, and chriſtians, is like that of the bit, in the horſe's mouth; who, like horſes, would be unruly and ungovernable, were it not for the force of language, the power of words, and ſtrength of argument.

Ver. 4. *Behold alſo the ſhips, which tho' they be ſo great*, &c.] Of ſo large a bulk, of ſuch a prodigious ſize, and are ſuch unwieldy veſſels: *and are driven of fierce winds*; with great vehemence, rapidity, and ſwiftneſs: *yet are they turned about with a very ſmall helm, whitherſoever the governour liſteth*; the helm, or tiller of a ſhip, is a beam or piece of timber faſtened into the rudder, and ſo coming forward into the ſteerage, where he that ſtands at helm, ſteers the ſhip [e], who is here called the governour; or *he that directs*, as the word may be rendered; that is, that ſteers; the word for *helm*, is tranſlated *rudder* in *Acts* xxvii. 40. and the helm or tiller is ſometimes, tho' improperly, called the rudder itſelf [f]; and this is very ſmall, in compariſon of the bulk of the ſhip that is guided by it. [g] *Ariſtotle* calls it, ϖηδαλιον μικρον, *a ſmall helm*, as the Apoſtle here does, and accounts for it, how large ſhips ſhould be moved and ſteered by it. And ſo, tho' the tongue is to the reſt of the body, as a ſmall helm to a large ſhip, yet, like that, it has great influence over the whole body, to check it, when it is carrying away with the force of its appetites, and paſſions; and ſo churches, ſocietes, and bodies of chriſtians, which are large and numerous, and are like ſhips upon the ocean, toſſed to and fro with tempeſts, driven by ſatan's temptations, and the world's perſecution, and ready to be carried away with the wind of falſe doctrine, yet are influenced and directed aright by thoſe that are at the helm, the faithful miniſters of the word, who ſay to them, this is the way, walk in it.

Ver. 5. *Even ſo the tongue is a little member*, &c.] Like the bit in the horſe's mouth, or like the helm of a ſhip. *And boaſteth great things*; and does them; for this word may be taken in a good ſenſe: a bridled and ſanctified tongue, that is influenced by the grace of God, and directed by the Spirit of God, as it ſpeaks great and good things, it has great power, weight, and influence: the tongue of the juſt is as choice ſilver, and the lips of the righteous feed many, *Prov.* x. 20, 21. the Goſpel, as preached by Chriſt's faithful miniſters, who are the churches tongue, when it comes not in word only, but in power, is the power of God unto ſalvation: faith comes by hearing it, and hearing, by this word; by it ſouls are convinced, converted, and comforted, enlightened, quickened, and ſanctified. *Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth*; what vaſt quantities of wood, large foreſts, ſtately buildings, and populous towns, and cities, are at once ſeized on by a little fire, a few ſparks, and in a ſhort time, burnt down, and utterly deſtroyed. One of the proverbs of *Ben Syra*, is, "burning fire kindles "great heaps;" ſuggeſting, that an evil tongue does great miſchief, as did the tongue of *Doeg* the *Edomite*, as the *Gloſs* upon it obſerves: from hence the Apoſtle paſſes to conſider the abuſe or vices of the tongue.

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[e] Chambers's Cyclopædia in the word *Helm*.

[f] Ib. in the word *Rudder*.

[g] Quæſt. Mechanic. c. 5.

Ver. 6. *And the tongue* is *a fire*, &c.] It is like to fire, very uſeful in its place, to warm, and comfort; ſo is the tongue in chriſtian converſation, and in the miniſtry of the word; the hearts of God's children burn within them, whilſt they are talking together, and whilſt the ſcriptures of truth are opening to them; but as fire ſhould be carefully watched, and kept, ſo ſhould men take heed to their ways, that they ſin not with their tongue, and keep their tongue from evil, and their lips from ſpeaking guile; for as fire kindles and riſes up into a flame, ſo unchaſte, angry, and paſſionate words, ſtir up the flame of luſt, anger, envy, and revenge; and as fire is of a ſpreading nature, ſo are lies, ſcandal, and evil reports vented by the tongue; and as fire devours all that comes in its way, ſuch are the words of an evil tongue; and therefore are called devouring words, *Pſ.* lii. 4. they devour the good names of men, and corrupt their good manners, and deſtroy thoſe who make uſe of them; and what wood is to fire, and coals to burning coals, that are whiſperers, talebearers, backbiters, and contentious perſons to ſtriſe, *Prov.* xxvi. 20, 21. *a world of iniquity*; that is, as the world is full of things, and full of ſin, for it lies in wickedneſs, ſo is the tongue, full of iniquity; there's a world of it in it; it abounds with it; it can't well be ſaid how much ſin is in it, and done, or occaſioned by it; as blaſphemy againſt God, Father, Son, and Spirit; curſing of men, imprecations on themſelves, their ſouls and bodies, and on others, with a multitude of prophane and dreadful oaths; obſcene, filthy and unchaſte words; angry, wrathful, and paſſionate ones; lyes, flatteries, reproaches, backbitings, whiſperings, tale-bearings, *&c.* And the *Jews* ſay, that he that uſes an evil tongue multiplies tranſgreſſion, and that it is equal to idolatry, adultery, and murder [h], and the cauſe of all ſin; and which they expreſs by way of fable, in this manner [i]: "when *Adam* ſinned, God laid hold "on him, and ſlit his tongue into two parts, and "ſaid unto him, the wickedneſs which is, or ſhall "be in the world, thou haſt begun with an evil "tongue; wherefore I'll make all that come into "the world, know, that thy tongue is the cauſe of all "this." The *Syriac* verſion renders this clauſe thus, *and the world of iniquity is as wood*; or the branch of a tree; the tongue is fire, and a wicked world is fuel to it. *So is the tongue amongſt our members, that it defileth the whole body*; the body politic, a whole nation, filling it with contention, ſtriſe, diviſion, and confuſion; and the eccleſiaſtical body, the church, by ſowing diſcord, fomenting animoſities, making parties, and ſpreading errors and hereſies, whereby the temple of God is defiled; and the natural body, and the ſeveral members of it, even the whole perſon of a man, ſoul and body, bringing upon him a blot of infamy and reproach, never to be wiped off; as for inſtance, the vice of that tongue lying, does; and oftentimes thro' the tongue, the actions done in the body, which ſeem good, are quite ſpoiled: *and ſetteth on fire the courſe of nature*; or *wheel of nature*; the natural body, as before, in which there is a continual rotation or circulation of the blood, by which it is ſupported; this is the wheel broken at the ciſtern at death, in *Eccl.* xii. 6. or the courſe of a man's life and actions, yea, of all generations, and the viciſſitudes and changes which have happened in them, on which the tongue has a great influence; and ſo the *Syriac* verſion renders it, *and ſets on fire the ſeries of our genealogies*, or *of our generations, which run like wheels*: or it may intend the frame of nature, the whole fabrick of the univerſe, and the general conflagration of it, which will be owing to the tongue; or becauſe mens tongues are againſt the Lord, to provoke the eyes of his glory, becauſe of the hard ſpeeches which ungodly ſinners have ſpoken againſt Chriſt, and his people, of which they will be convinced, by flames of fire about them: *and it is ſet on fire of hell*; that is, by the devil; for as heaven ſometimes is put for God, who dwells in heaven, *Matt.* xxi. 25. *Luke* xv. 18. ſo hell is put for the devil, whoſe habitation it is; ſee *Matt.* xvi. 18. and the ſenſe is, that the tongue is influenced, inſtigated, and ſtirred up by ſatan, to ſpeak many evil things; and it will be hereafter ſet on fire in hell, as the tongue of the rich man in *Luke* xvi. 24. To which purpoſe are thoſe words of the *Talmud* [k]; "whoever uſes an evil tongue, "the holy bleſſed God ſays to hell, I concerning "him above, and thou concerning him below, "will judge him, as it is ſaid, *Pſ.* cxx. 3, 4. "*what ſhall be done to thee, thou falſe tongue? ſharp* "*arrows of the mighty, with coals of juniper*; there "is no arrow but the tongue, according to *Jer.* "ix. 8. and there's no mighty one but God, *Iſ.* "xlii. 13. *coals of juniper*, היינו גיהנם, *theſe are* "*hell*."

Ver. 7. *For every kind of beaſts, and of birds*, &c.] Or the *nature* of them, as it is in the *Greek* text; however fierce as beaſts of prey are, or ſhy as the fowls of the air be: *and of ſerpents and things in the ſea*; the fiſhes there: *is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind*, or *by human nature*; by the wit and induſtry of man; by the various ways, means and methods, deviſed by man. So *Pliny* [l] relates, that elephants, lions and tygers among beaſts, and the eagle among birds, and crocodiles, aſps and other ſerpents, and fiſhes of the ſea have been tamed: tho' ſome think, this is only to be underſtood of their being maſtered and ſubdued, by one means, or another; or of their being deſpoiled of their power, or of their poiſon: and the *Syriac* and *Ethiopic* verſions render it, *ſubjected to human nature*.

Ver. 8. *But the tongue can no man tame*, &c.] Either his own, or others; not his own, for the man, that has the greateſt guard upon himſelf, his words and actions; yet, what through pride or paſſion, or one luſt or another in his heart, at one time or another, bolts out vain, idle, angry and ſinful words: and he, that does not, may be ſet down for a perfect man indeed: nor can he tame, or reſtrain,

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[h] T. Bab. Erachin, fol. 15. 2. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 100. 1.

[i] Otiot R. Aquiba in Ketoreth Haſſammim in Gen. fol. 12. 4.

[k] T. Bab. Erachin, fol. 15. 2. Yalkut, par. 2. fol. 127. 2.

[l] Nat. Hiſt. l. 8. c. 9. 16, 17. & 10. 5, 44.

ſtrain the tongues of others, from detraction, calumnies, backbitings and whiſperings; who ſay, their lips are their own, and who is Lord over us? no man can, by his own power and ſtrength, tame, or ſubdue his tongue, or reſtrain it from evils, it is habituated to, be it lying, curſing, ſwearing, or what elſe: God, by his Spirit, power and grace, can, and often does, change the note of the curſer, ſwearer, liar, and blaſphemer; but no man can do this, tho' he can tame beaſts, birds, ſerpents, and fiſhes; which ſhews the tongue to be worſe, than any thing to be found, in the whole compaſs of nature: it is an *unruly evil*; an evil it is, for it is a world of iniquity; and an unruly one, being more ſo, than the horſe and mule, which are without underſtanding, who are kept in and governed, and turned any way, by the bit and bridle: but tho', in nature, the tongue is fenced by a double fence of the lips and teeth, this is not ſufficient to reſtrain it; it breaks all bounds, and is not to be kept in by nature, art, or argument: nothing, but the grace of God, can, in any meaſure govern it, or lay an embargo on it: *full of deadly poiſon*; which, privately, ſecretly and gradually, deſtroys the characters, credit and reputation of men; and is of fatal conſequence in families, neighbourhoods, churches and ſtates.

Ver. 9. *Therewith bleſs we God, even the Father*, &c.] Of Jeſus Chriſt, and of ſpirits, and of mercies: this is the inſtrument, that is uſed in bleſſing God daily, for every meal that is eaten; and in joining with the ſaints, tho' only verbally and outwardly, in bleſſing God for all ſpiritual bleſſings in Chriſt, both in prayer, and in ſinging pſalms: *and therewith curſe we men*; make imprecations, and wiſh evils upon them: *which are made after the ſimilitude of God*; as man was originally, *Gen.* i. 26, 27. and tho' ſin has greatly defaced it, yet, there are ſtill ſome remains of it: and now, what an abſurd and monſtrous thing is this, that one and the ſame inſtrument ſhould be uſed in bleſſing God, the father of all creatures, and in curſing his children, his offspring, as all men are by creation, and bear ſome reſemblance to him.

Ver. 10. *Out of the ſame mouth proceedeth bleſſing and curſing*, &c.] Which is not only a contradiction, but unnatural, as well as wicked and ſinful: *my brethren, theſe things ought not ſo to be*; in any, and much leſs in profeſſors of religion: ſuch things are unbecoming men, are a ſcandal upon human nature, and exceeding unworthy of the Chriſtian name; ſee *Pſal.* l. 16, 19, 20.

Ver. 11. *Doth a fountain ſend forth, at the ſame place*, &c.] Or *hole*; for at divers places, and at different times, as *Pliny*[m] obſerves, it may ſend forth *ſweet* water *and bitter:* and it is reported[n], there is a lake with the *Troglodítæ*, a people in *Ethiopia*, which becomes thrice a day bitter, and then as often ſweet; but then it does not yield ſweet water and bitter, at the ſame time: this ſimile is uſed to ſhew, how unnatural it is, that bleſſing and curſing ſhould proceed out of the ſame mouth.

Ver. 12. *Can the fig-tree, my brethren, bear olive-berries?* &c.] Every tree bears fruit, according to its kind; a fig-tree produces figs, and an olive-tree, olive-berries; a fig-tree does not produce olive-berries, or an olive-tree, figs; and neither of them both: *either a vine, figs?* or fig-trees, grapes; or either of them, figs and grapes: *ſo can no fountain both yield ſalt water and freſh.* The *Alexandrian* copy reads, *neither can the ſalt* water *yield ſweet water*; that is, the ſea can't yield ſweet or freſh water: the *Syriac* verſion renders it, *neither can ſalt water be made ſweet:* but naturaliſts ſay, it may be made ſweet, by being ſtrained through ſand: the deſign of theſe ſimilies is to obſerve, how abſurd a thing it is, that a man ſhould both bleſs and curſe with his tongue.

Ver. 13. *Who is a wiſe man.*] Meaning, not in things natural and civil, or merely moral, but in things ſpiritual: and he is a wiſe man, who is both wiſe to do good, and wiſe unto ſalvation; who has learned to know his own ignorance, folly and ſtupidity; for the firſt leſſon, in the ſchool of ſpiritual wiſdom, is for a man to know, that he is a fool: and he is a wiſe man, who conſiders his latter end, thinks of a future ſtate, and what will become of him in another world; and who builds his faith and hope of eternal ſalvation, on the ſure and only foundation, the rock Chriſt Jeſus; and who takes up a profeſſion of religion, upon principles of grace, and with views to the glory of God, and, upon mature deliberation, reckoning the coſt, and what he muſt expect to meet with; and which he holds faſt, without wavering, and yet does not depend upon it; and who walks, circumſpectly, and with wiſdom, towards them, that are without; and who obſerves both providences and promiſes, for the encouragement of his faith; and keeps looking to the mark for the prize, preferring heavenly things to earthly ones. *And endued with knowledge amongſt you?* as he is, who is endued with the knowledge of himſelf; of the impurity of his nature, and the plague of his heart; and of his impotency and inability to do any thing that is ſpiritually good of himſelf; and of the imperfection and inſufficiency of his righteouſneſs to juſtify him before God; and of his loſt ſtate and condition by nature, how deſerving of the wrath of God, and obnoxious to the curſes of the law; and how miſerable he muſt be, without the grace of God, and righteouſneſs of Chriſt: and who is alſo endued with the knowledge of Chriſt, ſo as to ſee a fulneſs, ſuitableneſs and ability in him, as a Saviour; ſo as to love him, approve of him, as ſuch, and truſt in him; which knowledge is always practical, and ſoul-humbling; and the leaſt degree of it ſaving; and tho' it is imperfect, it is growing, and will, at laſt, come to perfection: now ſuch a man is a *Gnoſtick*, in the beſt ſenſe; for this queſtion is put with a view to the *Gnoſticks* of thoſe times, who valued themſelves upon their knowledge, and deſpiſed practical religion and godlineſs: hence it follows, *let him ſhew out of a good converſation his works, with meekneſs of wiſdom*; ſuch an one ought to perform good works, and he will perform them; and it is right in him to *ſhew* them forth, that they may be a means of others glorifying God upon the ſight of them; and that they may be evidences of the truth of faith in themſelves to others; and that they may be for the imitation of others; and that they may put to ſilence, and ſtop the mouths of falſe accuſers, and adorn the Goſpel, and recommend religion: and theſe ſhould be ſhewn forth *out of a good converſation*; not in a ſingle act or two, but in a ſeries and courſe of living; which may be ſaid to be *good*, when it is ordered aright, according to the word of God, and is honeſt among the *Gentiles*, and upright and holy; and is as becomes the Goſpel of Chriſt, and is worthy of the vocation of God to grace and glory; and when it is influenced by the grace of God; and the works ſhown out of it, and in it, are done in faith, from love, in the ſtrength of Chriſt, and are directed to the glory of God: and all this ſhould be *with meekneſs of wiſdom*; in a wiſe and humble manner, without truſting to, and depending upon ſuch works for juſtification and ſalvation; and without glorying in them, and boaſting of them; acknowledging the deficiency and imperfection of them, and his own weakneſs in the performance of them; and aſcribing them to the power and grace of God, by the aſſiſtance of which they are performed.

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[m] Nat. Hiſt. l. 2. c. 103.

[n] Iſidor. Hiſpal. Originum, l. 13. c. 13. p 115.

Ver. 14. *But if ye have bitter envying and ſtrife in your hearts,* &c.] Tho' theſe may not be expreſſed by words, or actions: envy at the happineſs of others, whether at the external bleſſings of providence, as riches and honours, or at the internal endowments of their minds, as their wiſdom and knowledge, their parts and abilities, is a root of bitterneſs in the heart, which bears wormwood and gall, and produces bitter effects, in the perſons in whom it is; it embitters their minds againſt their neighbours and friends; it is rottenneſs in their bones, and ſlays and deſtroys thoſe who are ſo ſilly as to be governed by it; and alſo in the perſons the objects of it; for who can ſtand before it? and ſtrife in the mind, or an intention to ſtrive and quarrel with others, who are the objects of envy, is very ſinful, and of pernicious conſequence: and if theſe be fomented and cheriſhed in the minds and breaſts of men, tho' they may not outwardly ſhow themſelves, yet *glory not*; let not ſuch boaſt of their being *Gnoſticks*, wiſe men, and endued with knowledge; they are far from deſerving ſuch a character; and ſuch boaſting is contrary to truth, yea, is lying againſt it, as follows: *and lye not againſt the truth*; for, for a man to aſſert himſelf to be a wiſe and knowing man, and yet cheriſhes bitterneſs in his heart, and quarrelling and contention in his mind, ariſing from envy, at the equal or ſuperior knowledge of others, he lyes both againſt the truth of God's word, and his own conſcience, which condemn ſuch things as ignorance, folly, and madneſs.

Ver. 15. *This wiſdom deſcendeth not from above,* &c.] If it muſt be called wiſdom, as it ought not; an envious, quarrelſome, and contentious ſpirit does not deſerve ſuch a name; yet if any will call it ſo, or can think that a man of ſuch a diſpoſition is a man poſſeſſed of wiſdom; it is ſuch wiſdom as does not come from above, from heaven, from the father of lights, from Chriſt, in whom are hid all the treaſures of wiſdom and knowledge, and from the ſpirit of wiſdom and revelation: what the *Jews* ſay [o] of the wiſdom of *Egypt*, may be ſaid of this, that it is חכמה תתאה, *wiſdom from below*, or inferior wiſdom, as it follows: *but is earthly, ſenſual, and deviliſh*; it is *earthly*, or of the earth, and ſprings from thence; and it is only converſant about earthly things, and is only ſuitable to earthly minds: it is *ſenſual*, or *natural*; what a natural man, one deſtitute of the Spirit of God, and without the knowledge of the things of the Spirit, may have; it is what is acquired by the mere ſtrength of nature, and only relates to natural things; and is only agreeable to corrupt nature, or to a natural and unregenerate man: yea, it is *deviliſh*, or ſuch as the devil himſelf has; and which comes from him, and being uſed, ſerves only his kingdom and intereſt.

Ver. 16. *For where envying and ſtrife is,* &c.] Where theſe are cheriſhed in the heart, and eſpecially where they break out into action, in families, neighbourhoods, ſtates, or churches: *there is confuſion and every evil work*; theſe occaſion diſturbances, raiſe uneaſineſs, make diſquietude, and cauſe tumults whenever they appear; and put perſons upon doing every thing that is wicked, to gratify ſuch inſatiable luſts.

Ver. 17. *But the wiſdom that is from above,* &c.] Which has God for its author; which is infuſed into the ſoul by the Spirit of God; and leads into the knowledge of things that are above, of heavenly things; and which only is true wiſdom and knowledge; and thoſe who are poſſeſſed of it, are the only true *Gnoſticks*; for which, ſee the note on ver. 13. namely, the grace of God: this wiſdom *is firſt pure*; it is pure in itſelf, it is free from every thing that is earthly, carnal, or ſenſual, or deviliſh; it produces purity of heart, of life, and converſation; and is the means of keeping perſons pure and chaſte, and free from impure luſts, luſts of uncleanneſs, pride, envy, wrath, *&c.* which prevail in carnal and unregenerate men: *and then peaceable*; it inclines and engages thoſe who have it, to live in peace with the ſaints, and even with all men; with thoſe of their own houſhold, with their neighbours, yea, with their enemies: it is alſo *gentle*; or makes men gentle, moderate, and humane, ſo as that they bear, and forbear; they bear with the infirmities of the weak; readily forgive injuries done them; do not rigidly exact what is their due, but recede from their juſt right, for the ſake of peace and love; and do not bear hard upon others for their failings, but cover them with the mantle of love: and it is *eaſy to be entreated*; or thoſe who have it, readily yield to the ſuperior judgments and ſtronger reaſonings of others; and are eaſily induced to hope and believe all things, and entertain a good opinion of men, and their conduct; and are far from being proud, arrogant, obſtinate, and over-bearing: *full of mercy and good fruits*; of compaſſion and beneficence to the poor; feeding the hungry, cloathing the naked, viſiting the widows and fatherleſs in their affliction; and doing all other good works, and duties, both with reſpect to God and man, as fruits of grace, and of the Spirit: *without partiality*; to one another; or making a difference between them; ſhewing no reſpect to perſons; beſtowing upon the poor and indigent, without any diſtinction: and *without hypocriſy*; either with reſpect to God, or man; not making ſhow of that which they have not, or do not intend.

Ver. 18. *And the fruit of righteouſneſs,* &c.] Which is either eternal life, which is the fruit of Chriſt's righteouſneſs, and ſhall be enjoyed by all thoſe who are juſtified by it; and who, in conſequence of it, through the grace of God, live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly; ſee *Rom.* vi. 22. or elſe what is enjoyed in this life, as the fruit and effect of a righteous and holy converſation, which is peace of conſcience; and may be truly called, the peaceable fruit of righteouſneſs; ſee *Iſ.* xxxii. 17. *is ſown in peace of them that make peace*; that is, either ſuch as are poſſeſſed of that wiſdom which is peaceable, and makes them ſo; that peace which they make, purſue after, exerciſe, and maintain, is a ſeed which being ſown by them, will, in the iſſue, be followed with eternal happineſs and felicity; ſee *Matt.* v. 9. or ſuch who live a godly life and converſation, and are filled with the fruits of righteouſneſs, and among the reſt, with this of making and preſerving peace among men, ſhall enjoy, as what will ſpring up from ſuch good ſeed ſown, much conſcience-peace, and ſpiritual pleaſure of mind: righteouſneſs and peace promiſe a large and comfortable harveſt both here and hereafter.

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[o] Zohar in Gen. fol. 119. 2.

CHAP. IV.

IN this chapter the Apoſtle gives the true cauſe of contentions and ſtrifes; and cautions againſt intemperance, covetouſneſs, pride, detraction, and vain confidence. Having in the latter part of the preceding chapter, inveighed againſt ſtrife and contention, he here ſhows from whence they ſpring, from a covetous deſire of riches and honour; and which yet are not obtained, becauſe they did not aſk theſe things of God with ſubmiſſion to his will; or they aſked with a wrong view, namely, to gratify their luſts, ver. 1, 2, 3. and he diſſuades from ſuch unlawful deſires, partly becauſe they were no other than adultery; and partly becauſe indulging them, was declaring themſelves enemies of God, ver. 4. and he deters from pride, under the name of envy, proud men being generally envious; from the ſenſe of the ſcripture, which ſays, not in vain, that the ſpirit luſts unto it; and from the conſequence of it, ſuch as are proud being reſiſted by the Lord, when he gives more grace to humble ones, ver. 5, 6. hence follow ſeveral exhortations, and various duties relating to humility; as to ſubmit to God, and reſiſt the devil, encouraged thereunto by this motive, he will flee, ver. 7. to draw nigh to God in a way of religious worſhip, who will draw nigh in a way of grace to his people; to purity of action, and of heart, or to that which is outward and inward, ver. 8. to be humbled, mourn, and weep, inſtead of joy and laughter, ver. 9. to lie low before the Lord, who will raiſe ſuch up, ver. 10. and not to ſpeak evil of any one, ſince this is judging a brother; nay, a ſpeaking evil of the law, and a judging of that; which is to invade the prerogative of God, the law-giver, who is able to ſave, and to deſtroy; and therefore one man ſhould not take upon him to judge another, ver. 11, 12. and as another inſtance of great neglect of God, and his providence, and diſreſpect unto it, the Apoſtle takes notice of a common practice among men, and even profeſſors of religion, who reſolve to go to ſuch a place, and continue ſo long, and there make merchandize, and promiſe themſelves ſucceſs; not conſidering what frail, ſhort-lived creatures they are, and how much all depends upon the will of God; and which they ſhould conſider, ſubmit to, and be determined by, ver. 13, 14, 15. and he reproves them for their boaſtings and joy in them, as evil, ver. 16. and obſerves, that it is not enough to know what is right and good, unleſs it is done; and that ſuch knowledge is but an aggravation of the evil of ſin committed, ver. 17.

Ver. 1. *From whence come wars and fightings among you?* &c.] Which are to be underſtood, not of public and national wars, ſuch as might be between the *Jews* and other nations at this time; for the Apoſtle is not writing to the *Jews* in *Judea*, as a nation, or body politic, but to the twelve tribes ſcattered abroad, and to ſuch of them as were chriſtians; nor were chriſtians in general as yet increaſed, and become ſuch large bodies, or were whole nations become chriſtians, and much leſs at war one againſt another, which has been the caſe ſince; and which, when it is, generally ſpeaking ariſes from a luſt after an increaſe of power; from the pride and ambitious views of men, and their envy at the happineſs of other princes and ſtates: nor do theſe deſign theological debates and diſputes, or contentions about religious principles; but rather law-ſuits, commenced before heathen magiſtrates, by the rich, to the oppreſſion of the poor; ſee ch. ii. 6. tho' it ſeems beſt of all to interpret them, of thoſe ſtirs and buſtlings, ſtrifes, contentions, and quarrels, about honours and riches; endeavouring to get them by unlawful methods, at leaſt, at the expence of their own peace, and that of others: come they *not hence*, even *of your luſts that war in your members?* as pride, envy, covetouſneſs, ambition, *&c.* which, like ſo many ſoldiers, are ſtationed and quartered in the members of the body, and war againſt the ſoul; for in the believer, or converted man however, there is at it were two armies; a law in the members, warring againſt the law of the mind; the fleſh againſt the ſpirit, and the ſpirit againſt the fleſh; and from this inward war ariſe external ones; or at leaſt from the corruption of nature, which militates againſt all that is good, all qurarels and contentions, whether public or private, of a greater or leſſer nature, and conſequence, ſpring.

Ver. 2. *Ye luſt and have not*, &c.] The Apoſtle proceeds to ſhew the unſucceſsfulneſs of many in their deſires and purſuits after worldly things; ſome might be like the ſluggard, whoſe ſoul deſireth all good things, and yet he has nothing, *Prov.* xiii. 4. becauſe he does not make uſe of any means, even of ſuch as are proper and neceſſary, and ought to be uſed; *ye kill and deſire to have, and cannot obtain*; ſome, inſtead of *kill*, which ſeems not ſo agreeable, read *envy*; and then the ſenſe is, they envy at the good and happineſs of others, and covet after another's property, but can't enjoy it; all ſuch envy and covetouſneſs are fruitleſs, as well as ſinful: *ye fight and war, yet ye have not*; go to law one with another about each other's property; or rather, make a great ſtir and buſtle to get the things of the world; riſe early, and ſit up late; ſtrive who ſhould get moſt, and quarrel about what is gotten, and ſeek to get all advantages of one another; and yet ſtill have not, what at leaſt is deſired and ſtrove for: *becauſe ye aſk not*; of God, whoſe bleſſing only makes rich: inſtead of all this worldly ſtir and buſtle, and theſe ſtrivings and quarrellings with one another, it would be much more adviſeable, and in the iſſue, be found to turn to more account, to pray to God for a bleſſing on endeavours; and to aſk of him the good and neceſſary things of life, in ſubmiſſion to his will, and with thankfulneſs for what he has beſtowed.

Ver. 3. *Ye aſk and receive not*, &c.] Some there were that did aſk of God the bleſſings of his goodneſs and providence, and yet theſe were not beſtowed on them; the reaſon was, *becauſe ye aſk amiſs*; not in the faith of a divine promiſe; nor with thankfulneſs for paſt mercies; nor with ſubmiſſion to the will of God; nor with a right end, to do good to others, and to make uſe of what might be beſtowed, for the honour of God, and the intereſt of Chriſt; but *that ye may conſume it upon your luſts*; indulge to intemperance and luxury; as the man that had much goods laid up for many years, did, to the neglect of his own ſoul, *Luke* xii. 19. or the rich man, who ſpent all upon his back and his belly, and took no notice of *Lazarus* at his gate, *Luke* xvi. 19.

Ver. 4. *Ye adulterers and adultereſſes*, &c.] Not who were literally ſuch, but in a figurative and metaphorical ſenſe: as he is an adulterer that removes his affections from his own wife, and ſets them upon another woman; and ſhe is an adultereſs that loves not her huſband, but places her love upon another man; ſo ſuch men and women are adulterers and adultereſſes, who inſtead of loving God, whom they ought to love with all their hearts and ſouls, ſet their affections upon the world, and the things of it: the *Vulgate Latin*, *Syriac* and *Ethiopic* verſions leave out the word *adultereſſes*: theſe the Apoſtle addreſſes in the following manner; *know ye not that the friendſhip of the world is enmity with God?* that an immoderate love for the good things of the world, and a prevailing deſire after the evil things of it, and a delight in the company and converſation of the men of the world, and a conformity to, and compliance with the ſinful manners and cuſtoms of the world, are ſo many declarations of war with God, and acts of hoſtility upon him; and ſhew the enmity of the mind againſt him, and muſt be highly diſpleaſing to him, and reſented by him: *whoſoever therefore will be a friend of the world, is the enemy of God*; whoever is in league with the one, muſt be an enemy to the other; God and mammon cannot be loved and ſerved by the ſame perſons, at the ſame time; the one will be loved, and the other hated; the one will be attended to, and the other neglected: this may be known both from reaſon and from ſcripture, particularly from *Matt.* vi. 24.

Ver. 5. *Do ye think that the ſcripture ſaith in vain*, &c.] Some think that the Apoſtle refers to a particular paſſage of ſcripture in the Old Teſtament, and that he took it from *Gen.* vi. 3. as ſome; or from *Exod.* xx. 5. as others; or from *Deut.* vii. 2, 5. or from *Job* v. 2. or from *Prov.* xxi. 10. others think he had in view ſome text in the New Teſtament; either *Rom.* xii. 2. or *Gal.* v. 17. and ſome have imagined, that he refers to a paſſage in the Apocryphal book of *Wiſdom*, ch. i. 4. and others have been of opinion, that it is taken out of ſome book of ſcripture then extant, but now loſt, which by no means can be allowed of: the generality of interpreters, who ſuppoſe a particular text of ſcripture is referred to, fetch it from *Numb.* xi. 29. but it ſeems beſt of all to conclude, that the Apoſtle has no regard to any one particular paſſage of ſcripture, in which the following words are expreſly had, ſince no ſuch paſſage appears; but that his meaning is, the ſenſe of the ſcripture every where, where it ſpeaks of this matter, is to this purpoſe: nor does it ſay this, or any thing elſe in vain; whatever is written there, is to anſwer ſome end, as for learning, edification, and comfort, for doctrine, reproof, correction, and inſtruction in righteouſneſs; neither with reſpect to what is before ſuggeſted, that what is aſked in a right manner, and for a right end, ſhall be given; and that the love of the world, and the love of God, are things incompatible; nor with reſpect to what follows: *the ſpirit that dwelleth in us luſteth to envy?* that is, the depraved ſpirit of man, the ſpirit of an unregenerate man; that as it is prone to every luſt, and prompts to every ſin, the imagination of the thought of man's heart being evil, and that continually, ſo it inſtigates to envy the happineſs of others; ſee *Gen.* vi. 5. and viii. 21. or this may be put as a diſtinct queſtion from the other, *does the ſpirit that dwelleth in us luſt to envy?* that is, the Holy Spirit, who dwells in the hearts of his people, as in his temple: the *Ethiopic* verſion reads, *the holy Spirit*; and then the ſenſe is, does he luſt to envy? no; he luſts againſt the fleſh, and the works of it, and envy among the reſt; ſee *Gal.* v. 17, 21. but he does not luſt to it, or provoke to it, or put perſons upon it; nor does he, as the *Arabic* verſion renders it, *deſire that we ſhould envy*; he is a Spirit of grace; he beſtows grace and favours upon men; and is ſo far from envying, or putting others upon envying any benefit enjoyed by men, that he increaſes them, adds to them, and enlarges them, as follows.

Ver. 6. *But he giveth more grace*, &c.] The *Arabic* verſion adds, *to us*; the *Ethiopic* verſion, *to you*; and the *Syriac* verſion reads the whole thus, *but our Lord gives more grace to us*; or *greater grace*: than the world can give, whoſe friendſhip is courted by men; the leaſt meaſure of grace, of faith, and hope, and love, and of a ſpiritual knowledge of Chriſt, and intereſt in him, and of peace, joy, and comfort, is more worth than all the world, and every thing in it: or greater grace, more favours than the ſaints are able to aſk or think; ſo *Solomon* had more favours given him than he could think of aſking for: or greater grace, and larger meaſures of it, even of ſpiritual light and knowledge, under the Goſpel-diſpenſation, than under the former diſpenſation; or where God beſtows gifts qualifying for ſervice and uſefulneſs, and theſe are made uſe of and employed for ſuch purpoſes, he gives more: or this may refer to internal grace wrought by the Spirit of God, in the hearts of his people; more of which he may be ſaid give, when he cauſes it to abound, as to its acts and exerciſes; when faith grows exceedingly, hope revives, and is lively, and abounds through his power and influence, and love to God and Chriſt, and one another, abounds yet more and more; when there is a growth in every grace, and in the knowledge of Chriſt Jeſus, ſo that this grace becomes a well of living waters, ſpringing up into eternal life, which at laſt will have its perfection in glory: *wherefore he ſaith*; either the Spirit that gives more grace, or the ſcripture, or God in the ſcripture, in *Prov.* iii. 34. *God reſiſteth the proud*; or ſcorns the ſcorners; he rejects them that truſt in themſelves that they are righteous, and deſpiſe others; that ſay, ſtand by thy ſelf, I am holier than thou; that are proud of themſelves, their enjoyments, their gifts, their external righteouſneſs, and holineſs, and are full, and rich, and increaſed with goods, and ſtand in need of nothing; theſe he oppoſes, he ſets himſelf againſt, he thruſts them away from him, he ſends them away empty, and ſcatters them in the imagination of their own hearts; and in the things in which they deal proudly, he is above them; he ſits in the heavens and laughs at them, and fruſtrates all their ſchemes: *but he giveth grace unto the humble*; who are ſenſible of their own vileneſs and meanneſs, and acknowledge it; who think the meaneſt of themſelves, and the beſt of others; and don't envy the gifts and graces of God beſtowed upon others, but rejoice at them; and aſcribe all they have, and are, to the free grace of God; and ingenuouſly confeſs the deficiency of their duties, and the inſufficiency of their righteouſneſs to juſtify them before God; and that when they have done all they can, or are aſſiſted to do, they are but unprofitable ſervants: now to theſe, God gives grace; he not only gives grace at firſt, to make them humble, but he gives them more grace, or increaſes what he gives: grace is God's gift; he gives all the grace that is in Chriſt, and all the bleſſings of grace that are in the covenant, and all the grace that is in the hearts of his people; as faith, hope, love, repentance, humility, patience, ſelf-denial, reſignation to his will, and every degree of ſpiritual knowledge; and grace is only his gift; men can't give it to themſelves, nor can the beſt of men give it to others; not godly parents to their children; nor miniſters to thoſe to whom they preach; no, nor the angels in heaven; nor is it to be obtained by the works of men: it is a free gift; it is given of the ſovereign will and good pleaſure of God, to whom, and when, and in what meaſure he pleaſes; to which he is not induced by any motives in men, for they have nothing in them to move him to it; and it is given by him abſolutely, without conditions, not ſuſpending it till the performance of them; and he gives it chearfully, and not grudgingly, largely, bountifully, and in great abundance.

Ver. 7. *Submit yourſelves therefore to God*, &c.] To the will of God, with reſpect to worldly things, and be content with ſuch things as are enjoyed, and be ſatisfied with the portion that is allotted; it is right and beſt for the people of God to leave themſelves with him, to chuſe their inheritance for them, ſince by all their anxious cares, their ſtriving and ſtruggling, their impatient deſires, wars and fightings, as they cannot add one cubit to their ſtature, ſo nothing to their worldly ſubſtance; and it becomes them to ſubmit to God in all afflictive diſpenſations of his providence, and be ſtill, and know that he is God; as well as to ſubmit to his way and method of ſalvation by Chriſt, and particularly to the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, for juſtification; and to depend upon him for ſupplies of grace in the diſcharge of every duty, and the exerciſe of every grace: *reſiſt the devil*, and *he will flee from you*; ſatan is to be looked upon as an enemy, and to be oppoſed as ſuch, and to be watched and guarded againſt; the whole armour of God ſhould be taken and made uſe of, particularly the weapon of prayer, the ſword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, and the ſhield of faith; and alſo the grace of humility, than which nothing is more oppoſite to him: he is a proud ſpirit, and he endeavours to ſwell men with pride of themſelves; and when he has worked them up to ſuch a pitch, he is then maſter of them, and can manage them as he pleaſes; but a poor, humble believer, with whom God dwells, to whom he gives more grace, and who comes forth not in his own ſtrength, but in the ſtrength of the Lord God, as *David* againſt *Goliah*, and who owns his vileneſs and ſinfulneſs, and flies to the grace of God, and blood of Chriſt, ſatan knows not what to do with him, he is puzzled, baffled, and confounded; ſuch he leaves, from ſuch he flees; he don't like the power of prayer, nor the ſtrength of faith, nor the ſharpneſs of the two-edged ſword, the word of God, nor the humble believer's ſtaff, bag, ſcrip, and ſling.

Ver. 8. *draw nigh to God*, and *he will draw nigh to you*, &c.] This muſt be underſtood conſiſtently with the perfection of God's immenſity and omnipreſence: the ſaints draw nigh to God, when they preſent their bodies, in his ſanctuary; when they tread in his courts, and attend his ordinances; where they always find it good for them to draw nigh unto him; and bleſſed is the man that approaches to him in faith and fear: they draw nigh to him when they come to the throne of his grace, for grace and mercy to help them; when they draw near to him in prayer, with true hearts, and lift them up with their hands to God; when in the exerciſe of faith and hope they enter within the vail, and come up even to hs ſeat, and lay hold on him as their covenant God and Father; and he draws nigh to them by granting them his gracious preſence, by communicating his love to them, by applying the bleſſings of his grace, by helping them in times of need and diſtreſs, and by protecting them from their enemies; the contrary to which is expreſſed by ſtanding afar off from them. Now this is not to be underſtood, as if men could firſt draw nigh to God, before he draws nigh to them; for as God firſt loves, ſo he firſt moves; he takes the firſt ſtep, and in converſion, turns and draws men to himſelf; tho' this does not reſpect firſt converſion, but after acts in conſequence of it; nor is it to be conſidered as a condition of the grace and favour of God, in drawing nigh to his people, but is expreſſive of what is their duty, and an encouragement to it: *cleanſe* your *hands ye ſinners, and purify* your hearts, *ye double minded*; the perſons addreſſed, are not the prophane men of the world, but ſinners in *Zion*, formal profeſſors, hypocritical perſons; who ſpeak with a double tongue to men, and who draw nigh to God with their mouths, but not with their hearts; who halt between two opinions, and are unſtable in all their ways: cleanſing of their hands and hearts, denotes the purity of outward converſation, and of the inward affections; and ſuppoſes impurity both of fleſh and ſpirit, that the body and all its members, the ſoul and all its powers and faculties are unclean; and yet not that men have a power to cleanſe themſelves, either from the filth of an external converſation, or from inward pollution of the heart; tho' a man attempts the one, he fails in it; and who can ſay he has done the other? *Job* ix. 30, 31. *Prov.* xx. 9. This is not to be done by ceremonial ablutions, moral ſervices, or evangelical ordinances; this is God's work only, as appears from his promiſes to cleanſe his people from their ſins, by ſprinkling clean water upon them; from the end of Chriſt's ſhedding his blood, and the efficacy of it; and from the prayers of the ſaints, that God would waſh them thoroughly from their iniquity, and cleanſe them from their ſin, and create clean hearts in them: and yet ſuch exhortations are not in vain; ſince they may be uſeful to convince men of their pollution, who are pure in their own eyes, as theſe hypocritical, nominal profeſſors, might be; and to bring them to a ſenſe of their inability to cleanſe themſelves, and of the neceſſity of being cleanſed elſewhere; and to lead them to enquire after the proper means of cleanſing, and ſo to the fountain of Chriſt's blood, which only cleanſes from all ſin.

Ver. 9. *Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep*, &c.] Not in a bare external way; not by afflicting the body with faſtings and ſcourgings, by renting of garments, and clothing with ſackcloth, and putting aſhes on the head, and other ſuch outward methods of humiliation; but afflicting the ſoul is meant, an inward mourning and weeping over the plague of the heart, the impurity of nature, and the various ſins of life; after a godly ſort, and becauſe contrary to a God of infinite love and grace; in an evangelic way, looking to Jeſus, and being affected with the pardoning grace and love of God in Chriſt. *Let your laughter be turned to mourning, and* your *joy to heavineſs*; meaning their carnal joy, on account of their friendſhip with the world, and their enjoyment of the things of it, ſince they conſumed them on their luſts, and which betrayed enmity to God.

Ver. 10. *Humble your ſelves in the ſight of the Lord*, &c.] Which is done, when men, before the Lord, and from their hearts, and in the ſincerity of their ſouls, acknowledge their meanneſs and unworthineſs, their vileneſs, ſinfulneſs, and wretchedneſs, and implore the grace and mercy of God in Chriſt, as did *Abraham, Jacob, Job, Iſaiah, Paul*, and the publican; and when they walk humbly with God,

God, acknowledging they can do nothing without him; owning their dependence on his grace, and aſcribing all they have, and are, unto it: *and he ſhall lift you up*; this is God's uſual way to lift up the meek, and exalt thoſe that humble themſelves; he lifts them from the dunghill, to ſet them among princes; he gives them a place, and a name in his houſe, better than ſons and daughters; he adorns them with his grace; he clothes them with the righteouſneſs of his Son; he grants them nearneſs to himſelf; and at laſt will introduce them into his kingdom and glory.

Ver. 11. *Speak not evil one of another, brethren,* &c.] The Apoſtle here returns to his former ſubject concerning the vices of the tongue, he had been upon in the preceding chapter, ver. 6, 7, 8, 9, 10. and here mentions one, which profeſſors of religion were too much guilty of, and that is, ſpeaking evil one of another; which is done either by raiſing falſe reports, and bringing falſe charges; or by aggravating failings and infirmities; or by leſſening and depreciating characters, and endeavouring to bring into diſcredit and diſeſteem among men: this is a very great evil, and what the men of the world do, and from them it is expected; but for the ſaints to ſpeak evil one of another, to ſit and ſpeak againſt a brother, and ſlander an own mother's ſon is barbarous and unnatural. *He that ſpeaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, ſpeaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law*; he that tale-bears and backbites his brother, his fellow-member, and detracts from his good name and character, and takes upon him to judge his heart, and his ſtate, as well as to condemn his actions, he ſpeaks evil of the law; and judges and condemns that, as if that forbid a thing that was lawful, even tale-bearing and detraction, *Lev.* xix. 16. or by ſpeaking evil of him for a good thing he does, he blames and condemns the law, as tho' it commanded a thing that was evil; and by paſſing ſentence upon his brother, he takes upon him the province of the law, which is to accuſe, charge, convince, pronounce guilty, and condemn: *but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law*; as is a duty, and would beſt become: *but a judge*; and ſo ſuch a perſon not only infringes the right of the law, but aſſumes the place of the judge and lawgiver himſelf; whereas, as follows,

Ver. 12. *There is one law-giver,* &c.] The *Alexandrian* copy, and others, and the *Syriac*, *Ethiopic*, and *Vulgate Latin* verſions, add, *and judge.* Who is the one only Lord God, *Iſ.* xxxiii. 22. This is a character that may be applied to God the Father, who gave the law to the people of *Iſrael*, both the judicial and ceremonial law, and alſo the moral law; from his right hand went a fiery law, and to him belongs the giving of it; and alſo to the Son of God, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who is king of ſaints, and law-giver in his houſe; who has given out commandments to be obſerved, and laws of diſcipline for the right ordering of his houſe, and kingdom, to be regarded; and particularly the new commandment of love, which is eminently called the law of Chriſt; and which is moſt apparently broke, by detraction and ſpeaking evil one of another: now there may be inferior and ſubordinate law-givers, as *Judah* is ſaid to be God's law-giver, and *Moſes* is ſaid to command the *Jews* a law; yet there is but one ſupreme, univerſal, and perfect law-giver, who is God; and tho' there may be many law-givers in things political, whoſe legiſlative power is to be obeyed, both for the Lord's ſake, and for conſcience ſake; yet in things religious, and relating to conſcience, God is the only law-giver, who is to be hearkened unto: *who is able to ſave, and to deſtroy*; this is true of God the Father, who is able to ſave, and does ſave by his Son Jeſus Chriſt, and even perſons that have broken the law he has given, and are liable to the curſe and condemnation of it; and he is able to ſave them according to that law, in perfect conſiſtence with it, and with his juſtice and holineſs, ſince Chriſt, by whom he ſaves, was made under it, and has fulfilled it; and that Chriſt is mighty to ſave, able to ſave to the uttermoſt, is certain from the ſcripture, and all experience; and God, the law-giver, is able to deſtroy both body and ſoul in hell, for the tranſgreſſions of his law; and even Chriſt the Lamb is alſo the lion of the tribe of *Judah*, who will break his enemies in pieces, as a potter's veſſel, and puniſh the contemners of his Goſpel with everlaſting deſtruction, from his preſence and glory: in a word, God, the law-giver, is ſovereign, and can deſtroy, or ſave, whom he pleaſes; he is able to ſave the brother that is ſpoken againſt, and to deſtoy him that ſpeaks againſt him: *who art thou that judgeſt another?* another man's ſervant, as in *Rom.* xiv. 4. or *thy neighbour*, as the *Syriac* and *Ethiopic* verſions read; or *the neighbour*, as the *Alexandrian* copy, and the *Vulgate Latin* verſion; that is, any brother, friend, or neighbour, in the manner as before obſerved in the preceding verſe.

Ver. 13. *Go to now, ye that ſay,* &c.] The Apoſtle paſſes from expoſing the ſin of detraction, and raſh judgment, to inveigh againſt thoſe of preſumption and ſelf-confidence; and the phraſe, *go to now*, is a note of tranſition, as well as of attention, and contains the form of a ſolemn and grave addreſs to perſons, who either think within themſelves, or vocally expreſs the following words, or the like unto them: *to-day, or to-morrow, we will go into ſuch a city*; in ſuch a country, a place of great trade and merchandize; as *Tyre* then was in *Phœnicia*, *Theſſalonica* in *Macedonia*, *Epheſus* in *Aſia*, and others: ſome render this as an imperative, or as an exhortation, *let us go*, which does not alter the ſenſe. *And continue there a year, and buy and ſell, and get gain*; as is cuſtomary for merchants to do; nor does the Apoſtle deſign by this to condemn merchandize, and the lawful practice of buying and ſelling, and getting gain; but that men ſhould not reſolve upon thoſe things without conſulting God, and attending to his will, and ſubjecting themſelves to it; and without conſidering the uncertainty and frailty of human life; as well as ſhould not promiſe and aſſure themſelves of ſucceſs, of getting gain and riches, as if thoſe things were in their own power, and had no dependence upon the providence and bleſſing of God.

Ver. 14. *Whereas ye know not what* ſhall be *on the morrow,* &c.] Whether there would be a morrow, for them or no, whether they ſhould live till to-morrow; and if they ſhould, they knew not what a morrow would bring forth, or what things would happen, which might prevent their intended journey and ſucceſs: no man can ſecure a day, an hour, a moment, and much leſs a year of continuance in this life; nor can he foreſee what will befal him to-day or to-morrow; therefore it is great ſtupidity to determine on this, and the other, without the leave of God, in whom he lives, moves, and has his being; and by whoſe providence all events are governed and directed; ſee *Prov.* xxvii. 1. *for what is your life?* of what kind and nature is it? what aſſurance can be had of the continuance of it? by what may it be expreſſed? or to what may it be compared? *it is even a vapour that appeareth for a little time, and then vaniſheth away*; which riſes out of the earth, or water, and expires almoſt as ſoon as it exiſts; at leaſt, continues but a very ſhort time, and is very weak and fleeting, and carried about here and there, and ſoon returns from whence it came: the alluſion is to the breath of man, which is in his noſtrils, and who is not to be accounted of, or depended on.

Ver. 15. *For that ye* ought *to ſay*, &c.] Inſtead of ſaying we will go to ſuch and ſuch a place, and do this, and that, and the other thing, it ſhould be ſaid, *if the Lord will, and we ſhall live, and do this and that*; the laſt *and* is left out in the *Vulgate Latin*, *Syriac*, *Arabic*, and *Ethiopic* verſions; and the paſſage rendered thus, *if the Lord will, and we ſhall live, we will do this*: ſo that here are two conditions of doing any thing; the one is, if it ſhould be agreeable to the determining will and purpoſe of God, by which every thing in the world comes to paſs, and into which the wills of men ſhould be reſolved, and reſigned; and the other is, if we ſhould live, ſince life is ſo very uncertain and precarious: and the ſenſe is, not that this exact form of words ſhould be always uſed, but what is equivalent to them, or at leaſt, that there ſhould be always a ſenſe of theſe things upon the mind; and there ſhould be a view to them in all reſolutions, deſigns, and engagements: and ſince the words are ſo ſhort and comprehenſive, it might be proper for chriſtians to uſe themſelves to ſuch a way of ſpeaking, upon all occaſions; we find it uſed by the Apoſtle *Paul*, frequently, as in *Acts* xviii. 2. 1 *Cor.* iv. 19. *Rom.* i. 10. *Heb.* vi. 3. and even by *Jews*, *Heathens*, and *Turks*. It is a ſaying of *Ben Syra*, the *Jew* [p], “ let a man never “ ſay he will do any thing, before he ſays, “ אם גזר השם, *if God will.*” So *Cyrus*, king of *Perſia*, when under pretence of hunting, he deſigned an expedition into *Armenia*, upon which an hare ſtarted, and was catched by an eagle, ſaid to his friends, this will be a good or proſperous hunting to us, ην Θεος θελη, *if God will* [q]. And very remarkable are the words of *Socrates* to *Alcibiades*, enquiring of him how he ought to ſpeak; ſays *Socrates*, εαν Θεος εθελη, *if God will* [r]; and ſays he, in another place [s], “ but I will do this, and come “ unto thee to-morrow, *if God will.*” And it is reported of the *Turks* [t], that they ſubmit every thing to the divine will; as the ſucceſs of war, or a journey, or any thing, even of the leaſt moment, they deſire to be done; and never promiſe themſelves, or others, any thing, but under this condition, *In Shallah*, if God will.

Ver. 16. *But now ye rejoice in your boaſtings*, &c.] Of to-morrow, and of the continuance of life, and of going to ſuch a place, and abiding there for ſuch a time, and of trading and trafficking with great ſucceſs, to the obtaining of much gain and riches; ſee *Prov.* xxvii. 1. *all ſuch rejoicing is evil*; wicked and atheiſtical, as expreſſing a neglect of and independence on providence; arrogating and aſcribing too much to themſelves, their power and will, as if they had their lives and fortunes in their own hands, and at their own diſpoſe, when all depend upon the will of God. The *Syriac* verſion renders it, *all ſuch rejoicing is from evil*; from an evil heart, and from the evil one, ſatan.

Ver. 17. *Therefore to him that knoweth to do good*, &c.] This may regard not only the laſt particular of referring all things to the will of God, the ſovereign diſpoſer of life, and all events, which ſome might have the knowledge of in theory, tho' they did not practiſe according to it; but all the good things the Apoſtle had exhorted to, and the contrary to which he had dehorted from, in this Epiſtle; and ſuggeſts, that a *Gnoſtick*, or one that knows the will of God, in the ſeveral branches of it, revealed in his word, *and doth it not, to him it is ſin*: it is a greater ſin; it is an aggravated one; it is criminal in him that is ignorant of what is good, and does that which is evil, nor ſhall he eſcape puniſhment; but it is much more wicked in a man, that knows what is right and good, and ought to be done, and does it not, but that which is evil, and his condemnation will be greater; ſee *Luke* xii. 47, 48. The omiſſion of a known duty, as well as the commiſſion of a known ſin, is criminal.

CHAP. V.

IN this chapter the Apoſtle reproves the vices of rich men, and denounces the judgments of God upon them; exhorts the ſaints to patience under ſufferings; dehorts them from vain and prophane ſwearing, and preſſes to various duties and branches of religious worſhip, private and publick, and to the performance of ſeveral good offices of love to one another. He repreſents the miſeries of wicked rich men as juſt at hand, ver. 1. becauſe they made no uſe of their riches, either for themſelves, or others, and becauſe of the truſt they put in them, heaping them up againſt a time to come, ver. 2, 3. and becauſe of their injuſtice in detaining the hire of labourers from them, ver. 4. and becauſe of their wantonneſs and luxury, ver. 5. and becauſe of their cruelty to the innocent, ver. 6. and ſuch who ſuffer at their hands, are exhorted to exerciſe patience, from the inſtance of the huſbandman waiting patiently for the fruit of the earth, and the rain to produce it; and from the conſideration of the coming of Chriſt, the judge, being near at hand, ver. 7, 8, 9. and from the example of the prophets of the Lord, who ſuffered much, and were patient, and ſo happy; and particularly from the inſtance of *Job*, his patience, the end of the Lord in his afflictions, and his pity and compaſſion towards him, ver. 10, 11. But of all things the Apoſtle intreats them, that they would take care of prophane ſwearing, and all vain oaths, ſince theſe bring into condemnation, ver. 12. and from hence he paſſes to various exerciſes of religion; the afflicted he adviſes to prayer; and thoſe in comfortable circumſtances of body and mind, to ſinging of pſalms, ver. 13. and ſuch that are ſick, to ſend for the elders of the church to pray over them, and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord, whereby not only the ſick man would be delivered from his ſickneſs, the Lord raiſing him up, but even his ſins would be declared to be forgiven, ver. 14, 15. And not only it became the elders to pray for ſick perſons, but alſo the ſaints in general, one for another, and to acknowledge their faults to each other, ſince the fervent prayer of every righteous man is of great avail with God, ver. 16. of which an inſtance is given in *Elias*, whoſe prayer, tho' a man ſubject to like paſſions as other men, againſt, and for rain, was very ſucceſsful, ver. 17, 18. And chriſtians ſhould not only be concerned for the health of each other's bodies, but alſo for the good of their ſouls; wherefore, whenever it is obſerved, that any are ſtraying from the path of truth, methods ſhould be taken to reſtore them, and turn them from the error of their ways; and whoever is the happy inſtrument of ſuch a reſtoration, is the means of ſaving a ſoul from death, and hiding a multitude of ſins, ver. 19, 20.

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[p] Sentent. 11.

[q] Xenophon. Cyropæd. l. 2. c. 25.

[r] Plato in Alcibiade, p. 135.

[s] Ib. in Laches.

[t] Smith de Moribus Turc. p. 74.

Ver. 1. *Go to now, ye rich men,* &c.] All rich men are not here deſigned; there are ſome rich men, who are good men, and make a good uſe of their riches, and do not abuſe them, as theſe here are repreſented; and yet wicked rich men, or thoſe that were the openly prophane, are not here intended neither; for the Apoſtle only writes to ſuch who were within the church, and not without, who were profeſſors of religion; and ſuch rich men are addreſſed here, who, notwithſtanding their profeſſion, were not rich towards God, but laid up treaſure for themſelves, and truſted in their riches, and boaſted of the multitude of their wealth; and did not truſt in God, and make uſe of their ſubſtance to his glory, and the good of his intereſt, as they ſhould have done: *weep and howl for your miſeries that ſhall come upon* you; meaning, not temporal calamities, that ſhould come upon them, at the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem,* in which the rich greatly ſuffered by the robbers among themſelves, as well as by the *Roman* ſoldiers; for the Apoſtle is not writing to the *Jews* in *Judea,* and at *Jeruſalem;* but to the chriſtians of the twelve tribes ſcattered in the ſeveral parts of the world, and who were not diſtreſſed by that calamity; but eternal miſeries, or the torments of hell are intended, which unleſs they repented of their ſins, would ſhortly, ſuddenly, and unavoidably come upon them, when their preſent joy and laughter would be turned into howling and weeping.

Ver. 2. *Your riches are corrupted,* &c.] Either thro' diſuſe of them; and ſo the phraſe is expreſſive of their tenaciouſneſs, with-holding that from themſelves and others, which is meet, and which is keeping riches for the owners thereof, to their hurt; or theſe are corrupted, and are corruptible things, fading and periſhing, and will ſtand in no ſtead in the day of wrath, and therefore it is great weakneſs to put any truſt and confidence in them: *and your garments are moth eaten;* being neither wore by themſelves, nor put upon the backs of others, as they ſhould, but laid up in ward-robes, or in cheſts and coffers, and ſo became the repaſt of moths, and now good for nothing.

Ver. 3. *Your gold and ſilver is cankered,* &c.] Or grown ruſty like iron, by lying long without uſe; this is not eaſily and quickly done, but in length of time gold and ſilver will change and contract a ruſtineſs; and ſo this conveys the ſame idea, of hoarding up riches, and laying up money, without making uſe of it in trade, for the ſupport of the poor, and without diſtributing it to their neceſſities: *and the ruſt of them ſhall be a witneſs againſt you;* at the day of judgment; which will be a proof that they have not been employed to ſuch ſervices, and for ſuch uſefulneſs, for which they were deſigned and given. *And ſhall eat your fleſh as it were fire;* that is, a remembrance of this, a ſenſe of it impreſſed upon them, ſhall be like fire in their bones; ſhall diſtreſs their minds, gnaw their conſciences, and be in them the worm that never dies, and the fire that ſhall never be quenched: *ye have heaped treaſure together for the laſt days;* either for many years, as the fool in the Goſpel, for the times of old age, the laſt days of men, for fear they ſhould then want; or for the laſt days of the world, or of time, as if they thought they ſhould live for ever: the *Vulgate Latin* verſion reads, *ye have treaſured up wrath for yourſelves in the laſt days;* inſtead of riches, as they imagined; and that by their covetouſneſs and wickedneſs, by a wicked diſuſe of their riches, and an unrighteous detention of them; but this ſupplement ſeems to be taken from *Rom.* ii. 5. though the ſenſe is confirmed by ſome copies which connect the phraſe, *as it were fire,* in the preceding clauſe with this, *ye have treaſured up as it were fire;* and the *Syriac* verſion renders it, *ye have treaſured up fire;* the fire of divine wrath; this is the fruit of treaſuring up riches in an ill way, and without making a proper uſe of them.

Ver. 4. *Behold the hire of the labourers, which have reaped down your fields,* &c.] The wages agreed for by the day, with the labourers in their fields, particularly their reapers; which one inſtance ſerves for many others; and is the rather mentioned, becauſe reaping is a laborious work, and thoſe who are employed in it, have nothing to live upon, but their hand labour; and eſpecially becauſe they are made uſe of in cutting down the corn, when it is fully ripe, and in great plenty; wherefore, to detain their juſt wages from them, argues great inhumanity and wickedneſs; and yet this was what was done by rich men: *which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth;* unto God for vengeance, as the blood of *Abel* did; and ſhows that ſuch an evil, however privately and fraudulently it may be done, will be made public, and is a crying one: *and the cries of them which have reaped, are entred into the ears of the Lord of ſabaoth;* that is, the Lord of hoſts; of angels, and of men; of the hoſt of heaven, and of the inhabitants of the earth; of *Jews* and *Gentiles,* and of rich and poor; and who has power to vindicate the cauſe of the latter, againſt their rich oppreſſors, and will do it; his ears are open to their cries, he takes notice of them, and regards them, and will take vengeance on thoſe that injure them. The reference is to *Deut.* xxiv. 15.

Ver. 5. *Ye have lived in pleaſure on the earth,* &c.] This is ſaid of other rich men; for all that is here ſaid, is not to be underſtood of the ſame individuals, but ſome things of one, and ſome of another; ſome made no uſe of their riches, either for themſelves, or others; ſome did make uſe of them, and employed the poor, and then would not give them their wages; and others lived a voluptuous and luxurious life, indulged themſelves in carnal luſts and pleaſures, and gratified the ſenſes by eating, drinking, gaming, *&c.* and ſo were dead whilſt they lived. The phraſe ſuggeſts, that their pleaſures were but ſhort-lived, but for a ſeaſon, even whilſt they were on earth; and that hereafter they would not live in pleaſure: *and been wanton;* thro' the abundance and plenty of good things, their delicious way of living, and the ſwing of pleaſures which they took; the alluſion is to fatted beaſts, which being in good paſtures, grow fat and wanton: *ye have nouriſhed your hearts as in a day of ſlaughter;* when beaſts were ſlain for ſome extraordinary entertainment, or for the ſolemn feſtivals and ſacrifices of the *Jews,* when they lived more deliciouſly than at other times; and then the ſenſe is, that theſe rich men fared ſumptuouſly every day; every day was a feſtival with them; they indulged themſelves in intemperance; they eat and drank, not merely what was neceſſary, and ſatisfying, and chearing to nature, but to exceſs, and gorged, and filled themſelves in an extravagant manner: the *Syriac* verſion, inſtead of *hearts*, reads *bodies*; and one copy reads, *your fleſh*; and the laſt phraſe may be rendered, as it is in the ſame verſion, *as unto*, or *for the day of ſlaughter*; and ſo the *Arabic* verſion, *ye have nouriſhed your hearts, as fattened for the day of ſlaughter*; like beaſts that are fattened in order to be killed, ſo were they preparing and fitting up by their ſins for deſtruction.

Ver. 6. *Ye have condemned and killed the juſt*, &c.] Meaning not Chriſt, the juſt one, as ſome have thought; whom the *Jewiſh Sanhedrim* condemned as guilty of death, and got the ſentence paſſed upon him, and him to be crucified by *Pontius Pilate*, on the day of ſlaughter, at the time of the paſſover, as ſome connect the laſt clauſe of the preceding verſe with this; ſince the Apoſtle is not writing to the *Jeruſalem Jews*, nor to unbelievers, but to profeſſors of religion; tho' he might ſay, they did it, becauſe their nation did it: but rather this is to be underſtood of the poor ſaints, who were juſt, thro' the imputation of Chriſt's righteouſneſs to them, and lived ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly, and were harmleſs and inoffenſive in their converſation; who were evil ſpoken of, cenſured, and judged, and condemned in a raſh and uncharitable manner by their brethren; or were drawn to the judgment-ſeats by the rich, who obtained a judicial proceſs againſt them, and procured a ſentence of condemnation to paſs upon them unrighteouſly; and who killed them, by taking away their good names from them, and by withholding from them their ſupplies of life, the fruit of their own labour, whereby their lives were imbittered and made miſerable: and *he doth not reſiſt you*; it being neither in his power, nor in his inclination; but takes it patiently, quietly ſubmits, and makes no oppoſition: or God does not reſiſt you, as yet; he will do it ſhortly.

Ver. 7. *Be patient therefore brethren*, &c.] The Apoſtle here addreſſes himſelf to the poor who were oppreſſed by the rich men, and theſe he calls *brethren*, of whom he was not aſhamed; when he does not beſtow this title upon the rich, tho' profeſſors of the ſame religion; theſe poor brethren he adviſes to be patient under their ſufferings, to bear them with patience, *unto the coming of the Lord*; not to deſtroy *Jeruſalem*, but either at death, or at the laſt judgment; when he will take vengeance on their oppreſſors, and deliver them from all their troubles, and put them into the poſſeſſion of that kingdom, and glory, to which they are called; wherefore, in the mean while, he would have them be quiet and eaſy, not murmur againſt God, nor ſeek to take vengeance on men, but leave it to God, to whom it belongs, who will judge his people: *behold the huſbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth*; ripe fruit, which ariſes from the ſeed he ſows in the earth; and which may be called *precious*, becauſe uſeful both to man and beaſt; ſee *Deut.* xxxiii. 14, 15, 16. and between this, and the ſowing of the ſeed, is a conſiderable time, during which the huſbandman waits; and this may be an inſtruction in the preſent caſe: *and hath patience for it until he receive the early and latter rain*; the *Jews* had ſeldom rains any more than twice a year; the early, or former rain, was quickly after the feaſt of tabernacles[u], in the month *Marcheſvan*, or *October*, when the ſeed was ſown in the earth; and if it did not rain, they prayed for it, on the third or ſeventh day of the month[w]; and the latter rain was in *Niſan*, or *March*[x], juſt before harveſt; and to this diſtinction the paſſage refers.

Ver. 8. *Be ye alſo patient*, &c.] As well as the huſbandman, and like him; and wait for the rains and dews of divine grace to fall, and make fruitful, and for the ripe fruit of eternal life; and in the mean while chearfully and patiently bear all injuries, and oppreſſions: *ſtabliſh your hearts*; tho' the ſtate of the ſaints is ſtable, they being fixed in the everlaſting love of God, in the covenant of grace, in the hands of Chriſt, and on the rock of ages; yet their hearts are very unſtable, and ſo are their frames, and the exerciſe of grace in them, and need ſtabliſhing, which is God's work; which is often done by the means of the word and ordinances; and theſe the ſaints ſhould make uſe of, for the ſtabliſhing of their hearts: the ſenſe may be, take heart, be of good chear, don't be diſmayed, or faint, or ſink under your preſſures, but be of good courage, pluck up your ſpirits, lift up your heads: *for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh*; when he will render tribulation to them that trouble them, free them from all their ſorrows and afflictions, and enter them into the joy of their Lord; which will be either at death, which was not very far off, or at the laſt day, which was drawing nearer and nearer, and which with God was near; with whom a thouſand years, are as one day.

Ver. 9. *Grudge not one againſt another, brethren*, &c.] On account of any happineſs, temporal or ſpiritual, which another enjoys; don't inwardly repine at it; or ſecretly ſigh and groan in an envious manner, at it, tho' nothing may be ſaid, as the word uſed ſignifies; much leſs complain of, accuſe and condemn one another, or meditate and ſeek revenge: *leſt ye be condemned*; hereafter, at the bar of Chriſt, by the judge of the whole earth, who is privy to the ſecret murmurings and grumblings, and the envious ſighs and groans of men; ſee *Matt.* vii. 1. *behold the judge ſtandeth before the door*; there is another that judgeth, who is the Lord, and he is at hand; he is juſt at the door; a little while and he will come, and not tarry; which may refer not to Chriſt's coming to deſtroy *Jeruſalem*, but to his ſecond coming to judgment, which will be quickly; for the Goſpel times are the laſt times; there will be no other age; at the end of this, Chriſt will come.

Ver. 10. *Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have ſpoken in the name of the Lord*, &c.] Men who have been highly honoured of God, with a gift of propheſying, or foretelling things to come; to whom God revealed his ſecrets, doing nothing without accquainting them with it; and who were ſent forth by him, and propheſied in his name, what were made known unto them; and yet, tho' theſe were his favourites, they ſuffered much; as cruel mockings, ſcourgings, impriſonment, famine, nakedneſs, and death in various ſhapes; ſome being ſtoned, others ſawn aſunder, and others killed by the ſword; all which they endured with incredible patience. And therefore the Apoſtle propoſes them to be taken, *for an example of ſuffering affliction, and of patience*; their afflictions were many and great, and yet they were very patient under them; and thro' faith and patience they went thro' them, and now inherit the promiſes; and ſo are a very proper example and pattern for New Teſtament ſaints to follow and copy after.

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[u] Bartenora in Miſn. Taanith, c. 1, §. 2. Maimon. Tephilla, c. 2. §. 16.

[w] T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 4. 2. & 6. 1. & 10. 1. & Bava Metzia, fol. 28. 1.

[x] Targum, Jarchi, Kimchi, & Miclol Jophi in Joel ii. 23. Vajikra Rabba, §. 35. fol. 175. 3.

Ver. 11. *Behold, we count them happy which endure,* &c.] Affliction, with courage, conſtancy, and patience, and hold out to the end; for ſuch ſhall be ſaved; theirs is the kingdom of heaven; they are happy now, and will be ſo hereafter: the Spirit of God, and of glory, now reſts upon them; and it is an honour done them, that they are counted worthy to ſuffer for Chriſt; and they'll be glorified with him to all eternity; the conſideration of which may ſerve to encourage and increaſe patience. *Ye have heard of the patience of Job*; from the account which is given of him, and his patience, in the book that bears his name; how he behaved under every trial, which came, one upon the back of another; as the plundering of his ſubſtance, the loſs of his children, and of the health of his body; and yet in all this *Job* ſinned not, nor murmured againſt God, nor charged him fooliſhly, and was a mirrour of patience; and tho' he afterwards let fall ſome expreſſions of impatience, yet he was humbled for them, and brought to repentance: this ſhows, that as the Apoſtle *James*, ſo the *Jews*, to whom he writes, believed that there had been really ſuch a man as *Job*; and that the book which bears his name, is an authentic piece of holy ſcripture, and contains a narrative of matters of fact; or otherwiſe this reference to him would have been impertinent. How long *Job* endured the chaſtenings of the Lord, cannot be ſaid. The *Jews*[y] ſay, they continued on him twelve months, which they gather from *Job* vii. 3. *And have ſeen the end of the Lord*; that is, the happy end, or exitus, out of all his troubles; which the Lord gave *to him*, as the *Oriental* verſions add; for he gave him twice as much as he had before, and bleſſed his latter end more than his beginning, *Job* xlii. 10, 12. Some underſtand this of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, both of his great patience in ſufferings, in which he is an example to his people, and they would do well to look to, and conſider him; and of the end of his ſufferings, his glorious reſurrection from the dead, and ſeſſion at the right hand of God, where he is crowned with glory and honour; but the former ſenſe is beſt: *that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy*; as to *Job*, ſo to all his people; his paternal relation to them, engages his pity towards them; nor does he willingly afflict them; and when he does, he ſympathizes with them; he is afflicted with them, and in his pity redeems them; his bowels move towards them, and he earneſtly remembers them, and works deliverance for them, in his own time and way; and therefore it becomes them to be patient.

Ver. 12. *But above all things, my brethren, ſwear not,* &c.] As impatience ſhould not ſhew itſelf in ſecret ſighs, groans, murmurings, and repinings, ſo more eſpecially it ſhould not break forth in raſh oaths, or in profane ſwearing; for of ſuch ſort of ſwearing, and of ſuch oaths, is the Apoſtle to be underſtood; otherwiſe an oath is very lawful, when taken in the fear and name of God, and made by the living God, and is uſed for the confirmation of any thing of moment, and in order to put an end to ſtrife; God himſelf, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and angels, and good men, are in ſcripture ſometimes repreſented as ſwearing: and that the Apoſtle is ſo to be underſtood, appears from the form of ſwearing prohibited, *neither by the heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath*; of the like kind; ſuch as are forbidden, and cautioned, and reaſoned againſt by our Lord, in *Matt.* v. 34, 35, 36. to which the Apoſtle manifeſtly refers; ſee the note there. *But let your yea be yea, and your nay, nay*; that is, whenever there is an occaſion for affirming, or denying any thing, let it be done nakedly, ſimply, and abſolutely, without any form of oath annexed to it; for whatever addition of that kind is made, comes from evil, and tends to it, and is evil: *leſt ye fall into condemnation*; by the Lord; for either falſe, or raſh, or prophane ſwearing; for he will not ſuffer it to go unpuniſhed; ſee *Exod.* xx. 7. Some copies read, *leſt ye fall into hypocriſy*; or diſſimulation, and get into a habit and cuſtom of lying and deceiving, as common ſwearers do; and ſo reads the *Arabic* verſion.

Ver. 13. *Is any among you afflicted?* &c.] As the people of God generally are; they are commonly a poor, and an afflicted people; at leaſt there are many among them that are ſo, and many are their afflictions: thoſe whom Chriſt loves, as he did *Lazarus*, are not free from ſickneſſes and diſeaſes; and theſe are rather ſigns of love, than arguments againſt it; and when this is the caſe of any of the ſaints, what is to be done? *let him pray*; to God that can ſave him; in the name of Chriſt; under the influence of the Spirit; believing in the word of promiſe. Times of afflictions are proper times for prayer; there is then more eſpecially need of it; and God ſometimes lays his afflicting hand upon his people, when they have been negligent of their duty, and he has not heard of them for ſome time, in order to bring them near to him, to ſeek his face, pay him a viſit, and pour out a prayer before him; ſee *Pſ.* l. 15. *Is any merry?* in good heart and ſpirit, in a good frame of mind, as well as in proſperous circumſtances, in ſoul, body and eſtate: *let him ſing pſalms*; let him not only be inwardly joyful, as he ſhould be in proſperity, and be thankful to God for his many mercies, temporal and ſpiritual, he enjoys; but let him expreſs it vocally, and melodiouſly, by ſinging pſalms, hymns, and ſpiritual ſongs: not that theſe are the only perſons that are to ſing pſalms, or this the only time, any more than that afflicted perſons are the only ones that are to pray, or the time of affliction the only time of prayer; but as affliction more eſpecially calls for prayer, ſo ſpiritual joy, and rejoicing in proſperous ſeaſons, for ſinging of pſalms: weeping, and ſinging of pſalms, were thought, by the *Jews*, inconſiſtent. *Kimchi*, on the title of the third pſalm, obſerves, that their *Rabbins* ſay, that when *David* went up the aſcent of the mount of *Olives*, he wept; and if he wept, why is this called a pſalm? and if a pſalm, למה בכה, *why did he weep?*

Ver. 14. *Is any ſick among you?* &c.] Which is often the caſe; the bodies of the ſaints, as well as others, are liable to a variety of diſeaſes; they are ſick, and ſometimes nigh unto death, as *Epaphroditus* was: and then, *let him call for the elders of the church*; in alluſion to the elders of the congregation of *Iſrael*, *Lev.* iv. 15. By theſe may be meant, either the elder members of the church, men of gravity and ſoundneſs in the faith, perſons of long ſtanding and experience; who have the gift and grace of prayer, and are not only capable of performing that duty, but of giving a word of counſel and advice to the ſick. It was a kind of proverbial ſaying of *Ariſtophanes* the *Grammarian*; "the works of young men, the counſels of middle "aged perſons, and ευχαι γεροντων, *the prayers of* "*ancient men*[z];" or rather officers of churches are meant, particularly paſtors, who are ſo called in ſcripture; theſe ſhould be ſent for in times of ſickneſs,

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[y] Seder Olam Rabba, c. 3. p. 9.

[z] Apud Harpocratian. Lex. p. 125.

ſickneſs, as well as phyſicians; and rather than they, ſince their prayers may be the means of healing both ſoul and body: ſo in former times, the prophets of God were ſent to in times of ſickneſs, for advice and aſſiſtance. It is a ſaying of *R. Phinehas ben Chama*[a], that "whoever has a "ſick perſon in his houſe, let him go to a wiſe "man, and he will ſeek mercy for him." And it follows here, *and let them pray over him*; or for him, for the recovery of his health: *anointing him with oil, in the name of the Lord*; which ſome think was only done in a common, medicinal way, oil being uſed much in the eaſtern countries for moſt diſorders; and ſo theſe elders uſed ordinary medicine, as well as prayer: or rather this refers to an extraordinary gift, which ſome elders had of healing diſeaſes, as ſometimes by touching, and by laying on of hands, or by expreſſing ſome words, and ſo by anointing with oil; ſee *Mark* vi. 13. which extraordinary gifts being now ceaſed, the rite or ceremony of anointing with oil, ceaſes in courſe: however, this paſſage gives no countenance to the extreme unction of the *Papiſts*; that of theirs being attended with many cuſtoms and ceremonies, which are not here made mention of; that being uſed, as is pretended, for the healing of the ſouls of men, whereas this was uſed for corporal healing; that is only performed when life is deſpaired of, and perſons are juſt going out of the world; whereas this was made uſe of to reſtore men to health, and that they might continue longer in it, as follows.

Ver. 15. *And the prayer of faith ſhall ſave the ſick*, &c.] That is, the prayer of the elders, being put up in faith by them, and in which the ſick perſon joins by faith; ſuch a prayer is a means of bringing down from God a bleſſing on the ſick man, and of reſtoring him to his former health: *and the Lord ſhall raiſe him up*; from his bed of ſickneſs, on which he is laid, and bring him forth to praiſe his name, and to fear and glorify him. *And if he have committed ſins*; not that it is a queſtion whether he has or no, for no man lives without ſin, nor the commiſſion of it; but the ſenſe is, if he has been guilty of any ſins, which God in particular has taken notice of, and on account of which he has laid his chaſtizing hand upon him, in order to bring him to a ſenſe of them, and to acknowledge them; which is ſometimes the caſe, tho' not always, at the ſame time that his bodily health is reſtored: *they ſhall be forgiven him*; he ſhall have a diſcovery, and an application of pardoning grace to him: and indeed the removing the ſickneſs or diſeaſe, may be called the forgiveneſs of his ſins, which is ſometimes the ſenſe of this phraſe in ſcripture, as in 1 *Kings* viii. 34, 36, 50.

Ver. 16. *Confeſs* your *faults one to another*, &c.] Which muſt be underſtood of ſins committed againſt one another; which ſhould be acknowledged, and repentance for them declared, in order to mutual forgiveneſs and reconciliation; and this is neceſſary at all times, and eſpecially on beds of affliction, and when death and eternity ſeem near approaching: wherefore this makes nothing for auricular confeſſion, uſed by the *Papiſts*; which is of all ſins, whereas this is only of ſuch, by which men offend one another; that is made to prieſts, but this is made by the ſaints to one another, by the offending party to him that is offended, for reconciliation, whereby a good end is anſwered; whereas there is none by the other, and very often bad conſequences follow. *And pray for one another, that ye may be healed*; both corporally and ſpiritually: *the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much*. Not any man's prayer; not the prayer of a prophane ſinner, for God heareth not ſinners; nor of hypocrites and formal profeſſors; but of the righteous man, who is juſtified by the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, and has the truth of grace in him, and lives ſoberly and righteouſly; for a righteous man often deſigns a good man, a gracious man, one that is ſincere and upright, as *Job*, *Joſeph* of *Arimathea*, and others; tho' not without ſin, as the perſon inſtanced in the following verſe ſhows; *Elias*, who was a man of like paſſions, but a juſt man, and his prayer was prevalent: and not any prayer of a righteous man is of avail, but that which is *effectual fervent*; that has power, and energy, and life in it; which is with the ſpirit, and with the underſtanding, with the heart, even with a true heart, and in faith; and which is put up with fervency, and not in a cold, lukewarm, lifeleſs, formal and cuſtomary way: it is but one word in the original text; and the *Vulgate Latin* verſion renders it, *daily*; that prayer which is conſtant and continual, and without ceaſing, and is importunate; this prevails and ſucceeds, as the parable of the widow, and the unjuſt judge ſhows. Some tranſlate the word *inſpired*; the Spirit of God breathes into men the breath of ſpiritual life, and they live, and being quickened by him, they breathe; and prayer is the breath of the ſpiritual man, and is no other than the reverberation of the Spirit of God in him; and ſuch prayer cannot fail of ſucceſs: it may be rendered *inwrought*; true prayer is not what is written in a book, but what is wrought in the heart, by the Spirit of God; who is the enditer of prayer, who impreſſes the minds of his people with a ſenſe of their wants, and fills their mouths with arguments, and puts ſtrength into them to plead with God, and makes interceſſion for them according to the will of God; and ſuch prayer is always heard, and regarded by him: this has great power with God, whatever is aſked, believing, is received; God can deny nothing prayed for in this manner; it has great power with Chriſt, as *Jacob* had over the angel, when he wreſtled with him; and as the woman of *Canaan*, when ſhe importuned him, on account of her daughter, and would have no denial: ſuch prayer has often been of much avail againſt ſatan, who has been diſpoſſeſſed by it; even the moſt ſtubborn kind of devils have been diſlodged by faſting and prayer: it has often been the means of preſerving kingdoms and nations, when invaded by enemies, as the inſtances of *Jehoſhaphat* and *Hezekiah* ſhew; and of removing judgments from a people, as was often done, thro' the prayers of *Moſes*, as when fire, and fiery ſerpents were ſent among them; and of bringing down bleſſings, as rain from heaven by *Elijah*; and of delivering particular perſons from trouble, as *Peter* was delivered from priſon, thro' the inceſſant prayer of the church for him: and this power, and efficacy, and prevalence of prayer, does not ariſe from any intrinſic worth and merit in it, but from the grace of the Spirit, who influences, and endites it, directs to it, and aſſiſts in it; and from the powerful mediation, precious blood, and efficacious ſacrifice of Chriſt; and from the promiſe of God and Chriſt, who have engaged, that whatever is aſked according to the will of God, and in the name of Chriſt, ſhall be done. The *Jews* have had formerly a great notion of prayer: the power of prayer, they ſay[b], is ſtrong; and extol it above all other ſervices: they ſay [c], it is better than good works, or than offerings and ſacrifices; and particularly, the prayer of righteous men: ſays *R. Eliezer* [d], "to what is, תפלתן של צדיקים, *the* "*prayer of righteous men* like? it is like a ſhovel: "the ſenſe is, that as the ſhovel turns the corn on "the floor, from one place to another, ſo prayer "turns the holy bleſſed God from wrath to "mercy."

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[a] T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 116. 1.

[b] Zohar in Exod. fol. 100. 1.

Ver. 17. *Elias was a man ſubject to like paſſions as we are,* &c.] The Apoſtle gives an inſtance of earneſt and fervent prayer, and of the efficacy of it in *Elias*; who is the ſame with the prophet *Elijah*, or *Elijah* the *Tiſhbite*; who, by the *Septuagint* in *Mal.* iv. 5. is called *Elias*, as here, and elſewhere, in the New Teſtament: of him *James* ſays, that he was a *man*, contrary to the notion of ſome of the *Jewiſh* writers, who affirm, that *Elijah* was not born of a father and mother, but was an angel, who was clothed with the four elements of the world [e]; but he was not only born, but born in ſin, as others are, and was by nature no better than others; and he himſelf confeſſes, that he was no better than his fathers, 1 *Kings* xix. 4. And the Apoſtle further obſerves, concerning him, that he was *ſubject to like paſſions as we are*; both in body and ſoul; he was ſubject to hunger and wearineſs, and was fed by ravens, and by the widow of *Sarepta*, and by an angel; and he was ſubject to reproach, affliction, and perſecution, being charged by *Ahab*, as a troubler of *Iſrael*, and perſecuted by *Jezabel*, who ſought his life; he was a mortal man, and liable to death, and requeſted to die, and muſt have died, had it not been for the wonderful power of God, which tranſlated him, that he ſhould not ſee death; and he was not free from ſinful paſſions, as impatience, fear, and unbelief, 1 *Kings* xvii. 20. and xix. 3, 4, 10, 18. *And he prayed earneſtly*; or *prayed in prayer*; an *Hebraiſm*: it is ſaid [f] of one, that, צלי צלותיה, *he prayed his prayer*; and of others, that, צלאן צלותין, *they prayed prayers*; tho' the phraſe here ſeems to deſign ſomething more than bare praying; a praying, not merely externally, or formally, and with the lip only, but with the ſpirit, and with the underſtanding, and with the heart engaged in it, with inwrought prayer. The prophet prayed with much earneſtneſs, with great vehemence and intenſeneſs of ſpirit, as this *Hebraiſm* denotes; his prayer was fervent, and it was conſtant, and importunate, and was continued, till he had an anſwer: he may be thought to have prayed each of the ſeven times, he ſent his ſervant to look out for a ſign of rain, 1 *Kings* xviii. 43. he firſt prayed, *that it might not rain*; this is not recorded in expreſs words, but may be gathered from 1 *Kings* xvii. 1. where he ſays, *as the Lord God of Iſrael liveth, before whom I ſtand, there ſhall not be dew, nor rain, theſe years, but according to my word*; ſo the paſſage is underſtood by the *Jewiſh* interpreters: the phraſe, *before whom I ſtand*, is paraphraſed by one of them [g] thus; before whom I am uſed to ſtand, בתפילה, *in prayer*; and it is a common ſaying with the *Jews*, there is no ſtanding ever mentioned, but prayer is intended; ſee the note on *Matt.* vi. 5. And the other phraſe, *according to my word*, is, by another [h], interpreted to this ſenſe, that the rain ſhould not deſcend naturally, according to the cuſtom of the world, but it ſhould deſcend when *Elijah*, ויתפלל עליו, *prayed for it*; and ſo it was: *and it rained not on the earth*; on the land of *Iſrael*, which is only meant; it rained in other parts of the world, for the drought in thoſe times was not univerſal: and this was, *by the ſpace of three years and ſix months*; which exactly agrees with the words of Chriſt, *Luke* iv. 25. and this was in judgment upon the land of *Iſrael*, for the idolatry it was filled with in the times of *Ahab*: and this inſtance of prayer is mentioned, not with a view that it ſhould be imitated; for we are not to pray for judgments, unleſs we have a divine order for it, as *Elijah* had; but to ſhew the efficacy of prayer made according to the will of God.

Ver. 18. *And he prayed again,* &c.] 1 *Kings* xviii. 42, 43. Here alſo is no expreſs mention of his prayer, but it may be concluded from his geſtures; and ſo the *Jewiſh* interpreters underſtand theſe words, *Elijah went up to the top of Carmel*, להתפלל, *to pray, and he caſt himſelf down upon the earth*, להתפלל על הגשמים, *to pray for rain*; *and he put his face between his knees*, ויתפלל, *and prayed, and ſaid to his ſervant, go up now, look toward the ſea*; and this he ſaid while he was, בתפילתו, *in his prayer* [i]: and the effect of this his prayer was, *and the heaven gave rain*; ſee 1 *Kings* xviii. 45. *And the earth brought forth her fruit*; which for the years paſt it had not; hence there was a ſore famine in the land, 1 *Kings* xviii. 2. Now the Apoſtle choſe to inſtance in ſuch a caſe, becauſe it was a common thing for the *Jews* to aſk for rain: we often read of ſuch a doctor, that he prayed for rain, and it came; and of another, that he aſked for the rains, and they deſcended [k]: and his view is to obſerve, that the weakneſs and infirmities of the ſaints ought not to diſcourage them from prayer; and that they ſhould be earneſt and fervent in it, as was *Elias*, a man of like paſſions with themſelves.

Ver. 19. *Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth,* &c.] Either from Chriſt, who is the truth, by departing from him, forſaking his ways, worſhip, and ordinances; or from the ſcriptures of truth, not ſpeaking according to them, and embracing notions that are contrary unto them; or from the Goſpel, the word of truth, from the doctrine of faith, and from uprightneſs of life and converſation, after having made a profeſſion of chriſtianity; for this is to be underſtood of one who has embraced the chriſtian religion, become a member of a church, and has walked in the path of truth and holineſs, but now fallen into error, either in principle, or in practice, or both: *and one convert him*; or turn him from his error, to truth again; for this deſigns not firſt converſion, or the turning of a ſinner from darkneſs to light, from the power of ſatan to God, and from the evil of a man's heart and ways, and from a dependence on his own righteouſneſs, to the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, to look to him for righteouſneſs, life, and ſalvation, which is wholly and entirely God's work, and not man's; but converſion after backſlidings; for a reſtoration from a fallen condition is ſometimes ſo called, *Pſ.* li. 12, 13. *Luke* xxii. 32. and which one brother may be an inſtrument of to another, by ſhowing him, and ſetting before him, the evil of his errors, whether in principle or practice; and by inſtructing him in the doctrines of the Goſpel, and in the duties of religion; and by reproving him in meekneſs, and according to the rules of Chriſt; which means are ſometimes bleſſed for the gaining of ſuch; and which may be called converſion: and alſo, this is ſometimes done by praying for him; and which ſeems chiefly to be intended here; for from praying for the healing of the diſeaſes of the body, the Apoſtle proceeds to encourage the ſaints to pray for one another, for the healing of the diſeaſes of the mind; and ſuggeſts, that if prayer avails to the one, it may to the other; and which is the moſt deſireable, and the greateſt bleſſing, as follows.

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[c] T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 32. 2.

[d] T. Bab. Succa, fol. 14. 1. & Yebamot, fol. 64. 1.

[e] Zohar in Gen. fol. 31. 1. & Imre Binah in ib.

[f] Ib. in Exod. fol. 4. 2. & in Num. fol. 79. 2.

[g] R. David Kimchi in loc.

[h] Vid. Laniado in loc.

[i] Jarchi, Kimchi, Ralbag, & Laniado in loc.

[k] T. Bab. Moed Katon, fol. 28. 1. & Taanith, fol. 19. 1. 23. 1. 24. 2. 25. 2. & Yoma, fol. 53. 2.

Ver. 20. *Let him know*, &c.] And obſerve it for his encouragement: *that he which converteth a ſinner from the error of his way*; who is the inſtrument of reſtoring a backſliding profeſſor, for ſuch an one is meant by a ſinner, and not a prophane perſon; or of turning a poor bewildered believer, who is got out of the way of truth and holineſs, into the right way again; or of convincing him of the error of his way, whether it be in point of doctrine, or of duty; and ſo of bringing him to the fold of Chriſt again, from whence he has ſtrayed: *ſhall ſave a ſoul from death*; not efficiently, but inſtrumentally, as in 1 *Tim.* iv. 16. for otherwiſe Chriſt is the only ſaviour; and he will be the means of ſaving *a ſoul*, which is of more worth than a world; and that from *death*, the ſecond death, which lies in the ſeparation of the ſoul from God, and in a ſenſe of his wrath; which apoſtacy threatens with, and leads unto, if grace prevents not. The *Alexandrian* copy, and others, and the *Vulgate Latin* verſion read, *his ſoul*; but the common reading is more emphatical; the *Syriac* and *Arabic* verſions render it, *his own ſoul*; and the *Ethiopic* verſion *himſelf*, as reſpecting him that is the inſtrument of the converſion of the other, and not the perſon converted: *and ſhall hide a multitude of ſins*; either *his own*, as the ſame verſions read; and then the ſenſe is, he ſhall be bleſſed with a diſcovery and application of the forgiveneſs of all his ſins, tho' they have been many and great; or rather the ſins of the perſon converted. Sin is only covered by the blood and righteouſneſs of Chriſt; and thereby it is ſo covered, as not to be ſeen by the eye of vindictive juſtice, and in ſuch manner, as that the perſons of thoſe who are covered therewith, are all fair, without fault, and unreproveable in the ſight of God; and tho' their ſins are many, even a multitude, they are blotted out as a thick cloud, and are abundantly pardoned; yea, all their ſins are covered, be they ever ſo many, for God forgives all treſpaſſes, for Chriſt's ſake; and the blood of Chriſt cleanſes from all ſin, and his righteouſneſs juſtifies from all: and whoever is an inſtrument of bringing a backſlider to a ſenſe of the evil of his ways, and to true repentance for the ſame; as he, upon ſuch repentance, has his iniquities cauſed to paſs from him, or, in other words, to be covered, as from the ſight of God, ſo from his own; he may be ſaid to be the inſtrument of this alſo.

AN
EXPOSITION, &c.

The Firſt Epiſtle General of PETER.

THAT *Simon*, called *Peter*, an Apoſtle of Jeſus Chriſt, was the writer of this Epiſtle, is not queſtioned by any; nor was the genuineneſs and authentickneſs of it ever made a doubt of. *Euſebius* ſays[a], that it had been confeſſed by all, and received without controverſy; and that the ancients, without any ſcruple, had made uſe of it in their writings. It is called his *general* or *catholic* Epiſtle, becauſe it was not written to any particular perſon, or to any particular church, but in general, to a number of chriſtians diſperſed in ſeveral places. The time when this Epiſtle was written, is not certain; ſome place it in the year of Chriſt 44 or 45, and ſo make it to be the moſt ancient of all the Epiſtles, and which is the more commonly received opinion: but Dr. *Lightfoot*[b] places it in the year 65, becauſe in it the Apoſtle ſpeaks of the end of all things being at hand, and of the fiery trial juſt coming on them, and of judgment beginning at the houſe of God, ch. iv. 7, 12, 17. all which he applies to the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*; tho' others fix it to 61, in the ſeventh year of *Nero*[c]. The place from whence it ſeems to be written was *Babylon*, ch. v. 13. which is to be underſtood not figuratively, either of *Rome* or *Jeruſalem*, but properly of *Babylon*, the metropolis of *Chaldea*, or *Aſſyria*. The perſons to whom it is written were *Jews*, at leaſt chiefly; for there might be ſome *Gentiles* among them, who may be taken notice of in ſome parts of the Epiſtle; but the principal part were *Jews*, as appears from their being called the ſtrangers of the diſperſion, or, as *James* calls them, *the twelve tribes ſcattered abroad*; from the mention of the tradition of their fathers; from their having their converſation honeſt among the *Gentiles*, and their paſt life among them; from urging ſubjection to the civil magiſtrates among the heathens, and the right uſe of their chriſtian liberty as to the ceremonies of the law; and from the near deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, which could only affect them; and from the uſe made of the writings of the Old Teſtament, and the authority of the prophets; ſee ch. i. 1, 18. and ii. 12. and iv. 3. and ii. 13, 16. and iv. 7, 12, 17. as well as from the ſecond Epiſtle, which was written to the ſame; ſee ch. i. 19. and ii. 1. and iii. 1, 2, 15. in which he ſeems to refer to the Epiſtle to the *Hebrews*, written by *Paul*, as to theſe. And beſides, *Peter* was the miniſter of the circumciſion, or of the circumciſed *Jews*, as *Paul* was of the *Gentiles*; and even thoſe paſſages in this Epiſtle, which ſeem moſt likely to concern the *Gentiles*, may be underſtood of the *Jews*, as which ſpeak of their ignorance, idolatry, and having not been a people, ch. i. 14. and iv. 3. and ii. 10. which were true of them before converſion, and as living among *Gentiles*. The occaſion of writing it was this; *Peter* meeting with *Sylvanus*, a faithful brother, and who had been a companion of the Apoſtle *Paul*, he takes this opportunity of ſending a letter by him to the converted *Jews*, diſperſed among the *Gentile* countries, where he, with *Paul*, and others, travelled: the deſign of which is to teſtify of the true doctrine of grace, in which they were agreed; ſee ch. v. 12. And accordingly in it he does treat of the doctrine of electing grace, of redeeming grace, of regenerating and ſanctifying grace, and of perſevering grace; and exhorts believers to the exerciſe of grace, of faith, hope, and love, and to the diſcharge of ſuch duties becoming their ſeveral ſtations, whereby they might evidence to others the truth of grace in themſelves, and adorn the doctrine of the grace of God, and recommend it to others: and particularly he exhorts them patiently to bear all afflictions and perſecutions they ſhould meet with, for their profeſſion of the true grace of God, in which he encourages them to ſtand ſtedfaſt: and this is the general ſcope and deſign of the Epiſtle.

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[a] Eccl. Hiſt. l. 3. c. 3.

[b] Harmony, &c. Vol. I. p. 335.

[c] Fabricii Bibliothec. Græc. l. 4. c. 5. §. 10. p. 164.

CHAP. I.

IN this chapter, after the inſcription and ſalutation, the Apoſtle gives thanks to God for various bleſſings of grace beſtowed, or to be beſtowed upon the perſons he writes to; and then, with the beſt of arguments and motives, urges them to the performance of ſeveral duties of religion. In the inſcription, the perſon who is the writer of the epiſtle is deſcribed, both by his name, and by his office; and alſo the perſons to whom it is ſent, by their outward condition, ſtrangers diſperſed thro' ſeveral countries particularly mentioned, and by their ſpiritual eſtate, elect men; the ſource and ſpring of which election is, the foreknowledge of God the Father; the means, the ſanctification of the Spirit; and the end, obedience, and ſprinkling of the blood of Chriſt; and to theſe the Apoſtle wiſhes a multiplication of grace and peace, ver. 1, 2. and then he gives thanks to God for the regeneration of them; the efficient cauſe of which, is God the Father; the moving cauſe, his abundant mercy; the means, the reſurrection of Chriſt from the dead; the end, a lively hope of a glorious inheritance, ver. 3, 4. and next follows a deſcription of regenerate ones; they are ſuch who are kept by the power of God through faith, unto ſalvation; who rejoice in hope of that ſalvation, tho' now for a little while are ſorrowful, by reaſon of afflictions, which are for the trial of their faith; they are believers in Chriſt, lovers of him, and rejoice in him, and ſhall at laſt receive the end of their faith, the ſalvation of their ſouls, ver. 5, 6, 7, 8, 9. the excellency of which ſalvation is ſet forth from the concern the prophets had in it, the ſcrutiny they made into it, and the revelation of it made to them; from the concern the Apoſtles had in it, and their report of it, and from the deſire of angels to look into it, ver. 10, 11, 12. upon which the Apoſtle exhorts to the exerciſe of various graces and duties, to attention of mind, to ſobriety, to a conſtant hope of eternal glory, and to holineſs of life and converſation, ver. 13, 14. the arguments engaging to which, are taken from the nature of God, who had called them by his grace, ver. 15, 16. from their concern with him, as a father, and a judge; from their ſtate and condition, as ſojourners in this world, and from their redemption by the blood of Chriſt from a vain converſation, ver. 17, 18, 19. and of Chriſt the redeemer of them, many things are ſaid; as that he was ordained before the foundation of the world, to be the redeemer; was manifeſted in human nature in theſe laſt days, for the ſake of ſuch that believe; was raiſed from the dead, and glorified, that there might be a ſufficient foundation for the exerciſe of faith and hope in God, ver. 20, 21. and next, the Apoſtle exhorts to brotherly love, in purity, and with fervency; from the conſideration of the internal purification of them by the Spirit, through obedience to the truth; and from their regeneration, the cauſe of which was not corruptible, but incorruptible ſeed; and the means, the living and abiding word of God, ver. 22, 23. which is illuſtrated by a paſſage out of *Iſ.* xl. 6, 7, 8. ſetting forth the frailty and mortality of men, and the tranſitorineſs of all outward enjoyments; to which is oppoſed, the duration of the everlaſting Goſpel, the means of regeneration, ver. 24, 25.

Ver. 1. *Peter an Apoſtle of Jeſus Chriſt*, &c.] The writer of this epiſtle deſcribes himſelf firſt by his name, *Peter*, the ſame with *Cephas*, which ſignifies a rock, or ſtone; a name given him by Chriſt at his firſt converſion, and which reſpected his after firmneſs, ſolidity, reſolution, and conſtancy; for his former name was *Simeon*, or *Simon*, as ſometimes called; ſee *Matt.* iv. 18. *John* i. 42. and he further deſcribes himſelf by his office, as *an Apoſtle of Jeſus Chriſt*; being one of the twelve Apoſtles, and the firſt of that number; who ſaw Chriſt in the fleſh, was converſant with him, had his call and commiſſion immediately from him, and was qualified by him to preach the Goſpel; and was ſent out firſt into *Judea*, and then into all the world to publiſh it, with a power of working miracles to confirm it; and this his character he makes mention of, in order to give the greater weight and authority to his epiſtle; and it is to be obſerved, that he does not ſtile himſelf, as his pretended ſucceſſor does, the head of the church, and Chriſt's vicar on earth; nor does he call himſelf the prince of the Apoſtles, but only an Apoſtle, as he was upon an equal foot with the reſt. The perſons he writes to are, *the ſtrangers ſcattered throughout Pontus*, *Galatia*, *Cappadocia*, *Aſia*, *and Bithynia*; theſe *Jews* here intended, are called *ſtrangers*; not in a metaphorical ſenſe, either becauſe they were, as the wicked are, eſtranged from the womb, and alienated from the life of God, as all unconverted men are, and as they were before converſion; for now they were no more ſtrangers, in this ſenſe: or becauſe of their unſettled ſtate and condition in this life; having no continuing city, and ſeeking one to come, an heavenly country; and living as pilgrims and ſtrangers, in which reſpect they are indeed ſo ſtiled, ch. ii. 11. but in a civil ſenſe, and not as the *Gentiles* were, aliens from the commonwealth of *Iſrael*, and ſtrangers to the covenants of promiſe, for theſe were *Jews*; but on account of their not being in their own land, and in a foreign country, and therefore ſaid to be *ſcattered*, or *the ſtrangers of the diſperſion*; either on account of the perſecution at the death of *Stephen*, when multitudes of the converted *Jews* were ſcattered abroad, not only throughout the regions of *Judea* and *Samaria*, but as far as *Phenice*, and *Cyprus*, and *Antioch*; ſee *Acts* viii. 1, 4. and xi. 19. and ſo it may be afterwards, throughout the places here mentioned; or elſe theſe were ſome remains of the ten tribes carried captive by *Salmanaſſer*, and of the two tribes, by *Nebuchadnezzar*; or rather the diſperſion of the *Greeks*, mentioned in *John* vii. 35. under the *Macedonians*, by *Ptolomy Lagus*: how ever, there were *Jews* of *Pontus*, who inhabited that place, and of ſuch we read in *Acts* ii. 9. who came to worſhip, at the feaſt of *Pentecoſt*, ſome of which were converted to the chriſtian faith, and being mentioned firſt, has occaſioned this epiſtle to be called, both by *Tertullian* [a], and *Cyprian* [b], *the epiſtle to the Pontians*. Perhaps theſe *Jews* converted on the day of *Pentecoſt*, on their return hither, laid the firſt foundation of a Goſpel-church ſtate in this country: it is a tradition of the ancients, mentioned by *Euſebius* [c], that *Peter* himſelf preached here, and ſo, very likely, formed the chriſtians he found, and thoſe that were converted by him, into

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[a] Scorpiace, c. 12.

[b] Teſtimon. ad Quirin. l. 3. c. 36. 37, 39.

[c] Eccl. Hiſt. l. 3. c. 1.

Goſpel churches; and it appears by a letter of *Dionyſius*, biſhop of *Corinth*[d], that there were churches in *Pontus*, in the *ſecond* century, particularly at *Amaſtris*, the biſhop of which was one *Palma*, whom he commends, and *Focas* is ſaid to be biſhop of *Syncope*, in the ſame age; and in the *third* century, *Gregory*, and *Athenodorus*, diſciples of *Origen*, were biſhops in this country[e]; the former was a very famous man, called *Gregory Thaumaturgus*, the wonder-worker, and was biſhop of *Neocæſarea*: in the *fourth* century, there was a church in the ſame place, of which, *Longinus* was biſhop, as appears from the *Nicene* church, at which he and other biſhops in *Pontus* were preſent; and in this age, in the times of *Diocleſian*, many in this country endured moſt ſhocking ſufferings, related by *Euſebius*[f]; and in the ſame century, **Helladius** is ſaid to govern the churches of *Pontus*; and in the *fifth* century, we read of churches in *Pontus*, reformed by *Chryſoſtom*; in this age *Theodorus* was biſhop of *Heraclea*, and *Themiſtius* of *Amaſtris*, both in this province, and both theſe biſhops were in the *Chalcedon* council; and in the *ſixth* century, there were churches in *Pontus*, whoſe biſhops were in the fifth ſynod held at *Rome* and *Conſtantinople*; and ſo there were in the *ſeventh* and *eighth* centuries[g]. *Galatia*, next mentioned, is that part of the leſſer *Aſia*, called *Gallo Græcia*, in which were ſeveral churches, to whom the Apoſtle *Paul* wrote his epiſtle, called the epiſtle to the *Galatians*; ſee the notes on *Acts* xvi. 6. and on *Gal*. i. 2. *Cappadocia*, according to *Ptolomey*[h], was bounded on the weſt by *Galatia*, on the ſouth by *Cilicia*, on the eaſt by *Armenia* the great, on the north by part of the *Euxine Pontus*; it had many famous cities in it, as *Solinus*[i] ſays; as *Archelais*, *Neocæſarea*, *Melita*, and *Mazaca*. The *Jews* oftentimes talk[k] of going from *Cappadocia* to *Lud*, or *Lydda*; ſo that according to them, it ſeems to be near to that place, or at leaſt, that there was a place near *Lydda*, ſo called; of this ſee more in the note on *Acts* ii. 9. From this country alſo there were *Jews* at *Jeruſalem* on the day of *Pentecoſt*, ſome of whom were converted; and here likewiſe the Apoſtle *Peter* is ſaid to preach, as before obſerved of *Pontus*, and who probably founded a church or churches here, in the *firſt* century; and in the *ſecond* century, according to *Tertullian*[l], there were believers in Chriſt dwelling in this country; and in the *third* century, *Euſebius*[m] makes mention of *Neon*, biſhop of *Larandis*, and *Celſus*, biſhop of *Iconium*, both in *Cappadocia*; there was alſo *Phedimus* of *Amaſea*, in the ſame country, in this age, and at *Ceſarea* in *Cappadocia*, ſeveral martyrs ſuffered under *Decius*; and in this century, *Stephen*, biſhop of *Rome*, threatned to excommunicate ſome biſhops in *Cappadocia*, becauſe they had re-baptized ſome that had been hereticks: in the *fourth* century there were churches in *Cappadocia*, of one of which, namely, at *Saſimi*, the famous *Gregory Nazianzen* was firſt biſhop, and afterwards of *Nazianzum*, as was alſo the famous *Baſil* of *Cæſarea*, in the ſame country; hither the perſecution under *Diocleſian* reached, and many had their thighs broken, as *Euſebius* relates[n]; from hence were ſent ſeveral biſhops, who aſſiſted at the council of *Nice*, under *Conſtantine*, and at another held at *Jeruſalem*: in the *fifth* century there were churches in *Cappadocia*, in ſeveral places, the names of whoſe biſhops are on record; as *Firmus*, *Thalaſſius*, *Theodoſius*, *Daniel*, *Ariſtomachus*, *Patricius*, and others: in the *ſixth* century there were many famous churches in this country, whoſe biſhops were in the fifth ſynod held at *Rome* and *Conſtantinople*; and in the *ſeventh* century, there were ſeveral of them in the *ſixth* ſynod of *Conſtantinople*; and in the *eighth* century, mention is made of biſhops of ſeveral churches in *Cappadocia*, in the ſecond *Nicene* ſynod; and even in the *ninth* century, there were chriſtians in theſe parts[o]. *Aſia*, here intends neither the leſſer nor the greater *Aſia*, but *Aſia*, properly ſo called; and which, according to *Solinus*[p], *Lycia* and *Phrygia* bounded on the eaſt, the *Ægean* ſhores on the weſt, the *Egyptian* ſea on the ſouth, and *Paphlagonia* on the north; the chief city in it was *Epheſus*, and ſo it is diſtinguiſhed from *Phrygia*, *Galatia*, *Myſia*, and *Bithynia*, in *Acts* xvi. 6, 7. as here from *Pontus*, *Galatia*, *Cappadocia*, and *Bithynia*, and from *Pontus*, and *Cappadocia*, in *Acts* ii. 9. tho' they were all in leſſer *Aſia*. Here alſo were *Jews* converted on the day of *Pentecoſt*; and here likewiſe *Peter* is ſaid to preach; and by him, and by the Apoſtle *John*, who alſo lived and died in this country, churches were planted; and churches there were here, even in the *ſeventh* century, as diſtinct from the other *Aſia* greater or leſs; for out of it biſhops were ſent to, and were preſent at, the ſixth council at *Conſtantinople*, whoſe names are recorded; yea, in the *eighth* century, there were churches and biſhops, one of which, perſuaded *Leo* to remove images from places of worſhip; and another was in the *Nicene* ſynod[q]. The laſt place mentioned is *Bithynia*, of which, ſee the note on *Acts* xvi. 7. And tho' the Apoſtle *Paul*, and his companions, were not ſuffered at a certain time to go into *Bithynia*, and preach the Goſpel there, yet it is certain that it was afterwards carried thither; and as *Peter* is ſaid to preach in *Pontus*, *Aſia*, and *Cappadocia*, ſo likewiſe in *Bithynia*; here, according to the *Roman* martyrology, *Luke* the evangeliſt died; and according to tradition, *Prochorus*, one of the ſeven deacons, in *Acts* vi. 5. was biſhop of *Nicomedia*, in this country; and *Tychicus*, of whom the Apoſtle *Paul* makes frequent mention, was biſhop of *Chalcedon*, another city in it; and who are both ſaid to be of the ſeventy diſciples; ſee the note on *Luke* x. 1. and it is certain, from the teſtimony of *Pliny*[r], an heathen writer, in a letter of his to *Trajan* the emperor, written about the year 104, that there were then great numbers of chriſtians in *Bithynia*; not only the cities, but the towns and villages were full of them; and in the *third* century, the perſecution under *Diocleſian* raged, particularly at *Nicomedia*, where *Anthimus*, the paſtor of the church in that place, had his head cut off, as *Euſebius*[s] relates; in the beginning of the *fourth* century, *Nice*, in *Bithynia*, became famous for the council held there under *Conſtantine*, againſt *Arius*; and in this century, biſhops from *Bithynia* aſſiſted at a ſynod held at *Tyre*, in *Phenicia*; and in the *fifth* century was held a ſynod at *Chalcedon*, a city in this country, againſt the *Neſtorian* hereſy; and the names of ſeveral biſhops of *Chalcedon*, *Nicomedia*, and *Nice*, who lived in this age, are on record;

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[d] Apud Euſeb. ib. l. 4. c. 23.

[e] Ib. l. 7. c. 14. Hieron. Script. Eccleſ. Catalog. §. 75.

[f] Ib. l. 8. c. 12.

[g] Hiſt. Eccl. Magdeburg. Cent. 2. c. 2. p. 3. Cent. 4. c. 2. p. 3. c. 7. p. 289. Cent. 5. c. 2. p. 4. c. 10. p. 602. Cent. 6. c. 2. p. 4. Cent. 7. c. 2. p. 3. Cent. 8. c. 2. p. 5.

[h] Geograph. l. 5. c. 6.

[i] Polyhiſt. c. 57.

[k] Zohar in Gen. fol. 51. 3. & in Exod. fol. 33. 2. & 35. 4.

[l] Adv. Judæos, c. 7. ad Scapulam, c. 3.

[m] Eccl. Hiſt. l. 6. c. 19.

[n] Ib. l. 8. 12.

[o] Eccl. Hiſt. Magdeburg. Cent. 3. c. 2. p. 2. c. 3. p. 11. c. 7. p. 117. Cent. 4. c. 2. p. 4. c. 9. p. 350. 390. Cent. 5. c. 2. p. 4. c. 10. p. 605, 606 Cent. 6. c. 2. p. 5. Cent. 7. c. 2. p. 3. c. 10. p. 254. Cent. 8. c. 2. p. 5. Cent. 9. c. p. 3.

[p] c. 53.

[q] Ib. Cent. 7. c. 2. p. 3. c. 10. p. 254. Cent. 8. c. 2. p. 5.

[r] Epiſt. l. 10. ep. 97.

[s] Eccl. Hiſt. l. 8. c. 5, 6.

and in the *ſixth* century, there were biſhops from theſe ſeveral places, and others, who were preſent in the *fifth* ſynod at *Conſtantinople*; as there were alſo in the *ſeventh* century, at the ſixth ſynod held at the ſame place, whoſe names are particularly mentioned; and in the *eighth* century, biſhops from hence were in the *Nicene* ſynod; and even in the *ninth* century, there were ſome that bore the chriſtian name in *Bithynia* [s]. In theſe places however, it ſeems, dwelt many *Jews*, who were converted to Chriſt, to whom the Apoſtle inſcribes this epiſtle, and whom he further deſcribes in the following verſe.

Ver. 2. *Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father*, &c.] Not to any office, as to that of biſhops or preſbyters; for tho' the Apoſtle writes to ſome of them under this character, ch. v. 1. yet not all; nor were they ſo called, as a nation, for they were perſons ſcattered about in ſeveral countries; nor as a church, for they are not wrote to as ſuch; nor does this character merely deſign their effectual vocation; tho' as that is a fruit, and evidence of election, it is ſometimes ſo ſtiled, and the ſaints called by grace, are ſaid to be choſen; ſee *John* xv. 19. 1 *Cor.* i. 26. but it intends the eternal election of thoſe perſons both to grace and glory; which the Apoſtle knew of, not by divine revelation, or any particular diſcovery made to him; but he concluded it in a judgment of charity, they being all under a profeſſion of faith in Chriſt; and he having reaſon to believe that the greater part of them were truly partakers of that faith which demonſtrated them to be the elect of God: the cauſe, ſpring, and ſource of their election was, *the foreknowledge of God the Father*; to whom election is commonly aſcribed, agreeable to the order of the divine perſons in the Trinity, and their diſtinct parts in the œconomy of ſalvation, tho' not to the excluſion of the Son and Spirit: and by this his *foreknowledge* is meant, not his eternal, univerſal, and infallible knowledge, and which is infinite, and reaches to all things and perſons, preſent, future, or poſſible; for this has for its objects perſons whom God never predeſtinated and choſe; tho' certain it is that he knows, and foreknows all whom he does predeſtinate and chuſe; nor does it intend the mere decree of election, or God's eternal purpoſe and reſolution to chuſe, but the ſpring and ſource of that act of his; and much leſs does it mean a bare preſcience of men, and choice of them, upon a foreſight of faith, holineſs, good works, and perſeverance therein; for theſe are all, when genuine, the fruits and effects of election, which are included in it, and ſecured and brought about by it; but the ſovereign grace, good-will, and pleaſure of God, or the everlaſting love of God the Father, which is the cauſe of, and has given birth to the act of election, is meant by foreknowledge, joined with affection, delight, and approbation; knowledge, and foreknowledge, as aſcribed to the divine being, often ſignify ſuch things; ſee *Pſ.* i. 6. 2 *Tim.* ii. 19. *Rom.* viii. 29, 30. and xi. 1, 2. and ſuch a knowledge God the Father had of the perſons of the elect from all eternity; and which is the ground and foundation of his chuſing them to grace and glory, and not any thing in them, or done by them, or any thing out of himſelf; no other reaſon can be given of it, than his own grace, his pure love, and ſovereign good-will and pleaſure: the means follow, through which they were choſen, *through ſanctification of the ſpirit*; as in 2 *Theſſ.* ii. 13. ſee the note there. The ends to which the ſaints are choſen, are, *unto obedience and ſprinkling of the blood of Jeſus Chriſt*; by *obedience* is meant, either the obedience of elect men to Chriſt; which lies in obeying the truth of the Goſpel; called the obedience of faith; and ſo is the ſame with the *belief of the truth*, which goes along in election with the ſanctification of the Spirit, in 2 *Theſſ.* ii. 13. and in ſubmiſſion to Goſpel ordinances, and doing all good works in the name, faith, and ſtrength of Chriſt; and which alſo are fruits and effects, and ſo not cauſes of divine predeſtination; ſee *Eph.* ii. 10. and alſo follow upon the ſanctification of the Spirit: or elſe the obedience of Chriſt is intended; and ſo the *Arabic* verſion renders it, *unto the obedience of Jeſus Chriſt*; which lay in his performing the precepts of the law, and bearing the penalty of it, death; and by which the choſen ſeed are juſtified, or made righteous in the ſight of God, and have a title to eternal life and glory, and are ſafe from wrath to come; and to the enjoyment of this grace, they are choſen of God the Father; and between theſe two, predeſtination and juſtification, there is a cloſe and inſeparable connexion; ſo that they that are intereſted in the one, are in the other; ſee *Rom.* viii. 30. the *ſprinkling of the blood of Jeſus Chriſt*, does not denote a ſmall quantity of it, for it was ſhed and poured out in great abundance; but is ſaid in alluſion to the ſprinkling of the blood of the paſſover-lamb, *Exod.* xii. 22, 23. or to the ſprinkling of the blood on the book of the covenant, and on the people at mount *Sinai*, *Exod.* xxiv. 8. or to other ſprinklings of blood in their legal ſacrifices: the application of the blood of Chriſt to the heart, by the Spirit of God, for cleanſing, pardon, and juſtification, is meant; which affords true, ſolid conſcience-peace and joy now, and entitles to eternal happineſs and glory; all which are ſecured by electing grace. The ſalutation of theſe perſons follows: *grace unto you and peace be multiplied*; which is much the ſame that is uſed by the Apoſtle *Paul* in all his epiſtles; ſee the note on *Rom.* i. 7. only *Peter* adds the word *multiplied*; which makes it more expreſs, and the ſenſe more clear: he means an enlarged view of intereſt in the love of God, an increaſe of grace out of the fullneſs of it in Chriſt, and of Goſpel light, and of the ſeveral gifts of the Spirit; and alſo of all proſperity outward and inward, of a conſcience-peace through the blood of Chriſt, which paſſeth all underſtanding, and a more eſtabliſhed and well-grounded hope of enjoying eternal peace hereafter. The phraſe is *Jewiſh*, and is uſed in their ſalutations in this form, שלמכון יסגי, *let your peace be multiplied* [t].

Ver. 3. *Bleſſed be the God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, &c.] The epiſtle begins here with thankſgiving to God, or an aſcription of bleſſing, praiſe, and glory to him; for this does not mean an invoking or conferring a bleſſing on him; neither of which can be, for there is not a greater than he to be invoked, nor can any thing be added to his bleſſedneſs: but God may be bleſſed by his creatures when they ſpeak well of him, and his wonderful works of creation, providence, and grace; when they aſcribe all their mercies, ſpiritual and temporal to him; give him the glory of them, and expreſs their thanks for them in heart, lip, and life; and ſuch a bleſſing of God for a ſpecial and ſpiritual favour, the grace of regeneration is intended here: by *God* is meant, not God eſſentially, but perſonally conſidered, even God the Father, as is clearly expreſſed: the words are rendred in the *Arabic* and *Ethiopic* verſions, without the copulative *and*, thus, *bleſſed be God the Father*; and if that is retained, they may be rendred thus, *bleſſed be God, even the Father*; as in 2 *Cor*. i. 3. and ſo the latter be exegetical of the former; tho' both are true of Chriſt, in different ſenſes; God is the God of Chriſt, as Chriſt is man; and he is the Father of Chriſt, as Chriſt is God; for as man, he had no father, nor is he a ſon by office, but by nature; ſee the note on *Eph*. i. 3. *which according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again*; regeneration is the bleſſing thanks are given for; and if we are to be thankful to God, and bleſs his name, becauſe he hath made us creatures, and hath given us a natural being; much more ſhould we praiſe him for making us new creatures, and giving us a ſpiritual being. To be *begotten again*, and ſo to be born again, is oppoſed unto, and diſtinguiſhed from our firſt birth, when we were conceived, and ſhapen in ſin; and deſigns a birth, ſpiritual, holy, and heavenly; it is ſignified by a being quickned, or made alive; ſo as in a ſpiritual ſenſe, to ſee, and hear, and breathe after divine things, and to live a life of faith and holineſs; by Chriſt being formed in the heart; by a partaking of the divine nature, and by being made new men, or new creatures: God, and not man, is the efficient cauſe of this; which is ſometimes aſcribed to the Spirit, and ſometimes to the Son, and here to the Father; and it is not mens works, but his own good-will and pleaſure, his great love and free favour, his rich grace and abundant mercy, are the impulſive, or moving cauſe of it; and abundance of grace and mercy indeed, is diſplayed in the regeneration and converſion of ſinners: what they are regenerated to is, *unto a lively hope*; meaning either the grace of hope, which is implanted in regeneration, and not before; for then, and then only, is a good hope through grace given: and it may be ſaid to be *lively*, or *living*, inaſmuch as it is fixed, not on dead works, but on a living Chriſt, on his perſon, blood, and righteouſneſs; and is not the hope of a dead ſinner, of a lifeleſs hypocrite, and formal profeſſor, that has a name to live, and is dead, but of a living believer, one made truly alive by the Spirit of life, from Chriſt; and is, what is ſometimes, at leaſt, in lively exerciſe, and makes the heart of a believer chearful, briſk, and lively; and is what is laſting and durable, and will never be loſt, but will be held faſt unto the end: or elſe the thing hoped for, is intended, the hope laid up in heaven; the bleſſed hope regenerate ones are born unto, and are looking for, even eternal life and happineſs; and the *Syriac* verſion renders it, *unto hope of life*; that is, of eternal life; and ſo reads one of *Stephens*'s copies. Saints are both begotten again to the grace of hope, and to the glory which that grace is waiting for: the means is, *by the reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt from the dead*; which may be connected either with the act of begetting again; for Chriſt's reſurrection is the virtual cauſe of regeneration, or regeneration is in virtue of Chriſt's reſurrection; had he not riſen from the dead, none would have been quickned, or made to live, or have been raiſed to newneſs of life: his reſurrection is the exemplar of regeneration; there is a likeneſs between them; as his reſurrection was a declaration of his ſonſhip, ſo regeneration is a manifeſtation of adoption; and as Chriſt's reſurrection was his firſt ſtep to glory, ſo is regeneration to eternal life; and both are wrought by the ſame almighty power: or the clauſe may be connected with the foregoing, *unto a lively hope*; for the reſurrection of Chriſt is what is the means of, and lays a ſolid foundation of hope, both of the ſaints reſurrection from the dead, of which Chriſt is the meritorious cauſe, pledge, and pattern, and of eternal glory and happineſs, ſince he roſe for our juſtification, with which glorification is inſeparably connected.

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[s] Hiſt. Eccl. Magdeburg. Cent. 4. c. 2. p. 3. c 9. p. 390. Cent. 5. c. 2. p. 4. c. 10. p. 601, 602. Cent. 6. c. 2. p. 4. Cent. 7. c. 2. p. 3. c. 10. p. 254. Cent. 8. c. 2. p. 5. Cent. 9. c. 2. p. 3.

[t] T. Hieroſ. Maaſer Sheni, fol. 56. 3. T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 11. 2.

Ver. 4. *To an inheritance incorruptible*, &c.] This is a further explanation of the *lively hope*, or hope laid up in heaven, which regenerate ones are begotten to: tis an *inheritance*; a large eſtate, and rich poſſeſſion, they are born heirs apparent to; what is not to be got by induſtry, or obtained by the works of the law; for they that are of the law are not heirs; but what is the pure bequeſt and free gift of God, as a father to his children; for an inheritance is proper and peculiar to children, nor does it belong to any but them; and it comes to them through the death of the teſtator, Chriſt, and of it the Holy Spirit is the pledge and earneſt: and here it is ſaid to be *incorruptible*; it is free from corruption in itſelf; nor can it be corrupted by others, by moth, or ruſt, or other things, as gold, ſilver, and garments may, which are a part of earthly inheritances; nor can it be enjoyed by corrupt perſons, either corrupted with ſin, or clothed with frailty and mortality; wherefore, in order to inherit it, corruption muſt put on incorruption, in every ſenſe; other epithets and commendations of it follow: *and undefiled*; it is in its own nature pure and holy, and free from any defilement of ſin; nor are there any of thoſe impurities in it which *Jews* and *Mahometans* dream of in their vainly expected earthly paradiſe; nor will it be poſſeſſed by any but undefiled perſons, ſuch as are made ſo through the blood and righteouſneſs of Chriſt: *and that fadeth not away*; as do this world, and the glory of it, and all inheritances and poſſeſſions in it; here is no continuing city, but there is one to come; in this inheritance are durable riches, everlaſting habitations, an houſe eternal in the heavens, glories in it that will never wither and die, and pleaſures which will never end, and which will be enjoyed without decreaſe or loathing: *reſerved in heaven for you*; the *Alexandrian* copy reads, *for us*; and the *Ethiopic* verſion renders it, *for us and you*; for all the ſaints; for all who are the elect, according to the foreknowledge of God, and who are begotten again to a lively hope; for theſe this inheritance is prepared, laid up, and ſecured in the hands of Chriſt their feoffee, who has it in truſt for them, and with whom they are coheirs; and it is ſafe for them *in heaven*; out of the reach of men and devils: this ſerves both to commend the inheritance, to ſet forth the excellency of it, lying in ſuch a place as heaven; for the ſituation of an inheritance adds oftentimes to the valuableneſs of it; and alſo the ſafety and ſecurity of it; it is ſafe, being in heaven, and more ſo as it is in Chriſt's hands there. The *Jews* are wont to call the future ſtate, an inheritance of the land of the living: they ſay [u], "this is called, נחלה, *an inheritance*; and add, "but in this world a man has no inheritance, nor "continuance;" ſo they interpret that phraſe, *by the God of thy father*, in *Gen*. xlix. 25. thus [w]; "this is אחסנא, *the inheritance* of the ſuperior "place, which is called *heaven*;" and ſometimes they ſtile it, אחסנתא עלאה, *the ſuperior inheritance*, or, *the inheritance above* [x]; all which agrees with *Peter*'s language.

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[u] Tzeror Hammor, fol. 150. 3.

[w] Zohar in Gen. fol. 131. 2.

Ver. 5. *Who are kept by the power of God*, &c.] This is a deſcription of the perſons for whom the inheritance is reſerved in heaven; they are not only choſen to ſalvation, and begotten again to an inheritance, but they are preſerved unto it; their happineſs is very great; their inheritance is ſafe in heaven for them, and they are kept below, amidſt a thouſand ſnares and difficulties, till they ſafely arrive to the poſſeſſion of that: they are kept, not in and by themſelves, the way of man is not in himſelf; nor in the hands of angels, for no ſuch truſt does God put in them; but in the hands of Jeſus Chriſt, where they are ſafe, and out of which none can pluck them; on him, as a foundation, and in him, as a ſtrong hold; they are kept in the love of God, and on his heart, from whence they can never be ſeparated, and in the covenant of grace, out of which they'll never be put; and in a ſtate of juſtification, and ſhall never enter into condemnation; and in the family of God, for being ſons, they are no more ſervants; and in a ſtate of grace and holineſs, in the fear of God, and faith of Chriſt, and love to both; and in the path of truth, from whence they can never finally and totally fall: for tho' they are not kept from the being of ſin, and the workings of it, and ſlips and falls into it, yet from being deſtroyed by it; and tho' not from ſatan, and his temptations, yet from being overcome by them; and tho' not entirely from unbelief, doubts, and fears, yet from final unbelief; for Chriſt prays for them, that their faith fail not; and from a final and total falling away from grace into ſin: and they are kept thus, not by their own power and might, or that of any mere creature, but *by the power of God*; meaning, not the Goſpel, nor the Spirit of God, but the perfection of his power; by which they are kept, as with a guard, or in a garriſon, as the word here uſed ſignifies; not only angels encamp about them, and ſalvation is for walls and bulwarks, all around them; but God himſelf in the perfection of his power, is a wall of fire to them; he is round about them from henceforth and for ever; their place of defence is the munition of rocks; his name is a ſtrong tower, where they run and are ſafe: tis added, *through faith*; ſome verſions read it, *and by faith*, as the *Syriac* and *Ethiopic*; by that faith which is of the operation of God, of which Chriſt is the author and finiſher, and ſhall never fail, it being ſupported by the ſame power the ſaints are kept; through faith, in the power and faithfulneſs of God; through faith looking to Chriſt, leaning on him, and living upon him; by faith getting the victory over the world, and every other enemy, and being more than conquerors, through Chriſt. That to which the ſaints are kept is, *unto ſalvation*; ſalvation is already obtained for them, by the obedience and ſufferings of Chriſt, and is applied to them in converſion, by the Spirit of Chriſt; but the full enjoyment of it, which is here intended, is reſerved for them in heaven; and to this they are kept, being heirs of it, and ſhall certainly poſſeſs it: and which is *ready to be revealed in the laſt time*; it is *ready*, being a kingdom prepared from the foundation of the world, and a ſalvation obtained by the blood of Chriſt, and a manſion of glory made fit for them, through the preſence and interceſſion of their redeemer: and it is ready *to be revealed*; in a ſhort time it will be made manifeſt; at preſent it is much out of ſight; eye has not ſeen, nor ear heard the full glories of it; ſaints themſelves as yet don't know what they ſhall be, and have: but *in the laſt time*, when Chriſt ſhall come a ſecond time to judge the world, he'll raiſe the dead bodies of his ſaints; and then this ſalvation ſhall be fully manifeſted to them; and they ſhall enjoy it both in ſoul and body to all eternity.

Ver. 6. *Wherein ye greatly rejoice*, &c.] The *Vulgate Latin* verſion reads, *in which ye ſhall rejoice*; and ſo the *Syriac* verſion, adding, *for ever*; and refer theſe words to the *laſt time*, or times ſpoken of in the preceding verſe; when the ſaints will greatly rejoice, being in full poſſeſſion of eternal ſalvation; in diſtinction from the preſent time, in which they are in heavineſs; but it is better to read the words in the preſent tenſe, and as expreſſive of the ſaints in this life, who are bleſſed with that fruit of the Spirit, joy, and have always reaſon to rejoice, and greatly rejoice. The connexion is with the whole that goes before; and the ſenſe is this, that regenerated perſons rejoice, in that they are the elect of God, according to his everlaſting love towards them, and free grace, and good will; in their regeneration, which is an evidence of their election of God; in the abundant mercy of God diſplayed in their regeneration; and in that lively hope of eternal life which is the effect of it; and in the reſurrection of Chriſt from the dead, which ſecures their juſtification of life, and their reſurrection from the dead; and in the inheritance they are born heirs unto; and in their preſervation to it by the power of God through faith; and in that compleat ſalvation which is ready for them, and in a ſhort time will be revealed, to which they are kept: *tho' now for a ſeaſon (if need be) ye are in heavineſs, through manifold temptations*. This ſeems to be a contraſt, but is no real contradiction; for the character of the ſaints in this world is, that they are, *as ſorrowful, yet always rejoicing*, 2 *Cor.* vi. 10. rejoicing even in their tribulations and temptations; yea, for them, and on account of them, in ſome reſpects, which in others make them ſorrowful, and heavy, or *heavy* with ſorrow: the cauſe of this heavineſs is not only indwelling corruptions, the hidings of God's face, and the temptations of ſatan, but afflictions and perſecutions, which are here meant by, *manifold temptations*; for not the temptations of ſatan, or to ſin, are here intended, but the temptations with which God tempts and tries his people: ſo he ſometimes does, by calling them to hard ſervice, to do things difficult and diſagreeable to fleſh and blood, in which way he tempted *Abraham*; and by laying afflictions, or ſuffering afflictions to come upon them, by which he tried *Job*; and by permitting wicked men to reproach and perſecute them, and to injure them in their characters, perſons, and properties; and which was the caſe of the primitive chriſtians, and has been more or leſs the caſe of the ſaints ever ſince: now ſuch exerciſes are called, from the quality of them, *temptations*, or trials; becauſe they try the hearts, principles, and graces of them that believe, and particularly their faith hereafter mentioned; and from the quantity of them, they are ſaid to be, *various*; they are of different ſorts; as reproach, impriſonment, loſs of goods, and death itſelf in divers ſhapes; and are more or leſs at different times and ages; and are exerciſed on various perſons: and are ſometimes very heavy, and grievous to be born, and cauſe great heavineſs and ſorrow of heart; and yet there are things, and circumſtances, and which are here hinted at, that greatly mitigate the heavineſs occaſioned by them; as, that theſe

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[x] Ib. in Exod. fol. 34. 3.

afflictions, and the heavineſs that comes by them, are but *little*, and light, in compariſon of the eternal weight of glory; tho' they are great tribulations in themſelves, through and out of which the people of God come to the kingdom; and ſo the *Syriac* verſion renders it, *tho' at this time* קליל *ye are a little made ſorrowful*; and then it is only *now*, for the preſent time, and but for a ſhort time; for a little ſeaſon, even for a moment, comparatively ſpeaking; and alſo, *if need be*, which the *Syriac* verſion omits, tho' by all means to be retained: afflictive diſpenſations, in whatſoever form, are neceſſary, by the will of God, who has appointed them, and therefore muſt be, and ought to be, quietly ſubmitted to, and patiently born, on that conſideration; and are alſo neceſſary, on account of Chriſt the head, to whom there muſt be a conformity of his members; and likewiſe on their own account; for the humbling of their ſouls; for the weaning of them from the things of this world; for the reſtraining, ſubduing, and keeping under the corruptions of their nature; and for the trial of grace: and tis only *if*, and when there is a neceſſity for them, that they are in heavineſs by them; otherwiſe God does not delight to afflict and grieve the children of men, and much leſs his own; ſee *Lam.* iii. 33. ſo the *Jews* ſay[y], that הוצרך, *there was a neceſſity*, of God's tempting *Abraham* as he did, to humble and purify him.

Ver. 7. *That the trial of your faith*, &c.] This is the principal end which God has in afflictive providences, to try the faith of his people; ſo the faith of *Abraham*, *Job*, *Habakkuk*, and others, have been tried: *being much more precious than of gold that periſheth*; the grace of faith is much more precious than gold; ſince that periſheth by uſing, but faith does not; and ſince it is ſo valuable as not to be obtained by it; and ſince thoſe that have it, tho' poor in this world, are rich, and heirs of a kingdom: but the trying of it is abundantly more precious than gold; for not only as gold being tried in the fire is purged from its droſs, and is proved to be genuine, and ſhines the brighter, ſo faith being tried in the fire of afflictions, is purged from unbelief; and the believer is purged from his droſs and tin, and his iniquity is purged, and the fruit of all is to take away ſin; and he is tried and proved to be a true believer, and his faith ſhines the more illuſtriouſly, as in the above inſtances; yea, the very trying of it has an influence on other graces, for great uſefulneſs; for the trying of faith works patience, and that, experience, and that, hope: *tho' it be tried with fire*; either tho' gold be tried with fire, and ſo is greatly refined, yet it is more precious than that; or tho' faith be tried with the fire of afflictions, yet it is precious, and more precious than gold: and it is tried for this purpoſe, that it *might be found unto praiſe and honour and glory, at the appearing of Jeſus Chriſt*; who is now in the higheſt heavens, and out of ſight, but will appear a ſecond time without ſin unto ſalvation, and every eye ſhall ſee him; and when the believer will be found in him, and his faith be found unto praiſe by him, he'll have praiſe of him himſelf; it will be ſaid unto him, well done good and faithful ſervant; his faith will be praiſed for its ſteadineſs and conſtancy, notwithſtanding all perſecutions and tribulations; and his good works, the fruits of faith, will be taken notice of by him with commendation; he'll be honoured, by being placed on the right hand of Chriſt, and by being ſet down with him in his throne, and having a crown of righteouſneſs given to him; and he'll be glorified both in ſoul and body; his body will be made like to Chriſt's glorious body, and his ſoul will have a glory revealed in it; and in his whole perſon he ſhall appear, when Chriſt does, with him in glory.

Ver. 8. *Whom having not ſeen ye love*, &c.] That is, Jeſus Chriſt, whom they had never ſeen with their bodily eyes, being *Jews*, who dwelt not in *Judea*, when Chriſt was upon earth, but were ſcattered about in ſeveral parts of the *Gentile* world; and yet Chriſt being made known to them, through the preaching of the Goſpel, they received and embraced him, and their affections were ſtrongly ſet upon him: they loved him becauſe of his excellencies and perfections, becauſe of the lovelineſs of his perſon, and becauſe he firſt loved them; they loved him becauſe of the fullneſs of grace that was in him, becauſe of what he had done for them, and was unto them, and becauſe of the offices he ſuſtained on their account, and the relations he ſtood in to them; they loved him above all creatures and things, and all of him, and that belong unto him, his people, truths, ordinances, ways, and worſhip; they loved him with all their hearts, and in the ſincerity of their ſouls, tho' they had never ſeen his face in the fleſh; whereas ſight often begets and increaſes love: their love was not carnal, but ſpiritual; it was a fruit of the Spirit of God in their ſouls; was accompanied with faith in Chriſt, and proceeded upon the report the Goſpel made of him: *in whom tho' now ye ſee him not, yet believing*; the *Arabic* verſion adds, *in him*; that is, in Chriſt, who was then received up into heaven, and muſt be retained there until the time of the reſtitution of all things; and therefore not now to be beheld with corporeal ſight: and yet theſe regenerate ones, and lovers of Chriſt, believed in him; ſee *John* xx. 29. not with a notional, hiſtorical, and temporary faith, believing not merely what he ſaid, or did, or does, or will do; but looking on him, and to him, for life and ſalvation; going out of themſelves to him, embracing of him, leaning upon him as their ſaviour and redeemer; venturing their ſouls upon him, committing their all unto him, expecting all from him, both grace and glory: and ſo *rejoice with joy unſpeakable and full of glory*; with a joy in believing on him, which is better experienced than expreſſed; a joy that not only ſtrangers intermeddle not with, know nothing of, which entirely paſſes their underſtanding, but is ſuch as ſaints themſelves can't ſpeak out, or give a full and diſtinct account of; they want words to expreſs it, and convey proper ideas of it to others: and it is a joy that is glorious; there is a rejoicing that is evil, and ſcandalous; but this is honourable, and of which none need be aſhamed; it is ſolid and ſubſtantial, and the matter of it always abiding, when the joy of the hypocrite is but for a moment; it is a joy on account of the glory of God, which the believer lives in the hope and faith of; and it is a beginning, a preſage, and pledge of it; it is a glory begun here; it is the firſt-fruits, and a part alſo of it; and by it ſaints may know a little what heaven itſelf will be.

Ver. 9. *Receiving the end of your faith*, even *the ſalvation of* your *ſouls*.] Which is a juſt and ſufficient ground of joy, and rejoicing. *Salvation* intends ſpiritual and eternal ſalvation; that which God appointed his people to from all eternity, which is obtained by Chriſt, applied by the Spirit, and will be fully enjoyed in heaven: this is the ſalvation *of ſouls*; which are of more worth than a world; and the redemption of which is precious, and requires a great price, and for which a great price is paid, as in ver. 18, 19. It is rightly ſupplied in our verſion by *your*, as in the *Syriac*, *Arabic*, and *Ethiopic* verſions; though the *Vulgate Latin* verſion only reads, *the ſalvation of ſouls*; and which is to be underſtood, not to the excluſion of bodies, for God has deſigned the ſalvation of them; and Chriſt has procured the redemption of them; and theſe will be preſerved unto the coming of Chriſt, being united to him; and will be raiſed by him, and with their ſouls enjoy everlaſting happineſs with him; tho' in the preſent ſtate of things, ſalvation rather takes place in the ſoul than in the body, which is expoſed to various labours, afflictions, and diſeaſes; but the chief deſign of the phraſe is, to diſtinguiſh this ſalvation from a corporal and temporal one: and ſo the *Jews* uſe the phraſe, תשועת הנפש, *the ſalvation of the ſoul*[y], in oppoſition to, and diſtinction from a mere bodily one; and it intends a ſalvation from ſin, ſatan, the law, and its curſes; from hell, the ſecond death, and wrath to come, and every ſpiritual enemy: which is *the end of faith*; or, as the *Syriac* verſion renders it, פורענא, *the reward of faith*; not that faith is the cauſe of ſalvation, or meritorious of it; for that itſelf is the gift of God, and is rather a part of ſalvation, and at moſt, but the means of perceiving an intereſt in it, and of enjoying the comfort of it; and is what will iſſue in it, and in the full enjoyment of it; when faith will both have its end and ſcope, and be at an end, being exchanged for fruition; juſt as a reward is given at the end of a man's labours; hence it's called, אחרית, *the end*, *Prov.* xxiii. 18. and even now ſalvation is the end of faith, in like ſenſe as Chriſt is the end of the law: as the law has its full accompliſhment, and all its ends anſwered in Chriſt, ſo faith has its end, and all it looks for, deſires, and wants; in ſalvation by Chriſt: and which is now *receiving*; for the ſaints not only ſhall receive, and enjoy the full poſſeſſion of it hereafter, but they have it now; it is not only appointed to them, and wrought out for them, but is brought near, ſet before them, and applied to them, and put into the hands of faith by the Spirit of God; they have it in faith and hope, by which they are already ſaved; and in Chriſt their head and repreſentative, in whom they are ſet down in heavenly places; and beſides, they have the beginning, firſt fruits, earneſt, and pledge of it in their own hearts, as well as a right unto, and a meetneſs for the perfect poſſeſſion of it hereafter; all which is matter of joy unſpeakable, and full of glory.

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[y] Tzeror Hammor, fol. 22. 1.

Ver. 10. *Of which ſalvation the prophets have enquired*, &c.] They greatly deſired the coming of the ſaviour, and to ſee him; they longed after the ſalvation to be accompliſhed by him, and expreſſed their wiſhes for him, and that; and enquired into the nature of it, and gave an account thereof, according to the meaſure of light and knowledge communicated to them; they ponited out Chriſt as a redeemer of his people, and his ſalvation as ſpiritual and eternal: *and ſearched diligently*; in the uſe of means; by prayer and ſupplication; by reading the prophecies that went before; by obſerving the types, ſhadows, and ſacrifices of the law; and by waiting upon the Lord for the inſpiration of his Spirit. This laſt clauſe is omitted in the *Syriac* verſion, but rightly retained in all others: *who propheſied of the grace*; that ſhould come *unto you*; *Jews*, and alſo the *Gentiles*. They propheſied both of Chriſt, who is the unſpeakable gift of God's free grace, who is full of grace, and by whom it comes; and alſo of the ſeveral bleſſings of grace thro' Chriſt, as of redeeming grace from ſin, ſatan, death, and the grave; of juſtifying grace, thro' his righteouſneſs, he being the Lord our righteouſneſs, in whom all the ſeed of *Iſrael* ſhall be juſtified, and glory; for tho' his righteouſneſs is revealed without the law, yet it is witneſſed to by law and prophets; of pardoning grace, as with God, and as a bleſſing of the new covenant, and as received thro' faith in Chriſt, to which give all the prophets witneſs; of adopting grace, both to *Jews* and *Gentiles*, ſignifying, that where they were not called the people of God, they ſhould be called the ſons of God; of regenerating and ſanctifying grace, in giving a new heart and ſpirit, in ſprinkling with clean water, in writing the laws of God in the inward parts, and pouring out the Spirit in a plenteous manner on all ſorts of men; of perſevering grace, intimating that they that fear the Lord ſhall not depart from him, and that his loving kindneſs ſhall never depart from them; and of eternal life and glory, as God's free gift, which is that everlaſting ſalvation, they ſay, *Iſrael* ſhall be ſaved in the Lord with.

Ver. 11. *Searching what, or what manner of time*, &c.] The prophets made a very diligent enquiry into the exact time when Chriſt ſhould come to work out the ſalvation of his people; to whom it was made known that his coming ſhould be before the ſceptre, or tribe of *Judah*, and all civil government in it ceaſed; and before the ſecond temple was deſtroyed, into which the Meſſiah, the meſſenger of the covenant, was to come, as the Lord and proprietor of it; and that it ſhould be ſeventy weeks, or 490 years, from a date given in *Dan.* ix. 24, 25, 26. as it was revealed to the prophet *Daniel*; who particularly enquired, and diligently ſearched into this matter, and was eminently a *man of deſires* this way, as he is ſtiled, *Dan.* ix. 23. and they not only ſearched into the exact time, but into the manner and quality of the time when the ſaviour ſhould come; and foretold that it would be, with reſpect to the nations of the world, a time of profound peace; with reſpect to the *Jews*, that it would be a time of great blindneſs, ignorance, unbelief, and hardneſs of heart; that ſuch would be that generation, or age, for wickedneſs and barbarity, as could not be declared and expreſſed; and that few would believe the report of the Goſpel; and that the Meſſiah would be rejected of men, and be wounded, bruiſed, and put to death; and with reſpect to the *Gentiles*, that the Goſpel would be preached to them, and that they ſhould ſeek to Chriſt, be gathered to him, and hope and truſt in him; and that the followers of the *Meſſiah* ſhould be perſecuted, and greatly diſtreſſed, and yet comforted and ſuſtained; and this ſhould be the face of the times, and the ſtate of things, when the ſalvation ſhould be revealed: and all this, and much more, *the Spirit of Chriſt in them did ſignify*; or *make manifeſt*; from whence it appears, that Chriſt then exiſted, as he did before there were any prophets, and even from everlaſting, being the eternal God; and that the Spirit is from him, as well as from the Father; and as here, ſo he is often, by the *Jews*[a], called, רוחא משיחא, *the Spirit of the Meſſiah*, or *Chriſt*; and that the Spirit is truly God, ſince he could declare before hand the exact time of Chriſt's coming, and the quality of the age in which he came, as well as bear a previous teſtimony to his ſufferings and glory; as alſo, that he was in the prophets, and they were inſpired by him, and ſpake as he moved and directed them: *when it teſtified before hand the ſufferings of Chriſt, and the glory that ſhould follow.* The *ſufferings of Chriſt*, are what the *Jews* call [b], חבלי של משיח, *the ſorrows of the Meſſiah.* Theſe are particularly teſtified of in *Pſ.* xxii. and lxix. *Iſ.* liii. and *Dan.* ix. 26. and *Zech.* xii. 10. The glory, or *glories*, as it may be rendered, deſign his reſurrection from the dead, his aſcenſion to heaven, his ſeſſion at the right hand of God, and having all power, authority, and judgment committed to him; and which are eminently and diſtinctly propheſied of in *Pſ.* xvi. 10. and lxviii. 18. and cx. 1. and *Dan.* vii. 13, 14.

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[y] Tzeror Hammor, fol. 168. 4.

[a] Zohar in Gen. fol. 19. 3. & paſſim.

Ver. 12. *Unto whom it was revealed,* &c.] The ſalvation they ſearched and enquired into, and the grace of it; the time of its being wrought out, and what ſort of times they would be when Chriſt ſhould come, both to the church, and to the world, among *Jews* and *Gentiles*; as alſo what cruel ſufferings the Meſſiah ſhould undergo, and what great glory ſhould be put upon him afterwards: *that not unto themſelves, but unto us they did miniſter.* The *Vulgate Latin*, *Arabic*, and *Ethiopic* verſions read, *unto you*; and ſo do ſome copies. Not that they were ignorant of the things they ſearched into, and were revealed unto them, and they propheſied of; as the *Jews* ſometimes ſay [c] of them, "that they "propheſied, and knew not what they propheſied "of;" tho' it is not to be ſuppoſed, that they had ſuch clear and diſtinct ideas of things, as ſaints have now under the Goſpel-diſpenſation; yet they knew much of the grace of the Goſpel, and had the comfort of it, and a view of intereſt in the great ſalvation, and ſaw the day of Chriſt afar off with pleaſure: nor that they did not miniſter, and were not uſeful to the ſaints of the age in which they lived; for their propheſies concerning Chriſt, and ſalvation by him, were particularly calculated for their ſpiritual refreſhment and comfort, and the ſupport of their faith and hope under afflictive circumſtances; but then they were not to have their accompliſhment in their times; for though they ſometimes ſpeak of them, becauſe of the certainty of them, as if they were already done, yet they knew they were not to be brought about until the laſt days; and therefore what was written by them, was written for our learning and inſtruction chiefly, and principally, on whom the ends of the world are come; and tho' they were both profitable to themſelves, and others that lived with them, yet they are more ſo to the ſaints under the Goſpel-diſpenſation, who are able to compare propheſies and facts together: even *the things which are now reported unto you*; as accompliſhed facts; ſuch as relate to the perſon and offices of Chriſt, and ſalvation wrought out by him; to his incarnation, obedience, ſufferings, death, reſurrection, aſcenſion into heaven, and ſeſſion at the right hand of God; of all which there is a true and faithful report made in the Goſpel: *by them that have preached the Goſpel unto you*; meaning himſelf, and the reſt of the Apoſtles, who had been called, and qualified, and ſent out by Chriſt to preach glad tidings, and publiſh peace, which they had done in the ſeveral parts of the world, both to *Jew* and *Gentile*: *with the Holy Ghoſt ſent down from heaven*; by Chriſt from the Father, particularly at the day of *Pentecoſt*, when the Apoſtles had an extraordinary and plentiful effuſion of the Spirit, qualifying them to preach the Goſpel to which they were called and ſent: and thus, as the great ſalvation is commended, from the concern that the prophets of old had in it, ſo from the preaching of it by the Apoſtles, who were influenced and guided by the ſame Spirit of Chriſt as they were, and in a far greater manner; and this ſalvation is ſtill more commended from the great regard the bleſſed angels have unto it: *which things the angels deſire to look into.* The *Vulgate Latin* verſion reads, *into whom*; either into the Holy Spirit, and the things of the Spirit, which he teſtified in the prophets, and publiſhed by the Apoſtles; or rather into Chriſt, his perſon, offices, and grace, the alluſion being to the *cherubim* on the mercy-ſeat, a type of Chriſt, which looked to one another, and to the mercy-ſeat, *Exod.* xxv. 20. and was true of them in the days of Chriſt's fleſh, when they aſcended and deſcended on the ſon of man, *John* i. 51. and when he roſe from the dead, and went to heaven; for then was he ſeen and gazed on by angels, as he now is, 1 *Tim.* iii. 16. or *into which things*; ſo the *Syriac*, *Arabic*, and *Ethiopic* verſions read; namely, the ſufferings of Chriſt, and the glories following; the great myſtery of redemption and ſalvation by Chriſt; the ſeveral doctrines of the Goſpel, in which the glory of the grace, wiſdom, righteouſneſs, truth, and power of God is diſplayed; things they are highly delighted with, take pleaſure in the contemplation of, and deſire to have a greater knowledge of, and acquaintance with: they ſung glory to God in the higheſt at the incarnation of Chriſt; they rejoice at the converſion of a ſinner; and diſdain not to be miniſtring ſpirits to the heirs of ſalvation; and learn of the church the manifold wiſdom of God; which may ſerve greatly to commend the excellency of Goſpel truths, and engage us in the ſtudy of them.

Ver. 13. *Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind,* &c.] With the girdle of truth; ſee *Eph.* vi. 14. ſince angels deſire to look into the myſteries of grace, do you apply your minds, and diligently attend unto them, in oppoſition to all looſe and vagrant thoughts of the mind, about other things: give yourſelves up wholly to them, meditate upon them, employ yourſelves in them, and about them; ſeeing they are the ſtudy and enquiry of angels, and what the prophets have propheſied of, and ſearched into, and miniſtred, and the Apoſtles of Chriſt have preached; and beſides, are things which relate to the perſon, office, ſufferings, and glory of Chriſt, and the ſalvation of immortal ſouls. Tho' the phraſe is ſometimes uſed to denote preparation and readineſs, and to be in a fit poſition to do any thing, as the *Iſraelites* were at the eating of the firſt paſſover, to march at the leaſt notice out of *Egypt*; and ſo to go a journey, to run a race, to ſerve another, to wait on him, and for him, and alſo be prepared for battle; and is a metaphor taken from the cuſtom of the eaſtern nations, who uſed to wear long garments, which they gathered up cloſe to them, and girt about them, when they were about any of the above things, that they might be no hindrance to them, and that they might perform them with more expedition and diſpatch; and ſo may be expreſſive of the readineſs of believers, as pilgrims and travellers, for their journey towards the heavenly country, and to run the race ſet before them, and alſo to do every good work, according to the ſtation they are placed in, to ſerve their Lord and maſter Jeſus Chriſt in whatſoever he calls them to, and to wait for his coming; ſee *Luke* xii. 35, 36, 37. and alſo to fight his battles,

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[b] T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 118. 1. & paſſim.

[c] T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 119. 2.

battles, to quit themſelves like men, and be ſtrong in defence of his Goſpel, and againſt every enemy of his and theirs. *Be ſober*; which is not only oppoſed to intemperance in eating and drinking, which greatly diſqualifies for the above readineſs and attention; but alſo to a being inebriated with the cares of this life, which choak the word, and make it unfruitful, and lead men into temptation, and many fooliſh and hurtful luſts, and from the faith of Chriſt; and likewiſe to a being intoxicated with errors, and falſe doctrine, which lull men aſleep, and render them uncapable of ſerving Chriſt, and his church; and turn their heads from faith to fables, and are contrary to the words of truth and ſoberneſs; ſo that to be ſober, is not only to be moderate in eating and drinking, but to be diſengaged from the anxious cares of the world, and to be diſentangled, recovered, or awaked from the error of the wicked: *and hope to the end*; or *perfectly*, as the *Greek* word may be rendered, and as it is in the *Syriac* verſion, which joins it with the other phraſe, and renders it, *be ye perfectly awaked*. The *Arabic* verſion renders it, *truſting with a perfect confidence*; ſo that it deſigns either the nature of that lively hope, to which they were begotten again, and are here exhorted to exercise, it being perfect, ſincere, and without hypocriſy; not like the hope of the hypocrite, which ſhall periſh, and ſtand him in no ſtead, but an undiſſembled one; for as there is faith unfeigned, and love without diſſimulation, ſo hope without hypocriſy; and alſo the full aſſurance of it, for as there is a plerophory of faith, and love, and of underſtanding, ſo of hope; ſee *Heb.* vi. 11. or it intends the duration of this grace, and the exerciſe of it: it is a grace that does, and will remain, and it ought to be continually exerciſed, and the rejoicing of it to be kept firm, *to the end*; to the end of life, and until the ſaints come to the enjoyment of what they are hoping for; even *for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jeſus Chriſt*; and which may be rendered for the grace that is brought unto you, in, or by the revelation of Jeſus Chriſt: and the ſenſe may be, that there is grace that is now brought to light by the Goſpel, and that is brought home to the ſouls of God's people thro' it; as electing grace, redeeming grace, juſtifying grace, pardoning grace, adopting grace; and in ſhort, ſalvation, as all of grace; which Goſpel is the revelation of Jeſus Chriſt: it is a revelation that is made by him; and it is a revelation that is made of him; it is a revelation of the glory of his perſon, and offices; herein is his righteouſneſs revealed from faith to faith; and here the riches of his grace are made manifeſt, and laid to open view; life and immortality are brought to light by Chriſt in it; and the way to eternal life, glory, and ſalvation, as being by Chriſt, is pointed out by it; and all this grace that is brought, and ſet before the ſaints in the Goſpel, they ought to hope for, and comfortably believe their intereſt in; and continue thus hoping, believing, and truſting to the end of their days: or if our verſion, and which is that of others alſo, be retained, the meaning is, that eternal glory and happineſs, which is called *grace*, becauſe it is the free gift of God thro' Chriſt, to his children and flock, and is the finiſhing of the grace that is beſtowed on them, and wrought in them, and is future, *is to be brought*; is a glory that ſhall be revealed in them, and a ſalvation ready to be revealed to them; and which will be done, when Chriſt ſhall be revealed from heaven, when he ſhall appear a ſecond time, and in glory; and is, and ought to be, the object of their hope, for it is laid up, and reſerved for them; and they have the earneſt of it in them, as well as the promiſe of it to them. The *Syriac* and *Ethiopic* verſions, inſtead of *grace*, read, *joy*; and is the ſame with eternal glory, the joy of the Lord prepared for them, and which they ſhall enter into.

Ver. 14. *As obedient children*, &c.] Or *children of obedience*. This may be connected either with what goes before, that ſeeing they were children of God, by adopting grace, and in regeneration brought to the obedience of faith, to whom the inheritance belonged, therefore they ought to continue hoping for it; or with what follows, that ſince they were manifeſtly the children of God by faith, in Chriſt Jeſus, being begotten again to a lively hope, they ought to be followers of him, and imitate him in holineſs and righteouſneſs, and ſhew themſelves to be obedient ones to his Goſpel and ordinances, as children ought to honour, and obey, and imitate their parents: *not faſhioning yourſelves to the former luſts in your ignorance*. The phraſe is much the ſame with that in *Rom.* xii. 2. *be not conformed to this world*; for to be conformed, or faſhioned, to the world, is to be faſhioned to the luſts of it; and to be faſhioned to the luſts of it, is to indulge them, to make proviſion for them, to obey them, to live and walk in them; which ſhould not be done by the children of God, and who profeſs themſelves to be obedient ones to the Goſpel, which teaches otherwiſe; and that becauſe they are *luſts*, fooliſh, hurtful, and deceitful ones, ungodly ones; the luſts of the devil, as well as of the world, and of the fleſh, and which war againſt the ſoul; and becauſe they are *former* ones, which they ſerved in a time of unregeneracy, and were now convinced and aſhamed of, and therefore ſhould no longer live to them; the time paſt of life being ſufficient to have walked in them: and becauſe they were luſts *in ignorance*, which they had indulged in a ſtate of ignorance; not of *Gentiliſm*, tho' this might be the caſe of ſome, but of *Judaiſm*; when they knew not God, eſpecially in Chriſt, and were ignorant of his righteouſneſs, and of the exceeding ſinfulneſs of ſin, as committed againſt a law, that was holy, and ſpiritual; nor did they know Chriſt, and the way of ſalvation by him, but thought they ought to do many things contrary to his name; nor the work of the Spirit in regeneration, ſaying with *Nicodemus*, how can theſe things be? nor the true ſenſe of the ſcriptures, the ſacred oracles, that were committed to them; much leſs the Goſpel, which was hidden from them, and they were enemies to: but now it was otherwiſe with them; they were made light in the Lord, and had knowledge of all theſe things; and therefore as their light increaſed, and the grace of God bringing ſalvation, appeared unto them, and ſhone out on them, it became them to deny ungodlineſs, and wordly luſts, and not to walk as they had done before, ſince they had not ſo learned Chriſt.

Ver. 15. *But as he which hath called you is holy*, &c.] Which is a periphraſis of God the Father, who had called them, not merely in an external way, by the outward miniſtry of the word; but internally, powerfully, and efficaciouſly, by his Spirit and grace; and who had called them to holineſs of life and converſation, as well as in calling had implanted principles of holineſs in them, and therefore is ſaid to call them with an holy calling; and who himſelf is holy, naturally, perfectly, and originally, and in ſuch ſenſe as no creature is, angels or men; and is glorious in holineſs, and is the ſource and fountain of holineſs in others: therefore ſo *be ye holy in all manner of converſation*; which reſpects not internal holineſs, but ſuppoſes it; for that is God's work, and not the creature's act; tis the ſanctification of the Spirit, of which he is the author; this they were choſen unto from the beginning, and made partakers of in regeneration; but external holineſs, holineſs of life and converſation, in all the parts and branches of it, both with reſpect to God and men, in matters both of religion, and civil life: and to be holy in this ſenſe, is an imitating of God, a copying after him, tho' he is far from being equalled by a ſinful creature, or even by an angel in heaven; however, the arguments to it, taken from the nature of God, and of his effectual calling to grace and holineſs, are very ſtrong and powerful; for it is walking worthy of him, who has called us to his kingdom and glory; and walking worthy of that vocation wherein we are called; and a following of God, as dear and obedient children; and what is according to his will, and what he directs unto, and requires, as appears from what follows.

Ver. 16. *Becauſe it is written*, &c.] In *Lev.* xi. 44. and xix. 2. and xx. 7. *be ye holy, for I am holy*; an argument the Apoſtle knew muſt have weight with theſe perſons, who were chiefly *Jews*, ſcattered abroad among the *Gentiles*, and had a value for the ſcriptures of truth; and therefore, as the argument for holineſs of life, from the nature and perfections of God is ſtrong, it muſt receive additional ſtrength from this being the declared will of God, even their ſanctification, on this account; and tho' holineſs, equal to God, is never to be attained to by a creature, yet ſo far as it is capable of it, it is deſireable, becauſe agreeable both to the nature and will of God, by all ſuch who are truly his children, who love his name, adore his perfections, give thanks at the remembrance of his holineſs, fear his goodneſs, and obey his will.

Ver. 17. *And if ye call on the Father*, &c.] Of Chriſt, and of all the ſaints; or *ſeeing* ye do. This is a freſh argument, engaging to holineſs of life and converſation. Invocation of God, includes the whole worſhip of him, the performance of every outward duty, and the exerciſe of every inward grace, particularly it deſigns prayer; and whoever are concerned in one, or the other, God will be ſanctified by all them that draw nigh unto him: or the phraſe may here intend an aſſerting God to be their father, under the influence of the Spirit of adoption; and all ſuch that do claim ſo near a relation to God, ought to honour and obey him, and to be followers of him: whoever call God their Father, and themſelves his children, ought to be careful that they do not blaſpheme, or cauſe to be blaſphemed, that worthy name by which they are called: *who without reſpect of perſons judgeth according to every man's work.* This is another reaſon why men ſhould be holy, taken from the general judgment; for this God that is a Father, is alſo a judge. There is a judgment after death, which is ſure and certain, and reaches to all perſons and things; and though the Father judges no man, but has committed all judgment to the Son, yet he'll judge every one by that man Chriſt, whom he has ordained to be the judge of quick and dead: before his judgment ſeat all muſt ſtand, where they will be impartially, and without reſpect of perſons, tried; no account will be had of what nation and place they are, whether *Jews* or *Gentiles*, or of this, or the other country, unleſs to aggravate or leſſen their condemnation; for it will be more tolerable for *Tyre* and *Sidon*, for *Sodom* and *Gomorrha*, than for ſuch who have been favoured with a Goſpel revelation, and believe it not; nor from what parents they have deſcended, for the ſoul that ſins, that ſhall die; nor of what age and ſex they are, ſmall and great ſhall ſtand before him; nor of what ſtate and condition, rich or poor, high or low, bond or free; or of what religious ſect and denomination, or whether they have conformed to ſome external things or not; no regard will be had to any outward appearance or profeſſion. The judge will not judge according to the ſight of the eyes, and outward view of things; for he looks on the heart, and knows the ſecret ſprings of all actions; and according thereunto will he judge and paſs the ſentence; and therefore what manner of perſons ought men to be, in all holy converſation and godlineſs. Hence it follows, *paſs the time of your ſojourning here in fear*; the people of God in this world are *ſojourners*, as all their fathers were; they are not natives of the place in which they are; tho' they are in the world, they are not of it; they were natives of it by their firſt birth, but by their ſecond, they are born again, from above, and ſo belong to another place; they are of another country, even an heavenly one; they are citizens of another city, a city which has foundations, whoſe builder and maker is God, their citizenſhip is in heaven; and there is their Father's houſe, which is not made with hands, and is eternal; and there lies their eſtate, their inheritance; and tho' they dwell here below, neither their ſettlement, nor their ſatisfaction are here; they reckon themſelves not at home whilſt they are on earth, and are ſtrangers in it, to the men of the world, and they to them; with whom they have not, or at leaſt ought not to have, any fellowſhip. It is indeed but for a *time* that they are ſojourners, not an eternity; which time is fixed, and is very ſhort, and will be quickly gone: it is but a little while, and Chriſt will come and take his home to his Father's houſe, where they ſhall be for ever with him; for 'tis only here on earth that they are pilgrims and ſtrangers: and whilſt they are ſo, they ſhould ſpend their time *in fear*; not of men, nor of devils, nor of death and judgment, hell and eternal damnation; for ſuch a fear is not conſiſtent with the love of God ſhed abroad in the heart, and is the effect of the law, and not encouraged by the Goſpel; is in natural men, yea in devils themſelves; but in the fear of God, and which ſprings from the grace of God, and is increaſed by it; is conſiſtent with the ſtrongeſt acts of faith, and with the greateſt expreſſions of ſpiritual joy; is oppoſite to pride and ſelf-confidence, and includes the whole worſhip of God, external and internal, and a religious converſation, in humility and lowlineſs of mind.

Ver. 18. *Foraſmuch as ye know*, &c.] From the ſcriptures of truth, by the teſtimony of the Spirit, by his work upon the ſoul, and by the application of the benefits of redemption, ſuch as juſtification, pardon, adoption, and ſanctification; ſee *Job* xix. 25. *Gal.* ii. 20. *that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as ſilver and gold.* The redemption of a ſoul, which is of more worth than a world, requires a greater price than gold and ſilver; and thoſe who have the largeſt ſhare thereof, can neither redeem their own ſouls with it, nor the ſouls of others. The ſoul is immortal and incorruptible, but theſe are corruptible things, which may be cankered, or wear away, and periſh by uſing; and therefore, ſeeing redemption is not obtained by any thing corruptible, nothing corrupt in principle, or practice, ſhould be indulged. The alluſion is to the redemption of the people of *Iſrael*, and of the firſtborn by ſhekels, *Exod.* xxx. 12, 13. *Numb.* iii. 46, 47, 48. Gold and ſilver do not mean pieces of gold and ſilver, but gold and ſilver coined; for only by ſuch could redemption of any thing be obtained[d]; but theſe are inſufficient for the redemption of the ſoul; which is a deliverance of it from the ſlavery of ſin, the bondage, curſe, and condemnation of the law, the captivity of ſatan, and from a ſtate of poverty, having been deep in debt, and ſold under ſin. It here follows, *from your vain converſation* received *by tradition from your fathers*; meaning not the corruption of nature, which is propagated from father to ſon by natural generation, and lies in the vanity of the mind, and is the ſpring and ſource of an evil converſation; tho' the ſaints, as they are redeemed from all ſin, ſo from this, that it ſhall not be their condemnation; nor *Gentiliſm*, which lay in vain philoſophy, in idolatry and ſuperſtition, and in an evil and wicked converſation, encouraged by the example of their anceſtors; but *Judaiſm*, and either regards the ceremonial law, which was delivered by *Moſes* to the *Jewiſh* fathers, and by them handed down to their poſterity; and which was vain, as uſed and abuſed by them, and was unprofitable, to obtain righteouſneſs, life, and ſalvation by, and therefore was diſannulled by Chriſt, who has redeemed and delivered his people from this yoke of bondage; or rather the traditions of the elders, which our Lord inveighs againſt, *Matt.* xv. 3, *&c.* and the Apoſtle *Paul* was brought up in, and zealous of, before converſion, *Gal.* i. 14. as the *Phariſees* were. Theſe were the inventions and decrees of them they called, אבות, *fathers*, to whoſe *Dogma's*, and deciſions, they paid the utmoſt reſpect. Theſe made up their oral law, which the *Jews* ſay[e] *Moſes* received from *Sinai*, and delivered to *Joſhua*; and *Joſhua* to the elders; and the elders to the prophets; and the prophets to the men of the great ſynagogue, the laſt of which was *Simeon* the juſt; and from him it was delivered to another; and ſo from one to another to the times of Chriſt, and his Apoſtles, and afterwards; and which conſiſted of many vain, uſeleſs, and unprofitable things; to walk according to which muſt be a vain converſation; and the ſaints now being redeemed by a greater price than that of ſilver and gold, and which is after mentioned, they ought not therefore to be the ſervants of men, no not of theſe fathers, but of God and Chriſt.

Ver. 19. *But with the precious blood of Chriſt*, &c.] Chriſt was propheſied of as a redeemer under the Old Teſtament, *Iſ.* lix. 20. and the *Jews* frequently aſcribe redemption to the word of the Lord God[f]; and which the Apoſtle here attributes to the blood of Chriſt; whoſe blood is the ſame with ours, only not tainted with ſin; the blood of an innocent perſon, and of one who is God, as well as man, and was freely ſhed in the room and ſtead of his people, and ſo a ſufficient price for their redemption: and it may truly be ſaid to be *precious*; as it is to God, to whom it is a ſweet-ſmelling ſacrifice, and with which he is well pleaſed; not that he takes delight in the mere effuſion of his blood, but as this is the ranſom-price, and the atonement of his choſen ones; and ſo it is to all them that believe, ſince by it they are juſtified; thro' it they have the forgiveneſs of their ſins; their peace and reconciliation with God is made by it; and by it they are ſanctified, and have boldneſs to enter into the holieſt of all: and this blood of Chriſt, by which they are redeemed, is *as of a lamb without ſpot and blemiſh*; Chriſt is comparable to a lamb, for the innocence of his nature, the meekneſs of his diſpoſition and deportment, and for his patience under ſufferings, and in death; and to the lambs of the daily ſacrifice, which were typical of the continual and conſtant virtue and efficacy of his ſacrifice to take away ſin; and particularly to the paſchal lamb, he being the true paſſover ſacrificed for us; and which, as alſo the lambs of the daily ſacrifice, and all others, were to be without ſpot and blemiſh; in which they prefigured Chriſt, who is without the ſtain of original, and the ſpot and blemiſh of actual ſin; and ſo was a very fit perſon to be a ſacrifice for ſin, and a redeemer of his people. The *Jews* have a notion, that the redemption of the *Iſraelites* out of *Egypt*, when a lamb without blemiſh was taken, and ſacrificed, and eat, had a reſpect to the future redemption by the Meſſiah; and which, they ſay[g], was to be in the ſame time of the year; that as they were redeemed in *Niſan*, the month in which the paſſover was kept, ſo they were to be redeemed in the ſame month: and indeed at that time, and in that month, was redemption obtained by the blood of Chriſt. Of the former, the *Targumiſt* in *Hoſ.* iii. 2. ſays, "I have redeemed them by my word, "on the fifteenth day of the month *Niſan*, and "have given ſilver ſhekels, the atonement of their "ſouls." It is obſervable, that the *Hebrew* word, דם, ſignifies both *blood* and *money*, or price; whether ſome reference may not be had to this here, ſince both are included here, may be conſidered.

Ver. 20. *Who verily was fore-ordained*, &c.] Or *fore-known*; that is, by God; and which intends, not barely his preſcience of Chriſt, of what he ſhould be, do, and ſuffer; but ſuch a previous knowledge of him, which is joined with love and affection to him; not merely as his own Son, and the expreſs image of his perſon, but as mediator; and whom he loved before the world was, and with a love of complacency and delight, and which will laſt for ever. It includes the choice of him as the head of the election, and the pre-ordination of his human nature, to the grace of union to his divine perſon, and the pre-appointment of him to various things. The *Syriac* verſion adds, *to this*; that is, to be the lamb for a ſacrifice, to be a propitiation for the ſins of his people, to be the ſaviour and redeemer of them by his precious blood. The alluſion is to the taking of the paſſover-lamb from the ſheep, or from the goats, and keeping it ſeparate, from the tenth to the fourteenth day of the month, before it was ſlain; ſo Chriſt, as man, was choſen out from among the people; and as *Joſeph*'s antitype was ſeparated from his brethren, and that *before the foundation of the world*; for all God's decrees and appointments, relating either to Chriſt, or his people, are eternal; no new thoughts, counſels, and reſolutions, are taken up by him in time. The affair of redemption, by Chriſt, is no new thing; the ſcheme of it was drawn in eternity; the perſons to be redeemed were fixed on; the redeemer was appointed in the council and covenant of peace; and even the very Goſpel, which proclaims it, was ordained before the world, for our glory. A ſaviour was provided before ſin was committed, and the method of man's recovery was ſettled before his ruin took place; and which was done without any regard to the works and merits of men, but is wholly owing to the free and ſovereign

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[d] Maimon. & Bartenora in Miſn. Beracot, c. 7. §. 1.

[e] Pirke Abot, c. 1. §. 1, 2, &c.

[f] Targum in Hoſ. i. 7. & iii. 2. & in Joel ii. 17.

[g] Zohar in Num. fol. 102. 3.

reign grace of God, and to his everlaſting love, both to the redeemer, and the redeemed. The *Jews* [h] reckon the name of the Meſſiah among the ſeven things that were created before the world was; in proof of which they mention, *Pſ.* lxxii. 17. *but was manifeſt in theſe laſt times for you*; he was before, he exiſted from everlaſting; he lay in the boſom of his Father from all eternity; and was veiled and hid under the ſhadows of the ceremonial law, during the legal diſpenſation; but in the fulneſs of time was manifeſt in the fleſh, and more clearly revealed in the Goſpel, and to the ſouls of men; his manifeſtation in human nature is principally intended, and which was in the laſt times of the legal diſpenſation, at the end of the *Jewiſh* world or ſtate, when a new world, or the world to come, took place. 'Tis a rule with the *Jews* [i], that whenever the laſt days, or times, are mentioned, the times of the Meſſiah are deſigned: and this manifeſtation of Chriſt was for the ſake of ſome particular perſons, even for all God's elect, whether among *Jews* or *Gentiles*, and who are deſcribed in the following verſe. The *Alexandrian* copy reads, *for us*; and the *Ethiopic* verſion, *for him*.

Ver. 21. *Who by him do believe in God*, &c.] Chriſt, as God, is the object of faith; as mediator, he is the way to the Father, by which men come to him, believe in him, and lay hold upon him, as their covenant God and Father; and is alſo the author of that faith by which they believe in him; and all their encouragement to believe is taken from him; and ſuch who do come to God, by Chriſt, and ſtay themſelves upon him, truſting in him, may know, and comfortably conclude, that Chriſt who was fore-ordained from all eternity to be the redeemer of his people; was manifeſt in the fleſh for their ſakes, and to obtain eternal redemption for them, which he was ſent to do, by him *that raiſed him up from the dead*; mention being made of his blood, as the price of redemption, ver. 19. ſuppoſes that he died; and leſt it ſhould be thought that he was held by the pains of death, and under the power of it, which it was impoſſible he ſhould, conſidering the dignity of his perſon, as the Son of God, and the fulfillment of his engagements, as the ſurety of his people; his reſurrection from the dead is aſſerted, which was not only foretold by himſelf, but predicted by the prophets, and was punctually accompliſhed; and which, as here, is uſually aſcribed to God the Father, tho' not to the excluſion of Chriſt himſelf, who had power to lay down his life, and take it up again; and which is a very great encouragement to faith in God, both with reſpect to juſtification in his ſight, and acceptance with him, ſince Chriſt roſe again for our juſtification, and with regard to a future reſurrection: *and gave him glory*; by raiſing him from the dead, when his body became a glorious one, being raiſed, ſpiritual, powerful, and incorruptible; and by his aſcenſion to heaven, being received up in a cloud, attended by thouſands of angels, and triumphing over the powers of darkneſs; and by placing him at his own right hand, which is an honour never beſtowed on any mere creature; and by poſſeſſing him with the gifts of the Spirit for men, and giving him all power in heaven and in earth, and authority to exerciſe judgment on all, and a name above every name in this, or the world to come: *that your faith and hope might be in God*; which are graces that go together, and much reſemble and aſſiſt each other; they are both the gifts of God, and have him for their object, and meet in the ſame perſons; and are greatly encouraged by the reſurrection of Chriſt, and the glory he now enjoys, ſince becauſe he lives, thoſe that believe in him ſhall live alſo, and appear with him in glory.

Ver. 22. *Seeing ye have purified your ſouls*, &c.] The Apoſtle paſſes to another exhortation, namely, to brotherly love; the ground of which he makes to be, the purification of their ſouls; and which ſuppoſes that they had been impure; and indeed, their whole perſons, ſouls and bodies, were ſo by nature; even all the members of their bodies, and all the powers and faculties of their ſouls: it is internal purity, purity of the heart, that is here particularly reſpected; tho' not to the excluſion of outward purity, for where there is the former, there will be the latter; but there may be an external purity, where there is not the inward one: this the Apoſtle aſcribes to the ſaints themſelves, but not without the grace of God, the blood of Chriſt, and the operations of his Spirit; as appears by a following clauſe; but they are ſaid to purify themſelves, inaſmuch as having the grace of faith beſtowed on them, they were enabled, under the influences of the Spirit of God, to exerciſe it on the blood of Chriſt, which cleanſes from all ſin: *in obeying the truth*; of the Goſpel, by receiving, believing, and embracing it, in the love of it; which teaches outward purity, and is a means, in the hand of the Spirit, of inward purity, and of directing to the purifying blood of Jeſus, who ſanctifies and cleanſes by the word: *through the Spirit*; this clauſe is left out in the *Alexandrian* copy, and ſome others, and in the *Vulgate Latin*, *Syriac*, and *Ethiopic* verſions, but is in the *Arabic* verſion, and ought to be retained; for, as Chriſt died to purify to himſelf a peculiar people, the Spirit of Chriſt does from him purify the heart, by faith, in his blood; by ſprinkling that on the conſcience, and by leading the faith of God's people to the fountain of it, to waſh in, for ſin, and for uncleanneſs; even both their conſciences and their converſation-garments, whereby they obtain inward and outward purity: *unto unfeigned love of the brethren*; which is the end of ſanctification, and an evidence of it; when the ſaints are loved as brethren, and becauſe ſuch; and with a love without diſſimulation, not in word and in tongue only, but in deed and in truth: this being the caſe, the exhortation follows: ſee that ye *love one another with a pure heart fervently*: this is Chriſt's new commandment, and the evidence of regeneration; a diſtinguiſhing badge of chriſtianity, and without which all profeſſion of religion is a vain and empty thing: this ſhould be mutual and cordial; ſhould proceed from the heart, and from an heart ſprinkled from an evil conſcience; and ſhould be with warmth and fervency, and not with coldneſs and indifference; tho' the word here uſed, εκτενως, may not only deſign the intenſeneſs of it, but the extenſiveneſs of it alſo; as that it ſhould reach to all the ſaints, the poor as well as the rich, and the leſſer as well as the greater and more knowing believers; and likewiſe may denote the continuance of it; it ought to be continually exerciſed, and to laſt always; and ſo the *Arabic* verſion renders it, *with a perpetual love*.

Ver. 23. *Being born again*, &c.] As they were of God, according to his abundant mercy, by the reſurrection of Chriſt, to a lively hope of a glorious inheritance; as in ver. 3. and therefore ſeeing they were brethren in a ſpiritual relation, they ought to love as brethren; being children of the ſame Father, belonging to the ſame family and houſhold, having

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[h] T. Bab. Peſachim, fol. 59. 1. & Nedarim, fol. 39. 2.

[i] Kimchi in Iſ. ii. 2.

the ſame Spirit, and the ſame nature and diſpoſition, and being members one of another, and heirs of the ſame grace and glory; and not only ſo, but were taught of God their Father in regeneration, to love one another: it became them highly therefore, to exerciſe that grace, and particularly, ſince they were born, *not of corruptible ſeed, but of incorruptible*; referring not to ſeed caſt into the earth, which firſt corrupts and dies, and then is quickned, and riſes, and brings forth fruit; but to human ſeed, and which the *Jews* call טפה סרוחה, *the filthy drop*[k]; which is in itſelf corrupt, and is corrupted, and whereby the corruption of human nature is propagated; for whatſoever is born of the fleſh, is carnal and corrupt; and ſo the Apoſtle has reference to the firſt birth, or natural generation of men, in which they are polluted and depraved, and confirms what the evangeliſt ſays, *John* i. 13. that regenerate perſons are not *born of blood*; or become new creatures, and holy men, by their natural deſcent, or firſt birth, be it from whom it will; for all men are of one blood originally, and that is tainted with ſin; nor by the will of fallen creatures, of corruptible men, themſelves or others; but of water, and of the Spirit, of the grace of the Spirit of God, which is ſeed pure and incorruptible, having no mixture or taint of ſin, nor any degree of pollution in it, and which remains ſo; nor can it be corrupted by all the wickedneſs there is in man's heart; nor by all the pollutions of the world, or temptations of ſatan; and this ſeed is conveyed into the heart by the Spirit of God, in regeneration, and it contains all grace in it: *by the word of God which liveth and abideth for ever*; for the incorruptible ſeed, and the ever-living and abiding word, are two diſtinct things; tho' interpreters generally confound them: and by *the word of God*, is either meant, the eſſential word, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt; who is concerned in regeneration as well as the Father and the Spirit; by whoſe reſurrection, and in conſequence of it, the elect of God are begotten again; and who, as the word, is able to build up all the ſanctified ones, and give them the inheritance they are born heirs unto: or the Goſpel, the word of truth, which is made uſe of as a means of begetting ſouls again; and the rather, ſince it ſeems to be ſo interpreted, ver. 25. the phraſes, *which liveth and abideth for ever*, may be either read in connexion only with *God*, and as deſcriptive of him, who is the living God, is from everlaſting to everlaſting, in diſtinction from idols; and here added to ſhew that he can give power and efficacy to his word, to regenerate and quicken, and will continue to preſerve it, and make it uſeful to all his ſaving purpoſes; ſo *Jarchi* explains the paſſage in *Iſ.* xl. 8. after referred to, *the word of our God ſhall ſtand for ever*; "because he lives and abides, "and it is in his power to confirm it; therefore it "follows, *O Zion that bringeth good tidings, get* "*thee up into the high mountain*; for becauſe he "lives for ever, this promiſe is publiſhed." Or elſe with the word of God, and is true both of Chriſt, and of the Goſpel. Chriſt is the word which lives; in him, as ſuch, is life; he has life in himſelf as God, as man, and as mediator; and is the author of life, natural, ſpiritual, and eternal; and abides for ever in his perſon, without any change; and in his offices, and grace, and righteouſneſs; he abides a prieſt continually, has an unchangeable prieſthood, and ever lives to make interceſſion, and of his kingdom there is no end: the ſame is ſaid of the *Memra*, or word of God, in the *Chaldee* paraphraſe on *Hoſ.* xi. 9. *I am God*, מימרי, *my word abideth for ever*; compare *John* xii. 34. The Goſpel alſo may be ſaid to live, in oppoſition to the law, which is the killing letter; and becauſe it points out the way of life and ſalvation to ſinners; and is a means of quickning dead ſinners, and of ingenerating that faith by which men live on Chriſt; and of revealing to them that righteouſneſs which is unto juſtification of life; and of ſupporting and maintaining ſpiritual life in them; and of reviving drooping ſaints; the *Syriac* verſion renders it, *the living word of God*: and it remains, and will abide; all its promiſes, bleſſings, doctrines, and ordinances are laſting; it will continue in the world until all the elect of God are gathered in, until the ſecond coming of Chriſt, and to the end of the world; notwithſtanding all the perſecutions of men, and cunning craft of falſe teachers, and all the ridicule and contempt it is treated with by mockers and ſcoffers; and will abide in the effects of it, in the hearts of the ſaints, to all eternity.

Ver. 24. *For all fleſh is as graſs*, &c.] All men, as born of corruptible ſeed, are frail, mortal, and periſhing; they ſpring up like graſs, and look beautiful for a while, but are very weak and tender, and in a little time they are cut down by death, and wither away; and whilſt they live, are, in a good meaſure, nothing but graſs in another form; the ſubſtance of their life is greatly by it; what is the fleſh they eat, but graſs turned into it? and this mortality is not only the caſe of wicked men, as the *Jews*[l] interpret the word, but of good men; even of the prophets, and preachers of the Goſpel; and yet the word of God ſpoken by them continues for ever: the paſſage referred to, is in *Iſ.* xl. 6, 7, 8. *and all the glory of man as the flower of the graſs*; all outward things which are in eſteem with men, and render them glorious to another, as riches, honour, wiſdom, ſtrength, external righteouſneſs, holineſs, and goodneſs; all which are fading and tranſitory, like the flower of the field; but the Goſpel continues, and reveals durable riches, and honour with Chriſt; and true wiſdom and ſtrength with him, and ſpiritual knowledge, in compariſon of which, all things are droſs and dung; and an everlaſting righteouſneſs, and true holineſs in him: ſome have thought, reſpect may be had to the legal diſpenſation, and to all the glory and ſtatelineſs and goodlineſs of the worſhip and ordinances of it, which were to endure but for a time, and are now removed; and the Goſpel diſpenſation has taken place of them, which will continue to the end of the world: *the graſs withereth and the flower thereof fadeth away*; and ſo fading are all the above things.

Ver. 25. *But the word of the Lord endureth for ever*, &c.] Tho' men die, and miniſters of the word too, and every thing in the world is uncertain, unſtable, fleeting, and paſſing away, and whatever change has been in the ordinances of divine ſervice; yet the word of the Lord, the Goſpel of Chriſt, is ſettled for ever, and will never paſs away: *and this is the word which by the Goſpel is preached unto you*; this is the Apoſtle's application of the paſſage in *Iſaiah*, ſhewing that the word of the Lord there, is the ſame with the Goſpel preached by him, and the other Apoſtles, at that preſent time; and is no other than that good tidings *Zion* is ſaid to bring; ſee *Iſ.* xl. 9. the ſelf-ſame Goſpel the prophet *Iſaiah* preached, the Apoſtles did, tho' with greater clearneſs, and more ſucceſs; ſee *Rom.* x. 8, 16.

CHAP.

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[k] Pirke Abot, c. 3. §. 1. & Bartenora in ib. Zohar in Exod fol. 42. 1. & 78. 2.

[l] Targum, Jarchi & Kimchi in Iſ. xl. 6.

CHAP. II.

THIS chapter conſiſts of exhortations in general, to a holy life; and in particular, to obedience to ſuperiors. It begins with an exhortation to lay aſide various vices, which were unbecoming, regenerate perſons, ver. 1. and agreeable to their character, as new-born babes, to expreſs a deſire after the Goſpel, which is commended from its nature, being comparable to milk; and from its quality, being reaſonable, ſincere, and unmixed; and from the end and uſefulneſs of it, a ſpiritual growth; and the argument engaging to ſuch a deſire, is the experience they had of the grace of Chriſt in it, ver. 2, 3. whoſe excellency is declared, under the metaphor of a ſtone, ſaid to be living, to be choſen of God, and precious to him, tho' rejected by men; to whom the ſaints are encouraged to come, as lively ſtones built up, a ſpiritual houſe, for the exerciſe of the holy office of the prieſthood, by offering up ſpiritual ſacrifices acceptable to God thro' Chriſt, ver. 4, 5. and that Chriſt is ſuch a precious ſtone, is proved from *Iſ.* xxviii. 16. and not only to God, but to all them that believe; tho' to them that believe not, he is the ſtone of rejection, ſtumbling and offence; to ſtumble at which, and the doctrine of it, through diſobedience, they were of old appointed by God, ver. 6, 7, 8. but the character of the perſons the Apoſtle writes to, was very different, quite the reverſe; being choſen, and called, and manifeſtly the people of God, and ſharing in his grace and mercy, ver. 9, 10. and theſe he exhorts, ſuitable to their ſtate and condition, to abſtain from ſin, as an enemy to their ſouls, and to live an honeſt life and converſation among the *Gentiles*, that they, inſtead of ſpeaking evil of them, might, by beholding their good works, glorify God, ver. 11, 12. And particularly he exhorts them to obedience to civil magiſtrates, both ſuperior and inferior; partly from the author of them, they being of the Lord; and partly from the uſefulneſs of them to puniſh wicked men, and to encourage good men; and alſo from its being the will of God, by ſuch obedience to ſilence the cavils of fooliſh men, ver. 13, 14, 15. And whereas it might be objected, that they were made free by Chriſt, and therefore ſhould not be the ſervants of men; it is granted, that they were free; but then it is denied, that they ſhould uſe their liberty for a cloke of maliciouſneſs: and beſides, it ſhould be obſerved, that they were the ſervants of God, and therefore ought to do what he enjoined them; and, among other things, yield obedience to civil magiſtrates, ver. 16. And to this purpoſe are various exhortations in ver. 17. and another particular one is added, which is to ſervants, to be ſubject to their maſters, and fear them, whether they be good or bad, ver. 18. and then he comforts ſuch that had bad maſters, and encourages them to bear the injuries they received from them patiently; becauſe ſo to do was grateful to God, and acceptable in his ſight; and becauſe they were called unto it by him; and becauſe of the example Chriſt had left them in ſuffering for them, ver. 19, 20, 21. And this is further urged from the character of Chriſt, who was without ſin, and yet ſuffered, and from his conduct, who, when reviled, made no return, but left his cauſe with God, ver. 22, 23. which leads on the Apoſtle to take notice of the nature of Chriſt's ſufferings in his body on the croſs, and the ends of them, which were expiation of ſin, healing diſeaſes, and holineſs of life, as a conſequent thereof, ver. 24. previous to which is converſion, which is illuſtrated by the former ſtate and condition men are in, being as ſheep going aſtray; and by their preſent one, being returned to Chriſt, the ſhepherd and biſhop of ſouls, ver. 25.

Ver. 1. *Wherefore laying aſide all malice*, &c.] Since the perſons the Apoſtle writes to were born again, and therefore ought to love one another, he exhorts them to the diſuſe of ſuch vices as were diſagreeable to their character as regenerate men, and, contrary to brotherly love; he diſſuades them from them, and adviſes to *lay* them *aſide*, either as weights and burdens, which it was not fit for new-born babes to carry; ſee *Heb.* xii. 1. or rather as old worn-out clothes, as filthy rags, which ſhould be put off, laid by, and never uſed more, being what were very unſuitable to their character and profeſſion to wear: the metaphor is the ſame as in *Eph.* iv. 22. and *Col.* iii. 8, 9. and the firſt he mentions is *malice*; to live in which is a mark of an unregenerate man, and very unbecoming ſuch who are born again; and is not conſiſtent with the relation of brethren, and character of children, or new-born babes, who are without malice, and do not bear and retain it: *all* of this is to be laid aſide, towards all perſons whatever, and in every ſhape, and in every inſtance of it: *and* alſo *all guile*; fraud, or deceit, in words or actions; and which ſhould not be found, and appear in any form, in *Iſraelites* indeed, in brethren, in the children of God; who ought not to lye one to another, or defraud each other, nor expreſs that with their lips which they have not in their hearts; which babes are free from, and ſo ſhould babes in Chriſt: *and hypocriſies*; both to God and men: hypocriſy to God is, when perſons profeſs that which they have not, as love to God, faith in Chriſt, zeal for religion, fervent devotion, and ſincerity in the worſhip of God; and do all they do to be ſeen of men, and appear outwardly righteous, and yet are full of all manner of iniquity: hypocriſy to men is, pretence of friendſhip, loving in word and tongue only, ſpeaking peaceably with the mouth, but in heart laying wait; a ſin to be abhorred and deteſted by one that is born from above; and is contrary to that integrity, ſimplicity, and ſincerity of heart which become regenerate perſons, the children of God, and brethren one of another: *and envies*; at each others happineſs and proſperity, riches, honours, gifts temporal or ſpiritual; for ſuch are works of the fleſh, ſhew men to be carnal, are unbecoming regenerated perſons, and contrary to the exerciſe of chriſtian charity, or love, which envieth not the welfare of others, either reſpecting body, ſoul, or eſtate: *and all evil ſpeakings*; backbitings, whiſperings, detractions, hurting one another's characters by innuendo's, falſe charges, and evil ſurmiſes; which is not acting like men that are made new creatures, and are partakers of the divine nature, nor like brethren, or as Chriſt's little ones, and who are of God, begotten again to be a kind of firſt-fruits of his creatures.

Ver. 2. *As new born babes*, &c.] The *Syriac* verſion renders it, *be ye ſimple as infants*; and as if it was a diſtinct exhortation of itſelf, and from that which follows; tho' it ſeems rather to be deſcriptive of the perſons ſpoken to, and a character of them, under which the Apoſtle addreſſes them; which carries in it a reaſon ſtrengthening the exhortation aſter given: he takes it for granted that they were begotten again, according to the abundant mercy of God, and born of incorruptible ſeed, by the word of God, and that they were juſt, or lately born; and which is to be underſtood of them all in general, and not of younger converts among them, who might be called little children with reſpect to others who were young men, or fathers; but that comparatively ſpeaking, thoſe that had been of the longeſt ſtanding were but as it were newly born, it being at moſt but a few years ſince they were called by grace: and they were as *babes*, not on account of their want of knowledge, or unſkilfulneſs in the word of righteouſneſs; or of non-proficiency in the learning of divine truths, and their great dullneſs, backwardneſs, and imperfection; or becauſe of their incapacity in taking in, and digeſting the ſtrong meat and ſublimer doctrines of the Goſpel; or for their inſtability and ſimplicity, being eaſily deceived and beguiled; nor for their weakneſs in faith, not being able to walk alone, and their inſufficiency to defend, or provide for themſelves; but becauſe of their harmleſſneſs and innocence, meekneſs and humility; and for the ſincerity of their faith and love, obedience and profeſſion. The proſelytes to the *Jews* religion are often ſaid[m] to be כקטון שנולד דמי, *as an infant juſt born*, or a new-born babe; to which the alluſion may here be made: *deſire the ſincere milk of the word*; this is not a declaration that theſe new-born ſouls did do ſo, tho' that might be true, but an exhortation to them ſo to do, as it became them: by the *ſincere milk of the word*, is meant the Goſpel, even the whole of it, and not as elſewhere, the more plain and eaſy truths of it; which is compared to milk, for its purity in itſelf, for every word of God is pure; and for its purifying nature, as uſed by the Spirit of God; and for its ſweetneſs and agreeable taſte to a regenerate man; and becauſe eaſy of digeſtion to a ſpiritual one; and becauſe it is nutritive to him, by it he is nouriſhed up unto eternal life; and becauſe, as milk is of a cooling nature, ſo the Goſpel is a means, in the hand of the Spirit of God, of aſſwaging thoſe inflammations, and of allaying that wrath and fiery indignation raiſed in the conſcience of a ſinner, by the law; and becauſe, as milk, medicinally uſed, is a reſtorative in conſumptive diſorders, ſo the Goſpel is not only the means of helping a declining perſon, and who is waſted and conſumed by ſin, but even of quickning ſuch as are dead in ſin; it is the ſavour of life unto life. The *Jewiſh* writers ſpeak of חלב של תורה, *the milk of the law*[n], of which they generally interpret[o] the paſſage in *Iſ.* lv. 1. but it is much better applied to the Goſpel, which is the milk of the word, or *rational milk*; not that the Goſpel is a ſcheme, according to the carnal reaſon of men; it is contrary to that, and above ſound reaſon, tho' not repugnant to it; but it is what is calculated for faith, the ſpiritual reaſon of men, and for ſuch who have their ſpiritual ſenſes exerciſed, to diſcern between good and evil; it is a ſpiritual drink, and is made up of ſpiritual things, and ſuited to the ſpiritual man; it is milk, not in a natural, but in a myſtic and ſpiritual ſenſe: the *Syriac* verſion renders it, *the word which is as milk, pure and ſpiritual*: and it is *ſincere*; without mixture, unadulterated with the inventions and doctrines of men, *Jews* or hereticks: or *without deceit*; being neither deceitfully handled by the faithful miniſters of it, nor cauſing deceit, or deceiving thoſe that cordially receive it. Now, this it becomes regenerate perſons to *deſire*; and vehemently long after, as a new-born babe does after its mother's milk; for the Goſpel is that to one that is born again, as the breaſt is to a babe: deſire after it ſuppoſes knowledge of it; and where there is an experimental knowledge, there will be a value and eſteem for it, even above neceſſary food, and at times, an hungring and thirſting after it, an impatient longing for, and deſire of it; when ſuch ſouls will labour after it, and diligently obſerve and attend every opportunity of enjoying it, and think long ere the ſeaſons of meeting with it return; for it is ſuitable food for them, ſavoury food, ſuch as their ſouls love, and which indeed they cannot live without: now the end of this exhortation, and of ſuch a deſire, and of feeding on the words of faith and ſound doctrine, is, *that ye may grow thereby*; regenerate perſons are not at their full growth at once; they are firſt children, then young men, and then fathers in Chriſt; the Goſpel is appointed as a means of their ſpiritual growth, and by the bleſſing of God becomes ſo, and which they find to be ſo by good experience; and therefore this milk of the word is deſirable on this account, for the encreaſe of faith, and the furtherance of the joy of it; for their growth in grace, and in the knowledge of Jeſus Chriſt, and in an experience of ſpiritual ſtrength from him, and unto him, as their head in all things; not merely in the leaves of a profeſſion, but in the fruits of grace, righteouſneſs, and holineſs. The *Alexandrian* copy, and ſeveral others, and alſo the *Vulgate Latin*, *Syriac*, and *Ethiopic* verſions, add, *unto ſalvation*; that is, until they come to a perfect knowledge of Chriſt, and to be perfect men with him, being arrived to the meaſure of the ſtature of the fullneſs of Chriſt, and in the poſſeſſion of that ſalvation he has obtained for them.

Ver. 3. *If ſo be ye have taſted that the Lord is gracious.*] Reference is had to *Pſ.* xxxiv. 8. *O taſte and ſee that the Lord is good*; and the *Syriac* verſion here adds, *if ye have ſeen*: by the Lord, is meant, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, as the following words ſhew, who is gracious, and amiable, and lovely in his perſon; who has a fullneſs of grace in him for his people; has diſplayed his grace towards them, in engaging for them as a ſurety, in aſſuming their nature, obeying, ſuffering, and dying in their ſtead; he is gracious in his word and promiſes, truths and ordinances, and in all his offices and relations; and regenerate perſons have taſted that he is ſo: an unregenerate man has no ſpiritual taſte; his taſte is vitiated by ſin, and not being changed, ſin is a ſweet morſel in his mouth, and he diſreliſhes every thing that is ſpiritual; but one that is born again, ſavours the things of the Spirit of God; ſin is exceeding ſinful to him, and Chriſt exceeding precious; he, and his fruit, his promiſes, and bleſſings of grace, his word and ordinances, are ſweet unto his taſte: and the taſte he has is not a mere ſuperficial one, ſuch as hypocrites may have of the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come; but ſuch a taſte of Chriſt, and of his grace, as by a true faith, to eat his fleſh, and drink his blood, and ſo have everlaſting life; ſuch have a ſaving and experimental knowledge of Chriſt, an application of him, and his ſaving benefits to them, a revelation of him in them, ſo that they find and feel that he dwells in them, and they in him;

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[m] T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 22. 1. & 48. 2. & 62. 1. & 97. 2. Maimon. Hilch. Iſſure Bia, c. 14. §. 11. & Eduth, c. 13. §. 2.

[n] Jarchi in Cant. 5. 12.

[o] Jarchi, Aben Ezra & Kimchi in Iſ. lv. 1. Abarbinel, Maſhmia Jeſhua, fol. 26. 1.

ſuch receive out of Chriſt's fullneſs, and grace for grace, and live by faith upon him, and receive nouriſhment from him; and of this the Apoſtle made no doubt concerning theſe perſons, but took it for granted that they had had ſuch taſtes of Chriſt, and therefore could not but deſire the Goſpel, which is a revelation of Chriſt, and ſets forth the glory of his perſon, and the riches of his grace: and whereas, ſuch as have truly taſted of his grace, cannot but deſire to have more, and freſh taſtes of it; where ſhould they have them, but in his word and ordinances? and therefore would they grow in grace, and know more of Chriſt, and taſte more of his goodneſs, it is their intereſt, as it is their ſpiritual nature, to deſire the Goſpel, in the purity and ſincerity of it.

Ver. 4. *To whom coming*, as unto *a living ſtone*, &c.] Chriſt here, as often elſewhere, is compared to a *ſtone*; and *Peter*, by the uſe of this metaphor, ſhews, that he is not the rock, but Chriſt is the rock on which the church is built, and he is the foundation-ſtone on which every believer is laid; and 'tis chiefly with reſpect to the uſefulneſs of a ſtone in building, that Chriſt is compared to one, who is the foundation and corner-ſtone, as well as for ſtrength and duration: and he is called a *living* one, becauſe he has life in himſelf, as God, as mediator, and as man; and communicates life to others, as natural life to all creatures, and ſpiritual and eternal life to his people, whoſe great priviledge it is to come to him: and by *coming* to him is meant, believing in him; and it does not deſign the firſt act of faith on Chriſt, or a ſoul's firſt coming to Chriſt, but an after and continued exerciſe of faith on him; and it ſuppoſes Chriſt to be come at, notwithſtanding he is in heaven, and ſaints on earth, for their faith and hope can enter into, and reach him within the vail, and notwithſtanding their many tranſgreſſions and backſlidings; it ſuppoſes life in them, or they could not come; and a ſenſe of their need of him, of his righteouſneſs to juſtify them, of his blood for pardon and cleanſing, of his fullneſs to ſupply their want, of food, reſt, peace, comfort, and ſalvation in him; and a perſuaſion of his ability and willingneſs to relieve them: and they are encouraged to come to him under the above conſiderations, as a ſtone, a foundation-ſtone; believing that he is laid as a foundation, and that he is the only foundation, and therefore they lay the whole ſtreſs of their ſalvation, and build all their hopes of happineſs on him; and as a living ſtone, deriving grace, life, and ſtrength from him; exerciſing faith on him for all the mercies, bleſſings, and comforts of a ſpiritual life, and looking to his mercy for eternal life. *Diſallowed indeed of men*; by the *Jewiſh* builders, high-prieſts, *Scribes*, and *Phariſees*, and the body and bulk of that nation; who rejected him as the Meſſiah, and ſtone of *Iſrael*, refuſed him as a foundation-ſtone, and left him out of the building; and layed another foundation, even their own works of righteouſneſs, on which ſandy foundation they built themſelves, and directed others to do ſo likewiſe; and ſet him at nought, as a living ſtone, would not come to him for life, but ſought it in the law, the killing letter, and among their dead works; but tho' Chriſt was thus diſallowed and diſeſteemed of by men, yet was highly valued and eſteemed by God: *but choſen of God, and precious*; his human nature was *choſen* from among, and above all other individuals of mankind, to be united to the Son of God; as God-man and mediator, he was choſen to that high-office, to be the head of the church, and the ſaviour of the body; to be the foundation in the ſpiritual building, and to be the author and giver of ſpiritual and eternal life, to as many as were given him. Moreover, this phraſe denotes the ſuper-excellency of Chriſt, to angels and men, in the account of God; being the brightneſs of his glory, the expreſs image of his perſon, the Son of his love, in whom he was always well-pleaſed, and in whom he took infinite delight, conſidered both as his Son, and the ſurety of his people; and to whom he was *precious*, and by him highly honoured, made higher than the kings of the earth, than the angels in heaven, than the heavens themſelves, being ſet down at God's right hand, and a name given him above every name in this world, or that to come; and who is precious to the ſaints too, more ſo than rubies, or any precious ſtones, or any thing or creature whatever; his perſon is precious, and ſo are his name, his blood, his righteouſneſs, his truths, his ordinances, and his people.

Ver. 5. *Ye alſo as lively ſtones*, &c.] Saints likewiſe are compared to ſtones; they lie in the ſame quarry, and are the ſame by nature as the reſt of mankind, till dug out and ſeparated from thence by the powerful and efficacious grace of God, when they are hewn, and made fit for the ſpiritual building; where both for their ornament, beauty, and ſtrength, which they receive from Chriſt, they are compared to ſtones, and are laſting and durable, and will never periſh, nor be removed out of the building: and becauſe of that life which they derive from him, and have in him, they are called *lively*, or *living ſtones*; the Spirit of life having entered into them, a principle of life being implanted in them, and coming to Chriſt, the living ſtone, they live upon him, and he lives in them; and his grace in them is a well of living water, ſpringing up into eternal life. It was uſual with poets and philoſophers to call ſtones, as they lie in the quarry, before they are taken out of it, *living* ones: ſo *Virgil*[p], deſcribing the ſeats of the nymphs, ſays, *intus aquæ dulces vivoque* ſedilia *ſaxo*, *nympharum domus*, &c. but here the Apoſtle calls ſuch living ſtones, who were taken out from among the reſt: the ſtones which *Deucalion* and *Pyrrha* caſt over their heads, after the flood, are called[q], ζωοθεντες λιθοι, *quickened ſtones*, they becoming men, as the fable ſays. *Are built up a ſpiritual houſe*; theſe living ſtones being laid, and cemented together, in a Goſpel church-ſtate, become the houſe of God in a ſpiritual ſenſe, in diſtinction from the material houſe of the tabernacle, and temple of old, to which the alluſion is; and which is built up an habitation for God, by the Spirit, and is made up of ſpiritual men; ſuch as have the Spirit of God, and ſavour the things of the Spirit, and worſhip God in ſpirit and in truth; among whom ſpiritual ſervices are performed, as prayer, praiſe, preaching, and hearing the word, and adminiſtring ordinances. Some read theſe words in the imperative, as an exhortation, *be ye built up as lively ſtones; and be ye ſpiritual temples and holy prieſts*, as the *Syriac* verſion. A ſynagogue with the *Jews* is called, בית רוחני, *a ſpiritual houſe*[r]; and ſo is the third temple, which the *Jews* expect in the times of the Meſſiah; of which one of their writers[s] thus ſays: "it "is known from the ancient wiſe men, that the "future redemption with which ſhall be the third, "רוחני, *ſpiritual* ſanctuary, is the work of God,

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[p] Æneid. l. 1.

[q] Euſtathius in Homer. Iliad. 1.

[r] Neve Shalom apud Caphtor, fol. 14. 1.

[s] R Alſhech in Hagg. ii. 7, 8, 9, 10.

“ and will not be as the former redemptions: *I will* “ *fill this houſe with glory*; this is, רוחני, *a ſpiritual* one, for even the walls ſhall be, רוחניים, “ *ſpiritual* —— for even all this *houſe* ſhall be *ſpiritual*; for that which was then built, which is “ the ſecond, ſhall be turned into another, a *ſpiritual* one:” and which has been already done, and is what the Apoſtle means here, the church, under the Goſpel-diſpenſation, or the Goſpel church-ſtate, in oppoſition to the worldly ſanctuary, and carnal worſhip of the *Jews*. *An holy prieſthood*; in alluſion to the prieſts under the law, who were ſet apart, and ſanctified for that office; but now under the Goſpel, all the ſaints are prieſts unto God, and are all appointed and directed *to offer up ſpiritual ſacrifices*; their whole ſelves, ſouls, and bodies, as a holy, living, and acceptable ſacrifice; their prayers, and praiſes, and all good works done in faith, and from love, and to the glory of God; particularly acts of kindneſs and beneficence to poor ſaints; theſe are called ſpiritual, in diſtinction from legal ſacrifices, and becauſe offered in a ſpiritual manner, under the influence, and by the aſſiſtance of the Spirit of God, and with their ſpirits. So the *Jews* ſpeak of ſpiritual ſacrifices, as diſtinct from material ones: “ the intellectual ſacrifice, they ſay [t], “ is before the material ſacrifices, both in time and “ excellency.——*Cain* brought an offering to the “ Lord of the fruit of the earth, and behold the “ intellectual attention did not agree with it, which “ is, הקרבן רוחני, *the ſpiritual ſacrifice.*” Now ſuch are *acceptable to God by Jeſus Chriſt*; through whom they are offered up; for ’tis thro’ him the ſaints have acceſs to God, preſent themſelves to him, and their ſervices; and both perſons and ſervices are only accepted in Chriſt, and for his ſake, and in virtue of his ſacrifice, which is always of a ſweet-ſmelling ſavour to God.

Ver. 6. *Wherefore alſo it is contained in the ſcripture, &c.*] *Iſ.* xxviii. 16. This is produced as a proof of the excellency of Chriſt, as compared to a ſtone; and of his uſefulneſs in the ſpiritual building; and of his being choſen of God, and precious, tho’ rejected by men; and of the happineſs, comfort, and ſafety of thoſe that believe in him. That this prophecy belongs to the Meſſiah, is the ſenſe of ſome of the *Jewiſh* writers: the *Targum* on it applies it to a mighty king; it does not mention the king Meſſiah, as *Galatinus* [u] cites it; but *Jarchi* expreſly names him, and interprets it of him: *behold I lay in Sion a chief corner-ſtone, elect precious*; Chriſt is here called *a chief corner-ſtone*, as in *Eph.* ii. 20. becauſe he not only adorns and ſtrengthens the building, but unites the parts, and keeps them together, even all the ſaints, *Jews* or *Gentiles*, in all ages and places, whether in heaven or earth; and he, as ſuch, is choſen of God for that purpoſe, and is precious both to God and man, on that account; and is a ſtone, not of mens laying, but of God’s laying in his council, covenant, promiſes, and prophecies, in the miſſion of him into this world, and in the Goſpel-miniſtry; the place where he is laid is in *Sion*, the Goſpel church, of which he is both the foundation and corner-ſtone: and this account is introduced with a *behold*, it being ſomething very wonderful, and worthy of attention: to which is added, *he that believeth on him ſhall not be confounded*; or *aſhamed*; of the foundation and corner-ſtone Chriſt, nor of his faith in him; and he ſhall not be confounded by men or devils, neither in this world, nor in that to come; he ſhall have confidence before Chriſt, and not be aſhamed at his coming; he ſhall be ſafe now, being laid on this ſtone; nor ſhall he be removed from it, or intimidated by any enemy, ſo as to flee from it; nor ſhall he *make haſte*, as it is in *Iſ.* xxviii. 16. to lay another foundation; and he ſhall be found upon this hereafter; ſo that his perſon and ſtate will be ſafe, tho’ many of his works may be burnt up.

Ver. 7. *Unto you therefore which believe, &c.*] And ſuch are not all they that can ſay their creed, or give their aſſent to the articles of it; nor all that believe a divine revelation, and that the ſcriptures are the word of God, and give credit to all that is contained in the ſacred oracles; or who believe the whole Goſpel, and all the truths of it; as that there is one God; that there are three perſons in the Godhead, Father, Son, and Spirit; that Chriſt is the Son of God, and truly God; that he is the mediator between God and man; that he is the Meſſiah, is become incarnate, has obeyed, ſuffered, and died for men, and is the ſaviour of them; that he roſe again, aſcended to heaven, is ſet down at the right hand of God, intercedes for his people, and will come a ſecond time to judge the world in righteouſneſs; together with all other truths which ariſe from, depend upon, and are connected with theſe; nor all that ſay they believe, or profeſs to do ſo; but ſuch who have ſeen themſelves loſt and undone by ſin, their need of a ſaviour, and Chriſt as the only one; who have ſeen the Son, the beauty of his perſon, the fullneſs of his grace, and the neceſſity and ſuitableneſs of ſalvation by him; who have beheld him as able to ſave them, as every way proper for them, and deſirable by them, for faith is a ſight of Chriſt; who alſo come to him under the drawings of efficacious grace, as periſhing ſinners, encouraged by his invitations and declarations, and venture on him; who likewiſe lay hold upon him, as their ſaviour, and will have no other; give up themſelves to him, and commit their all into his hands; who rely and ſtay themſelves upon him, truſt him with all they have, and for all they want, expecting grace and glory from him; who live upon him, and walk on in him, go on believing in him, till they receive the end of their faith, the ſalvation of their ſouls. Now to theſe, in proof of what is aſſerted in the above paſſage out of *Iſaiah*, Chriſt is *precious*; he is ſo in all his names and titles, as *Immanuel*, God with us, and that cluſter of them in *Iſ.* ix. 6. and particularly his name *Jeſus*, a ſaviour, which is as ointment poured forth, and draws the love of believers to him; and ſo he is in both his natures, divine and human; the perfections of deity in him, his being in the form of God, and equal to him, the brightneſs of his Father’s glory, and the expreſs image of his perſon, render him very amiable in the view of believers; who rightly conclude from hence, that all he has done, and does, muſt anſwer the purpoſes for which they are deſigned; and his having a perfect human nature, like to theirs, excepting ſin, in which he wrought ſalvation for them on earth, and is now glorified in heaven, makes him a delightful object to them: he is alſo precious to them in all his offices; in his prieſtly office, his blood is precious, as it muſt needs be, ſince by it they are purchaſed and redeemed; they are juſtified and ſanctified by it; thro’ it they have the forgiveneſs of ſin, and boldneſs to enter into the holieſt of all: his righteouſneſs is precious to

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[t] Neve Shalom apud Caphtor, fol. 88. 2. Vid. Raziel. fol. 33. 1.

[u] De Arcan. Cathol. Ver. l. 3. c. 21.

them, it being the beſt robe, the wedding-garment, fine linnen, clean and white, every way ſuitable to them, and anſwerable to the demands of the law; is pure, perfect, and everlaſting; that by which they are juſtified from all things, and which will anſwer for them in a time to come, and intitles them to eternal life. His ſacrifice is precious, of a ſweet-ſmelling ſavour to them, as well as to God; by which their ſins are fully expiated, put, and taken away; full ſatisfaction being made for them, and they themſelves thereby perfected for ever.
2 And ſo he is in his prophetic office. His word is precious, and all the truths of the Goſpel, which are comparable to gold, ſilver, and precious ſtones; the promiſes of it are exceeding great and precious, being ſuited to the caſes of all believers: and he is alſo precious in his kingly office; his commands are not grievous; his yoke is eaſy, and burden light; believers love his commandments above gold, yea, above fine gold, and eſteem his precepts concerning all things, to be right, and delight in his ways and ordinances: moreover, he is precious to them in all his relations, as he is the head of eminence and influence, their kind and loving huſband, their everlaſting father, their affectionate brother, and faithful friend; his whole perſon, in every view, is precious to them that believe; the church of Chriſt, the members of his body, the ſons of *Zion*, comparable to fine gold, in theſe is all the delight of ſaints; every thing that is in Chriſt, that is of him, or belongs to him, is precious to ſuch ſouls: ſome read the words, *to you therefore that believe, he is honour*; as the *Vulgate Latin*, *Arabic*, and *Ethiopic* verſions; and ſo the word is rendred in *Rom.* xiii. 7. he is both an honour to them, that they are related to him; and he is honoured by them, by believing in him, and obeying him; and he is the cauſe of all their true honour, both in this and the other world. The *Syriac* verſion renders it, *to you therefore is this honour given*; namely, that ſuch a ſtone is laid, and that they were built upon it, and ſhould not be confounded, or aſhamed, either here or hereafter; connecting the words with the preceding. The *Septuagint* uſe the word the Apoſtle here does, in *Iſ.* xi. 10. where it is propheſied of the Meſſiah, that his *reſt ſhall be glorious*; they render it τιμη, *honour*, or *precious*. The *Jewiſh* writers have adopted the word טימי, into their language, and uſe it for profit, and gain [w]; in which ſenſe it is applicable to Chriſt, who is gain to believers, both in life and in death; they being bleſſed with all ſpiritual bleſſings in him, and he being all in all to them: and alſo they uſe it, as denoting the intrinſic price and value of any thing [x], and which is a right ſenſe of the word; and to believers the price of wiſdom, or Chriſt is far above rubies, and all the things that can be deſired; to them he is precious as a ſtone, as a foundation and corner-ſtone, and more precious than the moſt precious ſtones or things in nature; this he is to them that believe: next follows, in this and the other verſe, the account of what he is to them that believe not; *but unto them which be diſobedient*; who are unperſuadable, unbelieving, and are children of diſobedience; who neither obey God and his righteous law, nor Chriſt and his Goſpel: *the ſtone which the builders diſallowed, the ſame is made the head of the corner*; reference is manifeſtly had to *Pſ.* cxviii. 22. which is a paſſage that clearly belongs to the Meſſiah, and which is ſuggeſted by Chriſt himſelf, in *Matt.* xxi. 42. ſee the note there; and is by our Apoſtle, in *Acts* iv. 11, 12. applied unto him: by the *builders* are meant, the rulers of the *Jews*, both civil end eccleſiaſtical, and eſpecially the latter, the ſcribes, phariſees, and chief-prieſts; who ſet up for builders of the church of God, but were miſerable ones; they built themſelves, and taught others to build, on the obſervance of the ceremonial law, and the traditions of the elders; on their carnal privileges, and moral righteouſneſs; and theſe diſallowed of Chriſt in the building, rejected him as the Meſſiah, refuſed him as the Saviour and redeemer, and ſet him at naught, had him in the utmoſt deriſion, and reckoned him as a worm, and no man; but to their great mortification, he is not only laid and retained as the foundation and corner-ſtone, but made the head of the building, and is exalted at God's right hand above angels and men; he is the head of the body, the church; he is higher than the kings of the earth, and angels are ſubject to him.

Ver. 8. *And a ſtone of ſtumbling, and a rock of offence,* &c.] The Apoſtle alludes to *Iſ.* viii. 14. and which is a prophecy of the Meſſiah; ſee the note on *Rom.* ix. 33. and had its accompliſhment in the unelieving and diſobedient *Jews*; who ſtumbled at his birth and parentage; at the manner of his birth, being born of a virgin; at the meanneſs of his parents, his ſuppoſed father being a carpenter, and his mother, *Mary*, a poor woman, when they expected the Meſſiah would have ſprung from ſome rich and noble family; and at the place of his birth, which they imagined was *Galilee*, from his education and converſation there; they ſtumbled alſo at his education, and could not conceive how he ſhould know letters, and from whence he ſhould have his wiſdom, having never been trained up in any of their ſchools and academies, or at the feet of any of their doctors and *Rabbins*; but, on the other hand, was brought up and employed in the trade of a carpenter; they ſtumbled at his outward meanneſs and poverty, when they expected the Meſſiah would be a rich, powerful, and glorious monarch; and ſo at the obſcurity of his kingdom, which was not of this world, and came not with obſervation, when they dreamt of an earthly and temporal one, which ſhould be ſet up in great ſplendor and glory; and they ſtumbled likewiſe at the company he kept, and the audience that attended him, being the poorer ſort of the people, and the more illiterate, and alſo ſuch who had been very prophane and wicked, as publicans and harlots; moreover, they ſtumbled at his miniſtry, at the doctrine he preached, particularly at the doctrine of his divinity, and of ſpiritual communion with him, by eating his fleſh, and drinking his blood, and at the doctrines of diſtinguiſhing grace; and ſo at his miracles by which he confirmed his miſſion and miniſtry, ſome of theſe being wrought on the ſabbath-day, and others they imputed to diabolical influence and aſſiſtance: in a word, they ſtumbled at his death, having imbibed a notion that Chriſt abideth for ever, and eſpecially at the manner of it, the death of the croſs; wherefore the preaching of Chriſt crucified, always was, and ſtill is, a ſtumbling-block unto them: *even to them which ſtumble at the word*; either the eſſential Word, Chriſt Jeſus, as before; or rather at the doctrine of the Goſpel, at that part of it which reſpects a Trinity of perſons in the Godhead; becauſe their carnal reaſon could not comprehend it, and they refuſed to ſubmit to revelation, and to receive the witneſs of God, which is greater than that of men; and at that part of it, which regards the deity of Chriſt, and that for this reaſon, becauſe he was a man, and in order to enervate the efficacy of his blood, righteouſneſs, and ſacrifice, and fearing too much honour ſhould be given to him; and alſo at that part of the word which concerns the diſtinguiſhing grace of God, as eternal perſonal election, particular redemption, and efficacious grace in converſion; againſt which the carnal mind of man is continually cavilling and replying, and in ſo doing, againſt God himſelf, charging him with cruelty, injuſtice, and inſincerity; and particularly at that part of the word which holds forth the doctrine of free juſtification, by the righteouſneſs of Chriſt; this was the grand ſtumbling-block of the *Jews*, who ſought for righteouſneſs, not by faith, but, as it were, by the works of the law, being ignorant of the righteouſneſs of God, and of the ſpirituality of the law, and of themſelves, and their own righteouſneſs, of which they had an overweaning opinion: *being diſobedient*; to the Goſpel revelation, and unwilling to ſubmit their carnal reaſon to it; this is the ſource and cauſe of their ſtumbling at Chriſt and his Goſpel: it is worth while to compare this with the *Chaldee paraphraſe* of *Iſ.* viii. 14. which paſſage is here referred to; and the paraphraſe of it runs thus; "*if ye obey not*, his word ſhall be among you for revenge, and for a ſtone ſmiting, and for a rock of offence to both houſes of the princes of *Iſrael*, and for deſtruction and offence to thoſe who are divided upon the houſe of *Judah*, &c. *whereunto alſo they were appointed*; both to ſtumble at the word of the Goſpel, and at Chriſt, the ſum and ſubſtance of it, he being ſet in the counſel and purpoſe of God, as for the riſing of ſome, ſo, for the ſtumbling and falling of others; and alſo to that diſobedience and infidelity which was the cauſe of their ſtumbling; for as there are ſome whom God has appointed and fore-ordained to believe in Chriſt, and on whom he has determined to beſtow true faith in him, and who have it as a pure gift, in conſequence of ſuch appointment; ſo there are others, whom he has determined to leave in that diſobedience and infidelity, into which the fall brought and concluded them, through which they ſtumble at Chriſt, and his word, and in conſequence thereof, juſtly periſh; but this is not the caſe of all; there are ſome who are the objects of diſtinguiſhing grace and favour, and who are deſcribed in the following verſe.

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[w] Targum in Eſther iii. 8. & v. 13. & vii. 4.

[x] Targum Hieroſol. in Gen. xxi. 33. Targum Jon. in Gen. xxiii. 15. Targum in Prov. xxxi. 10. Bereſhit Rabba, §. 2. fol. 2, 3. & §. 11. fol. 9. 3.

Ver. 9. *But ye are a choſen generation*, &c.] Or *kindred*; the phraſe is to be ſeen in the *Septuagint*, on *Iſ.* xliii. 20. to which, and the following verſe, the Apoſtle refers here, and in another part of this text. The alluſion is throughout to the people of *Iſrael* in general, who, in an external way, were all that is here ſaid; but was only true in a ſpiritual ſenſe, of ſuch as were choſen and called among the *Jews*: and who were a *generation* or *kindred*; being regenerate, or through abundant mercy begotten, and of an incorruptible ſeed born again; and were a-kin to God, he being their Father, and they his children by adopting grace, and which was made manifeſt by their new birth; and alſo a-kin to Chriſt, he being their head, huſband, father, and brother, and they his members, ſpouſe, children, and brethren; and to the ſaints, being of the ſame houſhold and family, in heaven and in earth; having the ſame father, lord, ſpirit, faith, baptiſm, and they all brethren: and they were a *choſen* generation or kindred; being famous, and in high eſteem with God, and accounted by him for a generation; he having choſen them above all kindred, tongue, people, and nation, and that from all eternity; and of his own ſovereign good-will and pleaſure; and not on account of their faith, holineſs, and good works; and to ſpecial benefits, to the relation and kindred they are in, to grace here, and glory hereafter; to regeneration and ſanctification, and to ſalvation and eternal life; juſt as *Iſrael*, as a nation, were choſen above all others, becauſe of the love of God to them, and for no other reaſon, to many external privileges and favours, which others did not enjoy: now the Apoſtle mentions this character firſt, becauſe God's eternal election is the ſource and ſpring of all ſpiritual bleſſings, which provides and ſecures them, and according to which, they are beſtowed, and with which, they are inſeparably connected: *a royal prieſthood*; referring to *Exod.* xix. 6. where the *Iſraelites* are called, a *kingdom of prieſts*; which the *Chaldee paraphraſe* renders, kings prieſts; ſee *Rev.* i. 6. a character which one of the *Jewiſh* commentators ſays[y], ſhall return to the *Jews* לעתיד לבא, *in time to come*; and well agrees with all the people of Chriſt, whether *Jews* or *Gentiles*, who are all of them *kings*, through their relation to Chriſt; and at the preſent time have a kingdom which cannot be moved, or taken away from them; being not only brought into the Goſpel diſpenſation, the kingdom of the Meſſiah, and having a right to all the privileges and immunities of it, but have alſo the kingdom of grace ſet up within them, or grace, as a reigning principle implanted in them; which lies not in any thing external, but in righteouſneſs and true holineſs, in inward peace, and ſpiritual joy; and they have the power of kings over ſin, ſatan, and the world; and the riches of kings, being poſſeſſed of the riches of grace now, and intitled to the riches of glory in another world; they live like kings, they wear royal apparel, the robe of Chriſt's righteouſneſs; they ſit at the king's table, and feed on royal dainties; and are attended on as kings, angels being their life-guards and miniſtring-ſpirits to them; and hereafter they ſhall reign with Chriſt on earth, and that for the ſpace of a thouſand years, and after that, for ever; being raiſed up from a low eſtate, to inherit the crown of glory, to wear the crown of life and righteouſneſs, and poſſeſs the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world, of which they are now heirs: and they are *prieſts*, as well as kings; being made ſo by Chriſt, and through his prieſtly office; are anointed with the Holy Ghoſt, and ſanctified by his grace, and allowed to draw near to God, and offer up by Chriſt their ſpiritual ſacrifices of prayer and praiſe; and are enabled and aſſiſted to offer up the ſacrifice of a broken heart, and their bodies alſo, and even their lives, when called to it; the alluſion is to the kingdom and prieſthood, being formerly together, and which met in Chriſt, *Zach.* vi. 13. and in his people. The *Jews* were wont to call the prieſtly dignity and office, כתר כהנה, *the crown of the prieſthood*[z]: *an holy nation*; referring to the ſame place in *Exod.* xix. 6. where the *Iſraelites* are ſo called, being ſeparated by God from other nations, and legally and externally ſanctified by him; as all the true *Iſrael* of God are ſanctified, or ſet apart by God the Father, in eternal election, to real and perfect holineſs; and are ſanctified or cleanſed from ſin, by the blood and ſacrifice of Chriſt; and are internally ſanctified by the Spirit of God; have principles of holineſs wrought in them, from whence they live holy lives and converſations: *a peculiar people*; as the *Iſraelites* are called a *peculiar treaſure, Exod.* xix. 5. to which the reference is: God's elect are a peculiar people, to whom he bears a peculiar love; they are choſen by him to be a ſpecial people above all others, and have peculiar bleſſings beſtowed on them, and peculiar care is taken of them; they are the Lord's סגלה, his treaſure, his jewels, his portion and inheritance, and therefore he will preſerve and ſave them; they are a people for acquiſition, purchaſe, and poſſeſſion, as the words may be rendred; whom God has obtained, procured, and purchaſed for himſelf, with the precious blood of his Son; hence the *Syriac* verſion renders them, כנישא פריקא, *a redeemed company*; the ſame with the church God has purchaſed with his blood, *Acts* xx. 28. and the purchaſed poſſeſſion, *Eph.* i. 14. and which are redeemed and purified to be, and appear to be, a peculiar people, zealous of good works, *Tit.* ii. 14. the end of all which grace being beſtowed upon them in election, redemption, and regeneration, is, *that ye ſhould ſhow forth the praiſes of him*; that is, God, who has choſen them into a ſpiritual kindred and relation, made them kings and prieſts, ſanctified them by his Spirit, and redeemed them by his Son, as a peculiar people; all which, laid them under obligation to ſhew forth with their lips, and in their lives and converſations, his *virtues*; we read, *praiſes*; and ſo the *Syriac* verſion; that is, the power, wiſdom, goodneſs, love, grace, and mercy of God, and the commendations of them, diſplayed in the above inſtances: the Apoſtle ſeems to have his eye on, *Iſ.* xliii. 21. where the *Septuagint* uſe the ſame word for *praiſe*, as here: next follows a *periphraſis* of God, and in it an argument, or reaſon for ſpeaking of his virtues, and ſhewing forth his praiſe: *who hath called you out of darkneſs into his marvellous light*; which is to be underſtood, not of an external call by the miniſtry of the word only; for many are called in this ſenſe, who are not choſen, redeemed, and ſanctified; but of an internal, ſpecial, powerful, holy, and heavenly calling, by the Spirit and grace of God: and this is, *out of darkneſs*; out of the darkneſs of the law, under the former diſpenſation, which was as night, in compariſon of the Goſpel-day; and out of that darkneſs which the *Jews* were particularly in, in and about the coming of Chriſt, being ignorant of the righteouſneſs of God, and the ſpirituality of the law; having loſt all right notions of the Meſſiah, and the true ſenſe of the ſcriptures, and were carried away with the traditions of the elders, and led by blind guides, the ſcribes and phariſees; out of this darkneſs, as well as what is common to men, in a ſtate of unregeneracy, having no ſight of themſelves, their ſin, and miſery, nor knowledge of divine things, of God in Chriſt, and of ſalvation by him, and of the work of the Spirit upon the heart, they were called, *into his marvellous light*; by which they ſaw the exceeding ſinfulneſs of ſin, the inſufficiency of their righteouſneſs, their need of Chriſt, and ſalvation by him; and aſtoniſhing it was to them, that they who were born blind, and were brought up in darkneſs, and were darkneſs itſelf, ſhould be made light in the Lord; and the objects they ſaw were amazing to them; every thing in a ſpiritual way was marvellous in their eyes; eſpecially the ſun of righteouſneſs, the light of the world, and alſo the wonderful things out of the law, or doctrine of Chriſt, the Goſpel, and the ſurprizing love and grace of God, in the whole, and in the ſeveral parts of their ſalvation: it was with them, as if a child, from the moment of its birth, was ſhut up in a dungeon, where there was not the leaſt crevice to let in the leaſt degree of light, and ſhould continue there till at years of maturity, and then be brought out at once, at noon-day, the ſun ſhining in its full ſtrength and glory, when that particularly, and all objects about him, muſt ſtrike him with wonder and ſurprize. The *Syriac* verſion renders it, *his moſt excellent light*; the Apoſtle ſeems to refer to the form of praiſe and thankſgiving uſed by the *Jews*, at the time of the paſſover; who ſay [a], "we "are bound to confeſs, to praiſe, to glorify, *&c.* "him who hath done for our fathers, and for us, "all theſe wonders; he hath brought us out of "bondage to liberty; from ſorrow to joy, and "from mourning to a good day, ומאפילה לאור גדול, "*and out of darkneſs into great light*; and from ſub"jection unto redemption." This was alſo part of their morning-prayer [b]; "I confeſs before thee, "O my God, and the God of my fathers, that "thou haſt brought me *out of darkneſs into light*." And it is to be obſerved, that the third *Sephira*, or number, in the *Jewiſh Cabaliſtic* tree, which anſwers to the third perſon in the Trinity, among other names, is called, *marvellous light* [c].

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[y] Baal Hatturim in loc.

[z] Pirke Abot, c. 4 §. 13. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 78. 3.

Ver. 10. *Which in time were not a people*, &c.] A *Lo-ammi* being put upon them; ſee *Hoſ.* i. 9, 10. and ii. 23. to which the Apoſtle here refers: God's elect, whether among *Jews* or *Gentiles*, were, from eternity, his choſen people, and his covenant-people; and as ſuch, were given to Chriſt, and they became his people, and his care and charge; and he ſaved them by his obedience, ſufferings, and death, and redeemed them to himſelf, a peculiar people: but then, before converſion, they are not a people formed by God for himſelf, and his praiſe; nor Chriſt's willing people, either to be ſaved by him, or to ſerve him; nor are they, nor can they be truly known by themſelves, or others, to be the people of God: the *Syriac* verſion gives the true ſenſe of the phraſe, by rendring it, *theſe who before were not* חשבין *reckoned or accounted a people*; that is, by others: *but are now the people of God*; being regenerated, called, and ſanctified, they are avouched by God to be his people; they have the witneſs of the Spirit to their ſpirits, that they are the people of God; they can then claim their relation to God, and are known, acknowledged, and called the people of God, by others: *which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy*; being called formerly, *Lo-ruhamah*, *Hoſ.* i. 6. and ii. 23. which paſſages the Apoſtle has in view: before converſion there is mercy in God's heart towards his elect, and ſo there is in the covenant of grace, and which was ſhown in the proviſion of his Son, as a Saviour, in the miſſion of him, and redemption by him; but this is not manifeſted to them, until they are begotten again, according to abundant mercy, and then they obtain mercy; having in their regeneration an evident diſplay of the mercy of God towards them, and an application of his pardoning grace and mercy, through the blood of his Son, unto them.

Ver. 11. *Dearly beloved, I beſeech you*, &c.] The Apoſtle, from characters of the ſaints, and which expreſs their bleſſings and privileges, with great beauty, propriety, and pertinency, paſſes to exhortations to duties; he addreſſes the ſaints under this affectionate appellation, *dearly beloved*, to expreſs his great love to them, and to ſhew that what he was about to exhort them to, ſprung from ſincere and hearty affection for them, and was with a view to their real good; nor does he in an authoritative way command, as he might have done, as an Apoſtle, but, as a friend, he entreats and beſeeches them: *as ſtrangers and pilgrims*; not in a literal ſenſe, tho' they were in a foreign country, in a ſtrange land, and ſojourners there, but in a ſpiritual and myſtical ſenſe; they were *ſtrangers*, not to God and Chriſt, and to the Spirit, to themſelves, to the ſaints, and to all that is good, as they had formerly been, but to the world, the men of it, and the things in it; and therefore it became them to ſeparate from it, and not conform to it; to abſtain from all appearance of evil, to have no fellowſhip with the unfruitful works of darkneſs, but to deny ungodlineſs and worldly luſts: and they were *pilgrims*; whoſe habit is Chriſt and his righteouſneſs; whoſe food is Chriſt and his fullneſs; whoſe ſtaff is Chriſt and the promiſes; whoſe guide is the bleſſed Spirit; the place for which they are bound is heaven, the better country, where is their father's houſe, their friends, and their inheritance; this world not being their country, nor their reſting-place, it became them to have their converſation in heaven, and to *abſtain from fleſhly luſts*; which ſpring from the fleſh, and are concerned about fleſhly things, and are exerciſed in and by the members of the fleſh, or body; hence, in the *Syriac* verſion, they are called, *the luſts of the body*: theſe are to be abſtained from; not that the Apoſtle thought that they could be without them; for whilſt the ſaints are in the body, fleſh, or corrupt nature will be in them, and the luſts thereof; but then theſe are not to be indulged, or proviſion to be made for them, to fulfil them; they are not to be obeyed and ſerved, or lived unto, but to be denied and crucified, being unſuitable to the character of ſtrangers and pilgrims, and alſo becauſe of their hurtful and pernicious nature: *which war againſt the ſoul*; ſee *Rom.* vii. 23. *James* iv. 1. *Cant.* vi. 13. theſe are enemies to the ſpiritual peace, comfort, and welfare of the ſoul; and being of a man's houſhold, and in his heart, are the worſt enemies he has; and are to be treated as ſuch, to be ſhunned and avoided, watched and guarded againſt; for tho' they cannot deſtroy the ſouls of true believers, they may bring much leanneſs upon them, and greatly diſtreſs them, and ſpoil them of their inward joy, and ſpiritual pleaſure.

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[a] Miſn. Peſachim, c. 10. §. 5. Haggada Shel Peſach, p. 23. Maimon. Hilchot Chametz Umetzah, c. 8. §. 5.

[b] T. Hieroſ. Berachot, c 4. fol. 7. 1.

[c] Cabala Denudata, par. 2 p 8.

Ver. 12. *Having your converſation honeſt among the Gentiles*, &c.] To have the converſation honeſt, is to provide things honeſt in the ſight of men; to live and walk honeſtly before all; to do thoſe things which are right and honeſt in the ſight of God, and among men; to order the converſation aright, according to the law of God, which is a rule of walk and converſation, and as becomes the Goſpel of Chriſt; and which was the more, and rather to be attended to, becauſe theſe converted *Jews* were *among the Gentiles*, that knew not God; idolaters, and unbelievers, prophane ſinners, who were watching for their halting, and that they might take an advantage againſt them, and the Goſpel, and the religion they profeſſed, from their converſations: *that whereas they ſpeak againſt you as evil doers*; charging them with the groſſeſt immoralities, as the heathens did the chriſtians in the firſt ages; which appears evidently from the apologies of *Tertullian*, *Juſtin Martyr*, and others; tho' it ſeems that the *Jewiſh* converts are here intended, who were accuſed by the *Gentiles* of ſeditious principles and practices, and of acting contrary to the laws of civil government, refuſing to yield ſubjection to *Gentile* magiſtrates, and obedience to heathen maſters; and hence the Apoſtle, in ſome following verſes, enlarges on thoſe duties, and which he exhorts them to attend unto, that they might put to ſilence the ignorance of ſuch fooliſh accuſers: and *that they may*, *by* your *good works which they ſhall behold, glorify God in the day of viſitation*; or *trial*, or *examination*, as the *Syriac* verſion renders it; which may be underſtood either of human or divine viſitation; if of the former, then the ſenſe is, let the ſaints attend to all the duties of civil life, that when heathen magiſtrates come to viſit their ſeveral diſtricts, and enquire and examine into the conduct of men, and ſeeing and finding that the chriſtians behave well and orderly, inſtead of perſecuting them, they will bleſs God, that they are ſuch good ſubjects; if of divine viſitation, which ſeems moſt likely, this muſt either deſign a viſitation by way of judgment, or of mercy; for as the *Jews* ſay [a], there is פקידה, *a viſitation*, for good, and a viſitation for evil: God ſometimes viſits in a way of puniſhment for ſin, and ſometimes in a way of grace, for the good and welfare of men; and then the ſenſe is, that when wicked men take notice of, and obſerve the good works of the ſaints, their civil, honeſt, and orderly converſation, they ſhall glorify God on that account, who has enabled them to perform them; and acknowledge the goodneſs of them, and the wrong judgment they have paſſed upon them, and the ill meaſure they have meaſured out to them; and this will be, either when God viſits them in a way of wrath, as at the day of judgment, or at the time of ſome temporal calamity before, or when he viſits them in a way of mercy, calls them by his grace, and effectually works upon them by his Spirit: the ſame argument for the performance of good works, is uſed by Chriſt, in *Matt.* v. 16.

Ver. 13. *Submit yourſelves to every ordinance of man*, &c.] Or, *to every human creation*, or *creature*; not *to all the ſons of men*, as the *Syriac* verſion renders it; or to all the individuals of mankind; for there are ſome that are in ſuch ſtations and circumſtances, that they are not to be ſubmitted to, but to be ruled over, and governed: ſo, kings are not to ſubmit to their ſubjects, nor are parents to be ſubject to their children, nor huſbands to their wives, nor maſters to their ſervants, which would be prepoſterous; but ſubmiſſion is limited and reſtrained to perſons in ſuch a place and ſituation: *the human creature*, or *creation*, here, deſigns the *Gentiles*, who are elſewhere called the creature, the whole creation, every creature, and every creature under heaven, *Rom.* viii. 19, 20, 21, 22. *Mark* xvi. 15. *Col.* i. 23. and particularly heathen magiſtrates, ſtiled *creation*, or *creature*; not as men, for all men as ſuch, are creatures; but as magiſtrates being created, conſtituted, and appointed ſuch, and inſtalled into, and inveſted with ſuch an office: and *human*; not only becauſe they were men, and were taken out from among men that bore the office of magiſtrates, and governed over men, and were for the good and advantage of mankind, but becauſe they were created and placed in ſuch a ſtation by men; tho' government itſelf is of God, is a divine inſtitution, yet this and that particular form of government, is of man; and eſpecially the forms of government among the *Gentiles*, were human; and are here ſo called, in diſtinction from the form of government among the *Jews*, which was, a *Theocracy*, and was divine; wherefore the *Jews*, and ſo theſe converted ones, ſcrupled yielding obedience to heathen magiſtrates; on which account they were ſpoken againſt, as evil doers; hence the Apoſtle, in the firſt place, and as a principal part of their honeſt converſation among the *Gentiles*, exhorts them to ſubmiſſion to civil magiſtrates, tho' they were creatures of men; and to *every* one of them, tho' a *Gentile*, an unbeliever, and a wicked man: and this he urges, *for the Lord's ſake*; for the ſake of Chriſt Jeſus the Lord, becauſe of his command, who ordered to give to *Cæſar* the things that are *Cæſar*'s; and in imitation of him, who paid tribute to whom tribute was due; and for the ſake of his honour and glory who was ill thought and ſpoken of by the *Gentiles*, becauſe of the diſregard of the converted *Jews* to their magiſtrates; and which ſerved to prejudice them againſt Chriſt and his Goſpel: the *Vulgate Latin*, *Syriac*, and *Ethiopic* verſions read, *for God's ſake*; becauſe civil government is of God; magiſtracy is of divine appointment; the powers that be, are ordained of God, tho' this or the other form is of man's preſcription: it is the command of God that magiſtrates ſhould be obeyed; and it makes for his glory, as well as for the good of men, when they are ſubmitted to in things that do not contradict the revealed will of God; for otherwiſe, not man, but God, is to be obeyed: *whether it be to the king*; to *Cæſar*, the *Roman* emperor; and the then reigning one, ſeems to be *Nero*, who tho' a wicked man, was to be ſubmitted to in things civil and lawful; and it holds good of any other king that has the ſupreme government of a nation: the *Syriac* verſion reads it in the plural number, *to kings*; and tho' the name of king was odious to the *Romans*, from the times of *Tarquin*, nor did they call their chief governor, or governors, by this name, yet other nations did; ſee *John* xix. 15. and ſubjection was to be yielded to him, *as ſupreme*; for the ſake, and in conſideration of his being in ſo high and exalted a ſtation, having the ſupreme power and government of the people in his hands. The *Syriac* verſion renders it, *becauſe of their power*; and the *Arabic* verſion, *becauſe of his power*; and the *Ethiopic* verſion, *becauſe all things are his*; the *Roman* emperors were abſolute monarchs; ſee *Rom.* xiii. 1.

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[a] Zohar in Gen. fol. 93. 3.

Ver. 14. *Or unto governors*, &c.] Inferior magiſtrates, ſuch as were under the *Roman* emperor; as proconſuls, procurators, *&c.* ſuch as *Pontius Pilate*, *Felix*, and *Feſtus*, who had under the emperor the government of particular nations, provinces, and cities: *as unto them that are ſent by him*; either by the king, the *Roman* emperor, by whom they were ſent, from whom they received their commiſſion, and derived their authority, under whom they acted, and to whom they were accountable; or by God, by whom they are ordained, and whoſe miniſters they are, and for the ends hereafter mentioned; ſo that this contains an argument or reaſon, why they ſhould be ſubmitted to: *for the puniſhment of evil doers*; the breakers of the laws of God and men, on whom puniſhment is to be inflicted, by the civil magiſtrates, for the breach of them, by fines, ſcourgings, impriſonment, and death itſelf, according as the crimes are: *and for the praiſe of them that do well*; who behave according to the laws of God and nations, and are obedient to magiſtrates, and ſubject to every ordinance; theſe have praiſe of men, of magiſtrates, and are rewarded by them; by protecting their perſons, defending their properties, and preſerving them in the peaceable enjoyment of their eſtates and poſſeſſions; ſee *Rom.* xiii. 3.

Ver. 15. *For ſo is the will of God*, &c.] Which refers not ſo much to what goes before; tho' it is a truth, that it is the will of God that men ſhould be ſubject to magiſtrates, and that magiſtrates ſhould encourage virtue, and diſcourage vice, reward the obedient, and puniſh delinquents; but to what follows: *that with well doing*; by doing good works, and thoſe well; by living ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly; by having the converſation honeſt among the *Gentiles*, agreeable to the law of God, and as becomes the Goſpel of Chriſt; particularly, by living according to the laws of civil ſociety, ſo far as is conſiſtent with, and not contrary to the commands of God; and by being ſubject to every civil magiſtrate, and ordinance of man: *ye may put to ſilence the ignorance of fooliſh men*; or, as the *Syriac* verſion renders it, *that ye may ſtop the mouths of thoſe fooliſh men who know not God*; or, as the *Ethiopic* verſion has it, *who know not theſe things*; who are ignorant of God, of his righteouſneſs, of his law, his Goſpel, and ordinances. The *Gentiles* were very ignorant of theſe things, and very fooliſh in their imaginations about religious affairs; and from this their ignorance and folly, aroſe calumnies, reflections, and cenſures upon the people of God; they neither knew God, nor them, nor true religion, and reproached what they underſtood not, and for want of knowing it: now the Apoſtle ſignified, that it was the declared will of God, that his people ſhould ſo behave in civil life, that their enemies ſhould be entirely confounded, and ſilenced, and have nothing to ſay againſt them; the word ſignifies, to be muzzled, to have the mouth ſhut up, as with a bit or bridle; it is uſed in *Matt.* xxii. 12. 1 *Cor.* ix. 9.

Ver. 16. *As free*, &c.] Theſe converted *Jews* might value themſelves on their freedom, partly as the deſcendants of *Abraham*, and ſo, free born, and not to be brought into bondage to other people; and chiefly becauſe of their liberty which they had in and by Chriſt Jeſus. The Apoſtle allows that they were free men, that they were Chriſt's freemen, were free from ſin, its damning and domineering power, and from the curſes and condemnation of the law, and had freedom of acceſs to God, and a right to all the privileges and immunities of the houſe of God; but then they were not free to ſin, and to live in the contempt of the laws of God and men, to deſpiſe government, ſpeak evil of dignities, and break in upon the rules of civil ſociety: *and not uſing your liberty as a cloak of maliciouſneſs*; under a pretence of chriſtian liberty, to hurt the perſons, properties, and eſtates of men, without looking upon themſelves accountable for their conduct to their ſuperiors: ſome think the Apoſtle alludes to the ancient cuſtom of ſervants, who when they were made free, walked with a cap, or covering on their heads, in token of it: it follows, but *as the ſervants of God*; for they that are free, are the ſervants of God and Chriſt, and ſhew themſelves to be ſo, by ſubmitting to, and obeying thoſe that are under them, and ordained by them; and which is no ways inconſiſtent with, and contrary to their chriſtian liberty, which never was deſigned to thwart and ſubvert the principles of natural religion, laws of a moral nature, or the rules of civil government; ſome inſtances of which are next mentioned.

Ver. 17. *Honour all men*, &c.] To whom honour is due, according to the place, ſtation, and circumſtances in which they are, the gifts of providence and grace beſtowed on them, and the uſefulneſs they are of, whether they be *Jews* or *Gen-*

tiles, rich or poor, believers or unbelievers: it is a ſaying of *Ben Zoma*[e], "who is to be honoured, or "is worthy of honour? מכבד את הבריות, *he that* "*honoureth creatures*;" meaning men in general, or the *Gentiles* particularly, who were ſometimes ſo called by the *Jews*; ſee the note on *Mark* xvi. 15. and may be meant by *all men* here: *love the brotherhood*; or *your brethren*, as the *Syriac* verſion renders it; the whole company of the brethren in Chriſt, who are born of God, are members of Chriſt, and of the ſame body, and have the ſame ſpirit, belong to the ſame family, and are of the houſhold of faith, let them be of whatſoever nation, or in whatſoever circumſtances of life. The *Jews* had not that good opinion of, nor that affection for the *Gentiles*, but were ready to treat them with indifference, neglect, and contempt; and not only thoſe that knew not God, but even believing *Gentiles* themſelves; and which is the reaſon of theſe exhortations, that they ſhould deſpiſe no man, but honour all; and eſpecially ſhould expreſs their love, both by words and deeds, to thoſe that were in the ſame ſpiritual relation with them, and that without any difference, on account of their being of another nation: *fear God*; not with a ſervile, but a filial fear, the new covenant grace of fear; which ſprings from the goodneſs of God, has that for its object, and is increaſed by the freſh inſtances and diſcoveries of it; and which ſhews itſelf in a reverential affection for God, a ſtrict regard to his worſhip and ordinances, and a carefulneſs of offending him. This is placed between what goes before, and follows after, to ſhew the influence it has on each of them; for where the fear of God is, there will be due reſpect ſhewn to all men, more or leſs, and an hearty and affectionate love to all the ſaints, as brethren, and a proper regard to thoſe that are ſet in high places of dignity and power: *honour the king*; *Cæſar*, the *Roman* emperor, tho' a wicked, perſecuting *Nero*, and ſo, any other king or governor; who, ſo far as he acts the part of a civil magiſtrate, preſerves the peace, the property, and liberty of his ſubjects, is a terror to evil works, and an encourager of good ones, and rules according to the laws of God, and civil ſociety, is deſerving of great honour and eſteem from men; and which is to be ſhewn by ſpeaking well of him, by a chearful ſubjection to him; by an obſervance of the laws, and by payment of tribute, and doing every thing to make him eaſy, and honourable in his government: advice much like this is given by *Iſocrates*[f]; fear God, "honour parents, revere friends, and obey the "laws."

Ver. 18. *Servants be ſubject to your maſters*, &c.] This was another notion of the *Jews*, that becauſe they were the ſeed of *Abraham*, they ought not to be the ſervants of any; and particularly ſuch as were believers in Chriſt, thought they ought not to ſerve unbelieving maſters, nor indeed believing ones, becauſe they were equally brethren in Chriſt with them; hence the Apoſtle *Peter*, here, as the Apoſtle *Paul* frequently elſewhere, inculcates this duty of ſervants to their maſters; ſee 1 *Cor.* vii. 20, 21. *Eph.* vi. 5. *Col.* iii. 22. 1 *Tim.* vi. 1, 2. *Tit.* ii. 9. the manner in which they are to be ſubject to them is, *with all fear*; with reverence to their perſons, ſtrict regard to their commands, faithfulneſs in any truſt repoſed in them, diligence in the diſcharge of their duty, and carefulneſs of offending them; and all this, *not only to the good and gentle*; thoſe that are good-natured, kind, beneficent, and merciful; that don't uſe them with rigour and ſeverity; are moderate in their demands of ſervice; require no more to be done than what is reaſonable; allow them ſufficient diet, give them good wages, and pay them duly: *but alſo to the froward*; the ill-natured, moroſe, and rigorous; who exact more labour than is requiſite; give hard words, and harder blows; with-hold ſufficiency of food from them, and keep back the hire of their labours.

Ver. 19. *For this is thank-worthy*, &c.] Or *grace*; this is a fruit and effect of grace, an inſtance of it, in which it ſhows itſelf: the *Syriac* verſion adds, *with God*; and ſo it is read in one of *Beza*'s copies, and in the *Alexandrian* copy, and ſome others; that is, this is grateful to God, and acceptable with him; as in ver. 20. *if a man for conſcience towards God*; or, *for a good conſcience*, as the *Syriac* verſion reads it; for acting according to his conſcience, in matters of religion, in the things of God; *for the knowledge of God*, as the *Arabic* verſion renders it; for the knowledge of God in Chriſt; for the Goſpel of Chriſt, and a profeſſion of it: or, *for God*, as the *Ethiopic* verſion; for the cauſe of God and truth, and for the ſake of things appertaining to God, and that make for his glory: *endure grief*; what occaſions grief, as ſevere words, bitter reproaches, hard cenſures, and heavy blows; and that with patience, and without murmuring, and with reſignation to the will of God: *ſuffering wrongfully*; there being no juſt cauſe for an ill look, word, or blow to be given.

Ver. 20. *For what glory is it if when ye be buffeted for your faults*, &c.] Which ye have committed, and are guilty of, and are truly ſuch: *ye ſhall take it patiently?* to be ſilent, and not murmur, when beaten, within meaſure, for real faults, is no great honour, nor does it deſerve any praiſe; it is the leaſt that can be done: *but if when ye do well*; either in their maſter's ſervice, or rather, in the buſineſs of religion, and the things of God; as when what they do is according to the will of God, and from love to him, and in faith, and in the name and ſtrength of Chriſt, and to the glory of God; without all which there is no well doing: *and ſuffer for it*; reproach and perſecution, by words or blows, in perſon or property: *ye take it patiently*; without grieving and repining, or anſwering again, and making any returns: *this is acceptable with God*; is agreeable to his will, and grateful in his ſight, what he is well pleaſed with, is reckoned grace with him; and tho' it is his own grace, and of his own beſtowing, he will reward it with glory.

Ver. 21. *For even hereunto were ye called*, &c.] Both to well doing, of which none but thoſe who are called with an holy and effectual calling, are capable; and which they are fitted for, and are under obligation to perform, and to ſuffer for ſo doing, which they muſt always expect, and to patience in ſuffering for it, which highly becomes them. This being then one end of the ſaints effectual vocation, is made uſe of as an argument to engage them to the exerciſe of the grace of patience in ſuffering for well doing; and another follows: *becauſe Chriſt alſo ſuffered for us*; in our room and ſtead, to fulfil the law, ſatisfy the juſtice of God, and make reconciliation for ſin; and not only for our good, or merely as a martyr, to confirm the truth of his doctrine, or barely as an example to us, tho' this alſo is true: the *Alexandrian* copy, and ſome others, read, *for you*; for you ſervants, as well as others, and therefore ſhould chearfully and patiently ſuffer for the ſake of Chriſt, and his Goſpel; and the rather, becauſe he ſuffered, *leaving us*, or *you*, as the ſame copies, and the *Vulgate Latin* verſion read, *an example that ye ſhould follow his ſteps:* Chriſt is an example to his people in the exerciſe of grace, as of faith, love, zeal, meekneſs, and humility; and in the diſcharge of duty, in his regard to the commands of the moral law, and poſitive inſtitutions of religion; in his conſtancy in prayer; in frequent attendance on public worſhip; in his ſubmiſſion to the ordinance of baptiſm, and his celebration of the ſupper; and likewiſe in his ſufferings; and in his meekneſs, patience, courage, and reſignation to the will of God, which is what is here intended, and in which his people are to follow and imitate him.

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[e] Pirke Abot, c. 4. §. 1.

[f] Paræn. ad Demon. Orat. 1.

Ver. 22. *Who did no ſin*, &c.] He was in the likeneſs of ſinful fleſh; he looked like a ſinful man, being born of a ſinful woman, and keeping company with ſinful men, being himſelf a man of ſorrows, greatly afflicted, and at laſt put to death. He was traduced as a ſinner, by his enemies, and had all the ſins of his people on him, which he bore, and made ſatisfaction for, and were the reaſon of his ſufferings; but he had no ſin in his nature, nor did he commit any in his life: *neither was guile found in his mouth*; tho' it was diligently ſought for, by the *Scribes* and *Phariſees*; there was no deceit in his lips, no falſhood in his doctrine, any more than there was immorality in his converſation; he was an *Iſraelite* indeed on all accounts, and in the fulleſt ſenſe of that phraſe; reference is had to *Iſ.* liii. 9. and this is obſerved, partly to ſhow, that Chriſt ſuffered not for himſelf, or for any ſins of his own, but for the ſins of others, for which he was very fit, ſince he had none of his own; and partly as an argument for patience in ſuffering; for ſince Chriſt ſuffered, who had no ſin, nor did any, nor could any be found in him, charged upon him, and proved againſt him; and which ſufferings of his he bore with patience; then how much muſt it become ſinful men to bear their ſufferings patiently, tho' they may not be criminal with reſpect to the things for which they ſuffer, but yet are ſo in other things, whereas Chriſt was not criminal, nor blame-worthy in any thing?

Ver. 23. *Who when he was reviled, reviled not again*, &c.] When he was reproached as a glutton, a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and ſinners, all the reply he made was, that wiſdom is juſtified of her children; and when he was charged with caſting out devils by *Beelzebub*, the prince of devils, he defended himſelf, not with bad language, but with ſtrong reaſonings; and when he was ſaid to be a *Samaritan*, and had a devil, his only anſwer was, that he had not, that he honoured his Father, and they diſhonoured him; and when he was reviled on the croſs, by thoſe that paſſed by, by the chief-prieſts, and ſcribes, and the thieves that were crucified with him, he made no return, he opened not his mouth, and much leſs in a recriminating way. *When he ſuffered he threatened not*; when he endured buffetings, and ſcourgings in his body, when the officers in the palace of the high-prieſts ſpit in his face, buffeted him, and ſmote him with the palms of their hands, and bid him propheſy who ſmote him, all which were very provoking; yet he ſaid not one word to them, much leſs threatened them with what he would do to them for ſuch uſage another day, when he would let them know, with vengeance, who it was that ſmote him; no, he took all patiently from them, and from *Pilate*, and the *Roman* ſoldiers, when ſcourged by them; he gave his back to the ſmiters, and his cheeks to them that plucked off the hair; and when he ſuffered crucifixion, and was put to ſuch diſtreſſing pains and agonies, he did not threaten his crucifiers with a future judgment, when he would take vengeance, and execute his wrath upon them, but prays to his Father for the forgiveneſs of their ſins: and, as it follows, *but committed* himſelf *to him that judgeth righteouſly*; he commended his ſpirit, or ſoul, to God his Father, and committed his cauſe to him, to vindicate it in what way he ſhould think fit, who he knew was the judge of all the earth, that would do right; and ſo the *Syriac* verſion ſupplies it with ריניה, *his judgment*; which he left with God, the righteous judge, to whom vengeance belongs; and which is an example, and an inſtruction to the ſaints to do ſo likewiſe; not to render railing for railing, or to ſeek revenge, but to leave their cauſe with their God, who will, in his own time, avenge the wrongs and injuries done them. The *Vulgate Latin* verſion reads, contrary to all the *Greek* copies, and other verſions, *but delivered himſelf to him that judgeth unjuſtly*; the ſenſe of which is, that Chriſt delivered himſelf into the hands of *Pilate*, who unjuſtly condemned him to death; but is neither the reading, nor ſenſe of the text.

Ver. 24. *Who his own ſelf bare our ſins*, &c.] As was typified by the high-prieſt, bearing the ſins of the holy things of the people of *Iſrael*, when he went into the moſt holy place, and by the ſcape-goat bearing the iniquities of all the people unto a land not inhabited, and as was foretold by the prophet *Iſaiah*. The Apoſtle here explains the nature and end of Chriſt's ſufferings, which were to make atonement for ſins, and which was done by bearing them. What Chriſt bore were *ſins*, even all ſorts of ſin, original and actual, and every act of ſin of his people; and all that is in ſin, all that belongs to it, ariſes from it, and is the demerit of it, as both filth, guilt, and puniſhment; and a multitude of ſins did he bear, even all the iniquities of all the elect; and a prodigious load and weight it was; and than which nothing could be more nauſeous and diſagreeable to him, who loves righteouſneſs, and hates iniquity: and theſe ſins he bore were not his own, nor the ſins of angels, but of men; and not of all men, yet of many, even as many as were ordained to eternal life, for whom Chriſt gave his life a ranſom, whom he juſtifies and brings to glory; our ſins, not the ſins of the *Jews* only, for *Peter* was a *Jew*, and ſo were thoſe to whom he writes, but of the *Gentiles* alſo, even the ſins of all his people, for them he ſaves from their ſins, being ſtricken for them. His *bearing* them was in this manner: he becoming the ſurety and ſubſtitute of his people, their ſins were laid upon him by his Father, that is, they were imputed to him, they were reckoned as his, and placed to his account; and Chriſt voluntarily took them upon himſelf; he took them to himſelf, as one may take the debt of another, and make himſelf anſwerable for it; or as a man takes up a burden, and lays it on his ſhoulders; ſo Chriſt took up our ſins, and *carried* them *up*, as the word here uſed ſignifies, alluding to the prieſts carrying up the ſacrifice to the altar, and referring to the lifting up of Chriſt upon the croſs; whither he carried the ſins of his people, and bore them, and did not ſink under the weight of them, being the mighty God, and the man of God's right hand, made ſtrong for himſelf; and ſo made entire ſatisfaction for them, by enduring the wrath of God, the curſe of the law, and all that puniſhment which was due unto them; and thereby bore them away, both from his people, and out of the ſight of God, and his vindictive juſtice; and removed them as far as the eaſt is from the weſt, and made a full end of them; and this he himſelf did, and not another, nor by another, or with the help of another; not by the means of a goat, as the high-prieſt, but by himſelf; though he was aſſiſted in bearing his croſs, yet he had no help in bearing our ſins; angels could not help him; his Father ſtood at a diſtance from him; there was none to help; his own arm brought ſalvation to him; but *his own ſelf*, who knew no ſin, nor did any, he by himſelf purged away our ſins, and made reconciliation for them, by bearing them: and which he did *in his own body*, and not another's; in that body which his Father prepared for him, and which he took of the virgin, and was free from ſin; tho' not to the excluſion of his ſoul, which alſo was made an offering for ſin, and in which he endured great pains and ſorrows for ſin: and all this *on the tree*; the accurſed tree, the croſs; which is expreſſive, both of the ſhame and pain of his ſufferings and death. The end of which was, *that we being dead to ſin*; *to our ſins*, as the *Alexandrian* copy, and the *Ethiopic* verſion read; as all the elect are, thro' bearing their ſins, and ſuffering death for them, ſo as that ſin ſhall not be imputed to them; it is as though it never was; it is dead to them, and they to that, as to its damning power and influence; ſo as that they are entirely diſcharged from it, and can never come into condemnation on account of it, and can never be hurt, ſo as to be deſtroyed by it; nor by by death, either corporal or eternal, ſince the ſting of death, which is ſin, is taken away, and the ſtrength of ſin, which is the law, is dead to them, and they to that: in ſhort, through the death of Chriſt they are ſo dead to ſin, that it is not only finiſhed, made an end of, and put away, but the body of it is deſtroyed, that it ſhould not be ſerved; which is an end ſubordinate to the former, and expreſſed in the next clauſe: *ſhould live unto righteouſneſs*; live, and not die the ſecond death, and live by faith on the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, for juſtification of life, and ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly in this preſent evil world; which the grace of God teaches, and the love of Chriſt in bearing ſin conſtrains to, and the redemption by his precious blood, lays under an obligation to do; for thoſe whoſe ſins Chriſt has bore, are not their own, but being bought with the price of his blood, they are bound to live to him who has a property in them, and a right to claim all obedience from them: *by whoſe ſtripes ye were healed*; the paſſage referr'd to is in *Iſ.* liii. 5. which is a prophecy of the Meſſiah, as is acknowledged by the *Jews* [g], who ſay [h], "this is "the king Meſſiah, who was in the generation of "the ungodly, as it is ſaid, *Iſ.* liii. 5. *and with his* "*ſtripes we are healed*; and for this cauſe God ſaved "him, that he might ſave *Iſrael*, and rejoice with "them in the reſurrection of the dead." Sin is a diſeaſe, a natural and hereditary one, an epidemical diſtemper, that reaches to all men, and to all the powers and faculties of their ſouls, and members of their bodies; and which is nauſeous and loathſome, and in itſelf mortal and incurable; nor can it be healed by any creature, or any thing that a creature can do. Chriſt is the only phyſician, and his blood the balm and ſovereign medicine; this cleanſes from all ſin; thro' it is the remiſſion of ſin, which is meant by healing; for healing of diſeaſes, and forgiving iniquities, is one and the ſame thing; ſee *Pſ.* ciii. 3. *Iſ.* xxxiii. 24. *Pſ.* xli. 4. on which latter text a learned *Jew* [i] has this note, "this interpreters explain, לשון סליחה, *as expreſ-* "*ſive of forgiveneſs*;" and the *Jews* ſay, there is no healing of diſeaſes, but it ſignifies forgiveneſs [k]: it is an uncommon way of healing by the ſtripes of another. Some think the Apoſtle alludes to the ſtripes which ſervants receive from their maſters, to whom he was now ſpeaking; and in order to encourage them to bear them patiently, obſerves, that Chriſt himſelf ſuffered ſtripes, and that they had healing for their diſeaſes and wounds, by means of his ſtripes, or through his being wounded and bruiſed for them.

Ver. 25. *For ye were as ſheep going aſtray*, &c.] This is a proof of their being healed, namely, their converſion; in which an application of the blood of Chriſt, and pardon, and ſo healing by it, was made to their ſouls. The Apoſtle has ſtill in view the prophecy of *Iſaiah*, ch. liii. 6. God's elect are ſheep before converſion; not that they have the agreeable properties of ſheep, as to be meek, harmleſs, innocent, clean, and profitable, for they are the reverſe of all this; nor can ſome things be ſaid of them before converſion, as may be after, as that they hear Chriſt's voice, and follow him; nor are they ſo called, becauſe unprejudiced againſt, and prediſpoſed unto the Goſpel, for the contrary is true of them; but they are ſo in electing grace, and were ſo conſidered in the Father's gift of them to Chriſt, and when made his care and charge, and hence they are called the ſheep of his hand; and when Chriſt laid down his life, and roſe again, which he did for the ſheep, and as the great ſhepherd of them; and when called by grace, for their being ſheep, and Chriſt's own ſheep by the Father's gift, and his own purchaſe, is the reaſon why he looks them up, calls them by name, and returns them: but then they are not yet of his fold; they are loſt ſheep, loſt in *Adam*, and by his fall, and by their own actual tranſgreſſions; they are as ſheep going aſtray from the ſhepherd, and from the flock, going out of the right way, and in their own ways; and are, like ſheep, ſtupid and inſenſible of their danger; and as they, never return of themſelves, until they are ſought for, and brought back: hence it follows, *but are now returned*; not returned themſelves, but were returned by powerful and efficacious grace: ſaints are paſſive, and not active in firſt converſion; they are turned, not by the power of their own free-will, but by the power of God's free grace; they are returned under the illuminations and quickenings of the bleſſed Spirit, and thro' the efficacious drawings of the Father's love, unto Chriſt: *unto the ſhepherd and biſhop of your ſouls*; by whom Chriſt is meant, who bears the office of a *ſhepherd*, and fully performs it by feeding his ſheep, providing a good fold and paſture for them; by gathering the lambs in his arms, and gently leading thoſe that are with young; by healing their diſeaſes, and preſerving them from beaſts of prey; hence he is called the good, the great and chief ſhepherd: and he is the *biſhop* or *overſeer* of the ſouls of his people, tho' not to the excluſion of their bodies: he has took the overſight of them willingly, and looks well to his flock, inſpects into their caſes, and often viſits them, and never forſakes them; nor will he leave them till they receive the end of their faith, the ſalvation of their ſouls, which he has undertook and effected by his obedience, ſufferings, and death. *Philo* the *Jew*[l] obſerves, that "to be a ſhepherd is ſo good "a work, that it is not only a title given to kings "and wiſe men, and ſouls perfectly purified, but "to God the governour of all —— who, as a "ſhepherd and king, leads according to juſtice "and law, ſetting over them his right *Logos, the* "*firſt-begotten Son*, who has taken the care of this "holy flock, as does the deputy of a great king."

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[g] Zohar in Exod. fol. 85. 2. Midraſh Ruth, fol. 33. 2. Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 53. 3. & 90. 1.

[h] R. Moſes Haddarſan apud Galatin. de Arcanis Cathol. Verit. l. 6. c. 2.

[i] R. Sol. Urbin. Ohel Moed, fol. 64. 1.

[k] Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 43. 1.

CHAP. III.

IN this chapter the Apoſtle inſtructs wives how to behave towards their huſbands, and huſbands how to behave towards their wives; and then exhorts to various things common to all chriſtians, and particularly to ſuffer patiently for righteouſneſs ſake; to which he encourages them from the ſufferings of Chriſt, and the benefits reſulting from them, on which he enlarges to the end of the chapter. He begins with the duty of wives to their huſbands, even unbelieving ones, which is ſubjection to them, urged from the profitable effect of it; ſince hereby they might be won over to the chriſtian religion, without the uſe of the word, as a means, by their converſation, which is explained of chaſtity and fear, ver. 1, 2. And he proceeds to give ſome advice about their apparel, that they ſhould have a greater regard to internal ornaments, particularly meekneſs and quietneſs of ſpirit, which is highly eſteemed of by God, rather than to outward adorning; and which he enforces by the examples of godly women in former times, who were ſo adorned, and were ſubject to their huſbands, particularly *Sarah*, the wife of *Abraham*, ver. 3, 4, 5, 6. And next the Apoſtle directs huſbands how to conduct towards their wives, to dwell with them, and honour them, becauſe veſſels, and weaker veſſels, and alſo heirs of the ſame grace of life; and beſides, to uſe them ill would be an hindrance of their praying together, ver. 7. And then follow various exhortations to unity of judgment, compaſſion, brotherly love, pity, courteouſneſs, and patience under the reproaches and revilings of men, which is the way to inherit a bleſſing they are called unto, ver. 8, 9. and that theſe are incumbent on the ſaints, and that they ſhall be bleſſed, who are helped to regard them, is proved by ſome paſſages out of *Pſ.* xxxiv. 12—16. which paſſages are cited, ver. 10, 11, 12. And in order to encourage to the exerciſe of the above things, the Apoſtle ſuggeſts, that they that ſo behaved ſhould not be hurt by any; and if they did ſuffer for righteouſneſs ſake from wicked men, yet ſtill they would be happy; nor ſhould this deter them from making a publick confeſſion of their faith; to which ſhould be added a good conſcience and converſation, to the ſhame and confuſion of them that ſpoke evil of them, and accuſed them, ver. 13, 14, 15, 16. And though they were diſtreſſed and injured by men, they ſhould not be caſt down, nor murmur, ſince it was the will of God it ſhould be ſo; and ſince it was better to ſuffer for doing well, than for doing ill; and eſpecially the example of Chriſt ſhould animate to patience, ſince he, an innocent perſon, ſuffered for the ſins of unjuſt men, to reconcile them to God; and he is now glorified and happy, and ſo will his people be, ver. 17, 18. And having made mention of his being quickened by the Spirit, the Apoſtle takes occaſion from hence of obſerving, that by the ſame Spirit Chriſt preached in the times of *Noab* to diſobedient perſons, whoſe ſpirits were now in hell; and he takes notice of the long-ſuffering of God in that diſpenſation towards them, and of the goodneſs of God in ſaving *Noah*, and his family, in the ark, which was a figure of baptiſm; of which ſome account is given what it is, and is not, and which ſaves by the reſurrection of Chriſt, ver. 19, 20, 21. who is deſcribed by his aſcenſion to heaven, ſeſſion at the right hand of God, and dominion over angels, authorities, and powers, ver. 22.

Ver. 1. *Likewiſe ye wives, be in ſubjection to your own huſbands*, &c.] As well as ſubjects to princes, and ſervants to maſters; tho' not with the ſame ſort of ſubjection, but what is ſuitable to the relation they ſtand in to their huſbands; ſee the notes on *Eph.* v. 22. *Col.* iii. 18. *that if any obey not the word*; any huſband who is an unbeliever, has no love for the Goſpel, and gives no credit to it, but deſpiſes, diſbelieves, and rejects it, the word of truth, of faith, of righteouſneſs, reconciliation, and ſalvation. The Apoſtle, tho' he includes all wives, and exhorts them in general to ſubjection to their own huſbands, yet has a particular regard to ſuch as had unbelieving huſbands, and who, on that account, were ſcrupulous of living with them, and of being in ſubjection to them; and therefore, as the Apoſtle *Paul* alſo did, he adviſes them to abide with them, and behave well to them, uſing much the ſame argument as he does in 1 *Cor.* vii. 10, 13, 16. *they alſo may without the word be won by the converſation of the wives*; for tho' the ordinary way and means of converſion is the word, faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word; yet, it may be ſometimes done without it; or however by the agreeable converſation of profeſſors, and ſo of religious wives, the hearts of ſuch as were averſe to chriſtianity, and the Goſpel, as unbelieving huſbands, may be ſo ſoftened, and wrought upon, as to entertain a better opinion of it, and in proceſs of time be inclined to hear and attend it; the conſequence of which may prove their converſion, which is a gaining, or winning of ſouls; and which, as it is for their good, is for the glory of Chriſt; for as every ſoul that is delivered from the power of darkneſs, and is tranſlated into the kingdom of Chriſt, is a loſs to ſatan, 'tis a gain to Chriſt, and to his church. The *Syriac* verſion, inſtead of, *without the word*, reads, *without labour*; as if the winning of unbelieving huſbands was eaſily obtained by the converſation of their wives.

Ver. 2. *While they behold your chaſte converſation*, &c.] Chearful ſubjection, ſtrong affection, and inviolable attachment to them, and ſtrict regard to the honour of the marriage-ſtate, and to the preſerving of the bed undefiled with luſts and adulteries: coupled *with fear*; with reverence of their huſbands, giving them due honour, and ſhewing all proper reſpect; or with the fear of God, which being before their eyes, and upon their hearts, engages them to ſuch an agreeable converſation.

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[l] De Agricultura, p. 194, 195.

Ver. 3. *Whoſe adorning, let it not be that outward* adorning, &c.] Or that only and principally; let not that be ſolely or chiefly attended to, nor anxiouſly ſought after, nor ever in order to allure and enſnare others, or to fill with pride and vanity; nor ſhould it be indecent and luxurious, immodeſt and immoderate, and unſuitable to the age, character, and ſtation of perſons; otherwiſe cloathing is both convenient and neceſſary; and a decent garb, neat and modeſt apparel, and what is ſuitable to the years, rank, and quality of perſons, is very commendable: nor are we to ſuppoſe that the Apoſtle forbids the uſe of what follows, but only when uſed in a luxurious and extravagant manner, and to feed pride and vanity, and encourage laſciviouſneſs and wantonneſs: *of plaiting the hair*; folding it up in curls, tying it up in knots, and putting it into the form of horns and towers, made by their criſping pins, with their cauls and round tires, like the moon, as was the cuſtom of thoſe times, and ſtill is. There were women among the *Jews*, whoſe buſineſs it was to plait womens hair; *Mary Magdalene* is thought to have her name from thence, and that to be her buſineſs. The *Jews* often ſpeak of one *Miriam* or *Mary*, by whom they ſeem to mean the mother of our Lord, who, they ſay[m], was, מגדלא שיער נשייא, *a plaiter of womens hair*; ſee the note on *Matt.* xxvii. 56. *And of wearing of gold*; or *golden things*; golden ornaments, as bracelets, chains, and rings, or pieces of gold ſtuck in the plaitings and folds of the hair. The *Jewiſh* women uſed to wear a crown of gold on their head, in the form of the city of *Jeruſalem*, called a golden city[n], and which they wore, after its deſtruction, in memory of it; but with thoſe they might not go out on a ſabbath-day. *R. Akibah*, it is ſaid[o], made a golden city for his wife, and the wife of *Rabban Gamaliel* envied her, for it ſeems this was reckoned a grand dreſs. Not that the ſenſe is, that every thing of this kind is forbidden, but when uſed to exceſs and extravagance; otherwiſe the daughters of *Abraham* and *Sarah* were decked with ear-rings, bracelets, and jewels of gold; ſee *Gen.* xxiv. 22, 30, 47, 53. *or of putting on of apparel*; that is *excellent*, or precious, as the *Syriac* verſion adds; or *of great price*, as the *Ethiopic*; that is beyond a perſon's ability or rank; the Apoſtle means ſuch apparel as is unbecoming and unſuitable, for he cannot be thought to forbid the putting on of any apparel; but his ſenſe is, that women ſhould not ſo much regard, and be ſo intent upon the outward adorning of their bodies, with any ſort of cloathing, and eſpecially ſuch as does not become them, as the inward adorning of their minds, next mentioned.

Ver. 4. *But* let it be *the hidden man of the heart*, &c.] By which is meant internal grace; which gives a beauty and ornament to the ſoul, far preferable to that which plaiting of the hair, wearing of gold, or any coſtly apparel, can give to the body: and this is called a *man*, as it is elſewhere the *new man*, *Eph.* iv. 24. becauſe it has that which anſwers to what is in man, to his ſoul, and the powers and faculties of it: this man, or new creature, has a new heart and ſpirit; it has a will to that which is ſpiritually good, and an underſtanding of divine things, and affections for Chriſt, for his Goſpel, ordinances, ways, and people, and for things above: it has what anſwers to all the five ſenſes; there is in it a ſeeing of the Son of God in the glories of his perſon, and the fullneſs of his grace, and of the inviſible things of another world; an hearing of the word, of the voice of Chriſt, ſo as to underſtand it, and live, and to diſtinguiſh it from the voice of a ſtranger; a ſmelling a ſweet ſavour in the things of God, and of his Spirit, and in the perſon, blood, righteouſneſs, and ſacrifice of Chriſt; a taſting that the Lord is gracious, his fruits pleaſant, and his word ſweeter than the honey, or the honey-comb; and a feeling of the burden of ſin, an handling of the word of life, a laying hold on Chriſt, and retaining him: and it has what anſwers to the parts and members of the body; it has eyes to ſee with, ears to hear with, hands to receive from Chriſt, and work with, to his glory, and feet to walk with: it has, in ſhort, all the parts of a man, tho' theſe are not yet grown up to perfection; and ſo that is not yet a perfect man, or arrived to the meaſure of the ſtature of the fullneſs of Chriſt; but a man it is: and *a man of the heart*; it has its ſeat there; it is an inward principle in the ſoul; hence it is called the *inner* and *inward man*; and nothing outward is it, as external humiliation for ſin, abſtinence from it, reformation of life and manners, a profeſſion of religion, and conformity to Goſpel-ordinances; but it is ſomething inward, as appears from its names, both here and elſewhere; it is called ſpirit, ſeed, the root of the matter, and oil in the veſſels; and from the ſeat and ſubject of it, the heart, the ſpirit, the underſtanding and will, the mind, conſcience, and affections: and it is the *hidden man*; 'tis wiſdom in the hidden part; it is hidden from the men of the world; they don't know what it is, nor what it means, nor how it is, or can be; the life of it is hidden from them, and the food it lives upon is hidden manna to them, and ſo are both its joys and ſorrows: it is ſometimes hidden from the ſaints themſelves; when they walk in darkneſs, and ſee no light, they are at a loſs to know whether this principle is in them or no; and it is hidden from other believers, till they give an account of it to them, when by comparing it with the word of God, and their own experience, they perceive it is the grace of God in them; and it is hidden from ſatan, it is out of his reach, he cannot touch it; tho' he can touch the old man, and ſtir up the corruptions of it, yet he can't touch the new man, that which is born of God, nor hurt or deſtroy it; but it is not hidden from God; he ſees it where men cannot, being covered with a variety of infirmities and ſins, and knows it is not where men ſometimes think it is. The nature of this hidden man is further expreſſed by what follows, *in that which is not corruptible*; it is oppoſed to corruptible things, as the outward adorning conſiſts of, ſuch as plaited hair, ſilver and gold, golden chains, rings, *&c.* and coſtly apparel; nor is it corrupt in itſelf; the old man is corrupt according to its deceitful luſts, but this new man, the hidden man of the heart, has no corruption in it, nor cleaving to it: 'tis the workmanſhip of God, and is created in righteouſneſs and holineſs; tho' it is as yet imperfect, there is nothing impure in it; nor can it ever periſh, or be loſt; it is an incorruptible ſeed, and will always remain when gold will periſh, and the beſt of garments be moth-eaten, and decay: *even the ornament of a meek and quiet ſpirit*; this is one, and a principal part of the inward adorning, or hidden man of the heart; and thoſe that are poſſeſſed of ſuch

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[m] T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 104. 2. Chagiga, fol. 4. 2. & Sanhedrin, fol. 67. 1.

[n] Miſn. Sabbat, c. 6. §. 1.

[o] T. Hieroſ. Sabbat, fol. 7. 4.

a ſpirit, are not eaſily provoked to anger; patiently bear, and put up with injuries; carry themſelves affably and courteouſly unto all; entertain the meaneſt thoughts of themſelves, and the beſt of others; don't envy the gifts and graces of others, and are willing to be inſtructed and admoniſhed by the meaneſt ſaint; quietly ſubmit to the will of God, in all adverſe diſpenſations of providence; and aſcribe all they have, and are, to the free grace of God, and reckon that when they have done all they can, they are but unprofitable ſervants. This grace of meekneſs, humility, and quietneſs is a fruit of the Spirit, and ſo a part of the hidden man, and is what is very ornamental to a believer; 'tis his cloathing, his inward adorning, and what makes him lovely in the ſight of God, and of his people; ſee 1 *Pet.* v. 5. and it is very uſeful to him in hearing the word, in giving a reaſon of the hope that is in him, in reſtoring others, and in ſhewing forth a good converſation; and particularly it greatly becomes, and exceedingly beautifies women profeſſing godlineſs; who ought to bear much with their huſbands, and be in ſilence, which is what the Apoſtle has a principal regard unto: and to encourage the more to the exerciſe of it, adds, *which is in the ſight of God of great price*; which may refer to the whole adorning, to the hidden man of the heart, which is incorruptible, in oppoſition to the outward adorning, which may be eſteemed by men, and be precious in their ſight; and particularly to the ornament of meekneſs, and quietneſs of ſpirit; for God has a great regard to the meek, humble, and quiet ſouls; he lifts them up, when caſt down; he cauſes glad tidings to be preached to them; he increaſes their joy in the Lord; he feeds them, when hungry, to their ſatisfaction; he guides them in judgment, and teaches them his ways; he'll riſe up in judgment for them, and reprove with equity for their ſake; he gives more grace unto them, and beautifies them with ſalvation, and will cauſe them to inherit the earth.

Ver. 5. *For after this manner in the old time,* &c.] In ages paſt, the years of many generations, ſince the time that God created man upon earth; in the times before the flood, and after it; in the times of the patriarchs, judges, kings, and prophets of *Iſrael*, under the Old Teſtament diſpenſation. The Apoſtle exhorts and encourages to this inward dreſs and ornament, from the antiquity of it: for in this way, and after this faſhion, *the holy women alſo*; who were ſanctified by the Spirit of God, and lived holy lives and converſations, ſuch as *Sarah*, *Rebekah*, *Rachel*, *Leah*, *Ruth*, *Hannah*, and others: *who truſted in God*; that he would ſend the Meſſiah, and make good all his promiſes, judging and believing him to be faithful to his word, and able to fulfil whatever he had promiſed, as *Sarah*, *Heb.* xi. 11. Such holy and believing women as theſe are worthy of imitation in their adorning and dreſs, and who, in the manner before deſcribed by the Apoſtle, *adorned themſelves*; or this were the adorning which they ſought after, valued, and chiefly regarded; not what was external, but internal: and which lay in meekneſs and humility, and in a quiet deportment, and in *being in ſubjection unto their own huſbands*; according to their original make, and natural relation, and the laws of God, and of creation; which is more becoming and adorning than plaiting of hair, wearing of gold, or coſtly raiment, and recommends them more, both in the ſight of God and men; nothing being a more indecent and uncomely ſight than a woman not in ſubjection to her huſband.

Ver. 6. *Even as Sarah obeyed Abraham,* &c.] Going along with him where-ever he went, as from *Chaldea* to *Canaan*, and into *Egypt*, and the land of the *Philiſtines*, ſaying the words he put into her mouth, *Gen.* xii. 5, 11, 13. and doing the things he bid her do, *Gen.* xviii. 6. *calling him Lord*; or *my Lord*, as the *Syriac* and *Ethiopic* verſions render it, and as it appears ſhe did from *Gen.* xviii. 12. The *Jews* uſe this inſtance to the ſame purpoſe the Apoſtle does, ſaying [p], “the wife ought to take “care of the family, to educate her children, to “ſerve and miniſter to her huſband in all things, “*calling him her own Lord*; which is what we learn “from the example of *Sarah*, who called *Abraham* “her Lord, ſaying, *my Lord is old.*” *Whoſe daughters ye are*; meaning not by natural deſcent, tho' they were, theſe being *Jews*, the Apoſtle writes to, but by grace, and in a ſpiritual ſenſe; juſt as thoſe are the children of *Abraham*, who walk in the ſteps of his faith, whether they be *Jews* or *Gentiles*; ſo ſuch are the daughters of *Sarah*, the children of the free woman, who imitate her in faith and obedience; that is, they appear, and are declared to be ſo: *as long as ye do well*; do acts of beneficence and hoſpitality to ſtrangers, and proper objects, as *Sarah* did, and all and every good work, according to the will of God, from love, and in faith, and with a view to his glory; and particularly obey and live in ſubjection to their huſbands, as ſhe did: *and are not afraid with any amazement*; are not deterred from doing well, nor ſcared by the terrors and menaces of wicked men, either their own huſbands, or others; or who with fortitude and intrepidity of mind, continue in the diſcharge of their duty to God and men, and particularly to their huſbands, following them, and obeying their lawful commands, as *Sarah* did in *Egypt*, and in *Gerar*, tho' ſhe expoſed herſelf to great danger: this is ſaid, becauſe women are timorous, and apt to be frighted at every thing, from the performance of their duty.

Ver. 7. *Likewiſe ye huſbands dwell with them,* &c.] *With your wives*, as the *Syriac* and *Ethiopic* verſions read; which not only included dwelling together in the ſame houſe, and bedding together in the ſame bed, but the whole of conjugal converſation, and all the offices and duties incumbent on men in a married ſtate: *according to knowledge*; of themſelves, and their wives, and the duties belonging to the conjugal ſtate, and the laws of God and man reſpecting it; and according to their knowledge of the Goſpel, and the chriſtian diſpenſation, which no ways breaks in upon, but ſtrengthens and encourages to the obſervance of things belonging to natural religion, and civil life; and according to that ſuperior knowledge of things, which, generally ſpeaking, men have to women; as alſo wiſely, prudently, becoming their characters as men and chriſtians: particularly *giving honour to the wife*; by ſpeaking well of her, and reſpectfully to her, and by deeds as well as words; not only by clothing her in a decent and becoming manner, ſuitable to her ſtation; but by providing every thing honeſt and comely for her, food and raiment, a ſuitable maintenance, all the neceſſaries, conveniencies, and delights of life, that are laudable and proper; in which ſenſe the word *honour* is uſed in 1 *Tim.* v. 3, 17. and this was agreeable to the doctrine of the *Jews* [q], who ſay, “let a

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[p] Sepher Muſar apud Druſ. de Quæſitis, Ep. 54. & in loc. Druſium in loc.

[q] T. Bab. Bava Metzia, fol. 59. 1. & Sepher Muſar apud

"man always take care, בכבוד אשתו, *of the glory of his wife*; for there is no bleſſing found in a man's houſe, but for the ſake of his wife, as it is ſaid, *Gen.* xii. 16. *and he intreated Abraham well for her ſake*; and *Rabba* uſed to ſay to the citizens, אוקירו לנשייכו, *honour your wives*, that ye may be rich." And indeed, this is what they promiſed in their marriage-contract, which runs thus[r]: "be thou unto me for a wife, according to the law of *Moſes* and *Iſrael*, and I, by the word of heaven, or God, will worſhip, ואוקיר, *and honour*, and nouriſh, and take care of thee, according to the cuſtom of the *Jews*, who worſhip, and *honour*, and nouriſh, and take care of their wives." *As unto the weaker veſſel*; ſo the wife is called a *veſſel* in 1 *Theſſ.* iv. 4. ſee the note there, and here *the weaker*; being ſo, for the moſt part, both as to ſtrength of body, and endowments of mind; and therefore to be uſed gently and tenderly, and not be treated with neglect and contempt, or with inhumanity and ſeverity; but as in every ſtate and condition, the ſtrong are to bear the infirmities of the weak; ſo a man ſhould bear with, and accommodate himſelf to the infirmities of his wife, and hide them as much as he can, and not expoſe them, nor deſpiſe her, on account of them. It is a ſaying of the *Jews*[s], "if thy wife be ſhort of ſtature, bow thyſelf, and whiſper to her." The meaning of the proverb is, that he ought to ſuit himſelf to her capacity and weakneſs: *and as being heirs together of the grace of life*; not of a natural life, and the good things of it; tho' huſbands and wives partake of the ſame kind of life, and have a right unto, and ſhare in the ſame neceſſaries of life; ſo *Adam* and *Eve* were partakers of the ſame life, and ſharers of the ſame benefits; and which is a reaſon indeed why they ought to live lovingly together: but ſomething more is intended; not the external gifts of the Spirit, which, unleſs in ſome few inſtances, are beſtowed on men, and not on women; nor the Goſpel, and the ordinances of it, which are the means of grace and life; tho' men and women, called by grace, have an equal right to them, and enjoy them; ſee *Gal.* iii. 28. but grace here, and glory hereafter, are here meant. Some copies, as the *Alexandrian*, and others, read, *heirs together of the manifold grace of life*; God's own people, without any difference as to ſex, as men and women, equally ſhare in grace, as it ſignifies the love and favour of God; which is the ſame to all the objects, as to the date of it, which is from everlaſting, one not being loved before another; and as to the quality of it, which is free, ſovereign, ſpecial, diſcriminating and unchangeable, one being loved not with one ſort of love, another with another; and as to the quantity of it, it not admitting of more or leſs; and as to the duration, which is for ever: and ſo they are heirs of it, as it denotes the bleſſings of grace; being equally heirs of, and ſharers in electing, redeeming, juſtifying, pardoning, and adopting grace: and as it may intend the internal graces of the Spirit, as faith, hope, and love; which, as to their principles, are the ſame in all the ſaints, tho' different as to the degree of the exerciſe of them: and which may be called *the grace of life*; or *living grace*, as ſome copies, and the *Complutenſian* edition read, and ſo the *Arabic* verſion, becauſe by it men and women, who were dead in treſpaſſes and ſins, are quickened; and in diſtinction to counterfeit grace, which differs as much from true grace, as the picture of a man from a living man; and becauſe it lives for ever, and never dies, and gives a meetneſs for eternal life, which it ſprings up to, iſſues in, and is inſeparably connected with. Moreover, by it may be meant eternal life and ſalvation, of which the ſaints, without any difference as to ſex, are heirs of: ſo ſome copies read, *heirs of manifold grace, and life*; by the former, meaning grace here, and by the latter, glory hereafter; which is a life of viſion of God, and uninterrupted communion with him; of perfection and pleaſure, and which will laſt for ever; and may be called the *grace of life*, becauſe it is the free gift of God's grace: and agreeably the *Syriac* verſion renders it, *the gift of eternal life*; and the *Ethiopic* verſion, *glorious life*: and this is repreſented as an inheritance, being what belongs only to the children; and which they have not by their own works, as an acquiſition of theirs, but by the free grace of their heavenly Father, and as his gift and bequeſt unto them. Now all the ſaints, of whatever ſtate, condition, or ſex, are equally heirs of this inheritance; for there is but one inheritance, one kingdom, one crown of glory, which all ſhall enjoy; and whatever diſparity there may be, particularly between huſband and wife, in their natural relation, there is none in the things of grace, and with regard to the kingdom of glory; and which is an argument why huſbands ſhould dwell peaceably and comfortably with their wives, and give all due honour to them, ſince they are upon a par in ſpiritual things, there being neither male nor female in Chriſt Jeſus, and becauſe they are now joint-heirs of, and ſhall equally ſhare in eternal life and happineſs. *That your prayers be not hindered*; as they would be, were they not to dwell together; or ſhould not the huſband give honour to his wife, and take care of her as he ought to do: hence would ariſe ſtrifes and quarrels, when they could not cordially, and to edification, join together in prayer; nor would ſuch prayers, put up in wrath, be acceptable unto God, who requires that men ſhould lift up holy hands every where, whether in public, or in private, in God's houſe, or in their own houſes, without wrath and doubting. From hence we may obſerve, that family-prayer is a duty incumbent on profeſſors of religion, and great care ſhould be taken that it be not neglected and hindered.

Ver. 8. *Finally be ye all of one mind*, &c.] Not that the Apoſtle was about to conclude his epiſtle; but having finiſhed his exhortations reſpecting the obedience of ſubjects to magiſtrates, and of ſervants to their maſters, and the duties incumbent on huſbands and wives, he proceeds to ſum up what he had further to ſay, in general rules; which regarded all ſorts of chriſtians, magiſtrates, and ſubjects, maſters and ſervants, huſbands and wives, parents and children, old and young, rich and poor, of whatſoever ſtate, age, ſex, or condition; and ſo the *Arabic* verſion renders it, *the ſum of the commandment is*; and the *Ethiopic* verſion, *the ſum of all is this*; namely, what follows: *be ye all of one mind*; whatever difference there might be in their natural and civil relation and character; and which is to be underſtood not of the ſameneſs of affection to one another, or of an humble and condeſcending ſpirit, diſpoſition, and carriage to each other, for theſe are expreſſed in ſome following exhortations; but of ſameneſs of judgment with reſpect to the doctrines and ordinances of the Goſpel, in which ſaints ſhould be perfectly joined together in the ſame mind, and in the ſame judgment; for as the church is but one body, of which Chriſt is the head, there ſhould be but one mind in it; even as there is but one Spirit of God, who convinces, enlightens, and leads into truth; and but one heart, and way, given to fear the Lord; and there is but one hope of our calling, or to which we are called; and one way to it, and therefore ought to agree in every thing reſpecting the way, the truth, and the life; tho' in things which do not, ſhould bear with one another; and there is but one Lord, who gives the ſame laws and ordinances to one, as to another, and which are to be kept alike by all; and there is but one faith, one doctrine of faith, which is uniform and all of a piece, and but one rule and ſtandard of faith, the ſacred ſcriptures; and but one baptiſm to be adminiſtred in the ſame way, and upon the ſame ſort of ſubjects, and in the ſame name of the Father, Son, and Spirit; and but one God and Father of all; all belong to the ſame family, and therefore ſhould preſerve an unity of ſpirit and mind, and ſpeak the ſame things; which is neceſſary to carry on the worſhip of God, honourably and regularly, to the glorifying of him, and for the peace, comfort, and ſafety of the churches of Chriſt: *having compaſſion one of another*; or ſympathizing with each other, both in proſperity and adverſity, whether in temporal or ſpiritual things; rejoicing with them that rejoice in Chriſt, make their boaſt of him, and have communion with him, and who are alſo bleſſed with health of body, and a competency of the good things of this life; and weeping with them that weep, for the loſs of goods, relations, *&c.* and being in bonds and afflictions; or becauſe of ſin, the abſence of Chriſt, and the temptations of ſatan; and being concerned alſo for ſuch who are fallen into immorality, or error, and hereſy; endeavouring to reſtore them out of the one or the other, in a ſpirit of meekneſs and tenderneſs: to all which, they ſhould be engaged by the example of Chriſt, the ſympathizing high-prieſt; by the conſideration of the divine compaſſion to them, both in a providential way, and in a way of grace; and on account of their union and relation to each other, as members of the ſame body: *love as brethren*; not in a natural and civil, but in a ſpiritual relation, being children of God, and brethren of Chriſt, and in a Goſpel church ſtate; and whoſe love to each other ought to be univerſal, fervent, without diſſimulation, and as Chriſt has loved them; and which ſhould ſhew itſelf in praying for each other, in bearing one another's burdens, in forgiving each other, in admoniſhing in love, and building up one another, on their moſt holy faith, and communicating to each other both in temporals and ſpirituals: and of a very excellent nature is it; it is the bond of perfectneſs, and evidence of regeneration; the glory and ornament of a profeſſion, and without which it is nothing; and what renders the communion of the ſaints with each other, pleaſant and profitable, comfortable to themſelves, and honourable in the eyes of others; and to which they ſhould be induced, from the conſideration of the love of God and Chriſt unto them, and from their relation to each other, as brethren: *be pitiful*; to thoſe that are in diſtreſs; put on bowels of mercy, and relieve and ſuccour them, diſtributing chearfully to their neceſſities: *be courteous*; gentle and affable, carrying it friendly to one another, ſeeking thoſe things which may be moſt agreeable to each other, ſhunning all moroſeneſs, ſtiffneſs, and incivility. The *Vulgate Latin* verſion renders it by two words, *modeſt, humble*; not proud, haughty, and overbearing, but condeſcending to each other, and to men of low eſtates; and ſo the *Syriac* verſion renders it, *kind and meek*.

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[r] Apud Buxtorf. Chald. Gram p. 389.

[s] T. Bab. Bava Metzia, fol. 59. 1.

Ver. 9. *Not rendring evil for evil*, &c.] Doing an ill thing in return to one that has done ill to you, and in a way of revenge for it; which is contrary to what is before adviſed to, and which is taking God's prerogative and work out of his hands, whoſe vengeance is, and which is to be overcome of evil: *or railing for railing*; returning ill language to ſuch as have given it, but rather ſhould imitate Chriſt, who when he was reviled, reviled not again, ch. ii. 23. and whoſe advice is, inſtead of returning injuries, blows, or words, to turn to him that ſmites on the right cheek the other alſo, and to bleſs them that curſe, do good to them that hate, and pray for them that perſecute, *Matt.* v. 39, 44. and which is here directed to: *but contrariwiſe bleſſing*; praying for a bleſſing on them; for if we are to do ſo for our enemies, for them that hate us, deſpitefully uſe and perſecute us, as did Chriſt, *Stephen* the protomartyr, and the Apoſtles, then much more for our fellow-chriſtians, who may do us an injury, or ſpeak evil of us, or to us; who ſeem to be chiefly intended: the argument to perſuade to it follows, *knowing that ye are thereunto called*; referring either to what goes before, being called by grace to the diſcharge of all the above duties exhorted to, and particularly to ſuffer patiently all injuries and affronts; and inſtead of making returns in the ſame way, to bleſs and pray for thoſe that have hurt us, either by words or deeds; ſee ch. ii. 20, 21. or to what follows, *that ye ſhould inherit a bleſſing*; temporal bleſſing, or bleſſings; for godlineſs has the promiſe of this life, and godly perſons ſhall not want any good thing; and even whilſt the bleſſings of others are curſed, they have their outward mercies with a bleſſing, and they are bleſſings indeed to them; wherefore, the little they may have, is better than the large affluence of others: and alſo ſpiritual bleſſing, or bleſſings; ſuch as peace of conſcience, the pardon of all their ſins, a juſtifying righteouſneſs, adopting grace, all ſupplies of grace from Chriſt, his preſence, and communion with him: and alſo an eternal one, even life for evermore; called ſo, becauſe it ſprings from the free favour, good-will, and bleſſing of God, and which its being an inheritance alſo ſhows; and becauſe ſuch that enjoy it are eternally and unſpeakably happy.

Ver. 10. *For he that will love life*, &c.] This, with what follows here, and in the two next verſes, are taken out of *Pſ.* xxxiv. 12, 13, 14, 15, 16. and are produced as a proof of what is before ſaid; that it is a good man's duty not to do or ſpeak evil in return for what is done or ſaid to him; but on the contrary, it becomes him to avoid evil, do good, and ſeek peace as much as poſſible, and leave it with a righteous God, to vindicate him and his cauſe, who will not fail to do it; and that ſuch ſhall inherit the bleſſing both here and hereafter: in the *Pſalm*, theſe words are put by way of queſtion, *what man is he that deſireth life?* that wills it with pleaſure, that loves it with a love of complacency and delight? and which is to be underſtood, not of natural life; for what man is there that don't love that? love of a natural life is natural to men; it is a firſt principle in nature to deſire life, and a preſervation of it, and to a great length; a man will give all that he has for it, as *Satan* ſaid, *Job* ii. 4. but both of a ſpiritual life, a life of faith on Chriſt, communion with him, and holineſs from him; the life of God, or to live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly, which carnal men are alienated from, and enemies to, and cannot deſire, only ſpiritual men; and of an eternal one; and ſo ſome of the *Jewiſh* interpreters[u] underſtand by life and good days, in the *Pſalm*, ſuch as are both in this world, and in that which is to come: *and ſee good days*; not the days of this life, which are evil, even the days of a good man, *Gen.* xlvii. 9. and the more ſo, the longer he lives; for the days of old age are evil days, in which there is no pleaſure, *Eccl.* xii. 1. unleſs ſuch days are meant, in which much good is done to the honour and glory of God, and in which gracious ſouls enjoy much of God, and ſee and taſte of his grace and goodneſs in the land of the living; tho' rather, the good days of eternity, even length of days for ever and ever, which holy men of God ſhall ſee, and enjoy in the other world, when they ſhall be poſſeſſed of fullneſs of joy, and of pleaſure for evermore: in the *Pſalm* it is, *and loveth* many *days, that he may ſee good*; deſires a bleſſed eternity of good things: *let him refrain his tongue from evil*; bridle that unruly member, which has a world of iniquity in it; let him keep it as with a bit, from the vices incident to it; from all obſcene words, filthy and corrupt communication, whatever is unſavoury and unedifying; from lying, curſing, ſwearing, and particularly from railing and evil ſpeaking, in return for ſuch language, which is chiefly meant; as well as from belching out blaſphemies againſt God, and damnable hereſies among men; for whoever would be thought a religious man, and lays no reſtraint on his tongue, his religion is a vain thing, *Jam.* i. 26. *and his lips that they ſpeak no guile*; as flatterers do, who ſpeak that with their mouth which does not agree with their heart, and ſo beguile and deceive perſons; and as falſe teachers, who uſe diſhoneſt arts, walk in craftineſs, handle the word of God deceitfully, uſe ambiguous phraſes, and words of double meaning, and with their good words, and fair ſpeeches, deceive the hearts of the ſimple; but ſuch things don't become perſons that ſeek for glory, honour, and immortality; that profeſs to be *Iſraelites* indeed; in theſe guile ſhould not be found in their lips, nor in their lives.

Ver. 11. *Let him eſchew evil*, &c.] Avoid all kind of evil, hate it, abſtain from the appearance of it, and have no fellowſhip with it; and particularly ſhould avoid rendring evil for evil, or taking revenge on perſons for doing him ill: *and do good*; every thing that is good, all good works, according to the will of God, in the exerciſe of faith, from a principle of love, and with a view to the glory of God; and without truſting to them, and depending upon them for life and ſalvation; and particularly do good for evil; do good to all men, acts of kindneſs and beneficence, even to enemies, and eſpecially to them that are of the houſhold of faith. The *Jewiſh* interpreters[w] on the *Pſalm* from whence theſe words are taken, obſerve, that in the firſt of theſe clauſes are contained all the negative precepts, whoſe number with them is three hundred, ſixty, and five; and in the latter of them, all the affirmative precepts, which amount to two hundred and forty-eight: *let him ſeek peace and enſue it*; or *purſue it*; let him ſeek after it, in the world, and with all men, as much as poſſible, yea with his very enemies; and live a peaceable and quiet life, in the kingdom, city, town, and neighbourhood where he is; and particularly in the church of God, and with the ſaints; which he ſhould ſeek with all diligence and eagerneſs, and purſue with all vigour to the utmoſt of his power; and endeavour to cultivate all he can, and follow the things which make for it. The note of one of the *Jewiſh* commentators[x] on this paſſage is, *ſeek peace*, in thine own place; *and purſue it*, in another place.

Ver. 12. *For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous*, &c.] Who are ſo not merely in the ſight of men, but of God; nor in their own account, and by their own works, but in the eſteem of God, through the imputation of the righteouſneſs of his Son unto them: and becauſe he loves this righteouſneſs, and is well pleaſed with it, ſeeing by it his law is magnified and made honourable, therefore his countenance beholds with pleaſure and delight thoſe righteous ones who are clothed with it; his eyes of omniſcience, love, care, and protection, are always upon them, watching over them, delighting in them, running to and fro in the earth on behalf of them; he ſees every injury done them, and in his own time and way will do them juſtice; which is a reaſon why they ſhould not take vengeance themſelves, but leave it with him, whoſe it is: *and his ears* are open *to their prayers*; or *prayer*; in the *Hebrew* text, *to their cry*; he is a God hearing prayer, and his righteous ones have his ear; he hears them whilſt they are ſpeaking, and will ſooner or later anſwer, and avenge his elect, who cry unto him day and night; for as he has an ear to hear their cries, which is not heavy, he has an arm to ſave them, which is not ſhortened; and this is another reaſon why they ſhould behave as before directed, and which is ſtill ſtrengthened by what follows; *but the face of the Lord is againſt them that do evil*; it is added in the *Pſalm*, *to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth*: by *the face of the Lord*, is meant, as the *Jewiſh* writers[y] interpret it, the anger of the Lord; it intends, not his kind, pleaſant, and loving countenance, but his angry one; with the former he beholds the upright, and with it he looks upon his righteous ones; but the latter is upon, and againſt the wicked, and is dreadful and intolerable, and the conſequence of it is everlaſting deſtruction from the preſence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.

Ver. 13. *And who is he that will harm you*, &c.] Or *can harm you*. God will not; for his eyes are upon the righteous, to protect and defend them, and his ears are open to their cries, to avenge them; he is on their ſide, and he is the only law-giver that is able to ſave, and to deſtroy. Chriſt will not; for when he came the firſt time, it was not to condemn, but to ſave; and when he comes a ſecond time, tho' he'll rule the wicked with a rod of iron, and daſh them in pieces as a potter's veſſel; yet his people, who are his jewels, he will ſpare, as a man ſpares his only ſon. Good angels will not; theſe rejoice at the converſion, and in the ſalvation of ſinful men, encamp about the ſaints, and are miniſtring ſpirits to them: nor the devil; tho' he would devour, he cannot; for greater is he that is in the ſaints, than he that is in the world: nor can ſin; for tho' it wars againſt them, it ſhall not have the dominion over them; and tho' it often breaks in upon their peace and comfort, it cannot damn and deſtroy their ſouls: nor the law; for tho' it pronounces guilty, and curſes thoſe that are under it, and are of the works of it, yet ſince Chriſt has fulfilled it for his people, by obeying its precepts, and bearing its penalty, the curſe, it lies not againſt them, nor can it inflict any puniſhment on them: nor the men of the world; who hate and perſecute the ſaints; theſe can do them no real harm; they cannot hurt their grace, which ſhines the brighter, being tried and proved in the furnace of affliction; they cannot deſtroy their peace and comfort by all the trouble they give them; all the harm they can do them, is to their bodies; they can do none to their ſouls; and even all the evil things they do to their bodies, work together for their good; and they muſt be very wicked men that will do harm in any reſpect to ſuch as behave well in ſtates, cities, towns, or neighbourhoods: *if ye be followers of that which is good*; of God, who is eſſentially, originally, and infinitely good, and does good to all his creatures, by imitating him in holineſs and righteouſneſs, in kindneſs, mercy, and beneficence; and of Chriſt, the good Shepherd, following him in the exerciſe of grace, as of humility, love, patience, *&c.* and in the diſcharge of duty; and of good men, the Apoſtles of Chriſt, the firſt churches, faithful miniſters, and all ſuch who through faith and patience have inherited the promiſes, and that both in doctrine and practice; and of all good things, whatever is true, honeſt, juſt, pure, lovely, and of good report, particularly righteouſneſs, godlineſs, faith, love, patience, and meekneſs. Some copies, as the *Alexandrian*, and others, read, *zealots*, or *zealous of good*; of good works, as in *Tit.* ii. 14. and ſo the *Vulgate Latin*, *Syriac*, and *Ethiopic* verſions.

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[u] Kimchi in Pſ. xxxiv. 17.

[w] Aben Ezra & Kimchi in Pſ xxxiv. 14.

[x] Jarchi.

[y] Jarchi & Menachem apud ib. & Aben Ezra in loc.

Ver. 14. *But and if ye ſuffer for righteouſneſs ſake*, &c.] For the doctrine of juſtification by the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, which was the great ſtumbling-block to the *Jews*, and on account of which they perſecuted the chriſtians; it being not after man, nor according to the carnal reaſon of men, and was contrary to the method they had fixed on, and what excluded boaſting in them, and was thought to be a licentious doctrine; and for a righteous cauſe, for profeſſing Chriſt and his Goſpel; for vindicating both which, whoever did, muſt expect to ſuffer perſecution; and alſo for living ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly; for by a religious life and converſation the ſaints are ſeparated from the world, and are diſtinguiſhed from them, which in effect ſets a mark of infamy and reproach upon them; and ſaints, by an agreeable life, reprove others, and condemn them; all which, irritate and provoke them to hate and perſecute them: now theſe words prevent an objection that might be made to what is before ſaid; that none can, or will harm ſuch as are followers of good; whereas it is a clear caſe, that ſaints for righteouſneſs ſake are hurt, and do ſuffer in their perſons, characters, and eſtate; they are reproached and reviled, and often ſuffer confiſcation of goods, impriſonment, and even death itſelf; to which the Apoſtle anſwers, by granting it, and ſuppoſing that this ſhould be the caſe, as it ſometimes is; yet no hurt is done them, they are ſtill happy perſons: *happy* are ye; ſince ſuffering on ſuch an account is a gift of God, even as believing in Chriſt itſelf is, and is a real honour done to a perſon, and to be ſo accounted; moreover, ſuch generally enjoy much of the preſence of God, and the comforts of his Spirit; the Spirit of God and of glory reſts upon them; hereby the graces of the Spirit of God in them are exerciſed, tried, and proved, and ſhine out the brighter; the faith and hope of other chriſtians are ſtrengthened, and God is glorified; and beſides, the kingdom of heaven, the crown of life, and eternal glory, with which their ſufferings are not to be compared, are theirs, and which they ſhall certainly enjoy: *and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled*; referring to a paſſage in *Iſ.* viii. 12. and the meaning is either, be not afraid with the ſame ſort of fear, as wicked men are; with a worldly, ſlaviſh fear of men, and of the loſs of worldly things, and of life itſelf: or, *afraid of them*, as the *Syriac* verſion renders it; who inject fear into you; don't be afraid of their revilings and reproaches, of their threatnings and menaces, and even of death itſelf by them, which is the utmoſt they can do; don't be troubled at any thing they ſay or do to you; ſince nothing can harm you, ſince God is on your ſide, Chriſt has delivered you from this preſent evil world, and ſaved you out of the hands of every enemy; and ſince the love of God, which caſteth out fear, is ſhed abroad in your hearts, and you are encompaſſed with it, and nothing can ſeparate you from it.

Ver. 15. *But ſanctify the Lord God in your hearts*, &c.] Still referring to *Iſ.* viii. 13. not by making him holy, which need not, nor cannot be, he being eſſentially, infinitely, and perfectly holy; but by declaring and proclaiming his holineſs, as the *Seraphim* in *Iſaiah*'s prophecy, and the four living creatures in the *Revelation* did; and by glorifying of him, praiſing and applauding all his perfections, and among the reſt, this of his holineſs, and giving thanks at the remembrance of it; which he has ſo much diſplayed in the works of creation, providence, redemption, and grace; hence the *Arabic* verſion renders it, *bleſs the Lord God in your hearts*: the Lord God is ſanctified by his people externally, when they regard his commands, attend his ordinances, and call upon his name, and praiſe him; but here an internal ſanctification of him, a ſanctification of him in their hearts, is intended, and what is oppoſed to the fear of men, and unbelief, and lies in the exerciſe of the grace of fear upon him; ſee *Iſ.* viii. 13. and which has for its object his goodneſs, and is a fruit of the covenant of his grace, and is a child-like and godly fear; and in the exerciſe of faith upon him, upon his covenant and promiſes, his faithfulneſs, and power to help, aſſiſt, and preſerve; whereby glory is given to him, a witneſs born to his truth, and he is ſanctified: ſome copies, as the *Alexandrian*, and one of *Stephens*'s, read, *ſanctify the Lord Chriſt*; and ſo read the *Vulgate Latin* and *Syriac* verſions; and certain it is that he is intended in *Iſ.* viii. 13. as appears from ver. 14. compared with *Rom.* ix. 33. 1 *Pet.* ii. 8. *and be ready always to give an anſwer to every man that aſketh you a reaſon of the hope that is in you with meekneſs and fear*; by, *the hope that is in* the ſaints, is not deſigned, the grace of hope itſelf, which is given to them, and implanted in them in regeneration; the reaſon, ground, and foundation of which, are, the love, grace, and mercy of God, through Chriſt, and his perſon, blood, righteouſneſs, ſacrifice, and redemption; but the Goſpel, the whole chriſtian doctrine, the doctrine of faith, and which the *Syriac* verſion here calls, *the hope of faith*; and the profeſſion of chriſtianity, called in *Heb.* x. 23. *the profeſſion of hope*; in which perſons profeſs their hope of eternal life and happineſs thro' Chriſt, as the doctrine of the Goſpel directs them to. Now, a *reaſon* of this is to be given; not that they are to account for the Goſpel, upon the foot of carnal reaſon; for that is not of men, nor according to the carnal reaſon of men; nor is it to be thought that every chriſtian ſhould be capable of defending the Goſpel, either in whole, or in part, by arguments and reaſons, in a diſputatious way, or to give a reaſon and argument for every particular truth; but that he ſhould be well acquainted with the ground and foundation of the chriſtian religion;

at leaſt, with the firſt principles of the oracles of God, and be converſant with the ſcriptures, and be able to point out that in them, which is the reaſon of his holding this and the other truth, tho' he is not able to give a gainſayer ſatisfaction, or to ſtop his mouth: and this is to be done, *with meekneſs and fear*; with *meekneſs*, before men; in a humble, modeſt way; not with an haughty air, and in a moroſe and ſurly manner, which ſerves only to irritate and provoke; and *with fear*; either of God, and ſo the *Ethiopic* verſion renders it, *with the fear of the Lord*; conſidering the ſubject of the argument, and the importance of it, and how much the honour of God is concerned in it; and taking care leſt the anſwer ſhould be delivered in a light, trifling and negligent manner, and that no part of truth be dropped or concealed, in order to pleaſe men, and be ſcreened from their reſentments; or with all due reverence of, and reſpect to men, to ſuperiors, to the civil magiſtrates, who may aſk the reaſon; for they are to be treated with honour and eſteem, and to be anſwered in an handſome and becoming manner, ſuitable to the dignity of their perſons and office; as the *Sanhedrim* was by *Stephen*; and as *Felix*, *Feſtus*, and *Agrippa*, by the Apoſtle *Paul*: and this anſwer, or reaſon, is to be given *to every man*; that has authority to aſk, and that aſks in a modeſt manner, and with a reverence ſuitable to the ſubject; for the phraſes, *with meekneſs and fear*, may reſpect him that aſks the reaſon, as well as him that gives the anſwer; for that which is holy is not to be given to dogs, to impudent perſons, mockers and ſcoffers, nor are pearls to be caſt before ſwine, filthy and irreverent perſons; ſee *Matt.* vii. 6. the *Alexandrian* copy, and ſome others, and ſo the *Vulgate Latin* verſion read, *but with meekneſs and fear*; for if it is not aſked in ſuch a way, there is no obligation to give an anſwer: and this is to be given, *always*; whenever it is aſked in ſuch a manner, and by proper perſons; when there is a neceſſity of it, and as opportunity offers: and ſaints ſhould be always *ready* to give it; and therefore it becomes them daily and diligently to ſearch the ſcriptures, meditate on them, and get all the help and aſſiſtance they can, to lead them into an acquaintance with them, that they may be ſo; for tho' the Apoſtles had extraordinary aſſiſtance promiſed them, and therefore were bid not to conſider beforehand what they ſhould ſay, when brought before kings and princes; yet this is not to be expected by ordinary perſons, nor in ordinary caſes. Agreeable to this, is the advice of *R. Eleazar*[z]; "be diligent to learn the law, and know what thou ſhouldſt anſwer to an Epicure," or heretic: ſays *R. Jochanan*[a], "in every place where the *Sadducees* object, תשובתן בצידן, *their anſwer is at their ſide*," or ready; that is, in the ſame ſcriptures on which they form their objections.

Ver. 16. *Having a good conſcience*, &c.] Meaning not the faculty of the conſcience itſelf, which is naturally evil, and defiled with ſin, and is only made good by the ſanctification of the Spirit, and the ſprinkling of the blood of Jeſus, by which the heart is ſprinkled from it, and that itſelf purged from dead works; but a life and converſation according to the dictates of ſuch a conſcience, in the uprightneſs and ſincerity of it, and by the grace of God, and according to the Goſpel, and whereby the doctrines of it are adorned; for, as beſides internal ſanctification of God, or a fearing of him, and believing in him with the heart, there muſt be a profeſſion of him with the mouth, and a reaſon of faith and hope given verbally, when there is an occaſion for it; ſo to both muſt be added a conſcientious diſcharge of duty, both to God and men, which is one way of defending and recommending the doctrines of the Goſpel: *that whereas they ſpeak evil of you as of evil doers*; as vain, proud, haughty, and arrogant perſons, as ſeditious men, enemies to order and civil magiſtracy; as ſuch that ſpeak evil of dignities, and deſpiſe government; when they ſhall ſee your modeſt and humble deportment in the world, and before them, and with what reverence and eſteem you treat them: *they may be aſhamed that falſely accuſe your good converſation in Chriſt*; which was in conſequence of their being in Chriſt, and made new creatures by him, and was as became his Goſpel, and by and under the influence of his grace and Spirit.

Ver. 17. *For it is better if the will of God be ſo*, &c.] For all things are ordered by the will of God, even all the ſufferings and afflictions of the ſaints; and which is a reaſon why they ought to be patiently ſubmitted to, and bore: and *better* it is, more honourable and profitable, *that ye ſuffer for well doing*; for believing in Chriſt, profeſſing him and his Goſpel, giving a free and open reaſon for ſo doing, and for exerciſing a good conſcience, and living godly in Chriſt Jeſus: *than for evil doing*; as a murderer, a thief, an evil doer, or a buſybody in other mens matters, ch. iv. 15, 16.

Ver. 18. *For Chriſt alſo hath once ſuffered for ſins*, &c.] Not his own, for he committed none, but for the ſins of his people; in order to obtain the remiſſion of them, to make reconciliation for them, and to take and put them away, and finiſh and make an end of them; which ſufferings of his, on account of them, were many and great: he ſuffered much by bearing the griefs, and carrying the ſorrows of his people, whereby he became a man of ſorrows, and acquainted with griefs, from his cradle to his croſs; and from the temptations of ſatan, being in all points tempted, as his members are, tho' without ſin; and from the contradiction of ſinners againſt him, in his name, credit, and character, abuſing him as the worſt of men; and he ſuffered in his ſoul, from the wrath of God, and curſes of the law, which lay upon him; and in his body, by many buffetings, ſcourges, wounds, and death itſelf, even the death of the croſs; and which being the finiſhing part of his ſufferings, is chiefly here meant. The *Alexandrian* copy reads, *died for you*; and the *Vulgate Latin*, *Syriac*, and *Ethiopic* verſions read, *died for our ſins*; and this he did *once*, and but once; he died once, and will die no more; he was offered up once, and will be offered up no more; there is no more offering, or ſacrifice for ſin; the reaſon is, becauſe his one offering is ſufficient to take away ſin, which the legal ſacrifices were not, and therefore were often offered; and the reaſon why this his one offering, or once ſuffering and dying, is ſufficient, is, becauſe of his divine nature, or eternal Spirit, by which he offered himſelf, and gave infinite virtue to his ſacrifice and ſatisfaction: now, this is an argument for ſuffering patiently; ſince Chriſt, the head, has alſo ſuffered, and therefore, why not the members; and ſince he has ſuffered for their ſins, and therefore ſhould not grudge to ſuffer for his ſake; and ſeeing alſo their ſufferings are but once, in this life only, and as it were but for a moment, and not to be compared with his ſufferings for them; and eſpecially when it is conſidered what follows: *the juſt for the unjuſt*;

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[z] Pirke Abot, c. 2. § 14.

[a] T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 38. 2.

Chriſt, the holy and juſt one, who is holy in his nature, and righteous in his life and actions, which were entirely conformable to the righteous law of God, and upright and faithful in the diſcharge of his office, and therefore called God's righteous ſervant; he ſuffered, and that not only by unjuſt men, by the *Jews*, by *Pilate*, and the *Roman* ſoldiers, but for and in the room and ſtead of unjuſt men, ſinners, and ungodly, who were deſtitute of righteouſneſs, and full of all unrighteouſneſs; and ſince he did, it need not be thought hard, or ſtrange, that ſinful men ſhould ſuffer at the hands of others; and ſtill it ſhould be born with the greater patience, ſince Chriſt not only ſuffered for them, but ſince an end is anſwered by it, as is here ſuggeſted: *that he might bring us to God*; nigh to God, who, with reſpect to communion, were afar off from him; and in peace and reconciliation with him, who were enemies to him by wicked works; and that they might have freedom of acceſs, with boldneſs, unto God, through his precious blood, and the vail of his fleſh; and that he might offer them unto God, as the *Vulgate Latin*, and *Syriac* verſions render it; as a ſacrifice acceptable unto God, preſenting them to him unblameable and unreproveable in his ſight; that he might bring them into his grace and preſence here, and as the great captain of their ſalvation, bring them to him in glory hereafter: *being put to death in the fleſh*; in the human nature: fleſh includes the whole of human nature, both body and ſoul; for tho' the body only dies, yet death is the diſſolution of the union between them both; and ſuch was Chriſt's death; for tho' the union between the two natures continued, yet his body and ſoul were diſunited; his body was left on the croſs, and his ſoul, or Spirit, was commended to God, when his life was taken from the earth, and he was put to death in a violent manner by men: *but quickned by the Spirit*; raiſed from the dead by his divine nature, the Spirit of holineſs, the eternal Spirit, by which he offered up himſelf, and by virtue of which, as he had power to lay down his life, ſo he had power to take it up again; when he was alſo juſtified in the Spirit, and all the elect in him. Now, as the enemies of Chriſt could do no more than put him to death in the fleſh, ſo the enemies of his people can do no more than kill the body, and cannot reach the ſoul; and as Chriſt is quickned and raiſed from the dead, ſo all his elect are quickned together, and raiſed with him, repreſentatively, and ſhall, by virtue of his reſurrection, be raiſed perſonally, and live alſo; which is no inconſiderable argument to ſuffer afflictions patiently, and which is the deſign of this inſtance and example of the ſufferings, death, and reſurrection of Chriſt.

Ver. 19. *By which alſo he went and preached unto the ſpirits in priſon.*] Various are the ſenſes given of this paſſage: ſome ſay, that Chriſt, upon his death, went in his human ſoul to hell; either, as ſome, to preach to the devils and damned ſpirits, that they might be ſaved, if they would; and as others, to let them know that he was come, and to fill them with dread and terror; but tho' hell may be meant by the priſon, yet the text does not ſay that he went unto it, or preached in it; only that the ſpirits were in it, to whom he ſometimes went, and preached; nor is his human ſoul, but his divine nature meant, by the ſpirit, by which he went, and preached to them: and as for the ends propoſed, the former is impracticable and impoſſible; for after death follows judgment, which is an eternal one; nor is there any ſalvation, or hope of ſalvation afterwards; and the latter is abſurd, vain, and needleſs. Others, as the *Papiſts*, imagine the ſenſe to be, that Chriſt, at his death, went in his human ſoul, into a place they call *Limbus patrum*, which they ſuppoſe is meant by the priſon here, and delivered the ſouls of the Old Teſtament ſaints and patriarchs, from thence, and carried them with him to heaven; but this ſenſe is alſo falſe, becauſe, as before obſerved, not the human ſoul of Chriſt, but his divine nature, is deſigned by the ſpirit; nor is there any ſuch place, as here feigned, in which the ſouls of Old Teſtament ſaints were, before the death of Chriſt; for they were in peace and reſt, in the kingdom of heaven, in *Abraham*'s boſom, inheriting the promiſes, and not in a priſon; beſides, the text ſays not one word of the delivering of theſe ſpirits out of priſon, only of Chriſt's preaching to them: add to all this, and which *Beza*, with others, obſerve, the Apoſtle ſpeaks of ſuch as had been diſobedient, and unbelievers; a character which will not agree with righteous men, and prophets, and patriarchs, under the former diſpenſation: others think the words are to be underſtood of Chriſt's going to preach, by his Apoſtles, to the *Gentiles*, as in *Eph.* ii. 17. who were in a moſt miſerable condition, ſtrangers to the covenants of promiſe, and deſtitute of the hope of ſalvation, and ſat in darkneſs, and the ſhadow of death, and as it were, at the gates of hell; were in the bonds of iniquity, and dead in ſin, and had been for a long time paſt, fooliſh and diſobedient, ſerving divers luſts and pleaſures, to which they were in bondage. This is indeed, a more tolerable ſenſe than the former; but it will be difficult to ſhow, that men, in the preſent ſtate of life, are called *ſpirits*, which ſeems to be a word that relates to the ſouls of men, in a ſeparate ſtate from their bodies; and eſpecially that carnal and unconverted men, are ever ſo called; and beſides, the Apoſtle, is ſpeaking of ſuch who were diſobedient, in the times of *Noah*; and therefore, not of the *Gentiles*, in the times of the Apoſtles: add to which, that the tranſition from the times of the Apoſtles, according to this ſenſe, to the days of *Noah*, is very unaccountable; this ſenſe does not agree with the connexion of the words: others are of opinion, that this is meant of the ſouls of the Old Teſtament ſaints, who were εν φυλακη, *in a watch*, as they think the phraſe may be rendred, inſtead of, *in priſon*; and ſaid to be in ſuch a ſituation, becauſe they were intent upon the hope of promiſed ſalvation, and were looking out for the Meſſiah, and anxiouſly deſiring his coming, and which he, by ſome gracious manifeſtation, made known unto them: but tho' the word may ſometimes ſignify a watch, yet more commonly, a priſon, and which ſenſe beſt ſuits here; nor is that anxiety and uneaſineſs, which repreſents them as in a priſon, ſo applicable to ſouls in a ſtate of happineſs; nor ſuch a gracious manifeſtation, ſo properly called preaching; and beſides, not believers, but unbelievers, diſobedient ones, are here ſpoken of; and tho' it is only ſaid, they were ſometimes ſo, yet to what purpoſe ſhould this former character be once mentioned, of ſouls now in glory? but it would be tedious to reckon up the ſeveral different ſenſes of this place; ſome referring it to ſuch in *Noah*'s time, to whom the Goſpel was preached, and who repented; and tho' they ſuffered in their bodies, in the general deluge, yet their ſouls were ſaved; whereas the Apoſtle calls them all, *the world of the ungodly*, 2 *Pet.* ii. 5. and others, to the eight ſouls that were ſhut up in the ark, as in a priſon, and were ſaved; tho' theſe are manifeſtly diſtinguiſhed in the text from the diſobedient ſpirits. The plain and eaſy ſenſe of the words is, that Chriſt, by his Spirit, by which he was quickned, went in the miniſtry of *Noah*, the preacher of righteouſneſs, and preached both by words and deeds, by the perſonal miniſtry of *Noah*, and by the building of the ark, to that generation who was then in being; and who being diſobedient, and continuing ſo, a flood was brought upon them which deſtroyed them all; and whoſe ſpirits, or ſeparate ſouls, were then in the priſon of hell, ſo the *Syriac* verſion renders it, בשיול, *in hell*, ſee *Rev*. xx. 7. when the Apoſtle *Peter* wrote this epiſtle; ſo that Chriſt neither went into this priſon, nor preached in it, nor to ſpirits that were then in it when he preached, but to perſons alive in the days of *Noah*; and who being diſobedient, when they died, their ſeparate ſouls were put into priſon, and there they were when the Apoſtle wrote: from whence we learn, that Chriſt was, that he exiſted in his divine nature before he was incarnate, he was before *Abraham*, he was in the days of *Noah*; and that Chriſt alſo, under the Old Teſtament, acted the part of a mediator, in his divine nature, and by his Spirit diſcharged that branch of it, his prophetic office, before he appeared in human nature; and that the Goſpel was preached in thoſe early times, as unto *Abraham*, ſo, before him.

Ver. 20. *Which ſometime were diſobedient*, &c.] To all the inſtructions and warnings which God gave them, to all the ſtrivings of his Spirit, and to the miniſtry of Chriſt, by *Noah*; they continued in their prophaneneſs and impiety, and to corrupt their ways, and fill the earth with violence and wickedneſs; not believing what they were threatned with, or that ever a flood would come upon them, and deſtroy them: and this *ſometime*, refers to the time of their being upon earth, who were now in hell; *to the days of Noah*, hereafter mentioned; and which the *Syriac* verſion connects with this clauſe, reading it thus, *who of old were diſobedient in the days of Noah*; at which time it was, that Chriſt, by his Spirit in *Noah*, went and preached to them: *when once the long-ſuffering of God waited in the days of Noah*; that is, when God, who is long-ſuffering and patient, waited on theſe diſobedient ones, in *Noah*'s time, for the ſpace of an hundred and twenty years: *while the ark was preparing*; by *Noah*, according to the directions which God gave him, *Gen*. vi. 14—22. and which, as *R. Tanchuma* ſays [b], was fifty-two years a building; others ſay [c], an hundred years; but *Jarchi* ſays [d], it was an hundred and twenty; and which ſeems moſt likely, that being the term of time in which God's long-ſuffering waited on them; during which time, *Noah* was preaching to them, and building the ark: *wherein few*, *that is*, *eight ſouls*, *were ſaved by water*; the eight perſons were, *Noah*, and his wife, and his three ſons, *Shem*, *Ham*, and *Japhet*, and their three wives. It is a common tradition with the *Jews* [e], that beſides theſe, *Og*, king of *Baſhan*, eſcaped the flood; and who, they ſay, is the ſame that eſcaped, and told *Abraham* of *Lot*'s being carried captive by the kings [f]; the manner of his eſcape at the flood, they relate thus [g]; "*Og* came, who was delivered from the men that died at the flood, and he rode upon the ark, and he had a covering upon his head, and was fed with the food of *Noah*; but not for his worthineſs was he delivered, but that the inhabitants of the world might ſee the power of the Lord;" and elſewhere [h], after this manner, citing thoſe words, *and Noah only remained* alive, *and they that were with him in the ark*, *Gen*. vii. 23. they add, "except *Og*, king of *Baſhan*, who ſat on a certain piece of wood which belonged to the ſcaffolding of the ark, and he ſwore to *Noah*, and his ſons, that he would be their ſervant for ever. What did *Noah* do? he bored an hole in the ark, and every day reached out food to him, and he remained alive, according to what is ſaid, *Deut*. iii. 11. *only Og*, *king of Baſhan*, &c." But this is all a mere fiction; and equally fabulous, is the account the *Arabians* give, who ſay [i], that eighty perſons, together with *Noah*, were taken into the ark, among whom was *Jorham*, their father; for there were no more than eight perſons ſaved; and this is the Apoſtle's ſenſe; and agreeably, the *Syriac* verſion renders it, *and eight ſouls*, בלחוד, *only entred into it, and were ſaved by water*; and we are told by ſome of the eaſtern writers [k], that when theſe eight went out of the ark, they built a city, which they called *Themanin*, which, in the *Arabic* language ſignifies *eight*, according to their number. The ark was a type of Chriſt, into whom, whoever enters by faith, or in whom whoever believes, ſhall be ſaved; but as they that entered into the ark were but few, ſo are thoſe that enter in at the ſtrait gate, or believe in Chriſt; and they that went into the ark were ſaved by the water bearing up the ark, even by that by which others were deſtroyed; as the very ſame things, for different reaſons, is the cauſe or means of deſtruction and ſalvation; ſo, Chriſt is ſet, for the fall and riſing of many, is a ſtumbling-block to ſome, and the power and wiſdom of God to others; and the Goſpel, and the miniſters of it, are the ſavour of life unto life to ſome, and the ſavour of death unto death to others. This inſtance of the diſpenſation of the providence of God to the old world, is very appoſitely, tho' by way of digreſſion, introduced by the Apoſtle; ſhewing, that in times paſt, as then, God's uſual method has been, to afford the outward means to ungodly men, and to bear with them long, and then bring down his vengeance upon them, and ſave his own people; and this, ſuffering ſaints might depend upon would be their caſe, and therefore ſhould bear their afflictions patiently.

Ver. 21. *The like figure whereunto even baptiſm doth alſo now ſave us*, &c.] The ark, and deliverance by it, as it was a type of Chriſt, and ſalvation by him, ſo it was a figure of baptiſm, and baptiſm was the antitype of that; or there is ſomething in theſe which correſpond, and anſwer to, and bear a reſemblance to each other: as the ark was God's ordinance, and not man's invention, ſo is baptiſm, it is of heaven, and not of men; and as the ark, while it was preparing, was the ſcorn and deriſion of men, ſo is this ordinance of the Goſpel; it was rejected with diſdain by the ſcribes and phariſees, as it ſtill is by many; and as the ark, when *Noah* and his family were ſhut up in it by God, repreſented a burial, and they ſeemed, as it were, to be buried in it, it was a lively emblem of baptiſm, which is expreſſed by a burial, *Rom*. vi. 4. *Col*. ii. 12. and as they in the ark had the great deep broke up under them, and the windows of heaven opened over them, pouring out waters upon them, they were, as it were, immerſed in, and were covered with water, this fitly figured baptiſm, by immerſion; nor were there any but adult perſons that entered into the ark, nor ſhould any be baptized but believers; to which may be added, that as the one ſaved by water, ſo does the other; for it is water-baptiſm which is here deſigned, which *John* practiſed, Chriſt gave a commiſſion for, and his diſciples adminiſtred: it ſaves not as a cauſe, for it has no cauſal influence on, nor is it eſſential to ſalvation. Chriſt only is the cauſe and author of eternal ſalvation; and as thoſe only that were in the ark, were ſaved by water, ſo thoſe only that are in Chriſt, and that are baptized into Chriſt, and into his death, are ſaved by baptiſm; not every one that is baptized, but he that believeth, and is baptized, ſhall be ſaved, *Mark* xvi. 16. for baptiſm is *not the putting away of the filth of the fleſh*; the deſign of it is not to take off the ſordid fleſh, as circumciſion did; or in a ceremonious way, outwardly, to ſanctify to the purifying of the fleſh, as the *Jewiſh* baptiſms did; ſee *Heb.* ix. 10, 13. or to take away either original or actual ſin; this only the blood of Chriſt can do; and it is not a mere external cleanſing of the body: *but the anſwer of a good conſcience towards God*; the *Vulgate Latin* renders it, *the interrogation of a good conſcience*; referring, it may be, to the interrogations that uſed to be put to thoſe who deſired baptiſm; as, doſt thou renounce ſatan? doſt thou believe in Chriſt? ſee *Acts* viii. 36, 37. others render it, *the ſtipulation of a good conſcience*; alluding alſo to the ancient cuſtom of obliging thoſe that were baptized, to covenant and agree to live an holy life and converſation, to renounce the devil and all his works, and the pomps and vanities of this world; and baptiſm does certainly lay an obligation on men to walk in newneſs of life; ſee *Rom.* vi. 4, 5. the *Ethiopic* verſion renders it, *confeſſion of God*; and to this the *Syriac* verſion agrees, rendring it, *confeſſing God with a pure conſcience*; for, to baptiſm, profeſſion of faith in Chriſt, and of the doctrine of Chriſt in a pure conſcience, is requiſite; and in baptiſm, perſons make a publick confeſſion of God, and openly put on Chriſt before men: the ſenſe ſeems plainly this; that then is baptiſm rightly performed, and its end anſwered, when a perſon, conſcious to himſelf, of its being an ordinance of Chriſt, and of his duty, to ſubmit to it, does do ſo upon profeſſion of his faith in Chriſt, in obedience to his command, and *with* a view to his glory; in doing which, he diſcharges a good conſcience towards God: and being thus performed, it ſaves, *by the reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt*; being a means of leading the faith of the baptized perſon, as to the blood of Chriſt, for pardon and cleanſing, ſo to the reſurrection of Chriſt, for juſtification; ſee *Acts* ii. 38. and xxii. 16. *Rom.* iv. 25. moreover, the ſenſe of the paſſage may be this, that baptiſm is a like figure as the ark of *Noah* was; that as the entrance of *Noah* and his family into the ark, was an emblem of a burial, ſo their coming out of it, was a figure of the reſurrection; and juſt ſuch a figure is baptiſm, performed by immerſion, both of the reſurection of Chriſt from the dead, and of the reſurrection of ſaints to walk in newneſs of life. The *Arabic* verſion renders the whole verſe thus; *of which thing baptiſm is now a type ſaving us, not by removing the filth of the fleſh only, but by exhilarating a good conſcience towards God, by the reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt.*

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[b] In Pirke Eliezer, c. 23.

[c] Elmacin. Hiſt. apud Hottinger. Smegma Orient. l. 1. c. 8. p. 249.

[d] In Gen. vi. 15.

[e] Targum Jon. in Deut. iii. 11. T. Bab. Nidda, fol. 61. 1.

[f] Bereſhit Rabba, §. 42. fol. 37. 2. Targum Jon. & Jarchi in Gen. xiv. 13.

[g] Targum Jon. in Gen. xiv. 13.

[h] Pirke Eliezer, c. 23.

[i] Pocock. Specim. Hiſt. Arab. p. 38.

[k] Eutychii Annal. p. 43. Elmacin. Hiſt. l. 1. c. 1. p. 12. Patricides, p. 10. Apud Hottinger, Smegma Orient. l. 1. c. 8. p. 251, 252.

Ver. 22. *Who is gone into heaven*, &c.] After he had been riſen forty days, where he is received, and will remain, until the reſtitution of all things; and where he appears in the preſence of God for his people, and ever lives to make interceſſion for them; and is entred as their forerunner, and is preparing manſions of glory for them; and will come again, and take them to himſelf, to be for ever with him, and from hence they expect him: *and is on the right hand of God*; where *Stephen* ſaw him; and which is an honour never conferred on any angel, or man; and ſhews that Chriſt had done his work, and that in a way acceptable to God; the *Vulgate Latin* verſion here adds, *ſwallowing up death that we might be made heirs of eternal life*; but is not ſupported by any copy or verſion: *angels, authorities, and powers being made ſubject unto him*; by *angels*, may be meant, angels both good and bad, who are all in ſubjection to Chriſt; and by *authorities and powers*, the kings, princes, and governors of this world, who hold their dominions from and under the Lord Jeſus Chriſt; and which is an argument why believers ſhould patiently bear all their ſufferings and afflictions, ſince Chriſt has the government in his hands, and he rules and over-rules all things for good; and when he pleaſes, he can put a ſtop to the rage and perſecutions of men; and ſo the Apoſtle returns to his former argument, in the following chapter.

CHAP. IV.

IN this chapter the Apoſtle goes on to exhort to an holy life and converſation, and to the ſeveral duties of religion, and to ſuffer chearfully for the ſake of Chriſt. From the conſideration of Chriſt's ſufferings, he exhorts the ſaints to arm themſelves with the ſame mind, and ceaſe from ſin, and live no longer to the luſts of men, but to the will of God, ver. 1, 2. the reaſon, or argument engaging to it, is taken from the paſt time of life, in which, they walked in all manner of ſin, and which ought to ſuffice, tho' they ſhould be ſpoken evil of by wicked men, for not continuing therein, ver. 3, 4. and to fortify their minds againſt ſuch abuſes, the Apoſtle takes notice of the general judgment, when ſuch perſons muſt give an account for their evil ſpeaking to the judge of quick and dead; and that tho' thoſe to whom the Goſpel is preached, and embrace it, ſuffer death for it, being judged of men in their bodies, yet they live to God in their ſouls, ver. 5, 6. and ſeeing the end of all things is near, he exhorts to various things, as, to ſobriety, watchfulneſs unto prayer, and eſpecially to fervent charity, ſince that covers a multitude of ſins, ver. 7, 8. and to hoſpitality, without grudging, and to a communication of all good things, as faithful ſtewards of them, ver. 9, 10. and particularly to the diſpenſation of the Goſpel, according to the word of God; and to a miniſtration to the poor, according to a man's ability, with a view to the glory of God, by Chriſt, ver. 11. and next, the Apoſtle proceeds to comfort the ſaints under reproaches and perſecutions, and to inſtruct them how to behave under ſuch circumſtances; as that they ſhould not think ſuch things ſtrange, tho' grievous, ſince they were for the trial of their graces, ver. 12. but ſhould rather rejoice, ſince they were partakers of the ſufferings of Chriſt now, and ſhould ſhare in his glory when revealed, which would make them exceeding glad, ver. 13. yea, inaſmuch as it was for the name of Chriſt they ſuffered reproach, they ought to reckon themſelves happy perſons; ſince the glorious Spirit of God reſted on them, and ſince the iſſue of it was, the glorifying of God by them, tho' he was evil ſpoken of by thoſe that reproached them, ver. 14. indeed, they ought not to ſuffer as perſons guilty of capital crimes; ſhould they, they would have reaſon to be aſhamed, but not ſince they ſuffered as chriſtians; but on the contrary, ſhould give glory to God for it, who had done them ſo much honour as to call them to it, ver. 15, 16. and to reconcile their minds to ſufferings, he obſerves, that the time was come, that afflictions ſhould begin with the people of God, on account of which, the righteous are ſcarcely ſaved, tho' certainly; and that therefore, ſad muſt be the ſtate of the diſobedient and ungodly, even of their wicked perſecutors, ver. 17, 18. wherefore, upon the whole, ſeeing it was the will of God they ſhould ſuffer, they ought to ſuffer patiently, and in well doing, commit the care of their ſouls to their faithful creator, ver. 19.

Ver. 1. *Foraſmuch then as Chriſt hath ſuffered for us in the fleſh*, &c.] The Apoſtle having finiſhed his digreſſion concerning Chriſt's preaching in the miniſtry of *Noah*, to men, whoſe ſpirits were now in priſon, and concerning the ſalvation of *Noah*'s family in the ark, by water, and concerning its antitype, baptiſm, its nature and effect, returns to the ſufferings of Chriſt, he had before made mention of; and argues from thence, to holineſs of life, and patience in ſufferings, after this manner; ſeeing then, Chriſt, the eternal Son of God, the Lord of glory, the holy and juſt one, ſuffered ſuch indignities, reproaches, and perſecutions from men, the wrath of God, the curſes of the law, and death itſelf; and that not for himſelf, nor for angels, but for men, and theſe not all men, otherwiſe his death, with reſpect to ſome, muſt be in vain; but for a particular number of men, in diſtinction from others, deſcribed in the beginning of this epiſtle, as elect, according to the foreknowledge of God; and theſe ſufferings he endured in the room and ſtead of thoſe perſons, in the days of his fleſh, whilſt here on earth, and in his human nature, both ſoul and body, and was crucified through the weakneſs of his fleſh, and for the ſins of our fleſh, and which he bore in his own: *arm yourſelves likewiſe with the ſame mind*; that was in Chriſt; as he ſuffered for you, do ye likewiſe ſuffer for him, in his cauſe, for righteouſneſs ſake, for the ſake of him and his Goſpel; and bear all reproaches, afflictions, and perſecutions on his account, willingly, and chearfully, with meekneſs and patience, as he did, and with the ſame view; not indeed to make ſatisfaction for ſin, which was his principal deſign, but that being dead unto ſin, you might live unto righteouſneſs. The Apoſtle ſpeaks to the ſaints, in this exhortation, as to ſoldiers, and who had many enemies to engage with, and therefore ſhould put on their armour, and be in a readineſs to meet any attack upon them: *for he that hath ſuffered in the fleſh hath ceaſed from ſin*; meaning either Chriſt, who having ſuffered in human nature for the ſins of his people, whereby he has made ſatisfaction for them, is now clear of them; the ſins that were imputed to him being took and bore away, finiſhed and made an end of, and he juſtified from them, and freed from all the effects of them, and puniſhment for them, as from all the infirmities of human nature, from mortality and death: or, the perſon that has ſuffered in and with Chriſt, his head and repreſentative, which is all one as if he had ſuffered himſelf, in perſon; by virtue of which, his ſin ceaſes, and he ceaſes from being chargeable with it, as if he had never ſinned; which is the caſe of every criminal, when he has ſuffered the penalty of the law for his crime: or elſe the perſon that is dead to ſin, by virtue of the death of Chriſt, and in imitation of it, who has been baptized into Chriſt's death, and planted in the likeneſs of it; whoſe old man is crucified with Chriſt, and he is dead with him; who has crucified the affections with the luſts, and through the Spirit has mortified the deeds of the body; which way the generality of interpreters go: ſuch a man has ceaſed from ſin; not from the being and indwelling of it in him; nor from the burden of it on him; nor from a continual war with it in him; nor from ſlips and falls by it, and into it; no, nor from it in the moſt ſolemn and religious ſervices; but as from the guilt of it, and obligation to puniſhment by it, through the death of Chriſt, ſo from the ſervitude and dominion of it, through the power of divine grace, in conſequence of Chriſt's death: or rather, the believer that ſuffers death in his body, for the ſake of Chriſt, ſuch an one immediately ceaſes from the very being of ſin, and all commiſſion of it; he becomes at once perfectly pure, and holy, without ſpot or wrinkle, or any ſuch thing; and a noble argument this is to meet death without fear, and to ſuffer it chearfully and willingly, ſince the conſequence of this will be, an entire freedom from ſin, than which nothing can be more deſireable by a believer: to this agrees the *Syriac* verſion, which renders the words thus; *for whoever is dead in his body hath ceaſed from all ſins*; but the *Arabic* verſion more fully confirms this ſenſe, and is the beſt verſion of the text, and is this; *be ye armed with this* (ſame) *thought*, *that* (not *for*) *he that hath ſuffered in the fleſh hath ceaſed from ſin*; that is, fortify your minds againſt all the fears of ſufferings, and of death, for the ſake of Chriſt, with this ſingle thought; that he that has ſuffered martyrdom for Chriſt, in his body, or has ſuffered death for his ſake, or dies in the Lord, is free from ſin, and ſo from ſorrow, and is the moſt happy perſon imaginable; ſo that this laſt clauſe is not a reaſon of the former, but points out, and is explanative of what that ſame mind or thought is, chriſtians ſhould arm themſelves with, againſt the fears of death; and it is the beſt piece of armour for this ſervice, a ſaint can make uſe of.

Ver. 2. *That he no longer ſhould live*, &c.] The *Arabic* verſion reads, *that ye no longer ſhould live*. This expreſſes the end of being armed with the above thought, that a ſuffering ſaint after death is clear of ſin; and the uſe that is to be made of it in the preſent time of life, and the remainder of it, that ſuch a perſon who ſo thinks, and is thus guarded and fortified againſt the fears of death, ſhould no more, or any longer live, *the reſt of* his *time in the fleſh, to the luſts of men, but to the will of God*: the phraſe, *his time in the fleſh*, means the preſent time of life, in the body, and is the ſame with thoſe phraſes, in the days of his fleſh, to abide in the fleſh, and be at home in the body; and the words of the text ſuppoſe the former part of this time to have been ſpent in ſinful luſts and pleaſures, as the former part of the time of God's elect, even that before converſion is; and that the remaining part of it, be it longer or ſhorter, ought to be ſpent otherwiſe: not *to the luſts of men*; of wicked and unregenerate men, unconverted *Gentiles*; which they are addicted to, immerſed in, and ſerve; and which they are deſirous others ſhould live in; and which are ſometimes called divers, worldly and fleſhly luſts; and are fooliſh, and hurtful, and deceitful, and drown men in perdition, and therefore not to be lived unto: *but to the will of God*; revealed in his word, and which is good, acceptable, and perfect; one part of which is ſanctification, holineſs of heart, life, and converſation, as alſo patient ſuffering all reproach, injury, and perſecution, for the ſake of the Goſpel; to live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly, to ſtudy to exerciſe a conſcience void of offence towards God and men, and to ſuffer patiently for his name ſake, is to live to the will of God; and nothing more ſtrongly ſhould engage to this, than the conſideration of a ſinleſs life after death; ſee 2 *Pet.* iii. 11, 13, 14. The luſts of men, and the will of God, being oppoſed to each other, ſhews, that the nature of man is ſadly corrupted, and is oppoſite to God; and that the will of man is depraved, and that the deſires of it are not to that which is good, but are contrary to the will of God.

Ver. 3. *For the time paſt of our life may ſuffice us*, &c.] The word *our* is left out in the *Alexandrian* copy, and in the *Vulgate Latin* and *Syriac* verſions. The *Arabic* verſion reads, *the time of your paſt life*; and to the ſame purpoſe the *Ethiopic* verſion; and which ſeems to be the more agreeable reading, ſince it can hardly be thought that the Apoſtle would put himſelf among the *Jews* diſperſed among the *Gentiles*, who had walked with them in their unregeneracy, in all the ſins hereafter mentioned, and beſt agrees with the following verſe: *to have wrought the will of the Gentiles*; or *when ye wrought*, as the *Syriac*, *Arabic*, and *Ethiopic* verſions; *when we walked*, or *were walking in laſciviouſneſs*, *luſts*, *exceſs of wine*, *revellings*, *banquetings*, *and abominable idolatries*. Theſe converted perſons in the paſt time of their life, before converſion, *walked* in ſin; which denotes a ſeries and courſe of ſinning, a perſiſting and progreſs in it, with delight and pleaſure, promiſing themſelves ſecurity and impunity: the particular ſins they walked in are reducible to theſe three heads, unchaſtity, intemperance, and idolatry: *in laſciviouſneſs*, *luſts*; which belong to the head of uncleanneſs, and take in all kinds of it; as fornication, adultery, inceſt, ſodomy, and all unnatural luſts: *exceſs of wine*, *revellings*, *banquetings*; which refer to intemperance of every ſort, by eating or drinking; as gluttony, drunkenneſs, ſurfeitings, and all luxurious feaſts and entertainments, attended with riotings, revellings, and obſcene ſongs; and which are here mentioned in the *Syriac* and *Arabic* verſions, and which lead to laſciviouſneſs, and every unclean luſt: *and abominable idolatries*; which ſome underſtand of worſhipping of angels; but they ſeem rather to intend the idolatries the *Jews* were led into by the feaſts of the *Gentiles*, either at their own houſes, or in the idols temple; by which means they were gradually brought to idolatry, and to all the wickedneſs and abominations committed by them at ſuch times: and it is eaſy to obſerve, that the two former, uncleanneſs and intemperance, often lead men into idolatry; ſee *Exod.* xxxii. 6. *Numb.* xxv. 1, 2. Now when they walked in theſe things, they *wrought the will of the Gentiles*; they did the things which the ſinners of the *Gentiles*, the worſt of men, that knew not God, took pleaſure in, and what they would have others do; and therefore, ſince the paſt time of their life had been ſpent in ſuch a way, it was ſufficient, and more than ſufficient; ſee *Ezek.* xliv. 6. for no time is allowable for ſin; and therefore it became them for the future, and in the remaining part of life, to behave in another manner; not to do the will of the *Gentiles*, but the will of God; to which that grace of God obliged them, that had made a difference between what they were themſelves formerly, and themſelves now, and between themſelves and others.

Ver. 4. *Wherein they think it ſtrange*, &c.] Here the Apoſtle points out what the ſaints muſt expect from the men of the world, by living a different life; and he chuſes to mention it, to prevent diſcouragements, and that they might not be uneaſy and diſtreſſed when they obſerved it; as that they would wonder at the change in their converſations, and look on it as ſomething unuſual, new, and unheard-of, and treat them as ſtrangers, yea, as enemies, on account of it: *that you run not with them into the ſame exceſs of riot*; to their luxurious entertainments, their *Bacchanalian* feaſts, and that profuſion of laſciviouſneſs, luxury, intemperance, and wickedneſs of all ſorts, which, with ſo much eagerneſs of mind, and bodily haſte, they ruſhed into; being amazed that they ſhould not have the ſame taſte for theſe things as before, and as they now had; and wondering how it was poſſible for them to abſtain from them, and what that ſhould be that ſhould give them a different caſt of mind, and turn of action: *ſpeaking evil of* you; and ſo the *Syriac* and *Arabic* verſions ſupply *you* as we do; but in the *Greek* text 'tis only, *ſpeaking evil of*, or *blaſpheming*; God, Chriſt, religion, the Goſpel, and the truths of it, and all good men; hating them becauſe different from them, and becauſe their lives reprove and condemn them; charging them with incivility, unſociableneſs, preciſeneſs, and hypocriſy.

Ver. 5. *Who ſhall give account to him*, &c.] *To God himſelf*, as the *Syriac* verſion reads; of all their blaſphemies, and hard ſpeeches ſpoken by them againſt God, Chriſt, the Goſpel, and good men, and receive their juſt puniſhment. This the Apoſtle ſays, to calm the minds of God's people, and make them to ſit eaſy under all cenſures, reproaches, and calumnies, and not think of avenging themſelves, but commit themſelves to him that will judge righteouſly; even to him, *that is ready to judge the quick and the dead*; that is, all men, ſuch as will be found alive when he comes, and thoſe that have died before, who will then be raiſed from the dead, to receive their judgment; and by whom is meant the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, to whom all judgment is committed; and who is ordained to be the judge of quick and dead, and will judge both at his appearing and kingdom; yea, the day is appointed when this judgment will proceed by him, and he is at the door; ſo that he may be truly ſaid to be ready for it, as he is every way equal to it, and will finiſh it with righteouſneſs.

Ver. 6. *For, for this cauſe was the Goſpel preached alſo*, &c.] Not for what goes before, becauſe Chriſt was ready to judge quick and dead; and becauſe wicked men muſt give an account to him, and therefore the Goſpel is preached to them alſo, that they may be left without excuſe; but for what follows, and which does not ſo much deſign the reaſon of the preaching of it, as the event conſequential upon it. By the *Goſpel* is meant the good news of the incarnation, ſufferings, and death of Chriſt, and ſalvation by him; and includes all the doctrines of grace, as of pardon, righteouſneſs, and eternal life; and by its being *preached* is meant, the publiſhing of it openly, freely, and boldly, with faithfulneſs, and conſiſtence: the perſons to whom it was preached, are *to them that are dead*; not in a figurative ſenſe, dead in treſpaſſes and ſins; tho' this is the caſe of all mankind, and of God's elect, in a ſtate of nature, whether *Jews* or *Gentiles*; and the Goſpel is preached to ſuch, as it is ordered to be preached, to all nations, to every creature, and is the means of quickening dead ſinners; and this follows upon it, that ſuch as receive it are judged and condemned by men, and live ſpiritually here, according to the will of God, and an eternal life hereafter; but the word *dead* is uſed in the ſame ſenſe as in the preceding verſe, where it manifeſtly ſignifies ſuch who had been alive, but were now dead in a natural ſenſe, whom Chriſt would judge, as well as thoſe that will be found alive when he comes; wherefore the Goſpel has been preached alſo to them that are already dead, as well as to thoſe who are now alive. And by theſe are meant, not the dead, whoſe ſouls are in hell, for to them there, the Goſpel never was, nor never will be preached, nor they ſaved, as *Origen*, and his followers, have vainly thought: nor the deceaſed patriarchs, before the coming of Chriſt, whoſe ſouls, by the *Papiſts*, are ſaid to be in *Limbus*, whither Chriſt, they ſay, went upon his death, and preached to them, and delivered them; but theſe never were in any ſuch place, but in peace and reſt; nor did Chriſt, in his human ſoul, deſcend thither, but went to paradiſe: nor the dead in general, before the Apoſtle's writing of this Epiſtle; for tho' the Goſpel had been preached from the beginning, from the fall of *Adam*, to certain perſons, and at certain periods of time, yet not to all the individuals of mankind, who were then dead, eſpecially in the *Gentile* world; nor the Old Teſtament ſaints in general, who were now dead, though they had the Goſpel preached to them in types and figures, in promiſes and propheſies; nor the men in the times of *Noah*, to whom the Goſpel was preached by him, and who, ſome of them, as ſuppoſed, tho' they were judged and puniſhed in their bodies in the view of men, being drowned in the waters of the flood, yet repenting and believing, upon *Noah*'s preaching to them, they live in their ſpirits in eternal life, according to the free mercy and grace of God; but tho' the Goſpel was preached to them, yet they remained diſobedient to it, even all of them, but *Noah*'s family, for any thing that appears; and are ſtiled the world of the ungodly, and are now ſpirits in the priſon of hell, and therefore can't be ſaid to live according to God in the ſpirit: but ſuch are intended, to whom the Goſpel had been preached, and to whom it had been effectual unto ſalvation; who had received it in the love of it, had ſincerely profeſſed it, and had ſuffered for it even death itſelf; ſuch are deſigned who had ſuffered in the fleſh, or were dead in their bodies, ver. 1. who either were dead in the Lord, or eſpecially had ſuffered death for his ſake, as *Stephen* and others: and this, with what follows, is mentioned with a general view to encourage the ſaints to patient ſuffering for Chriſt; to fortify them againſt the ill opinion and judgment the world have formed of them; and to aſſure them, that Chriſt will judge his people, both quick and dead, and avenge their cauſe, ſince the Goſpel has been preached to one as well as to another, and attended with the ſame power: the effect and conſequence of which is, *that they might be judged according to men in the fleſh*; meaning, either that ſuch perſons that receive and profeſs the Goſpel, and ſuffer for it, are judged according to the judgment of men that are in the fleſh, in an unregenerate eſtate, that is, carnal men, to be a ſtrange and unaccountable ſort of people, as in ver. 4. to receive ſuch a ſtrange ſett of notions, ſo ſtrenuouſly to contend for them, and ſo conſtantly to abide by them, and to debar themſelves of ſo many pleaſures of life, and expoſe themſelves to ſo much reproach and ſhame, to ſuch dangers, and even to death itſelf; one while they are judged to be by theſe men enthuſiaſts, mad men, and fools; and at other times to be knaves and villains, hypocrites and deceivers; and this is the common effect of the Goſpel, being preached and coming with power to any; ſee 1 *Cor*. iv. 3. or the ſenſe is, that ſuch perſons, according to men, or in their apprehenſions, are judged of God, or have the judgments of God inflicted on them in their fleſh, in their bodies, for ſome ſins of theirs; and therefore they ſuffer what they do in the fleſh, vengeance purſuing them; being ignorant that when they are judged, as they reckon it, they are only chaſtened by the Lord in a fatherly way, that they might not be eternally condemned with the world, 1 *Cor*. xi. 32. or elſe to compleat the ſenſe, for all may be taken into it; theſe perſons who were formerly alive, but now dead, and had embraced and profeſſed the Goſpel preached to them, were judged, and condemned, and put to death in the fleſh, according to the will of wicked men, and which was all that they were capable of; *but* tho' this were their caſe, tho' they were thus judged, cenſured, and condemned, yet *live according to God in the Spirit*; whilſt they were here on earth, the Goſpel preached to them had ſuch an effect upon them, as to cauſe them to live ſpiritually, to live by faith on Chriſt, to live a life of holineſs from him, and communion with him, and to live according to the will of God, in righteouſneſs and true holineſs; and now, tho' dead in their bodies, they live in their ſpirits or ſouls, an eternal life of comfort, peace, pleaſure, and happineſs with God, according to his eternal purpoſe, unchangeable covenant, promiſe, grace, and love.

Ver. 7. *But the end of all things is at hand*, &c.] With reſpect to particular perſons, the end of life, and which is the end of all things in this world to a man, is near at hand; which is but as an hand's breadth, paſſes away like a tale that is told, and is but as a vapour which appears for a while, and then vaniſhes away. Or this may be ſaid with regard to the *Jews*, the end of their church, and civil ſtate was near at hand, of their ſacrifices, temple, city, and nation; or with reſpect to the whole univerſe, to the ſcheme and faſhion of this world, which will ſoon be gone, tho' the ſubſtance will abide; when the heavens ſhall paſs away, and the earth, and all therein, will be burnt up; when there will be an end of all the purpoſes and promiſes of God reſpecting the preſent ſtate of things concerning his church and people, and of the judgments of God upon his enemies here; when the man of ſin will be deſtroyed, and the wickedneſs of the wicked will be come to an end, and the ſorrows, afflictions, and perſecutions of the ſaints will be no more; and when will be an end put to the preſent diſpenſation of things; there will be an end of the miniſtry of the word, and of the adminiſtration of ordinances; time will be no more, and the final ſtate of both good and bad men will take place: this may be ſaid to be at hand in the Apoſtles time, tho' ſo long ago, becauſe that was the laſt time, and the laſt diſpenſation of things; and whereas they knew not the exact time when it would be, they frequently ſpoke of it as near, in order to ſtir up the ſaints to the more diligent diſcharge of duty, and fervent exerciſe of grace, as here: *be ye therefore ſober*; or *temperate*, as the *Arabic* verſion renders it; and ſo is oppoſed to intemperance in eating and drinking, which is an abuſe of the creatures of God, and unfits a man for the duties of religion; when ſatan eaſily gets an advantage, and is often the cauſe of other ſins, and is frequently diſſuaded from, for the ſame reaſon as here; ſee 1 *Cor.* vii. 31. *Luke* xxi. 34, 35. or *chaſte*, as the *Syriac* verſion; and ſo is oppoſed to immodeſty in words, actions, or apparel, in which ſenſe ſobriety is uſed in 1 *Tim.* ii. 9. or *prudent*, as the *Vulgate Latin* verſion; and is oppoſed to all ſelf-conceit and vanity of mind, and imprudence in conduct and converſation; ſee *Rom.* xii. 3. and to all immoderate care of the world, which has the ſame effect upon the ſoul, as ſurfeiting and drunkenneſs on the body: it hinders the ſoul in the ſervice of God, chokes the word, and makes it unprofitable, and runs men into many ſins, ſnares, and temptations; and the conſideration of the end of all things being at hand, ſhould draw off from it. It may alſo ſignify ſoundneſs of mind and judgment, in the doctrines of faith, which are words of truth and ſoberneſs; and the rather this may be exhorted to, ſince towards the cloſe of time there will be little of the doctrine of faith in the earth, and men will not be able to endure ſound doctrine: it follows, *and watch unto prayer*; watch all opportunities of praying, or of attendance on that ordinance, both in private and in public; watch and obſerve both your preſent wants, and preſent mercies, that ye may know what to pray for, and what to return thanks for; and that you have a due reverence of the divine majeſty, in whoſe preſence you are entring. The *Vulgate Latin* and *Arabic* verſions render it, *watch*, or *be awake in prayers*; be careful that you lift up your hearts with your hands to God; that you pray for ſuch things as are agreeable to the revealed will of God; that you pray in faith, and lift up holy hands without wrath and doubting; and watch for the Spirit of God to enlarge your hearts in prayer, and to aſſiſt you both as to the matter and manner of praying. And perſons ſhould alſo watch after prayer for a return of it; and that they do not depend upon the duty performed; and that they are not negligent to return thanks for the mercy prayed for, when received. Very rightly does the Apoſtle join the above exhortation with this, ſince a man that is not ſober, is neither fit to watch, nor pray; and a drunken man, according to the *Jewiſh* canons, might not pray[l]: "one that is a drinker, or in " drink, let him not pray, or if he prays, his " prayer is deprecations; a drunken man, let him " not pray, and if he prays, his prayer is blaſ" phemies." Or as it is elſewhere[m] expreſſed, " let not a drunken man pray, becauſe he has no " intention; and if he prays, his prayer is an " abomination, therefore let him return and pray " when he is clear of his drunkenneſs: let no one " in drink pray, and if he prays, his prayer is " prayer, (unleſs the word, תפלה, ſhould rather " be rendered *folly*, as it may); who is a drunken " man? he that can't ſpeak before a king; a " man in drink can ſpeak before a king, and not " be confounded; even tho' he drinks but a fourth " part, or a quarter of wine, let him not pray " until his wine is departed from him."

Ver. 8. *And above all things have fervent charity among yourſelves*, &c.] Not but that charity, or love, is to be exerciſed towards all men, even towards enemies, but more eſpecially towards the ſaints, and that under ſuch a conſideration in which it cannot be exerciſed towards others; namely, as their brethren in Chriſt, and as belonging to him, as the children of God, as redeemed by Chriſt, and ſanctified by the Spirit; and theſe not only ſuch as are of the ſame nation, and belong to the ſame particular church and community, or of the ſame denomination, but all the ſaints every where, whether *Jews* or *Gentiles*, or of whatſoever name, and in whatſoever ſtate and condition: and this love ought to be mutual and reciprocal, and to be warm and fervent, and not lukewarm and indifferent, as it too often is; and ſhould be conſtant, *continued*, and *perpetual*, as the *Vulgate Latin* and *Arabic* verſions here read: and this the Apoſtle exhorts to above all things elſe; ſince outward ſobriety, and watchings, and prayer, and all other duties, are nothing without this; this is the ſum and ſubſtance of the law, and the fulfilling of it; and without this a mere knowledge of the Goſpel, and a profeſſion of it, are in vain, and therefore in the firſt place to be attended to. And eſpecially for the following reaſon, *for charity ſhall cover the multitude of ſins*; referring to *Prov.* x. 12. not a man's own ſins, but the ſins of others; and not from the ſight of God, for from that only the blood and righteouſneſs of Chriſt cover ſins, even all the ſins, the whole multitude of the ſins of God's elect; but from the ſight of men, both of thoſe againſt whom they are committed, and others; ſince charity, or true love, thinks no ill, but puts the beſt conſtructions upon the words and actions of fellow-chriſtians, and does not take them up, and improve and exaggerate them, but lets them lie buried in oblivion: it takes no notice of injuries, offences, and affronts, but over-looks them, bears with them, and forgives them, ſo that they are never raked up, and ſeen any more; which prevents much ſcandal, ſtrife, and trouble. The *Alexandrian* copy, and ſome others, and the *Vulgate Latin*, *Syriac*, and *Arabic* verſions read, *covereth*, as in *Prov.* x. 12.

Ver. 9. *Uſe hoſpitality*, &c.] Or *be lovers of ſtrangers*, as the phraſe may be rendered, and as it is in the *Syriac* verſion; that is, ſuch as are of a diſtant country, or come from afar, and are unknown by face, eſpecially good men, that are obliged to remove from their native country for the ſake of religion, or by one providence or another; and theſe are to be loved: and love is to be ſhewn them, both negatively, by not vexing them, and making them uneaſy in body or mind; by not oppreſſing them by violence and injuſtice, and making any exorbitant demands upon them; or by not perverting judgment with reſpect to them; and poſitively, by directing, counſelling, and adviſing them, and if need be, by giving them food, and raiment, and lodging: and it is what men have been led to by the very light of nature, as in the inſtances, of *Jethro* the *Midianite*, towards *Moſes*, and the inhabitants of *Melita* with *Publius*, the chief man of the iſland, towards the Apoſtle *Paul*, and his company; and is what God enjoined the *Iſraelites* by divers laws, ſince they had been ſtrangers in the land of *Egypt*; and various are the exhortations to it in the New Teſtament; and ſome, by the practice of it, have entertained angels unawares, as *Abraham* and *Lot*; and even Chriſt himſelf, as the two diſciples travelling to *Emmaus*; and is what is highly regarded and commended by Chriſt, and the

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[l] T. Hieroſ. Terumot, fol. 40. 4.

[m] Maimon. Hilch. Tephilla, c. 4. §. 17.

contrary is reſented by him; and therefore it ought to be uſed and practiſed frequently; ſaints ſhould inure themſelves to it, be given to it, purſue and follow hard after it; ſee the notes on *Rom.* xii. 13. *Heb.* xiii. 2. The Apoſtle adds here, *one to another*; which clauſe is left out in the *Syriac* and *Ethiopic* verſions; the reaſon of which may be, becauſe the authors of theſe verſions might think this not ſo conſiſtent with the duty exhorted to, ſince the objects of it are ſtrangers; but it ſhould be obſerved, that ſo were theſe perſons the Apoſtle writes to; ſee ch. i. 1. they were ſcattered about, and lived in different countries, and were ſtrangers to one another, and therefore the clauſe is pertinent enough; and the ſenſe is, that as they were in foreign countries, and at a diſtance one from another, whenever by any providence they were brought where each other were, that they would be hoſpitable to one another: and that *without grudging*; food, raiment, and lodging, or what they want, whether direction or advice, thinking it no trouble to give them either; or *without murmurings*, as it may be rendered, as if they were burdenſome, and they were too chargeable to them, and their ſtay too long; and without complaints of them, finding fault, and picking quarrels with them, and laying charges againſt them, in order to get rid of them. This is one branch of charity before recommended.

Ver. 10. *As every man hath received the gift*, &c.] That is, *from God*, as the *Syriac* and *Ethiopic* verſions add. This is a general rule laid down by the Apoſtle, according to which, diſtribution of every kind, whether in things temporal or ſpiritual, is to be made, even according to the nature, quality, and quantity of the gift received: the greateſt gift God beſtows on men, next to himſelf, Son, and Spirit, and received by them in this life, is ſpecial grace; which God gives of his ſovereign will and pleaſure, liberally, abundantly, without the deſerts of men, or conditions to be performed by them; of this kind are faith, repentance, hope, and love: the next to this is the miniſterial gift, or what qualifies men for the work of the miniſtry; which is not any thing in nature, or what is acquired by art and induſtry, but is a gift of grace, which is beſtowed on ſome in a higher, on others in a lower degree: and beſides theſe, there are the gifts of nature and providence, as human wiſdom, and the knowledge of things natural and civil, riches and wealth, and the various good things of life; for there is nothing a man has in nature, and in grace, but what is a gift to him, and what he has received: and according to the meaſure of the gift received, be it what it will, the exhortation is, even ſo *miniſter the ſame one to another*; or to, and among yourſelves; to your neighbours or companions, as the *Syriac* verſion renders it; if the gift be ſpecial grace, tho' that itſelf cannot be imparted from one to another, yet the knowledge of it may; and it becomes ſuch who have an experience of the grace of God upon their hearts, to make it known, both to particular friends in private converſation, and to the church of God in publick, for the uſe and edification of others, and the glory of God's grace: if the gift be a miniſterial one, whether it be greater or leſs, for it is not in all alike; it is not to be wrapped up in a napkin, and hid in the earth, or to lie neglected, but to be ſtirred up, and uſed for the benefit of the ſouls of men: and if it is a temporal one, the good things of this life, according to the meaſure of them, that a man has, he is to miniſter to the ſupply of the poor; and as God has proſpered him, he is to diſtribute to the neceſſities of others; as men freely receive, be it what it will, they ſhould freely miniſter it, according to the nature and meaſure of it: *as good ſtewards of the manifold grace of God*; for they are but ſtewards of whatſoever gifts they have; and therefore, if they would approve themſelves good ſtewards, they ſhould miniſter the ſame in proportion to their reception of them. Manifold and various are the graces of the Spirit of God, and the rich experiences communicated to men, which are not only for themſelves, but for the good of others alſo: gifts for publick uſefulneſs are different one from another; one man has one gift, and another has another; or the ſame gift is not alike in all, in ſome greater, and in others leſs; and all are but ſtewards; they are accountable for them, and the uſe of them, to their great Lord and maſter: and various are the doctrines of the grace of God; of the grace of the Father, in election, in the everlaſting covenant, in the miſſion of his Son, in the free juſtification of ſinners by his righteouſneſs, in the free and full pardon of all their ſins, in the adoption of any into his family, and in the gift of eternal life; and of the Son of God, in engaging as the ſurety of his people from everlaſting, in aſſuming their nature in time, in obeying, ſuffering, and dying in their room and ſtead; and of the Spirit of God in regeneration and ſanctification; and of all theſe myſteries of grace the miniſters of the Goſpel are ſtewards; and it is required of them that they be faithful. Temporal good things are given to men, not for their own uſe only, but for others; and they are but ſtewards of them; the original proprietor is God, and to him they muſt give an account of their ſtewardſhip, and how they have uſed and diſpoſed of the manifold gifts which God, of his goodneſs, has put into their hands; ſo that this laſt clauſe contains a reaſon or argument enforcing the above rule.

Ver. 11. *If any man ſpeak*, let him ſpeak *as the oracles of God*, &c.] This is an application of the above general rule to a particular caſe, the public miniſtry of the word, for that is here meant: *if any man ſpeak*; not in any manner, or on any ſubject; not in a private way, or about things natural and civil; but in public, and concerning divine things: *let him ſpeak*; this is rightly ſupplied in our tranſlation; and in which it is ſupported and confirmed by the *Syriac* and *Arabic* verſions, who both ſupply the ſame way: *as the oracles of God*; by which are meant the writings of the Old Teſtament, the ſacred ſcriptures; ſee *Rom.* iii. 2. ſo called, becauſe they come from God, are breathed and ſpoken by him, and contain his mind and will, and are authoritative and infallible; and according to theſe he is to ſpeak, who ſpeaks in public on divine ſubjects, both as to the matter and manner of his ſpeech: the matter of it muſt be agreeable to the divinely inſpired word of God, muſt be fetched out of it, and confirmed by it; and he is to ſpeak every thing that is in it, and keep back nothing, but declare the whole counſel of God, and only what is in it, without mixing his own chaff, or the doctrines of men with it; and it ſhould be ſpoken in a manner agreeable to it, not as the word of man, but as the word of God; and not in words which man's wiſdom teacheth, but in the words of the Holy Ghoſt; and with all boldneſs, for ſo the Goſpel ought to be ſpoken; and with all certainty and aſſurance, conſtantly affirming the things of it, for nothing is more ſure than they are; and with all openneſs, plainneſs, and freedom, making truth manifeſt, laying it plain and open before men, as it ought to be; and that with all reverence and godly fear, which becomes both ſpeaker and hearer. The Apoſtle next proceeds to mention another caſe, to which the above rule is applicable; *if any man miniſter*, let him do it *as of the ability which God giveth*; that is, if any man miniſter in temporal things to the ſupply of the poor; if a private man, and in a private way, let him do it in proportion to his ability, as God has proſpered him in the world; or if an officer of the church, a deacon, and which ſeems to be the ſenſe, for ſo the word uſed ſignifies; διακονει, if any man perform the office, or act the part of a deacon, let him do it according to what God, in his providence, has put into his hands; that is, of the churches ſtock, which he ſhould miniſter with ſimplicity and chearfulneſs. A like diviſion of church offices into public preaching of the word, and miniſtring to the wants of the poor, is here made, as in *Rom.* xii. 6, 7, 8. The end of all this is, *that God in all things may be glorified through Jeſus Chriſt*; or *by all means*, as the *Arabic* verſion renders it; by all ways and methods proper; for the glory of God ſhould be the principal view in every action of life: hence the *Syriac* verſion adds to the phraſe, *in all things*, for the ſake of explanation, *which ye do*; by ſobriety, by prayer, by watching unto it; by exerciſing fervent charity, and uſing hoſpitality one to another; by miniſtring the gift, as it is received; by the public miniſtration of the word; and by ſupplying the wants of the poor, whether in a perſonal, or in a church way: or in all gifts, whether private or publick, temporal or ſpiritual; ſince they all come from God, and men are accountable to him for them; and therefore ſhould be uſed ſo as to glorify him by them, and give him the glory of them; and not glory in them, as if not received from him: or in all the members of the church, whether officers, as paſtors and deacons, or private chriſtians; all ſhould ſo behave in their reſpective ſtations, as God may have glory: *thro' Jeſus Chriſt*; thro' whom all grace is communicated, by whom all gifts are beſtowed, and by virtue of grace and ſtrength received from him, every good work is performed to the glory of God: *to whom be praiſe, and dominion, for ever and ever*; meaning either to God the Father, from whom every good gift comes; who is the God of all all grace, of whom, and through whom, and to whom, are all things; and therefore the praiſe and glory of all belongs to him; and who has the dominion over all creatures and things, and has the diſpoſal of all in nature, providence, and grace: or to Jeſus Chriſt, out of whoſe fulneſs manifold grace, grace for grace is received; and who having aſcended on high, has received gifts for men, and gives them to them, and ſo is worthy of all praiſe; and who, as God, has the kingdom of nature and providence, equally with the Father, and as mediator, the kingdom of grace, the goverment of the church; and whoſe dominion will be from ſea to ſea, and from the rivers to the ends of the earth; and of whoſe kingdom there will be no end. *Amen*; ſo let it be, ſo ſhall it be.

Ver. 12. *Beloved, think it not ſtrange concerning the fiery trial*, &c.] By which may be meant either the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, which was at hand, and of which the Apoſtle may be thought to give the *Jews*, he writes to, notice of before hand; that they might be prepared for it, and not be overwhelmed with conſternation and amazement, when they ſhould hear of it; who, tho' in other countries, muſt be affected with it, and would be a trying diſpenſation to them: or elſe the afflictions and perſecutions which daily come upon them, for the ſake of Chriſt, and his Goſpel; ſignified by *fire* or *burning*, becauſe grievous to the fleſh, and gave great uneaſineſs, diſtreſs, and pain to it; and becauſe of the fury of men, and the violence and fierceneſs of their rage, expreſſed thereby; as alſo becauſe the people of God under them, are ſometimes ready to conceive, that the wrath of God is poured out, like fire, upon them. But the Apoſtle would not have theſe ſaints entertain any ſuch thoughts, and therefore he calls them *beloved*; that is, of God, as they were notwithſtanding all the fiery trials and afflictions, which were brought upon them; or he means, that they were beloved by him, and dear unto him, and other ſaints, tho' they were ill treated and reproached by the world: the *Syriac* and *Arabic* verſions read, *my beloved*; and the *Ethiopic* verſion, *our brethren*: and the Apoſtle exhorts them not to look upon their afflictions, that either did, or ſhould attend them, as ſtrange and uncommon things; ſince afflictions, of whatſoever kind, are not things of chance, and do not riſe up out of the duſt, but are by the appointment, and according to the will of God; and are alſo the common lot of the people of God in all ages, from the beginning of the world, the ſame afflictions are accompliſhed in others; yea, Chriſt himſelf endured the ſame hatred, reproach, and contradiction of ſinners, againſt himſelf; and they are what he has given his people reaſon to expect, having told them of them before hand, that they might not be offended at them; and as they lay in his way to glory, it need not ſeem ſtrange, that the ſaints alſo ſhould, thro' many tribulations, enter the kingdom. Moreover, this fiery diſpenſation, be it what it will, was not to deſtroy them, but to try them, and that for their good, profit, and advantage; juſt as gold and ſilver are tried in the fire, and loſe their droſs, and become purer and brighter: *which is to try you*; afflictions try the graces of the ſaints; as their faith in Chriſt, which becomes thereby much more precious than of Gold, that periſheth; and their love to him, by which it appears, that no tribulation can ſeparate them from it, nor many waters and floods of afflictions drown it; and their hope of eternal life, which grows more lively and ſtrong, and is as an anchor, ſure and ſtedfaſt, amidſt the greateſt ſtorms. Theſe try a man's profeſſion of religion, whether it is took up on good principles, and without ſiniſter views; ſince, if it is not, when perſecution, becauſe of the word, comes, he is offended and gone; and likewiſe, what a man's principles are, whether worth ſuffering for or no; and whether they will bear him up, and he abide by them, when called to ſuffer for them; and therefore, ſince ſuch ends are anſwered by fiery trials, they ſhould not be looked upon as ſtrange and unuſual things: *as tho' ſome ſtrange thing happened unto you*; which was never known and heard of before; and as if uſeleſs, and of no ſervice, and as foreign to the characters, caſes, and circumſtances of the ſaints in this world. The Apoſtle in this verſe returns to his former argument, to animate and encourage the ſaints in ſuffering afflictions patiently for righteouſneſs ſake.

Ver. 13. *But rejoice, inaſmuch as ye are partakers of Chriſt's ſufferings*, &c.] Not of his perſonal ſufferings; though they were partakers of the benefits and bleſſings which come through them, and reſult from them, ſuch as juſtification, peace, and pardon, and which are matter and ground of rejoicing; but of the ſufferings of his body, the church, which is myſtically himſelf; and are called his, becauſe of the union between him and his people, and the ſympathy he bears to them, and becauſe they are endured for the ſake of him, and his Goſpel, and conform the ſaints, and make them like unto him; and therefore ſuffering ſaints ſhould rejoice in this, that their ſufferings are accounted by Chriſt as his own, who in all their afflictions is afflicted; and that they are honoured to ſuffer for his name's ſake, and are hereby made like unto him: *that when his glory ſhall be revealed*; the glory of his divine nature, as the only-begotten Son of God, in which he'll come and appear at the laſt day; and which, tho' incommunicable, will be more manifeſt to all men, and eſpecially to the ſaints, who will know more of him, as the brightneſs of his Father's glory, and the expreſs image of his perſon; and when the glory of his office, as mediator, will be more conſpicuous, and ſhall be beheld by all that the Father has given to him; and alſo the glory of his human nature, which is now crowned with glory and honour at the right hand of God; and likewiſe the glory which he has in his hands for his people, even eternal glory and happineſs: this is now, in a great meaſure, unſeen, but it will then be revealed, both to the ſaints, and in them; they'll appear with Chriſt in glory, and have a glory both upon their ſouls and bodies. As they ſuffer with him, and for his ſake, they'll be glorified with him, when he ſhall come in his own glory, and in his Father's glory, and in the glory of his holy angels: the conſideration of which, as it muſt greatly encourage to ſuffer for his ſake, ſo muſt be matter of great joy, as follows: *ye may be glad alſo with exceeding joy*; a joy unſpeakable, and full of glory, being made partakers of the glory of Chriſt, either in beholding, or in poſſeſſing it.

Ver. 14. *If ye be reproached for the name of Chriſt*, &c.] For being called by his name; for bearing the name of chriſtians; for believing in him, and profeſſing him; and for the ſake of his Goſpel, which is ſometimes called his name, *Acts* ix. 15. not that the Apoſtle makes any doubt of this, for nothing is more certain, than that the ſaints ſhall be reproached, and all manner of evil ſpoken of them falſly for Chriſt's name ſake; but he ſuppoſes it, and takes it for granted, that they are, and will be reproached, and yet pronounces them bleſſed perſons: *happy* are ye; ſome ſupply it, *ſhall ye be*, as the *Vulgate Latin* verſion; that is, in the other world, becauſe the kingdom of heaven, the crown of life and glory, belongs to ſuch perſons; they'll be happy at death, in judgment, and to all eternity: others, with our tranſlators, ſupply, *are ye*, as the *Syriac*, *Arabic*, and *Ethiopic* verſions; for ſuch are happy now in themſelves, being both comfortable in their frames, and honourable in their perſons and characters, however uncomfortable, miſerable, and diſhonourable they may appear to the men of the world: *for the Spirit of glory, and of God, reſteth upon you*; alluding to *Iſ.* xi. 2. that is, *the glorious Spirit of God*, as the *Syriac* verſion renders it; who is glorious in himſelf, in the perfections of his nature, being poſſeſſed of the ſame glorious divine eſſence with the Father and Son; and in his works both of nature, being equally concerned with the other perſons in the Godhead, in the works of creation and providence, and alſo of grace, eſpecially the latter; and in all his gifts and graces with which he adorns the ſaints, and makes them glorious: and his reſting on them denotes his inhabitation in them, and his abiding with them, and remaining in them; and which appears by the comfort they enjoy in their ſouls amidſt all the reproaches and revilings of men, and by the ſtrength which they have to bear up under, and endure ſhame and perſecution for the ſake of Chriſt; and which caſts an honour upon them, and makes them both glorious and chearful. The *Jews* have a ſaying [a], that the Holy Ghoſt does not dwell on any, but on him that has a chearful heart: *on their part he is evil ſpoken of, but on your part he is glorified*; on the part of the revilers, the perſon, office, work, and grace, the operations and influences of the Spirit are blaſphemed and ridiculed; the power of the Spirit, with which the ſaints ſpeak, the experiences of grace they expreſs, the comforts of the Spirit they declare that they enjoy under ſuffering circumſtances, as well as their courage, patience, and chearfulneſs, he gives them, are generally bantered by perſecutors; and indeed, all the reproaches they caſt upon the people of God, fall upon the Spirit of God, by whom they are animated and influenced: but on the part of the ſufferers, he is glorified; inaſmuch as they continue to bear a teſtimony to his grace, depend upon his ſtrength, and aſcribe all their comfort, and gracious experience unto him. This clauſe is wanting in the *Vulgate Latin*, *Syriac*, and *Ethiopic* verſions, but is in all *Beza*'s *Greek* copies, excepting one; and is alſo in the *Arabic* verſion.

Ver. 15. *But let none of you ſuffer as a murderer*, &c.] The puniſhment for murder was death by the law of God, *Gen.* ix. 6. *or as a thief*; whoſe fine or mulct, according to the *Jewiſh* law, was a fivefold or fourfold reſtitution, according to the nature of the thing that was ſtolen, *Exod.* xxii. 1. *or as an evil doer*; a breaker of any of the laws of God or men, which are of a moral nature, and for the good of civil ſociety: *or as a buſy-body in other mens matters*; or *as a biſhop in another man's dioceſs*; that concerns himſelf in things he has nothing to do with, and neglects his own affairs, and lives in idleneſs, and upon the ſpoil of others; or takes upon him to manage, direct, order, and command other mens ſervants, or perſons that don't belong to him, to do his buſineſs, or whatſoever he pleaſes. The *Vulgate Latin* verſion renders it, *a deſirer of others goods*; and the *Ethiopic* verſion, *a covetous deſirer of others things*; and ſo is led on by an inſatiable thirſt for them, to obtain them in an evil way, either by ſecret fraud, or open violence and oppreſſion. To ſuffer in any ſuch caſes is ſcandalous and diſhonourable, and unbecoming the character of a chriſtian. This laſt clauſe is left out in the *Syriac* verſion.

Ver. 16. *Yet if* any man ſuffer *as a chriſtian*, &c.] Becauſe he is one, and profeſſes himſelf to be one. This name was firſt given to the diſciples at *Antioch*, either by themſelves, or by the *Gentiles*; however, it being agreeable to them, was retained; it is only mentioned here, and in *Acts* xi. 26. and xxvi. 28. *let him not be aſhamed*; neither of Chriſt, and his Goſpel, for which he ſuffers, nor of the name he bears, nor of the puniſhment he endures, however ignominious and ſhameful it may be among men; but let him, as his Lord and maſter did, endure the croſs, and deſpiſe the ſhame, *Heb.* xii. 2. *but let him glorify God on this behalf*; that he beſtows this gift upon him to ſuffer for Chriſt, as well as to believe in him; and that he does him ſo much honour to call him to ſuch ſervice, and to ſtrengthen him in it, ſo as to take it joyfully, and endure it patiently and chearfully. The *Alexandrian* copy, and ſome others, and alſo the *Vulgate Latin*, *Syriac*, and *Ethiopic* verſions, inſtead of, *in this behalf*, read, *in this name*; that is, of a chriſtian.

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[a] T. Hieroſ. Succa, fol. 55. 1.

Ver. 17. *For the time* is come *that judgment muſt begin at the houſe of God*, &c.] By *the houſe of God* is either meant the temple at *Jeruſalem*, which is often ſo called, becauſe it was built for God, and where were the ſymbol of his preſence, and his worſhip; and now the time was come, or at hand, that God would begin at his ſanctuary, and leave this houſe deſolate, and not one ſtone ſhould be left upon another, as Chriſt had foretold: or elſe the church of God, which is frequently called the houſe of God, becauſe it is of his building, where he dwells, and grants his gracious preſence, and which he beautifies, fills, repairs, and defends; and ſo may deſign believers in Chriſt, thoſe that are of the houſhold and family of God: and by *judgment* is meant, not puniſhment for ſin, ſtrictly ſpeaking, becauſe Chriſt has endured this in the room and ſtead of his church and people, and therefore in juſtice can't be inflicted on them; but afflictions and perſecutions, and which are fatherly chaſtiſements, and different from God's judgment on the world, and condemnation with it; ſee 1 *Cor.* xi. 32. and theſe may be ſaid to *begin* with them, becauſe it is only in this life the ſaints have their afflictions; and which are in love to them, and therefore are betimes brought upon them to try them, and purge them, and make them partakers of his holineſs: beſides, wicked men are often made uſe of as inſtruments, by which God chaſtizes his people; upon which account they are reſerved till laſt, to be the objects of his vengeance, when they have filled up the meaſure of their ſins; and then what is begun in love at the houſe of God, will end in wrath and ſevere puniſhment on them: and whereas it is ſaid, *the time* is come, or at hand, it may be obſerved, that as God has his ſet time to favour his *Zion*, ſo likewiſe to chaſtize her; all his peoples times are in his hand, as of comfort, ſo of temptation, affliction, and perſecution. The firſt times of chriſtianity, or of the preaching of the Goſpel, were times of trouble and diſtreſs; for as it was neceſſary the Goſpel ſhould be confirmed by ſigns and wonders, ſo that it ſhould be tried and proved by the ſufferings of the ſaints for it: and the phraſe alſo ſuggeſts, that theſe ſufferings and afflictions were but for a time, and even as it were for a moment, for a little while; and is a reaſon why the ſaints ſhould glorify God, as theſe words imply, being introduced with the cauſal particle, *for*; that they have their ſufferings now, and not with the wicked in the world to come, which will have no end: *and if* it *firſt* begin *at us*; either us *Jews*, for *Peter*, and thoſe he writes to were ſuch; or us chriſtians, who believe in Chriſt, have embraced his Goſpel, and profeſs his name: *what ſhall the end be of them that obey not the Goſpel of God?* of which God is the author, and which contains things relating to him; as, the grace of God, the righteouſneſs of God, peace with him, pardon from him, juſtification before him, and acceptance with him; and which he commits to men, and qualifies them for preaching it, and ſucceeds the miniſtry of it; and it being his Goſpel, as it makes it the more valuable in itſelf, ſo it is to be had in the greateſt reverence and eſteem; and the greater is the ſin of ſuch who deſpiſe, and reject it, as did the unbelieving *Jews*, who ſeem chiefly deſigned here; it was firſt preached to them, but they diſbelieved the doctrines of it, and ſubmitted not to its ordinances, and rejected Chriſt, the Saviour, the ſum and ſubſtance of it; and put it away from them, judging themſelves unworthy of everlaſting life: and what ſhall the end of ſuch be? in this world wrath came upon them to the uttermoſt, ruin upon their nation, city, and temple; and in the world to come, everlaſting deſtruction from the preſence of the Lord, and eternal vengeance in flames of fire. The *Jews* have various phraſes, and frequent expreſſions in their writings, which reſemble theſe, and ſerve to illuſtrate them. When *Noah* told the old world of the flood, and called upon them to repent, they are repreſented as ſaying to him, "where does *puniſhment begin?* מן ביתיה, *at the* "*houſe* of that man does it *begin?* when *Methuſelah* "died, they ſaid unto him, does not puniſhment "begin at the houſe of that man?" and elſewhere[o], ſays *R. Jonathan*, "puniſhment does not come "into the world, but in the time that the wicked "are in the world; and it does not begin (*i. e.* at "them) אלא מן הצדיקים תחלה, *but it begins at* "*the righteous*;" and again[p], "when God exe- "cutes judgment on the righteous, he is praiſed; "for if he executes this on them, how much more "on the ungodly?" ſee *Iſ.* x. 11, 12. *Jer.* xxv. 29. and xlix. 12. *Ezek.* xix. 6.

Ver. 18. *And if the righteous ſcarcely be ſaved*, &c.] Reference is had to *Prov.* xi. 31. where in the *Septuagint* verſion are the ſame words as here: the *righteous* are ſuch, not who are ſo in their own opinion, or merely in the eſteem of others, nor on account of their civility, morality, and external righteouſneſs before men, or by the deeds of the law; but who are made righteous by the righteouſneſs of Chriſt imputed to them: and ſuch are *ſcarcely ſaved*; not as if they were but in part ſaved, for they are compleatly ſaved; Chriſt has wrought out and finiſhed a compleat ſalvation for them; and they are ſaved from all enemies, and every thing that might hurt them; from ſin, ſatan, the law, the world, hell, and death; and they are compleatly juſtified, and have all their ſins pardoned, and ſhall be perfectly ſaved: nor as if their ſalvation was doubtful; for tho' they are ſcarcely, yet certainly ſaved; for they are choſen to ſalvation, and Chriſt has obtained it for them, and they have the application of it already made to them by the bleſſed Spirit; and being juſtified, or made righteous perſons, nothing is more certain than that they ſhall be glorified: but they are ſaid to be *ſcarcely* ſaved, becauſe of the difficulty of it, both with reſpect to Chriſt, who met with difficulties in working out their ſalvation; by reaſon of the ſtrictneſs of divine juſtice, and the demands of the righteous law, which would make no abatement; the ſins of his people he had to bear, and make atonement for; the many enemies he had to grapple with, and the accurſed death of the croſs, he had to undergo; tho' they were ſuch he was able to ſurmount, and did: and eſpecially with reſpect to the ſaints themſelves; for tho' their ſalvation is certain and compleat, being finiſhed by Chriſt, yet their enjoyment of it is attended with many difficulties; by reaſon of the corruptions of nature, a law in their members, warring againſt the law of their minds; the frequent temptations of ſatan, who ſeeks to devour them, and their wreſtlings with principalities, and powers, which are above their match; and alſo by reaſon of various afflictions and perſe-

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[n] Midraſh Kohelet, fol. 79. 4.

1c nd Grotium in loc.

[o] T. Bab. Bava Kama, fol. 60. 1. Caphtor, fol. 70. 2.

[p] Jarchi in Num.

perſecutions, and many tribulations, which make their way to eternal life a ſtrait way, and through which they muſt enter into the kingdom of heaven: and if this be their caſe, as it is, *where ſhall the ungodly and the ſinner appear?* the prophane ſinner, the Chriſtleſs, impenitent, unbelieving and unregenerate man; otherwiſe, all men are ſinners in themſelves; but here it means, ſuch as are deſtitute of the ſanctifying grace of the Spirit, and the juſtifying righteouſneſs of Chriſt, and that live and die in their ſins: where ſhall ſuch appear? not in the congregation of the righteous; nor at the right hand of Chriſt; nor in heaven, into which no defiled ſinner ſhall enter; nor even on earth, among and under the rocks and mountains, which will not be able to hide them from the face of the judge, and his wrath, when he ſhall come; but at Chriſt's left hand, and in hell, and among the devils and damned there.

Ver. 19. *Wherefore let them that ſuffer according to the will of God*, &c.] This is the concluſion made from the foregoing premiſes; that ſeeing the ſtate and condition of the ſaints in this world, at worſt, and which is but for a time, is infinitely preferable to the dreadful ſtate and condition of diſobedient perſons, ungodly men, and ſinners, and which will endure to all eternity; they ſhould not think ſtrange of their ſufferings, or complain of them, but patiently endure them; and eſpecially when they conſider that theſe are not the effects of chance, or merely owing to the malice and wickedneſs of men, or to any ſecond cauſe only; but they are the will of God, are by his appointment, under his direction, and by his order, and for their good, and his own glory: and therefore it becomes them to *commit the keeping of their ſouls* to him, *in well doing, as unto a faithful creator*; and which is not only their duty, but their privilege: and the ſenſe is, that when they are called to ſuffer for Chriſt, they ſhould commit their cauſe to God, who, as he is the creator, is the governor of the univerſe, and will judge righteouſly; and when they are even called to lay down their lives for his ſake, they ſhall not loſe them; tho' their bodies are killed, they may and ſhould commit their ſouls, when departing from their bodies, into the hands of God; as *Stephen*, the firſt martyr, committed his into the hands of Chriſt, in imitation of him; where he that made them, as he is able to keep them, will faithfully preſerve them in happineſs and glory, till the reſurrection morn, when their bodies ſhall be raiſed and re-united to them: and this is to be performed, *in well doing*; for which they ſuffer, and in which they ſhould continue to the laſt; not rendring evil for evil, but bleſſing; and in imitation of Chriſt, and his ſervant *Stephen*, pray for their worſt enemies, and wiſh them all the good, and do them all the acts of kindneſs that lie in their power.

CHAP. V.

IN this chapter, the Apoſtle firſt exhorts paſtors and members of churches, to their reſpective duties, as ſuch; and then to thoſe which were common to them all, as chriſtians; and cloſes the epiſtle with prayers for them, ſalutations of them, and with his apoſtolic benediction. He begins with the paſtors, or elders, and deſcribes himſelf as a fellow-elder, an eye-witneſs of Chriſt's ſufferings, and a partaker of his glory, ver. 1. and theſe he exhorts to feed the flock of God, where they were; to take the charge and overſight of them, freely, readily, and willingly, and not through force or covetouſneſs; and not to exerciſe a tyrannical dominion over them, but to be examples to them, ver. 2, 3. and the argument made uſe of to encourage them to all this is, that at the appearance of Chriſt, the chief ſhepherd, they ſhould receive a never-fading crown of glory, ver. 4. and next, the members of the churches are exhorted to ſubmit to the rule and government of their paſtors, being according to the word of God; and to be ſubject to one another; and particularly to put on humility, as a garment very ornamental to them; and the rather, ſince God oppoſes himſelf to men that are proud, but gives more grace to the humble, ver. 5. and eſpecially he exhorts them to be humble under the hand of God, ſince that is a mighty one, and this is the way to be exalted in due time; and alſo to caſt their care upon him, ſeeing he cared for them, ver. 6, 7. and then the Apoſtle proceeds to the common duties of chriſtians, and to exhort them to ſobriety and watchfulneſs, ſince ſatan their adverſary was a cruel and indefatigable one, and ever ſeeking the ruin of men; and to reſiſt him in the ſtedfaſt exerciſe of faith, and patiently bear all afflictions, ſeeing the ſame were accompliſhed in their brethren, in the world, ver. 8, 9. and then he puts up ſome petitions for them, that they might be perfected, ſtabliſhed, ſtrengthened, and ſettled, ver. 10. and aſcribes glory and dominion for ever to the God of grace, to whom he prays, ver. 11. after which, he names the perſon by whom he ſends this epiſtle, giving a ſummary of it; that it was an exhortation and a teſtimony to the true doctrine of grace wherein they ſtood, ver. 12. and next follow the ſalutations of the church at *Babylon*, and of his ſon *Marcus*, to them, ver. 13. and laſtly, he deſires they would ſalute one another with a kiſs of love, and gives them his benedictory wiſh, ver. 14.

Ver. 1. *The elders which are among you I exhort*, &c.] The Apoſtle returns to particular exhortations, after having finiſhed his general ones, and which chiefly concern patient ſuffering for Chriſt; and having particularly exhorted ſubjects to behave aright to civil magiſtrates, ſervants to their maſters, and huſbands and wives mutually to each other, here proceeds to exhort *elders* to the diſcharge of their office and duty; by whom are meant, not the elder in age, or the more ancient brethren in the churches, tho' they are diſtinguiſhed from the *younger*, in ver. 5. but men in office, whoſe buſineſs it was to feed the flock, as in ver. 2. and tho' theſe might be generally the elder men, and whoſe office required, at leaſt, ſenile gravity and prudence, yet they were not always ſo; ſometimes young men, as *Timothy*, and others, were choſen into this office, which is the ſame with that of paſtors, biſhops, or overſeers; for theſe are ſynonimous names, and belong to perſons in the ſame office: and theſe are ſaid to be *among* them, being members of the churches, and called out from among them to the paſtoral office, and who were ſet over them in the Lord, and had their reſidence in the midſt of them; for where ſhould elders or paſtors be, but with, and among their flocks? they were fixed among them; and in this an elder differs

fers from an Apoſtle; an elder was tied down to a particular church, whereas an Apoſtle was at large, and had authority in all the churches; and theſe the Apoſtle *Peter* does not command in an authoritative way, tho' he might lawfully have uſed his apoſtolic power; but he choſe rather to exhort, intreat, and beſeech, and that under the ſame character they bore: *who alſo am an elder*; or, *who am a fellow-elder*; and ſo the *Syriac* verſion renders it; and which expreſſes his office, and not his age, and is entirely conſiſtent with his being an Apoſtle; for tho' that is an higher office than a paſtor, or elder, yet it involves that, and in ſome things agrees with it; as, in preaching the word, and adminiſtring ordinances; and is mentioned to ſhew the propriety and pertinency of his exhortation to the elders; for being an elder himſelf, it was acting in character to exhort them; nor could it be objected to, as impertinent and unbecoming; and ſince he was ſtill in an higher office, on which account he could have commanded, it ſhews great humility in him to put himſelf upon a level with them, and only intreat and beſeech them; he does not call himſelf the prince of the Apoſtles and paſtors, and the vicar of Chriſt, as his pretended ſucceſſor does, but a fellow-elder: *and a witneſs of the ſufferings of Chriſt*; as he was even an eye-witneſs of many of them; of his exceeding great ſorrow in his ſoul, of his agony and bloody ſweat in the garden, and of his apprehenſion, and binding by the officers and ſoldiers there; and of the contumelious uſage he met with in the high-prieſt's hall, where he was mocked, blindfolded, buffeted, and ſmote upon the face; if not of his ſufferings on the croſs; ſince it is certain, *John* was then preſent; and quickly after, we read of *Peter* and he being together, *John* xix. 26. and xx. 2. and therefore a very fit perſon to exhort theſe elders to feed the churches under their care, with the preaching of a crucified Chriſt, ſince he, from his certain knowledge, could affirm his ſufferings, and his death: moreover, he was a witneſs, that is, a miniſter, and preacher of the ſufferings of Chriſt, and of the doctrines of peace, pardon, juſtification and ſalvation through them; as appears from all his ſermons recorded in the *Acts of the Apoſtles*, and from theſe his *Epiſtles*: and beſides, he was a partaker of the ſufferings of Chriſt; he bore witneſs to him, by ſuffering for him; and as the Apoſtle *Paul* did, filled up the afflictions of Chriſt in his fleſh; he, with other Apoſtles, were put into the common priſon by the *Jewiſh Sanhedrim*, for preaching Chriſt, as he afterwards was by *Herod*; and had, doubtleſs, by this time, gone through a variety of ſufferings for the ſake of Chriſt and his Goſpel, as he afterwards glorified God by dying that death, which his Lord and maſter ſignified to him before-hand; and therefore a very proper perſon to exhort theſe elders to diſcharge their work and office, and perſevere in it, whatever they were called to ſuffer for it: *and alſo a partaker of the glory that ſhall be revealed*; which ſome think, has reference to the transfiguration of Chriſt upon the mount, where *Peter* was preſent, and ſaw the glory of Chriſt, and of thoſe that were with him, *Moſes and Elias*, and enjoyed their company, and heard their converſation with ſo much pleaſure and delight, that he was for continuing there; and which was an emblem and pledge of the glory of Chriſt, that was afterwards to be revealed, and ſtill is to be revealed; and ſo the *Syriac* verſion renders it, *a partaker of his glory*; of the glory of Chriſt; ſee ch. iv. 13. or it regards the eternal glory and happineſs of the ſaints, which is at preſent hid, and unſeen, but ſhall be revealed at the laſt time, at the coming of Chriſt, when he ſhall appear in his glory, both to the ſaints, in them, and upon them; a glory which ſhall be both upon body and ſoul; and this the Apoſtle calls himſelf a partaker of, as in Chriſt, his head and repreſentative, and becauſe of his intereſt in it, his aſſurance of right unto it, and meetneſs for it, and the certainty of enjoying it; nothing being more ſure than this, that thoſe that ſuffer with Chriſt, and for his ſake, ſhall be glorified with him. Now, the exhortation of a perſon in ſuch an office, as before expreſſed, and of one that was an eye-witneſs of Chriſt's ſufferings, and had endured ſo much for Chriſt, and had had ſo large an experience of his grace, and ſuch full aſſurance of glory, muſt carry great weight and influence in it, and is as follows.

Ver. 2. *Feed the flock of God which is among you,* &c.] Some read, *as much as in you is*; that is, to the utmoſt of your power, according to your abilities, referring to the manner of feeding the flock, doing it in the beſt way they are capable of; but the phraſe is rather deſcriptive of the flock to be fed, which points it out, and diſtinguiſhes it from all others, and for which they ſhould have a particular regard; it being the flock, as the *Syriac* verſion renders it, *which is delivered unto you*; which was committed to their care, and they were made overſeers of, and ſtood in a ſpecial relation to; wherefore it was incumbent on them to regard them, ſo as they did not, and were not obliged to regard any other diſtinct flock: by *the flock of God*, or, *of Chriſt*, as ſome copies read, is meant, not the whole world, which *Philo* the *Jew* [r] calls, the greateſt and moſt perfect, τȣ οντος Θεȣ ποιμνη, *flock of the true God*; but the church of God, over which they were elders or paſtors, conſiſting of Chriſt's ſheep and lambs, he ordered *Peter* to feed, as he now does his fellow-elders; and becauſe they are the flock of God, which he has choſen, diſtinguiſhed, and ſeparated from the reſt of the world, and has made the care and charge of Chriſt; put them into his hands, whence they are called the ſheep of his hand; which he has purchaſed with his blood, and effectually called by his grace, and returned them to himſelf, the ſhepherd and biſhop of ſouls, who before, were as ſheep going aſtray, and folded them together in a Goſpel-church ſtate; all this is a reaſon, and a ſtrong one, why they ſhould be fed; not with every wind of doctrine, which blows up the pride of human nature, and ſwells men with vain conceits of themſelves; nor with the chaff of human doctrines; nor with trifling and ſpeculative notions; but with knowledge and underſtanding of divine and evangelical truths, with the words of faith and ſound doctrine, with the wholeſome words of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; with the Goſpel of the grace of God, which contains milk for babes, and meat for ſtrong men; and with a crucified Chriſt himſelf, who is the bread of life, and whoſe fleſh is meat indeed, and his blood drink indeed; by directing them to his perſon, blood, and righteouſneſs, to live by faith on; by preaching the doctrines of peace and pardon by his blood, atonement, and ſatisfaction by his ſacrifice, and juſtification by his righteouſneſs, and compleat ſalvation by his obedience and death: in ſhort, feeding includes the whole of the paſtors work, the miniſtry of the word, the adminiſtration of ordinances, and the rule and government of the church, in the ſeveral branches of it; for the ſame word ſignifies to rule, as to feed; and which work is further expreſſed by, *taking the overſight* thereof; that is, of the flock; or *take the care of it*, as the *Syriac* verſion renders it, and adds, *ſpiritually*; in a ſpiritual manner; which is an interpretation of the phraſe: an acting the part of a biſhop or overſeer of it, as the word ſignifies; looking diligently to it, inſpecting into the various caſes of the members of the church; uſing diligence to know the ſtate of the flock, and performing all the offices of a careful ſhepherd; as feeding the flock, and not themſelves; ſtrengthening the diſeaſed; healing the ſick; binding up that which was broken; bringing again that which was driven away, and ſeeking that which was loſt; watching over them that they go not aſtray; and reſtoring of them in the ſpirit of meekneſs, when they are gone out of the way; and overlooking both their practices, and their principles; admoniſhing, reproving them for ſin, as the caſe requires; and preſerving them as much as in them lies, from wolves, and beaſts of prey; from falſe teachers, and from all errors and hereſies: all which is to be done, *not by conſtraint*; or with force, in a rigorous and ſevere manner; for this may be underſtood actively of paſtors not forcing their flock, over driving them, or ruling them with force and cruelty, complained of in *Ezek*. xxxiv. 4. or paſſively, of their being forced to feed the flock, and ſuperintend it; as ſuch may be ſaid to be, who enter into the miniſtry, and continue in it, becauſe obliged to it for want of a livelihood, and not knowing how to get one any other way; or through the preſſing inſtances of relations, acquaintance, and friends; this ought not to be a matter of neceſſity, but of choice; they ſhould be induced to it by no other neceſſity than what Chriſt has laid upon them, by calling them to the work, and furniſhing them for it with the gifts of his Spirit; and ſhould engage and continue in it by no other conſtraint than that of his love; wherefore it follows, *but willingly*. The *Vulgate Latin* verſion adds, *according to God*, and ſo ſome copies; according to the will of God, and agreeable to his word; and the *Ethiopic* verſion renders it, *with equity for God*; with all uprightneſs and integrity, for the ſake of the honour and glory of God; this ſhould be done with all a man's heart and ſoul, and ſhould ſpring from pure love to Chriſt; for no man is fit to feed Chriſt's lambs and ſheep, but thoſe who ſincerely love him; ſee *John* xxi. 15, 16, 17. and from a cordial and affectionate concern for the good of ſouls; and from an hearty deſire unto, and delight in the work itſelf; otherwiſe all he does will be as a taſk and burden; he will do it grudgingly, and with negligence, and will murmur under it, at leaſt, ſecretly. The *Arabic* verſion renders it, *watching, not forced watches, but willing ones*. This contraſt of phraſes ſeems to be *Jewiſh*, or *Rabbinical*[q]; it is a tradition of the *Rabbans*; “blood which is defiled, and they ſprinkle it ignorantly, 'tis accepted; preſumptuouſly, not accepted; of what things are theſe ſaid? of a private perſon; but of a congregation, whether ignorantly, or preſumptuouſly, tis accepted; and of a ſtranger, whether ignorantly or preſumptuouſly, בין באונס בין ברצון, *whether by conſtraint or willingly*, it is not accepted:” it follows here, *not for filthy lucre*; not from a covetous diſpoſition, which is a filthy one; and for the ſake of gaining money, and amaſſing wealth and riches, as the falſe prophets in *Iſaiah*'s time, who were never ſatisfied; and the falſe teachers in the Apoſtles time, who, through covetouſneſs, made merchandize of men, and ſuppoſed that gain was godlineſs; whereas there is no ſuch thing as ſerving God and mammon; and as the work of the miniſtry ſhould not be entred upon, and continued in, with any ſuch ſordid view; ſo neither for the ſake of gaining glory and applauſe, a preſidence, and chief place in the churches, and a name among the miniſters of the goſpel, and credit and eſteem among men: *but of a ready mind*; or, *from the whole heart*, as the *Syriac* verſion renders it; and in a chearful view of reproaches and perſecutions, of the loſs of credit and reputation, of worldly ſubſtance, and of life itſelf; and with a ſincere concern for the glory of God, and the good of immortal ſouls; being ready to do every thing with chearfulneſs, that may contibute to either of theſe. The *Ethiopic* verſion renders it, *in the fullneſs of your heart with joy*.

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[r] De Agricultura, p. 195.

Ver. 3. *Neither as being lords over God's heritage*, &c.] Or *clergy*; meaning not eccleſiaſtical perſons, as preſbyters, and deacons, who are ſuppoſed to be under the government of biſhops, tho' not to be governed with tyranny, and in a haughty, imperious, and arrogant manner; to which ſenſe the *Arabic* verſion inclines, rendring the words thus; *not as thoſe who domineer over ſuch that are appointed in the dignities of the prieſthood*; but ſuch cannot be deſigned, becauſe they are preſbyters, or elders, which are here exhorted not to uſe ſuch tyrannical power and authority; wherefore the flock, or church of God, the people of Chriſt, and members of churches, in common, are here intended: the *Ethiopic* verſion renders it, *his own people*; who are the lot, portion, and inheritance of God, and Chriſt; and moreover, the ſeveral churches are the parts, portions, and heritages, for the word is in the plural number, which are aſſigned to the care of their reſpective paſtors, and elders, in alluſion to the land of *Canaan*, which was diſtributed by lot: the word *clergy* is common to all the ſaints, and not to be appropriated to a particular order of men, or to officers of churches; and theſe are not to be lorded over by their elders, in a domineering and arbitrary way; for tho' they are ſet over them in the Lord, and have the rule over them, and ſhould be ſubmitted to, and obeyed in their right and lawful miniſtrations of the word and ordinances, and are worthy of double honour when they rule well; yet they are not to take upon them an abſolute authority over the conſciences of men; they are not to teach for doctrines the commandments of men; nor to have the dominion over the faith of men, but to be helpers of their joy; and are not to coin new articles of faith, or enact new laws, and impoſe them on the churches; but are to teach the doctrines of Chriſt, and rule according to the laws he has given: *but being enſamples to the flock*. The *Ethiopic* verſion reads, *to his own flock*; that is, the flock of God; and the *Vulgate Latin* verſion adds, *heartily*; the meaning is, that they ſhould go before the flock, and ſet an example to believers, in word, in converſation, in charity, in ſpirit, in faith, in purity; and be patterns of good works to them, and recommend the doctrines they preach, and the duties they urge, by their own lives and converſations; and particularly ſhould be enſamples to the ſaints, in liberality and beneficence,

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[q] T. Bab. Menachot, fol. 25. 1. Vid. T. Bab. Avoda Zara, fol. 54. 1. & Maimon. Hilch. Iſſure Mizbeach, c. 4. §. 5, 6.

in lenity and gentleneſs, in meekneſs and humility, in oppoſition to the vices before warned againſt.

Ver. 4. *And when the chief ſhepherd ſhall appear*, &c.] This is the encouraging motive and argument to engage the elders and paſtors of churches to diſcharge their office faithfully, chearfully, and in an humble manner: by *the chief ſhepherd*, is meant, Chriſt; who may well be called ſo, ſince he is God's fellow, and in all reſpects equal with him, and is the ſhepherd and biſhop of the ſouls of men; all other biſhops, paſtors, and elders are under him; they receive their commiſſions from him, to feed his lambs and ſheep; are made paſtors and overſeers by him; and have their gifts, qualifying them for ſuch offices, from him; and have their ſeveral flocks aſſigned unto them by him; and from him have they all the food with which they feed them, and are accountable to him for them, and the diſcharge of their office: ſo that Chriſt is the chief ſhepherd, in the dignity of his perſon, he being God over all, bleſſed for ever; in his qualifications for his office, having all power, grace, and wiſdom in him, to protect his flock, ſupply their wants, guide and direct them; and in the nature and number of his flock, being rational creatures, the ſouls of men, even elect men; and tho' they are, when compared with others, but a little flock, yet conſidered by themſelves, are a great number; and eſpecially the general aſſembly will be, in compariſon of the little bodies and ſocieties of ſaints under paſtors and teachers, of Chriſt's ſetting over them, with reſpect to whom, principally, he is called the chief ſhepherd: the alluſion is to the principal ſhepherd, whoſe own the ſheep were, or however, had the principal charge of them; who uſed to have others under him, to do the ſeveral things relating to the flocks he directed, and were called *little ſhepherds*; ſo *Aben Ezra* ſays[s], it was cuſtomary for the ſhepherd to have under him רועים קטנים, *little ſhepherds*; the ſame perhaps with the hirelings, whoſe own the ſheep are not, *John* x. 12. who are retained, or removed, according to their behaviour; theſe, in the *Talmudic* language are called ברולי[t], or כרולי; tho' according to *Guido*[u], the word pronounced in the latter way, ſignifies, a *chief ſhepherd*, who takes cattel of men, and has other ſhepherds, ſervants under him; and ſuch an one uſed to be called הרועה הגדול, *the great*, or *chief ſhepherd*; ſo *Maimonides*[w] ſays, it was the cuſtom of ſhepherds to have ſervants under them, to whom they committed the flocks to keep; ſo that when הרועה הגדול, *the chief ſhepherd*, delivered to other ſhepherds what was under his care, theſe came in his room; and if there was any loſs, the ſecond ſhepherd, who was under *the chief ſhepherd*, was obliged to make good the loſs, and not the firſt ſhepherd, who was the chief ſhepherd; and to the ſame purpoſe, ſays another of their commentators[x]; it is the cuſtom of הרועה הגדול, *the chief ſhepherd*, to deliver (the flock) to the little ſhepherd that is under him; wherefore the ſhepherd that is under him, is obliged to make good any loſs: now, ſuch a ſhepherd is Chriſt; he has others under him, whom he employs in feeding his ſheep, and who are accountable to him, and muſt give up their account when he appears: at preſent he is out of the bodily ſight of men, being received up to heaven, where he will be retained till the time of the reſtitution of all things; and then he will appear a ſecond time in great glory, in his own, and in his Father's, and in the glory of his holy angels: and when he thus appears, *ye ſhall receive a crown of glory which fadeth not away*; in diſtinction from thoſe crowns which were given to the conqueror, in the *Olympic* games; which were made of divers flowers, of the olive, wild olive, pine-tree, and of parſly, and inſerted in a branch of the wild olive-tree[y], and which quickly faded away; or in alluſion to crowns made of *Amarantus*[z], the plant *everlaſting*, ſo called, from the nature of it, becauſe it never fades: the eternal glory and happineſs, which is here meant by a crown of glory, or a glorious crown, never fades away, but ever ſhines in its full luſtre; and this, faithful miniſters ſhall receive at the hands of the chief ſhepherd, as a gift of his, as a reward of grace; when they have finiſhed their work, they will enter into the joy of their Lord, and ſhine as the ſtars for ever and ever; they ſhall reign with Chriſt, as kings, on a throne of glory, wearing a crown of glory, and enjoying a kingdom and glory to all eternity.

Ver. 5. *Likewiſe ye younger*, &c.] Not in office, as if inferior officers to biſhops were here intended, who ought to be ſubject to them; for elders and paſtors are the ſame with them, nor is there any other office but that of deacons; nor younger paſtors and overſeers, ſuch an one as *Timothy* was; not but that a deference is to be paid, and proper reſpect had to ſuch who are of greater age, and longer ſtanding and experience, by younger brethren in the miniſtry; nor ſuch as are only younger in years, who ought to riſe up unto, and honour hoary hairs, which may be done where ſubjection is not required, as here; nor ſuch as are young in grace and experience, ſince there are little children, young men, and fathers in the church; but all the members of churches in common are here intended, as diſtinguiſhed from their officers; for as paſtors and overſeers were, for the moſt part, choſen from among thoſe that were ſenior in age, ſo the members generally conſiſted of the younger ſort; and beſides, as it was uſual to call chief men and rulers, whether in church or ſtate, fathers, ſo thoſe that were ſubjects, the younger; ſee *Luke* xxii. 26. Theſe the Apoſtle exhorts as follows, *ſubmit yourſelves unto the elder*; not merely in age, but in office, as before; for as he had exhorted the elders to a diſcharge of their work and office, he proceeds in the next place, and which is ſignified by the word *likewiſe*, to ſtir up the members of the churches to their duty to their elders, or paſtors, who had the overſight of them; and that is to *ſubmit* themſelves to them, as in *Heb.* xiii. 17. which is done by attending conſtantly on the word preached by them, and receiving it, ſo far as it agrees with the ſcriptures of truth; and by joining with them in all the ordinances of Chriſt, and their adminiſtrations of them; by being ſubject to the laws of Chriſt's houſe, as put in execution by them; by taking their counſel and advice, regarding and hearkening to their admonitions and reproofs, and taking them in good part, looking upon them, and behaving towards them as their ſpiritual guides and governours. The *Syriac* and *Ethiopic* verſions read, *to your elders*; ſuch as were particularly ſet over them in the Lord, and had taken the care of them, for to no others are they obliged to ſubmit themſelves. *Yea all* of you *be ſubject one to another*;

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[s] Comment. in Zech. xi. 8.

[t] T. Bab. Bava Kama, fol. 56. 2.

[u] Dictionar. Syr. Chald. p. 102.

[w] In Miſn. Bava Kama, c. 6. §. 2.

[x] Bartenora in ib.

[y] Vide Paſchalium de Coronis, l. 6. c. 1. p. 339. c. 16 p. 391. c. 18. p. 399. c. 19. p. 413.

[z] Ib. l. 3. c. 11. p. 178.

other; that is, all the members of the churches ſhould not only ſubmit themſelves to their paſtors, but to their fellow-members, as in *Eph.* v. 21. they ſhould ſubmit to the ſuperior judgments of one another, eſteeming each other better than themſelves, and not be tenacious of their own way of thinking and judging of things; yea, condeſcend to men of low eſtates, and weaker minds, bear the infirmities of the weak, and take all admonitions and reproofs given in a friendly manner kindly; and chearfully perform all offices of love, and by it ſerve one another in things temporal and ſpiritual; doing the meaneſt ſervices for the good of each other, ſuch as waſhing the feet of one another, in imitation of their Lord and maſter. *And be clothed with humility*; without which there will be no ſubjection, either to the elders, or one another. This is a grace which ſhows itſelf in a man's thinking and ſpeaking, the beſt of others, and the worſt of himſelf; in not affecting places and titles of eminence; in being content with the loweſt place, and patiently bearing the greateſt contempt; in not aſpiring to things too high for him, always acknowledging his own meanneſs, baſeneſs, and unworthineſs; aſcribing all he is, and has, to the grace and goodneſs of God, whether it be gifts of nature, providence, or grace: and this is a believer's clothing, not the robe of his juſtifying righteouſneſs before God, but is a conſiderable part of his inward garment of ſanctification, which is in the ſight of God of great price; and makes a large ſhow in his outward converſation-garments before men, and renders him lovely and amiable: it is an ornament to him, which is precious with God, and recommends him to the eſteem of men, and the religion and Goſpel he profeſſes, and his profeſſion of it. Some think there is a metaphor in the words, taken from knots of ribbands, and ſuch like things, wore by women on their heads, or breaſts, for ornament; and that the Apoſtle's advice to the ſaints is, that their breaſt-knot, or ornament ſhould be humility. Others think it is taken from a ſort of badge which ſervants wore over their garments, by which they were diſtinguiſhed; and ſo ſaints are directed to put on this badge, by which they may be known to be the ſervants of Chriſt: the former ſeems more agreeable: but as the word ſignifies to bind, or faſten any thing, by tying of knots, it may denote the retaining of this grace in conſtant exerciſe, ſo as never to be without it; and to be clothed or covered with it, is always to have it on, and in exerciſe, in every action of life, in all our deportment before God and men, in all public and religious worſhip, and throughout the whole of our converſation, in the family, in the world, or in the church. The phraſe ſeems to be *Jewiſh*, and is to be met with in the writings of the *Jews*. It is ſaid [a], "he that has fear, ונתלבש בענוה, *and is clothed with humility*; humility is the moſt excellent, and is comprehended in all, as it is ſaid, *Prov.* xxii. 4. He who has the fear of God, is worthy of humility, and every one that hath humility is worthy of kindneſs or holineſs." And it is a ſaying of *R. Meir* [b], "he that loves God loves men; he that makes God glad, makes men glad; and it (the law) מלבשתו ענוה, *clothes him with humility* and fear." *For he reſiſteth the proud*; or *ſcorneth the ſcorners*, as it is in *Prov.* iii. 34. from whence theſe words are taken: the Lord treats them as they treat others; as they deſpiſe all other men and things, he deſpiſes them; he is above them, in that they have dealt proudly, and has them in deriſion; he eludes all their artifices, and fruſtrates their ſchemes, and diſappoints their ambitious views, and ſcatters them in the imagination of their hearts, and brings their counſels to confuſion, and oppoſes himſelf to them, and as their adverſary; and a dreadful thing it is for perſons to have God ſtand up againſt them, and reſiſt them. This is a reaſon diſſuading from pride, and exciting to humility, as is alſo what follows: *and giveth grace to the humble*; that is, more grace; ſee *James* iv. 6. The firſt grace cannot be intended, for no man is truly humble before he has received the grace of God, 'tis that which makes him ſo; or it may deſign larger gifts of grace, which God beſtows on thoſe who acknowledge him to be the author and giver of what they have, and who make a proper uſe of them to his glory; when he takes away from the vain and oſtentatious, that which to themſelves, and others, they ſeemed to have. Moreover, God grants his gracious preſence to ſuch as are of an humble, and of a contrite ſpirit; and at laſt he gives them glory, which is a free grace-gift, and the perfection of grace; the poor in ſpirit, or humble ſouls, have both a right and meetneſs for, and ſhall enjoy the kingdom of heaven.

Ver. 6. *Humble yourſelves therefore*, &c.] Or *be ye humbled* before God, and in his ſight; quietly ſubmit to his will; patiently bear every affliction without murmuring, repining, or replying againſt him; be ſtill under the rod, and deſpiſe not the chaſtening of the Lord; mourn over ſin as the cauſe, acknowledge your vileneſs and unworthineſs, and ſtand in awe of his majeſty, conſidering yourſelves as *under the mighty hand of God*; a phraſe expreſſive of his omnipotence, which can't be ſtayed, and it would be madneſs to oppoſe it; and which is able to caſt down the proud, and daſh them to pieces, as well as to exalt the humble. This hand, upon men, in a way of chaſtiſement, preſſes ſore, and in a way of puniſhment preſſes down, and cruſhes to pieces; but to be under it in an humble manner, is ſafe and profitable; ſuch are hid as in the hollow of his hand, and are ſafe as in a pavilion, and comfortable under the ſhadow of his wings; and ſuch humiliation and ſubmiſſion to him, and putting themſelves under his mighty hand and care, is the way to exaltation: *that he may exalt you in due time*; the *Arabic* verſion reads, *in the time of exaltation*; when his time to exalt is come, either in this world, or more eſpecially at the appearance of Chriſt, and his kingdom. The *Vulgate Latin* verſion, and two copies of *Beza*'s, one of *Stephens*'s, and the *Alexandrian*, read, *in the time of viſitation*; and ſo the *Ethiopic* verſion, *when he ſhall have viſited you*; which ſeems to be taken out of ch. ii. 12. ſooner or latter ſuch who are humbled ſhall be exalted; it is the uſual way and method which God takes to abaſe the proud, and exalt the humble; for humble ſouls honour him, and therefore ſuch as honour him he will honour; and this he does in his own time, in a time that makes moſt for his glory, and their good; oftentimes he does it in this life, and always in that which is to come.

Ver. 7. *Caſting all your care upon him*, &c.] *Upon God*, as the *Syriac* and *Ethiopic* verſions read. The words are taken out of, or at leaſt refer to *Pſ.* lv. 22. where, inſtead of, *caſt thy burden upon the Lord*, the *Septuagint* have it, *caſt thy care upon the Lord*; the care of the body, and of all the affairs of life, concerning which ſaints ſhould not be anxiouſly thoughtful, but depend upon the providence of God, tho' in the diligent uſe of means, which is not forbidden, nor diſcourged by this, or any ſuch like exhortation; as alſo the care of the ſoul, and the ſpiritual and eternal welfare of it, which ſhould be committed into the hands of Chriſt, on whom help is laid, and who is become the author of eternal ſalvation; nor ſhould this ſlacken and make perſons negligent in the uſe of means, for the good, comfort, and advantage of their ſouls: *for he careth for you*; for the bodies of his people, and their outward concerns of life, for food and raiment for them, and for the preſervation of them, who will not ſuffer them to want, nor with-hold any good thing from them, or ever leave them, and forſake them; and for their ſouls, for which he has made proviſion in his Son, and in the covenant of his grace has laid help upon a mighty ſaviour; and who has obtained an eternal redemption for them, beſtows his grace upon them, and gives every needful ſupply of it to them, and keeps them by his power thro' faith unto ſalvation.

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[a] Zohar in Num. fol. 60. 3.

[b] Pirke Abot, c. 6. §. 1.

Ver. 8. *Be ſober, be vigilant*, &c.] The Apoſtle had exhorted to each of theſe before; ſee ch. i. 13. and iv. 7. but thought fit to repeat them; ſobriety and watchfulneſs being exceeding neceſſary and uſeful in the chriſtian life; and the one can't well be without the other: unleſs a man is ſober in body and mind, he will not be watchful, either over himſelf, or others, or againſt the ſnares of ſin, ſatan, and the world; and if he is not on his watch and guard, he is liable to every ſin and temptation. The *Syriac* verſion renders the words, *watch*, and *be ye mindful*, or *remember*; watch with diligence, care, and induſtry, keeping a good look-out, minding and obſerving every thing that preſents, and remembring the power and cunning of the enemy; and the *Ethiopic* verſion renders them thus, *be ye prudent, and cauſe your heart to underſtand*; referring them not to temperance of body, but ſobriety of mind, and to a prudent conduct and behaviour, as having a ſubtle, as well as a malicious enemy to deal with: *becauſe your adverſary the devil*; he who is a defamer and calumniator; who accuſes God to men, and men to God, and is therefore ſtiled the accuſer of the brethren; he is the ſaints avowed and implacable enemy. Satan is an enemy to mankind in general, but more eſpecially to the ſeed of the woman, to Chriſt perſonal, and to Chriſt myſtical, to all the elect of God: the word here uſed is a forenſic term, and ſignifies a court-adverſary, or one that litigates a point in law, or oppoſes another in an action or ſuit at law. The *Jews* [c] have adopted this word into their language, and explain it by, בעל דין, *a law adverſary*, or one that has a ſuit of law depending againſt another. Satan accuſes men of the breach of the law, and pleads, that juſtice might take place, and puniſhment be inflicted, and which he purſues with great violence and diligence: *as a roaring lion*; ſo called, both on account of his ſtrength, and alſo becauſe of his rage, malice, and cruelty, which he breathes out againſt the ſaints, who, tho' he can't deſtroy them, will do all he can to terrify and affright them; ſo the young lions in *Pſ.* civ. 21. are, by the cabaliſtic *Jews* [d], underſtood of devils; to which, for the above reaſons, they may be truly compared: *walketh about*; to and fro in the earth; ſee *Job* i. 7. as a lion runs about here and there, when almoſt famiſhed with hunger; and it alſo denotes the inſidious methods, wiles, and ſtratagems ſatan takes to ſurprize men, and get an advantage of them: he takes a tour, and comes round upon them, upon the back of them, at an unawares, ſo that they have need to be always ſober, and upon their guard: *ſeeking whom he may devour*; this is the end of his walking about: and the like is expreſſed in the *Targum* on *Job* i. 7. and ii. 2. "and ſatan anſwered before the Lord, and ſaid, from going about in the earth, למבדק בעובדי, *to ſearch into the works* of the children of men, and from walking in it;" that ſo he might have ſomething to accuſe them of, and they fall a prey into his hands. This is the work he is continually employed in; he's always ſeeking to do miſchief, either to the ſouls, or bodies, or eſtates of men, eſpecially the former; tho' he can do nothing in either reſpect without a permiſſion, not unleſs he *may*; and though this, with reſpect to body and eſtate, is ſometimes granted, as in the caſe of *Job*, yet never with reſpect to the ſouls of any of God's elect, which are ſafe in Chriſt's hands, and out of his reach; this hinders not but that ſaints ſhould be ſober and watchful.

Ver. 9. *Whom reſiſt*, &c.] By no means give way to him, by indulging any ſin, or yielding to any temptation, but oppoſe him, and ſtand againſt his wiles, his cunning and his power: *ſtedfaſt in the faith*; both in the doctrine of faith, which ſatan endeavours to remove from, or cauſe to ſtagger in; and in the grace of faith, exerciſing it on the promiſes of God, and his perfections, particularly his power and faithfulneſs concerned in them, and in the blood, righteouſneſs, ſacrifice, and perſon of Chriſt, which faith is capable of making uſe of, as a ſhield, to good purpoſe, againſt all the fiery darts of ſatan; as alſo in a profeſſion of faith, which, as it ſhould be held faſt without wavering, and which the devil is very buſy to keep perſons from making, or to cauſe them to drop it when they have made it, by violent ſuggeſtions, ſtrong temptations, and a flood of reproaches and perſecutions; all which ſhould be diſregarded: *knowing that the ſame afflictions are accompliſhed in your brethren, that are in the world*; and therefore ſhould not be ſurprized and ſtaggered by them, nor think them ſtrange, but endure them without murmuring, and with patience and chearfulneſs; ſince they are the *ſame afflictions* and trials, which others have been exerciſed with, in all ages; the ſame which the fraternity or *brotherhood*, as the word ſignifies, ſee ch. ii. 17. who ſtand in the ſame relation to God and Chriſt as they do, endure; yea, the ſame which Chriſt himſelf, who ſtands in this relation to them, has endured: and which muſt be expected whilſt they are *in the world*; but this is the great mercy, that they are only endured in this world; there will be none in the world to come; they'll be *accompliſhed* and finiſhed here; and every believer has his meaſure, which muſt be filled up; and ſo has the whole body of Chriſt, his church, and when they are fulfilled, they'll be no more.

Ver. 10. *But the God of all grace*, &c.] Who has riches of grace, an immenſe plenty of it in himſelf; has treaſured up a fulneſs of grace in his Son; is the author of all the bleſſings of grace, of electing, adopting, juſtifying, pardoning, and regenerating grace; and is the giver of the ſeveral graces of the Spirit, as faith, hope, love, repentance, *&c.* and of all the ſupplies of grace; and by this character is God the Father, deſcribed as the object of prayer, to encourage ſouls to come to the throne of his grace, and pray, and hope for, and expect a ſufficiency of his grace in every time of need; as well as to ſhew, that the ſufferings of the ſaints here are but for a while; that they are in love and kindneſs; and that they ſhall certainly enjoy the glory they are called unto by him; and which is the next thing by which he ſtands deſcribed, *who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Jeſus Chriſt*. This *call* is not a mere external one, by the miniſtry of the word, which is not always effectual and unto ſalvation; but an internal, ſpecial, and efficacious one, and which is high, holy, heavenly, and unchangeable. The perſons who are the ſubjects of it are *us*, whom God has choſen in Chriſt, and are preſerved in him, and redeemed by him; and who are a ſelect people, and diſtinguiſhed from others, and yet in themſelves no better than others; nay, often the vileſt, meaneſt, and moſt contemptible. Some antient copies read *you*, and ſo do the *Arabic* and *Ethiopic* verſions: what they are called to, is *his eternal glory*; that which is glorious in itſelf, and is ſignified by what is the moſt glorious in this world, as a kingdom, crown, throne, inheritance, *&c.* and lies in conſtant and uninterrupted communion with Father, Son, and Spirit; in a compleat viſion of the glory of Chriſt, and in perfect conformity to him; in a freedom from all evil, and in a full enjoyment of all happineſs: and this is *his*, God the Father's; which he has prepared and provided for his people of his own grace, and which he freely gives unto them, and makes them meet for: and it is *eternal*; it will laſt for ever, and never paſs away, as does the glory of this world; it is a continuing city, a never-fading inheritance, an eternal weight of glory: and to this the ſaints are called, *by*, or *in Jeſus* Chriſt; the glory they are called to is in his hands; and they themſelves, by being called unto it, appear to be in him, and as ſuch, to belong unto him, or are the called of Chriſt Jeſus; and beſides, they are called by him, by his Spirit and grace, and into communion with him, and to the obtaining of his glory. *After that ye have ſuffered a while, make you perfect, ſtabliſh, ſtrengthen, ſettle* you; ſome copies, and alſo the *Vulgate Latin* and *Ethiopic* verſions, read theſe words in the future tenſe, not as a prayer, but as a promiſe, *ſhall make you perfect*, &c. the ſenſe is the ſame; for if it is a prayer, it is a prayer in faith, for what ſhall be done; for God will make his people *perfect*: and which reſpects not their juſtification; for in that ſenſe they are perfect already in Chriſt, their head, who has perfectly fulfilled the law for them, and fully expiated their ſins; has compleatly redeemed them, and procured for them the pardon of all their treſpaſſes; and has juſtified them from all their iniquities: but their ſanctification; for tho' all grace is implanted in them at once, yet it is gradually brought to perfection; there is a perfection of parts, of all the parts of the new man, or creature, but not of degrees; and there is a comparative perfection with reſpect to themſelves, before converſion, or with reſpect to hypocrites; for perfection oftentimes means no other than integrity and ſincerity; or with reſpect to other chriſtians, who are weaker in knowledge and experience: and there is a perfection of holineſs in Chriſt, who is their ſanctification, but not in themſelves; for every part of the work of grace is imperfect, as faith, love, knowledge, *&c.* and ſin dwells in them, and they ſtand in need of freſh ſupplies of grace; and even the beſt of them diſclaim perfection, tho' they greatly deſire it, as here the Apoſtle prays for it; and which ſhows, that as yet, they had it not, tho' they will have it hereafter in heaven, where there will be perfect knowledge, and perfect holineſs, and perfect happineſs. He alſo prays, that God would *ſtabliſh* them, or believes and promiſes that he would. The people of God are in a ſafe and eſtabliſhed ſtate and condition already; they are in the arms of everlaſting love, and in the hands of Chriſt, and in a ſure and inviolable covenant of grace, and are built on the rock of ages; and are in a ſtate of grace, of juſtifying, adopting, and ſanctifying grace, from whence they can never finally and totally fall; and yet they are very often unſtable in their hearts and frames, and in the exerciſe of grace, and diſcharge of duty, and in their adherence to the doctrines of the Goſpel; and need to be eſtabliſhed, and to have a more firm perſuaſion of their intereſt in the love of God, and a more ſteady view of their ſtanding in Chriſt, and the covenant of his grace, and a more lively and comfortable exerciſe of grace on him, and a more conſtant diſcharge of duty, and a more firm and cloſer adherence to the truths and ordinances of the Goſpel; and they will have a conſummate ſtability in heaven, where are ſure dwelling-places. Another petition, or promiſe, is, that God would *ſtrengthen* them; which ſuppoſes them to be weak and feeble, not as to their ſtate and condition, for their place of defence is the munition of rocks; nor in the ſame ſenſe as natural men are, or as they themſelves were before converſion; nor are they all alike weak, ſome are weaker in faith and knowledge, and of a more weak and ſcrupulous conſcience than others, and are more eaſily drawn aſide by corruptions and temptations, and are in greater afflictions: and this is to be underſtood, not of bodily, but ſpiritual ſtrength; that God would ſtrengthen their ſouls, and the work of his grace in them, their faith, hope, and love; and ſtrengthen them to perform their duties, to withſtand temptations, oppoſe their own corruptions, bear the croſs, reproaches, and perſecutions, and do their generation work: and he further adds, and *ſettle* you, or *found* you; not that God would now lay the foundation, Chriſt, for he had been laid by him already in his counſels and decrees, and in the covenant of his grace, in the miſſion of him into this world, and by his Spirit in their hearts; nor that he would afreſh lay them on Chriſt, the foundation, for they were there laid already, and were ſafe; but that he would build them up, and ſettle their faith on this foundation, that they might be rooted and grounded in the love of God, have a lively ſenſe, and firm perſuaſion of their intereſt in it, and be grounded and ſettled in the faith of the Goſpel; be ſettled under a Goſpel miniſtry, have a fixed abode in the houſe of God, enjoy the ſpiritual proviſions of it, and have fellowſhip with Chriſt, and his people here; and at laſt enter and dwell in the city which has foundations, where they will be never more ſubject to wavering, inſtability, and inconſtancy, and from whence they will never be removed; this will be their laſt and eternal ſettlement: and this will be *after* they have *ſuffered a while*; in their bodies, characters, and eſtates, thro' the malice and wickedneſs of men; and in their ſouls, from their own corruptions, the temptations of ſatan, and the hidings of God's face; which will be but for a very little while, for a moment, as it were; theſe are only the ſufferings of this preſent time, and in the preſent evil world; nor are they inconſiſtent with God, being the God of all grace unto them, or with their being called to eternal glory, the way to which lies thro' them; and they are the means of perfecting, ſtabliſhing, ſtrengthening, and ſettling them.

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[c] Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 41. 4. Bereſhit Rabba, §. 82. fol. 41. 4. & Jarchi & Aruch in Mattanot Cehuna in ib.

[d] Lex. Cabal. p. 231, 417.

Ver. 11. *To him be glory, and dominion, for ever and ever*, Amen.] The *Syriac* verſion begins this doxology in the preceding verſe, reading the words thus, *to the God of grace*, and then putting what follows, *who hath called us*, &c. into a parentheſis, connects them with theſe, *be glory, and power, and honour*, &c. *glory* is due to God for all the grace he beſtows on men; and to give it to him, ſhows a ſenſe of divine goodneſs, and a grateful heart; and to him very fitly is *dominion* aſcribed, whoſe kingdom rules over all, and who diſpenſes his grace, as well as his providential favours, in a ſovereign way; and whom the ſaints are in a peculiar manner, under obligation to obey; to which is added, *Amen*, ſignifying that ſo the Apoſtle prayed, it might be, and believed it would be.

Ver. 12. *By Sylvanus, a faithful brother, unto you*, &c.] *Sylvanus* is the ſame with *Silas*, ſo often mentioned in the *Acts of the Apoſtles*, as a companion of the Apoſtle *Paul*; whom *Peter* met with in his travels, and ſent this letter by him, or uſed him as his amanuenſis, or both: his character is, that he was a *faithful brother* to thoſe perſons, to whom this Epiſtle is written; that is, he was a faithful miniſter of the Goſpel to them, who, with great ſincerity and integrity, preached the word unto them, as the Apoſtle was well informed, and had reaſon to believe; for what follows, *as I ſuppoſe*, does not ſuggeſt any doubt of it, but, on the contrary, a firm belief; for the word uſed, ſignifies to repute, to reckon, to conclude a thing upon the beſt and ſtrongeſt reaſons; tho' ſome connect this phraſe, as that alſo *unto you*, with the following clauſe, *I have written briefly*; as does the *Syriac* verſion, which renders the whole thus, *theſe few things, as I think, I have written unto you, by Sylvanus, a faithful brother*; and then the ſenſe is, this ſhort Epiſtle, as in my opinion it is, I have wrote and ſent to you by *Sylvanus*, who is faithful and upright, as a brother, a miniſter, and a meſſenger. The *Arabic* verſion ſeems to refer the above clauſe, *as I ſuppoſe*, neither to the character of *Sylvanus*, nor to the brevity of the Epiſtle, but to the matter of it, rendering it thus, *theſe things, in a few words, I have written unto you, according to my ſenſe*; according to my judgment and reaſon, as I think, by which you will ſee and know my real ſentiments and thoughts of things; for what I have written is according to the beſt of my underſtanding and knowledge: *exhorting and teſtifying, that this is the true grace of God wherein ye ſtand*; or *have ſtood*, and ſtill continue to do ſo: the *Syriac* verſion renders it, *I am perſuaded and teſtify*; expreſſing his great confidence and aſſurance, that the Goſpel of the grace of God, which ſprings from the grace of God, is full of it, and declares it, and which he had delivered in this Epiſtle, and they had formerly received, and had ſtood faſt in, and abode by, was the true Goſpel. The *Arabic* verſion gives another ſenſe, rendering the words thus, *intreating and beſeeching, that this grace of God, in which ye ſtand, may be true and firm*; that is, that ye may ſtill continue truly to embrace and profeſs it, and firmly abide by it; tho' the meaning rather is, that the Apoſtle bears a teſtimony to the truth of the Goſpel, and of the chriſtian religion, as held and profeſſed by them, with conſtancy hitherto; and exhorts them unto the conſideration of the truth of it, which might be depended upon, to cleave unto it with full purpoſe of heart.

Ver. 13. The church that is *at Babylon*, &c.] The *Vulgate Latin, Syriac*, and *Arabic* verſions ſupply the word *church*, as we do. Some, by *Babylon*, underſtand *Rome*, which is ſo called, in a figurative ſenſe, in the book of the *Revelations*: this is an ancient opinion; ſo *Papias* underſtood it, as [e] *Euſebius* relates; but that *Peter* was at *Rome*, when he wrote this Epiſtle, cannot be proved, nor any reaſon be given, why the proper name of the place ſhould be concealed, and a figurative one expreſſed. It is beſt therefore to underſtand it literally, of *Babylon* in *Aſſyria*, the metropolis of the diſperſion of the *Jews*, and the centre of it, to whom the Apoſtle wrote; and where, as the miniſter of the circumciſion, he may be thought to reſide, here being a number of perſons converted and formed into a Goſpel church-ſtate, whereby was fulfilled the prophecy in *Pſ.* lxxxvii. 4. perhaps this church might conſiſt chiefly of *Jews*, which might be the reaſon of the Apoſtle's being here, ſince there were great numbers which continued here, from the time of the captivity, who returned not with *Ezra*; and theſe are ſaid by the *Jews* [f] to be of the pureſt blood: many of the *Jewiſh* doctors lived here; they had three famous univerſities in this country, and here their *Talmud* was written, called from hence [g] *Babylonian*. The church in this place is ſaid to be *elected together with* you; that is, were choſen together with them in Chriſt, before the foundation of the world, to grace here, and glory hereafter; or were equally the elect of God, as they were, for as ſuch he writes to them, ch. i. 2. and this the Apoſtle ſaid in a judgment of charity of the whole church, and all the members of it, being under a profeſſion of faith in Chriſt; and nothing appearing to the contrary, but that their faith was unfeigned, and their profeſſion right and ſincere. This church, he ſays, *ſaluteth* you; wiſhes all peace, happineſs, and proſperity of every kind, and ſo doth *Marcus, my ſon*; either in a natural ſenſe, his ſon according to the fleſh; ſince it is certain *Peter* had a wife, and might have a ſon, and one of this name: or rather in a ſpiritual ſenſe, being one that he was either an inſtrument of converting him, or of inſtructing him, or was one that was as dear to him as a ſon; in like manner as the Apoſtle *Paul* calls *Timothy*, and alſo *Titus*, his own ſon. This ſeems to be *Mark* the Evangeliſt, who was called *John Mark*, was *Barnabas*'s ſiſter's ſon, and his mother's name was *Mary*; ſee *Col.* iv. 10. *Acts* xii. 12, 25. He is ſaid [h] to be the interpreter of *Peter*, and to have wrote his Goſpel from what he heard from him; and who approved of it, and confirmed it, and indeed it is ſaid to be his.

Ver. 14. *Greet ye one another with a kiſs of charity*, &c.] The *Vulgate Latin, Syriac*, and *Arabic* verſions read, *with an holy kiſs*; and ſo ſome copies, as in *Rom.* xvi. 16. and elſewhere; ſee the note there; and intends ſuch a kiſs, as is not only oppoſite to every thing that is laſcivious and impure, but is expreſſive of true love and affection, and is hearty and ſincere: and ſuch a love the *Jews* call, as the Apoſtle does here, נשיקה דרחימו, *a kiſs*

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[e] Eccl. Hiſt. l. 2. c. 15.

[f] T. Bab. Kiddushin, fol. 69. 2. & 71. 2. & Gloſſ. in ib.

[g] T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 24. 1.

[h] Papias apud Euſeb. Hiſt. Eccl. l. 3. c. 39. Tertullian. adv. Marcion. l. 4. c. 5. Hieron. Catalog. Script. Eccl. §. 2. 18.

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kiſs of love[l]; for as *Philo* the *Jew*[k] obſerves, a kiſs and love differ, the one may be without the other, a mere compliment, a ſhew of friendſhip, and not ariſe from ſincere love. *Peace with you all that are in Chriſt Jeſus*; who were choſen in him before the foundation of the world; and appeared to be in him by effectual vocation; and were at leaſt by profeſſion in him, and were in Chriſt myſtical, and incorporated in a Goſpel church; the *Arabic* verſion reads, *who are in the love of Jeſus Chriſt*. To theſe the Apoſtle wiſhes *peace*, temporal, ſpiritual, and eternal. The *Vulgate Latin* reads *grace*, which is moſt uſual in *Paul*'s Epiſtles. The Epiſtle is cloſed with *Amen*, as is common; the Apoſtle wiſhing that this might be the caſe, and believing that it would be.

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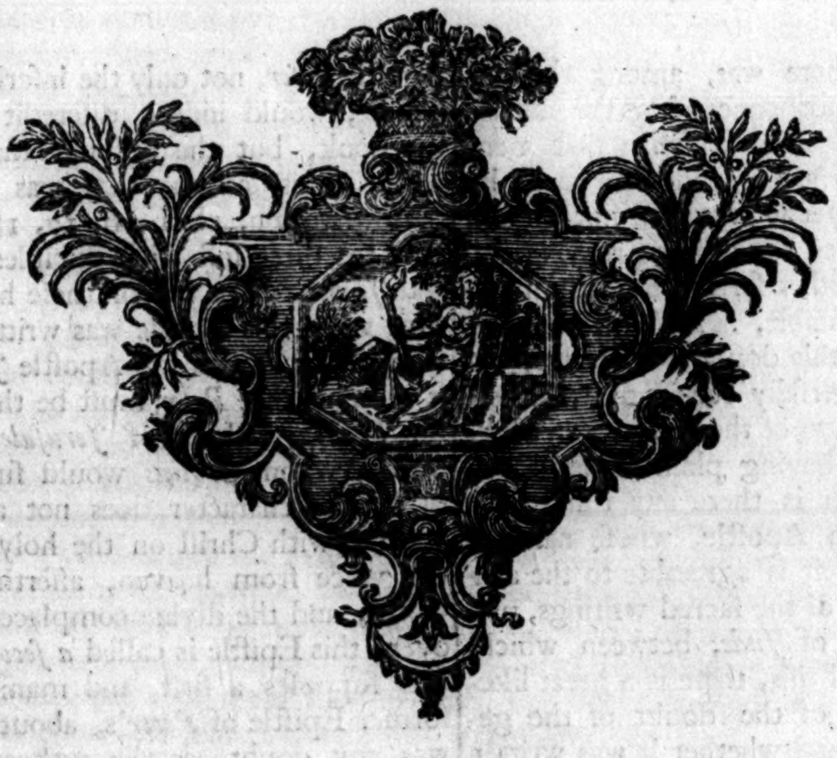
[l] Zohar in Exod. fol. 60. 3, 4.

[k] Quis rerum divin. Hæres, p. 486, 487.



AN

EXPOSITION, &c.

The Second Epiſtle General of PETER.

THOUGH there was, among the ancients, a doubt concerning the authority of this Epiſtle, which is firſt mentioned by *Origen*[a], and afterwards by *Euſebius*[b] and *Jerom*[c], yet it prevailed not among the churches, nor hindered the diligent reading and uſe of it, together with other ſcriptures; it appearing to be uſeful and profitable, as *Euſebius* declares; and in proceſs of time, this doubt was entirely removed, and it was univerſally received by fathers and councils into the canon of the ſcriptures, where it is juſtly retained, it having plain ſignatures of its divine original. Nor is there any thing in it unworthy of ſo great an Apoſtle, whoſe name it bears; but the whole of it is agreeable to the analogy of faith, to the reſt of the ſacred writings, particularly to the Epiſtle of *Jude*, between which, and the ſecond chapter of this, there is a great likeneſs. The only reaſon of the doubt of the genuineſs of this Epiſtle, and whether it was written by the Apoſtle *Peter*, is the difference of its ſtile from the former; but the Holy Ghoſt, the dictator of the ſacred writings, is not limited to a man's natural ſtile, but could vary it, as he pleaſed: beſides, a man's ſtile is not the ſame at different times, and when writing on different ſubjects; add to which, that this objection can only regard the ſecond chapter, for the firſt and third agree with the former Epiſtle. And ſome have thought, that the ſecond chapter is an extract out of ſome ancient *Hebrew* book deſcribing the characters of the old falſe prophets; which book *Peter* and *Jude* having before them, took the characters of the old prophets, and, under divine direction, applied them to the falſe teachers of the preſent age; and if ſo, 'tis not to be wondered at, that the ſtile of the Epiſtle ſhould differ from the former, and even from itſelf in this part. But that it was written by the Apoſtle *Peter*, not only the inſcription ſhews, which, if falſe, would indeed diſcredit the genuineneſs of the book, but the account that is given of the writer of it, as one that was with Chriſt at his transfiguration, ch. i. 16, 17, 18. Now there were only the three following diſciples there, *Peter*, *John*, and *James*. The laſt of theſe had been dead ſome time when this Epiſtle was written, and it was never aſcribed by any to the Apoſtle *John*, and therefore it remains that *Peter* muſt be the writer of it. As for *Symeon*, biſhop of *Jeruſalem*, that ſucceeded *James*, whom *Grotius* would ſuggeſt as the author of it, the character does not agree with him; he was not with Chriſt on the holy mount, nor heard the voice from heaven, aſſerting the Sonſhip of Chriſt, and the divine complacency in him: moreover, this Epiſtle is called *a ſecond Epiſtle*, ch. iii. 1. and ſuppoſes a firſt, and manifeſtly refers to the former Epiſtle of *Peter*'s, about which there never was any doubt, as the authors before-mentioned obſerve. It was written by the Apoſtle in his old age, when upon the decline of life, juſt as he was about to put off his tabernacle, ch. i. 13, 14, 15. a little before his martyrdom, in the year 68, tho' Dr. *Lightfoot* places it in 66; and it is ſent to the ſame perſons as his firſt, namely, to the believing *Jews* ſcattered throughout ſeveral parts of *Aſia*, he being the miniſter of the circumciſion; ſee 1 *Ep.* i. 1. compared with 2 *Ep.* iii. 1. The ſcope and deſign of it are, to put them upon a concern for a larger increaſe of grace and ſpiritual knowledge; to confirm and eſtabliſh them in the preſent truth of the Goſpel; to warn them againſt falſe teachers, which he largely deſcribes; and he puts them in mind of the diſſolution of all things, and of what will precede and follow it; from whence he draws ſeveral uſeful hints and inferences.

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[a] Apud Euſeb. Eccl. Hiſt. l. 6. c. 25.

[b] Ib. l. 3. c. 3, 25.

[c] Catalog. Script. Eccleſ. §. 2.

CHAP. I.

IN this chapter, after the inſcription and ſalutation, the Apoſtle takes notice of gifts of grace beſtowed; and exhorts to the exerciſe of holineſs and good works; and gives the reaſons why he was ſo preſſing to them; and endeavours to eſtabliſh the ſaints in the Goſpel that had been preached among them. In the inſcription, the writer of the Epiſtle deſcribes himſelf by his names, the one given him by his parents, the other by his Lord and maſter, and by his character and office; and the perſons to whom he writes, are deſcribed as having faith, and that of the ſame kind with the Apoſtles, and which they obtained thro' the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, ver. 1. The ſalutation is the ſame with that in the former Epiſtle, only here is added a wiſh for an increaſe of divine knowledge, ver. 2. and which might be expected, ſince by the power of divine grace, every thing neceſſary to a ſpiritual and godly life had been given them in effectual vocation, thro' the knowledge of Chriſt; even exceeding great and precious promiſes, whereby they partook of the divine nature, and eſcaped the vices which prevailed in the world, ver. 3, 4. upon which he exhorts not to reſt where they were, but to go on in the exerciſe of grace, and performance of duties, many of which he enumerates, ver. 5, 6, 7. to enforce which he adds ſeveral arguments, as that thro' an abounding in theſe things they would appear not to have a ſuperficial and ſpeculative knowledge of Chriſt, ver. 8. or otherwiſe it would be evident, that they were blind and ignorant, and in an unrenewed ſtate, ver. 9. whereas by theſe things they would make their calling and election ſure and manifeſt to men, and would never fall totally and finally, and in the iſſue have an abundant entrance into the everlaſting kingdom of Chriſt, ver. 10, 11. and then he gives the reaſons of his conduct, why he ſo much urged a regard to theſe things, and put them in mind of them; namely, the uſefulneſs of them for their eſtabliſhment, the duty of his office, which required it, the ſhort time he had to live, and the profitableneſs of ſuch exhortations to them, after his deceaſe, ver. 12, 13, 14, 15. and in order to eſtabliſh them in the truths of the Goſpel, and particularly in that which concerns the coming of Chriſt in power and glory, on which he enlarges in the latter part of this Epiſtle; he obſerves, that this was not a cunningly deviſed fable, but was what he, and others, were eye-witneſſes of, even of that which was an emblem and pledge of it; namely, the transfiguration of Chriſt on the mount, when they ſaw the glory he received from God his Father, and heard the voice from heaven which declared him to be his well-beloved Son, ver. 16, 17, 18. and beſides, they had a ſurer proof of the certainty of his coming; namely, the propheſies concerning it, which ſhould be regarded and given heed to, being as a lamp to direct in the preſent ſtate of darkneſs and imperfection, until the illuſtrious day of Chriſt's coming appears, ver. 19. and the rather this ſhould be attended to, ſince no ſcriptural prophecy is an invention and device of men; nor was it formerly given out at the pleaſure of men, but by ſaints, who were influenced and moved unto it by the Holy Ghoſt, ver. 20, 21.

Ver. 1. *Simon Peter, a ſervant, and an apoſtle of Jeſus Chriſt*, &c.] The writer of this Epiſtle is deſcribed firſt by his names, *Simon Peter*; the firſt of theſe was the name by which he was called from his infancy by his parents, and by which he was known when Chriſt called him to be a diſciple and follower of him, and is the ſame with *Simeon*; and ſo it's read in moſt copies; ſee *Acts* xv. 14. a name common with the *Jews*; the latter is what was given him by Chriſt at his converſion, *John* i. 42. and anſwers to *Cephas* in the *Syriac* language; and both ſignify a rock or ſtone, becauſe he was built upon Chriſt, the rock, and foundation, and chief corner-ſtone, and with a view to his future ſolidity, firmneſs, and conſtancy: and he is next deſcribed by his character as a *ſervant*, not of ſin, nor ſatan, nor man, but Jeſus Chriſt, whoſe ſervant he was, not only by creation, but by redemption, and grace; and not merely a ſervant of his, in common with other believers, but in a miniſterial way, as a preacher of the Goſpel, which this phraſe ſometimes deſigns. The uſe of it ſhews the Apoſtle's humility, his ſenſe of obligation to Chriſt, and acknowledgment of him as his Lord, and that he eſteemed it an honour to ſtand in ſuch a relation to him: but to diſtinguiſh him from a common ſervant of Chriſt, and an ordinary miniſter of the word, 'tis added, *an apoſtle of Jeſus Chriſt*; one that was immediately ſent by Chriſt, had his commiſſion and doctrine directly from him, and a power of working miracles, in confirmation of his miſſion and miniſtry being divine, and an authority at large to go every where and preach the Goſpel, plant churches, and put them in due order, and place proper perſons over them. This is ſaid to give weight and authority to his Epiſtle: and further, in this inſcription of the Epiſtle, the perſons are deſcribed to whom it is written, as follows, *to them that have obtained like precious faith with us*; they were believers in Chriſt, who had a faith of the right kind; not a faith of doing miracles, which was not common to all, nor was it ſaving; nor an hiſtorical faith, or a mere aſſent to truths, nor a temporary one, or a bare profeſſion of faith; but that faith which is the faith of God's elect, the gift of his grace, and the operation of his power; which ſees the Son, goes to him, ventures on him, truſts in him, lives upon him, and works by love to him. This is ſaid to be *precious*, as it is in its own nature, being a rich and enriching grace, of more worth and value than gold that periſheth, or than thouſands of gold and ſilver; it is not to be equalled by, nor purchaſed with the riches of the whole world; it is precious in its object, it being converſant with the precious perſon, precious blood, and precious righteouſneſs and ſacrifice of Chriſt, and is that grace which makes Chriſt, and all that is his, precious to ſouls; it is precious in its acts and uſefulneſs; it is that grace by which men go to God and Chriſt, receive from them, and give all glory to them, and without which it is not poſſible to pleaſe God: to which add the durableneſs of it; it is an abiding grace, and will never fail, when the moſt precious things in nature do: and it is *like precious* with that the Apoſtles had; for there is but one faith, and which is called a common faith, even common to all the elect; and which is the ſame in all, not as to degrees, for in ſome it is ſtrong, and in others weak; or as to the actings of it, which are not in all alike, nor in the ſame perſons at all times; in ſome 'tis only a ſeeing of the Son, his glory, fullneſs, and ſuitableneſs, and longing for views of an intereſt in him; in others a reliance on him, and truſting in him; and in others a holy confidence, and full aſſurance of being his: but then it is alike with reſpect to its nature, as it is the ſubſtance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not ſeen; and as it works by love to Chriſt, and his people; it ſprings from the ſame cauſe, the love and favour of God, and has the ſame object, Jeſus Chriſt, and is followed with the ſame ſalvation; for tho' it is but as a grain of muſtard-ſeed, yet being genuine, the perſon that has it ſhall certainly be ſaved: wherefore, for the comfort and encouragement of theſe ſcattered believers, the Apoſtle aſſures them, that their faith was the ſame with their brethren that dwelt at *Jeruſalem*, and in *Judea*, who believed in Chriſt, and even with them that were the Apoſtles of Chriſt; and this he ſays they had *obtained*, not by their own merits or induſtry, but by the grace of God; for faith is not of a man's ſelf, it is the gift of God, and the produce of his grace and power. Some have rendered it, *obtained by lot*; not by chance, but by the all-wiſe, good, and powerful providence of God, ordering, directing, aſſigning, and giving this grace unto them. And which came to them *thro' the righteouſneſs of God, and our ſaviour Jeſus Chriſt*; or *of our God, and ſaviour Jeſus Chriſt*, as the *Vulgate Latin* and *Ethiopic* verſions read; that is, of Chriſt Jeſus, who is our God and ſaviour: ſo that here is a teſtimony of the deity of Chriſt, as well as of his character as a ſaviour, who is an able, and a willing one, a full, compleat, ſuitable, and only ſaviour: and the reaſon why he is ſo, is, becauſe he is truly and properly *God*; and why he is ſo to us, bebecauſe he is *our* God: wherefore by *righteouſneſs* here, cannot be meant the goodneſs and mercy of God, as ſome think, tho' faith undoubtedly comes thro' that; nor the faithfulneſs of God making good his purpoſe and promiſe of giving faith to his elect, as others think; but the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, which is not the righteouſneſs of a creature, but of God; that is wrought out by one that is God, as well as man, and ſo anſwerable to all the purpoſes for which it is brought in. Now faith comes *in*, or *with* this righteouſneſs, as the phraſe may be rendered; when the Spirit of God reveals and brings near this righteouſneſs to a poor ſenſible ſinner, he at the ſame time works faith in him to look to it, lay hold upon it, and plead it as his juſtifying righteouſneſs with God: or it comes *thro'* it; hence it appears, that faith and righteouſneſs are two diſtinct things; and that faith is not a man's righteouſneſs before God, for it comes to him thro' it; as alſo, that righteouſneſs is before faith, or otherwiſe faith could not come by it; and moreover, is the cauſe and reaſon of it; faith has no cauſal influence upon righteouſneſs, but righteouſneſs has upon faith: the reaſon why a man has a juſtifying righteouſneſs, is not becauſe he has faith; but the reaſon why he has faith given him, is, becauſe he has a juſtifying righteouſneſs provided for him, and imputed to him.

Ver. 2. *Grace and peace be multiplied unto you*, &c.] By a multiplication of *grace* may be meant a larger diſcovery of the love and favour of God; which tho' it admits of no degrees in itſelf, being never more or leſs in God's heart, yet as to the manifeſtations of it, it is different, and capable of being increaſed, and drawn out to a greater length; or elſe an increaſe of the internal graces of the Spirit of God, as to the actings and exerciſe of them; or a larger meaſure of the gifts of the Spirit, for greater uſefulneſs among them; or a clearer view, and a more enlarged knowledge of the Goſpel of the grace of God, and the truths of it; and indeed, the word grace may take in all theſe ſenſes: and by a multiplication of *peace*, which the Apoſtle in this ſalutation alſo wiſhes for, may be deſigned an affluence of all kind of proſperity, temporal and ſpiritual, external and internal; and more eſpecially an increaſe of ſpiritual peace, a fullneſs of joy and peace in believing, ariſing from a ſenſe of free juſtification by Chriſt's righteouſneſs, and full pardon and atonement by his blood and ſacrifice: *thro' the knowledge of God, and of Jeſus our Lord*; which is to be underſtood, not of a natural, but of a ſpiritual and evangelical knowledge; of a knowledge of God, not as the God of nature and providence, but as the God of all grace, as in Chriſt, and a covenant God in him, and of the perſon, offices, and grace of Chriſt; and which deſigns true faith in him, by which means larger diſcoveries of the grace of God are made, and a greater enjoyment of ſpiritual peace is had: or it may be rendered, *with the knowledge of God*, &c. and the ſenſe then is, that the Apoſtle prays, as for a multiplication of grace and peace, ſo along with it, an increaſe of ſpiritual and evangelical knowledge; which in the beſt is imperfect, but may be increaſed by the bleſſing of God, on thoſe means which he has appointed for that end, ſuch as the word and ordinances. The *Syriac* verſion renders this clauſe, *through the knowledge of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, leaving out the word *God*, and the copulative *and*, and adding the word *Chriſt*; and the *Ethiopic* verſion reads, *in the knowledge of our God, Chriſt Jeſus our Lord*, without any diſtinction. After the inſcription and ſalutation begins the Epiſtle, with an account of various ſpecial favours beſtowed upon theſe perſons; and are mentioned by the Apoſtle to encourage his faith, and theirs, in expectation of enjoying what he here wiſhes unto them, ſince already ſuch great and good things had been beſtowed upon them.

Ver. 3. *According as his divine power*, &c.] Meaning either the power of God the Father, to whom belong eternal power and Godhead; and he is ſometimes called by the name of *power* itſelf; ſee *Matt*. xxvi. 64. being all-powerful and mighty; or rather the power of Chriſt, ſince he is the next and immediate antecedent to this relative; and who, as he has the fullneſs of the Godhead in him, is almighty, and can do all things; and is *El-ſhaddai*, God all-ſufficient, and can communicate all things whatſoveer he pleaſes, and does, as follows: for he *hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godlineſs*; referring not ſo much to a temporal *life*, tho' he gives that, and preſerves it, and furniſhes with all the mercies and comforts of it; and which come to his, from him, in a covenant way, as his left hand bleſſings, and in great love; but rather a ſpiritual life, which he is the author and maintainer of, all the joys, pleaſures, bleſſings, and ſupports of it, being given by him; as alſo eternal life, for that, and every thing appertaining to it, are from him; he gives a meetneſs for it, which is his own grace, and a right unto it, which is his own righteouſneſs; and he has power to give that itſelf to as many as the Father has given him, and he does give it to them; and likewiſe all things belonging to *godlineſs*, or internal religion; and which is the means of eternal life, and leads on to it, and is connected with it, and has the promiſe both of this life, and of that which is to come; and every thing relating to it, or is in it, or it conſiſts of, is from Chriſt; the internal graces of the Spirit, as faith, hope, and love, which, when in exerciſe, are the principal parts of powerful godlineſs, are the gifts of Chriſt, are received out of his fullneſs, and of which he is the author and finiſher; and he is the donor of all the freſh ſupplies of grace to maintain the inward power of religion, and to aſſiſt in the external exerciſe of it: all which things are given *thro' the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue.* The call here ſpoken of, is not a bare outward call, by the miniſtry of the word, but an internal, ſpecial, and powerful one, which ſprings from the grace, and is according to the purpoſe of God, and is inſeparably connected with juſtification and glorification; and is either of God the Father, who, as the God of all grace, calls to eternal glory by Chriſt; or rather of Chriſt himſelf, who calls by his Spirit and grace; and hence the ſaints are ſometimes ſtiled, *the called of Jeſus Chriſt*, *Rom.* i. 6. what they are called unto by him is, *glory and virtue*; by the former may be meant, the glorious ſtate of the ſaints in the other world, and ſo anſwers to *life*, eternal life, in the preceding clauſe; and by the latter, grace, and the ſpiritual bleſſings of grace here, and which anſwers to *godlineſs* in the ſaid clauſe; for the ſaints are called both to grace and glory, and to the one, in order to the other. Some render it, *by glory and virtue*; and ſome copies, as the *Alexandrian*, and others, and ſo the *Vulgate Latin* verſion read, *by his own glory and virtue*; that is, by his glorious power, which makes the call as effectual, and is as illuſtrious a ſpecimen of the glory of his power, as was the call of *Lazarus* out of the grave; unleſs the Goſpel ſhould rather be intended by glory and virtue, which is glorious in itſelf, and the power of God unto ſalvation, and is the means by which perſons are called to the communion of Chriſt, and the obtaining of his glory: ſo then this phraſe, *him that hath called us to glory and virtue*, is a periphraſis of Chriſt, thro' a *knowledge* of whom, and which is not notional and ſpeculative, but ſpiritual, experimental, fiducial, and practical, or along with ſuch knowledge all the above things are given; for as God, in giving Chriſt, gives all things along with him, ſo the Spirit of Chriſt, which is a Spirit of wiſdom and revelation in the knowledge of him, when he makes him known in the glory of his perſon, grace, and righteouſneſs, alſo makes known the ſeveral things which are freely given of God and Chriſt: and this is what, among other things, makes the knowledge of Chriſt preferable to all other knowledge, or any thing elſe.

Ver. 4. *Whereby are given unto us*, &c.] Or *by which*, that is, glory and virtue; by the glorious power of Chriſt, or by the glorious and powerful Goſpel of Chriſt; and ſo the *Arabic* verſion renders it, *by both of which*; or *by whom*, as the *Vulgate Latin* verſion reads; that is, by Chriſt; for as in him are all the promiſes of God, ſo they are at his diſpoſe, and by him are given unto the ſaints: *exceeding great and precious promiſes*; meaning the promiſes of the new and everlaſting covenant, of which Chriſt is the mediator, ſurety, and meſſenger; and which are *exceeding great*, if we conſider the author of them, who is the great God of heaven, and earth, and who was under no obligation to make promiſes of any thing to his creatures; and therefore muſt ariſe from great grace and favour, of which they are largely expreſſive, and are like himſelf; are ſuch as become his greatneſs and goodneſs, and are confirmed by his oath, and made good by his power and faithfulneſs: and they are alſo great, as to the nature and matter of them; they are better promiſes than thoſe of the covenant of works; they are not merely temporal ones, nor are they conditional and legal; but as they relate to things ſpiritual and eternal, to grace here, and glory hereafter, ſo they are abſolute, free, and unconditional, and are irreverſible and unchangeable; and they anſwer great ends and purpoſes, the glory of God, and the everlaſting good and happineſs of his people; and therefore muſt be *precious*, of more value and worth than thouſands of gold and ſilver, and to be rejoiced at more than at the finding of a great ſpoil, being every way ſuited to the caſes of God's people, and which never fail. The end of giving them is, *that by theſe you might be partakers of the divine nature*; not eſſentially, or of the eſſence of God, ſo as to be deified, this is impoſſible, for the nature, perfections, and glory of God, are incommunicable to creatures; nor hypoſtatically and perſonally, ſo as the human nature of Chriſt, in union with the Son of God, is a partaker of the divine nature in him; but by way of reſemblance and likeneſs, the new man, or principle of grace, being formed in the heart, in regeneration, after the image of God, and bearing a likeneſs to the image of his Son; and this is ſtiled, Chriſt formed in the heart, into which image and likeneſs the ſaints are more and more changed, from glory to glory, thro' the application of the Goſpel, and the promiſes of it, by which they have ſuch ſights of Chriſt as do transform them, and aſſimilate them to him; and which reſemblance will be perfected hereafter, when they ſhall be entirely like him, and ſee him as he is: *having eſcaped the corruption that is in the world thro' luſt*; not the corruption and depravity of nature, which is never eſcaped by any, nor got rid of ſo long as the ſaints are in the world; but the corrupt manners of the world, or thoſe corruptions and vices which are prevalent in the world, and under the power and dominion of which the world lies; and particularly the ſins of uncleanneſs, adultery, inceſt, ſodomy, and ſuch like filthy and unnatural luſts, which abounded in the world, and among ſome that called themſelves chriſtians, and eſpecially the followers of *Simon Magus*. Now the Goſpel, and the precious promiſes, being gratiouſly beſtowed, and powerfully applied, have an influence on purity of heart, and converſation, and teach men to deny ungodlineſs and worldly luſts, and to live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly; ſuch are the powerful effects of Goſpel-promiſes, under divine influence, as to make men inwardly partakers of the divine nature, and outwardly to abſtain from, and avoid the prevailing corruptions and vices of the times.

Ver. 5. *And beſides this, giving all diligence*, &c.] Or *upon this*, as the *Syriac* and *Arabic* verſions read, beſtow all your labour, diligence, and care; namely, on what follows, and that from the conſideration of what goes before; for nothing can more ſtrongly animate, and engage to the diligent exerciſe of grace, and diſcharge of duty, than a conſideration of the high favours, and free grace-gifts of God, and the exceeding great and precious promiſes of his Goſpel: *add to your faith virtue*; or *with your faith*, ſo the *Arabic* verſion renders it, and the like, in the following clauſes. They had faith, even like precious faith with the Apoſtles, not of themſelves, but by the gift of God, and which is the firſt and principal grace; it leads the van, or rather the *chorus*, as the word rendered *add*, ſignifies; and tho' it is in itſelf imperfect, has many things lacking in it, yet it can't be added to, or increaſed by men; miniſters may be a means of perfecting what is lacking in it, and of the furtherance and joy of it, but it is the Lord only that can increaſe it, or add unto it, in that ſenſe, and which is not the meaning here: but the ſenſe is, that as it is the baſis and foundation of all good works, it ſhould not ſtand alone, there ought to be virtue, or good works along with it, by which it may be perfected, not eſſentially, but evidentially, or might appear to be true and genuine; for by *virtue*, may be either meant ſome particular virtue, as juſtice towards men, to which both the grace and doctrine of faith direct; and indeed pretenſions to faith in Chriſt, where there is not common juſtice done to men, are of little account; or, as others think, beneficence to men; and ſo the *Ethiopic* verſion renders it, *proceed to bounty by your faith*; and faith does work by love and kindneſs to fellow-creatures and chriſtians; but this ſeems rather deſigned by brotherly kindneſs and charity, in ver. 7. or boldneſs, courage, conſtancy, and fortitude, which ought to go along with faith. Where there is true faith in Chriſt, there ſhould be a holy boldneſs to profeſs it, and conſtancy in it, and courage to fight the good fight of faith, and firmneſs of mind to ſtand faſt in it, notwithſtanding all difficulties and diſcouragements; or virtue in general is here meant, not mere moral, but chriſtian virtues, which are the fruits of the Spirit of God, and of his grace; and differ from the other, in that they ſpring from the grace of God, are done in faith, by the aſſiſtance of the Spirit of Chriſt, and by ſtrength received from him, and in love to him, and with a view to the glory of God; whereas moral virtues, as exerciſed by a mere moral man, ſpring from nature, and are performed by the mere ſtrength of it, and are deſtitute of faith, and ſo but, ſplendida peccata, *ſplendid ſins*, and proceed from ſelf-love, from ſiniſter ends, and with ſelfiſh views: *and to virtue, knowledge*; not of Chriſt, mentioned ver. 8. and which is included in faith, for there can be no true faith in Chriſt, where there is not knowledge of him; but of the will of God, which it is neceſſary men ſhould be accquainted with, in order to perform it; or elſe tho' they may ſeem zealous of good works, their zeal will not be according to knowledge; they ought to know what are virtues or good works in God's account, and what are the nature and uſe of them, leſt they ſhould miſtake and miſapply them; or of the ſcriptures of truth, and of the myſteries of the Goſpel, which ſhould be diligently ſearched, for the increaſe and improvement of knowledge in divine things, and which has a conſiderable influence on a juſt, ſober, and godly living; or by knowledge may be meant, prudence and wiſdom, in ordering the external converſation aright towards thoſe that are without, and in ſhewing good works out of it, to others, by way of example, and for the evidence of the truth of things, with meekneſs of wiſdom.

Ver. 6. *And to knowledge, temperance*, &c.] Avoiding all exceſs in eating and drinking, and all impure and unclean luſts; for it ſignifies nothing what a man knows, or profeſſes to know, if his life is a ſcene of intemperance and debauchery: this ſeems to be levelled againſt the followers of *Simon Magus*, who aſcertained ſalvation to knowledge, tho' the life was ever ſo impure. Moreover, this may include abſtinence, not only from hurtful luſts, but from the uſe of things indifferent, when the peace and comfort of a weak brother are endangered; for then, to knowledge, muſt be added love, otherwiſe that knowledge will not be right, at leaſt not rightly uſed; ſee 1 *Cor.* viii. 1, 2, 7, 10, 11. *and to temperance, patience*; which is neceſſary to the running of the chriſtian race, which is attended with many difficulties, and exerciſes; and under affliction from the hand of God, that there be no murmuring nor repining; and under reproaches and perſecutions from men, that they faint not, and are not diſcouraged by them; and in the expectation of the heavenly glory: this is proper to be ſuperadded to the former, becauſe there may be intemperance in paſſion, as well as in the uſe of the creatures; a man may be inebriated with wrath and anger, and overcome with impatience, as well as with wine and ſtrong drink: *and to patience, godlineſs*; either internal, which is diſtinguiſhed from bodily exerciſe, or outward worſhip, and lies in the inward and powerful exerciſe of grace, as faith, hope, love, fear, *&c.* and the *Syriac* verſion here renders it, *the fear of God*; or rather external, and intends the whole worſhip of God, as prayer, praiſe, hearing of the word, and attendance on all ordinances.

Ver. 7. *And to godlineſs, brotherly kindneſs*, &c.] Without which, godlineſs, or external worſhip, or a profeſſion of religion, is a vain ſhow; for this is both the evidence of regeneration, and of the truth and power of real godlineſs; and alſo the beauty, comfort, and ſecurity of chriſtian ſociety and worſhip, and without which they can't be maintained with peace, profit, and honour: *and to brotherly kindneſs, charity*; or *love*; that is, to all men, enemies, as well as to the houſhold of faith; and to God and Chriſt, to his houſe, worſhip, ordinances, people, and truths. Charity is more extenſive in its objects and acts than brotherly kindneſs, or love. As faith leads the van, charity brings up the rear, and is the greateſt of all.

Ver. 8. *For if theſe things be in you*, &c.] Are wrought in you by the Spirit of God, and exerciſed and performed by his aſſiſtance, who works in his people both to will and do: *and abound*; increaſe in their acts and exerciſes by the frequent performance of them: *they make* you; both by way of influence and evidence, that ye ſhall *neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*. There is a knowledge of Chriſt which is barren and fruitleſs; and thoſe that have it are ſo in their converſations, and it will be of no avail to them another day: and this is a mere notional and ſpeculative knowledge, ſuch as is not attended with any inward experience and application of Chriſt to themſelves, or any fruits of righteouſneſs in their lives, and is a bare theory of things relating to his perſon, offices, and works; but there is a knowledge of him that is ſpiritual and experimental, by which a ſoul not only approves of Chriſt, but places its truſt and confidence in him, and appropriates him to himſelf, and practically obſerves his commands and ordinances in the faith of him; and in love to him, he performs the above duties, and exerciſes the above graces; from whence it appears, that he is neither barren, nor unfruitful himſelf in the profeſſion of his knowledge of Chriſt; or *in the acknowledgment* of him, as it may be rendered; nor is that a vain, empty, and uſeleſs thing: he is not like the barren fig-tree, or the earth that bears briars and thorns, and is nigh to curſing and burning, but like a tree planted by a river of water, and is green, flouriſhing, and fruitful. This is uſed as an argument to enforce the foregoing exhortation, to add to, that is, to exerciſe and perform the above graces, and duties, in conjunction with each other.

Ver. 9. *But he that lacketh theſe things*, &c.] Or in, and with whom, they are not; that is, theſe *virtues*, as the *Arabic* verſion reads, as faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godlineſs, brotherly kindneſs, and charity; where the principles of thoſe things are not, and they are not exerciſed and performed, ſuch an one *is blind*; let him boaſt ever ſo much of his light and knowledge, and value himſelf upon it, and expect to be ſaved by it, let him live as he will; for he has no true knowledge of God, as in Chriſt, as the God of all grace, as his covenant God and Father; nor does he know what it is to have communion with him in Chriſt; he only profeſſes to know him in words, whilſt in works he denies him; nor has he any right knowledge of Chriſt, only notional and general, not ſpiritual, experimental, particular, and practical; he does not ſee the Son, ſo as truly to believe in him; he has no true ſight of his beauty, ſuitableneſs, and fulneſs, and of him for himſelf; nor any experience of the work of the Spirit of God upon his heart, when he neither receives, ſees, nor knows ſpiritually, any more than the world itſelf does; nor does he ſee the plague of his own heart, the corruptions of his nature, and the exceeding ſinfulneſs of ſin; nor has he any true ſpiritual light into the Goſpel, and the doctrines of it, only a form of godlineſs, without the power of it: and therefore whatever natural underſtanding of things he has, he is ſpiritually blind, *and cannot ſee afar off*; at leaſt, not the good land that is afar off, the kingdom of heaven; the inviſible glories of the other world; things that are not ſeen, which are eternal, which one that has true faith has a glimpſe and ſight of; nor Chriſt, who is in heaven at the right hand of God, and the things of Chriſt, his blood, righteouſneſs, and ſacrifice, carried within the vail; nor even what is within himſelf, the ſins of his heart, the pollution of his nature, and the evil that dwells there; he ſees not that he is poor, and wretched, and miſerable, but fancies himſelf to be rich, and in need of nothing; he ſees nothing but outward things, the things of time and ſenſe, worldly and earthly things, which are near him, and all around him, which he minds, on which his heart is ſet, and he purſues with vigour. The *Vulgate Latin* verſion renders it, *trying with the hand*, as blind men do, feeling and groping to find the way; ſee *Acts* xvii. 27. *and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old ſins*; not by baptiſm, from the ſins committed before it, for that does not purge from any ſins, old or new, but that which it leads the faith of believers to, for pardon and cleanſing, even the blood of Chriſt; but this alſo, and purification by it, is not meant here, tho' generally interpreters give this as the ſenſe, and underſtand it of the ſin of ingratitude in ſuch a perſon, who had received ſo great a benefit by Chriſt, and was unmindful of it; ſince it can't be thought that one ſo deſcribed, as above, ſhould ever have had his conſcience purged by the blood of Chriſt from his old ſins, or thoſe before converſion, unleſs it be by profeſſion; and then the ſenſe is, that he has forgotten that he once profeſſed to have been purged from all his ſins by Chriſt; which, if he had, would have made him zealous of good works, and put him upon glorifying Chriſt both in body and ſpirit. The *Ethiopic* verſion renders it, *and he hath forgot to purge himſelf from old ſins*; which he would have been concerned for, had he had a true and ſpiritual knowledge of Chriſt, and his Goſpel, and an application of the exceeding great and precious promiſes of it, or had been made a partaker of the divine nature thro' them; ſee 2 *Cor.* vii. 1. but the words are better rendered agreeable to the original text, *and hath forgotten the purification of his old*, or *former ſins*; or *ſins of old*, as they are rendered by the *Vulgate Latin*, *Syriac*, and *Arabic* verſions; that is, he does not conſider, nor think of it, that he was a ſinner of old, a ſinner in *Adam*, that he was conceived and ſhapen in ſin, and went aſtray, and was called a tranſgreſſor from the womb; he does not think that he ſtands in any need of being purged from former ſins; and is entirely unmindful of, and neglects the purification of them by the blood of Chriſt.

Ver. 10. *Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence*, &c.] To exerciſe the afore-mentioned graces, and to perform the above duties, ſince this is the way *to make your calling and election ſure*; by *calling* is not meant, a call to any office in the church, nor an external call, either by the voice of nature, or by the miniſtry of the word; but an internal and effectual call by ſpecial grace, to grace here, and glory hereafter; inſtead of *calling*, the *Alexandrian* copy reads, *comfort:* and by *election* is meant, not a national, nor church-election, but a particular and perſonal one, ſince ſcattered ſaints, and particular believers are here written to, and each called upon to be diligent to make their own, and not another's, calling and election ſure; nor is a choice of perſons to an office deſigned, ſeeing the Apoſtle writes not to officers of churches in particular, but to believers in common; nor a ſeparation of perſons from the world by effectual vocation, ſince theſe two are both mentioned here, and as diſtinct from each other, and to be made ſure; but an election of particular perſons to eternal life and ſalvation is here intended, which is an eternal act of God, ariſes from his free grace and favour, and is according to his ſovereign will and pleaſure; and is abſolute, and independent of any condition, foreſeen, or required in men, as faith, holineſs, and good works; all which are fruits and effects, and not cauſes and conditions of electing grace. Theſe may be made *ſure*, not in themſelves, or with reſpect to God, for in this ſenſe they can't be made ſurer than they are: effectual calling is according to the purpoſe of God, which can't be fruſtrated, and is, without repentance, irreverſible, and irrevocable, and is inſeparably connected with eternal glory; and election ſtands not upon the foot of works, but upon the free grace of God, which cannot be made void, and upon the will of God, which cannot be reſiſted; and is alſo cloſely connected with glorification; ſee *Rom.* viii. 30. nor are thoſe to be made ſure by ſaints, with reſpect to themſelves; for tho' they may ſometimes be at a loſs about them, and may have ſome ſcruples and doubts in their minds concerning their intereſt in them, and an aſſurance of their being both called and choſen, may be after all attained unto by them; yet this is not their work, but it is the work of the Spirit of God, to certify and make ſure unto them, or aſſure them of, their vocation and election of God: but the ſenſe is, that diligence is to be uſed by the ſaints, to make their calling and election ſure to others; not their election by their calling only, which is to themſelves; for both are to be made ſure, and that to others, and by ſome third thing; either to their fellow chriſtians, which they may do by giving them an account of the work of God upon their ſouls, joined with a teſtimony of their good lives and converſations; or rather to the world *by good works*, as the *Vulgate Latin* verſion, and two copies of *Beza*'s read; or *by your good works*, as the *Alexandrian* copy, and the *Syriac* and *Ethiopic* verſions read; or by the exerciſe of the graces, and the diſcharge of the duties before mentioned, whereby the men of the world may be certified and aſſured, by the beſt evidence the ſaints are capable of giving to them, or they of receiving, that they are the called and choſen of God, they profeſs themſelves to be; and which is a reaſon why thoſe things ſhould be done: and another follows, *for if ye do theſe things, ye ſhall never fall*; or *ſin*, as the *Vulgate Latin* and *Arabic* verſions render it; not that they ſhould never fall at all, or in any ſenſe, for in many things we all offend or fall; or ſhould ever commit any act of ſin, or fall into ſin, for there is no man that lives, and ſins not; or that they ſhould not fall from a degree of the lively exerciſe of grace, or from a degree of ſtedfaſtneſs in the doctrine of faith, but that they ſhould never ſin the ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt, or fall totally and finally; for tho' they fall, they ſhould riſe again by faith and repentance, thro' the grace and power of Chriſt, who is able to keep them from falling: and beſides, whilſt they were exerciſing thoſe graces, and doing thoſe duties, they ſhould not fall; for theſe are the means of final perſeverance, and therefore the rather to be regarded. Another argument, ſtrengthening the exhortation, follows:

Ver. 11. *For ſo an entrance ſhall be miniſtred unto you abundantly*, &c.] An abundant ſupply of grace and ſtrength ſhall be freely afforded, to carry thro' all the duties and trials of life; and when that ſhall be ended, an admiſſion will be granted *into the everlaſting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt*; meaning, not the Goſpel-diſpenſation, or the ſpiritual kingdom of Chriſt, which is not of this world, but lies among his people, who are called out of it, in whom he reigns by his Spirit and grace, according to laws of his own enacting; nor his perſonal kingdom on earth with his ſaints, which will laſt only a thouſand years, and not be for ever; but the kingdom of heaven, or the ultimate glory, which will be everlaſting; and is called a kingdom, to denote the glory and excellency of that ſtate; and an everlaſting one, becauſe it will never end; and the kingdom of Chriſt, becauſe it is in his poſſeſſion, for his people; it is prepared by him, and he will introduce them into it, when they ſhall be for ever with him, and reign with him for ever and ever. Some copies read, *the heavenly kingdom*. There is an entrance of ſeparate ſouls into this kingdom at death; and which may be ſaid to be miniſtred *abundantly* to them, or *richly*, as the word ſignifies, when they depart out of this world with joy and comfort; triumphing over death, and the grave, in a full view by faith of their intereſt in the love of God, the grace of Chriſt, and the glories of another world; and there is an entrance into it at judgment, and which will be abundantly, when all the ſaints, together, in their ſouls and bodies, ſhall be introduced by Chriſt into the full joy of their Lord. As the ſaints enter the kingdom thro' many tribulations, the gate is ſtrait, and the way is narrow, and they are ſcarcely ſaved, and many of them, ſo as only by fire; but when the abundant grace given unto them by the way to heaven, the great conſolation many enjoy in their laſt moments, and eſpecially the free and full admiſſion of them both at death, and at judgment, to eternal happineſs, are conſidered, the entrance miniſtred may be ſaid to be abundantly; or, as the *Arabic* verſion renders it, *with a breadth*; the entrance is large and broad.

Ver. 12. *Wherefore I will not be negligent*, &c.] The Apoſtle having made uſe of proper arguments to excite the ſaints he writes to, to regard the exhortation he had given, to the diligent exerciſe of grace, and diſcharge of duty, proceeds to give the reaſons of his own conduct, why he gave ſuch an exhortation to them, and preſſed it, and continued to do ſo, and determined for the future to go on with it, as particularly the uſefulneſs and profitableneſs of it; and therefore, ſeeing it would be attended with ſo many advantages before mentioned, he was reſolved, that he would not be careleſs, nor omit any opportunity that ſhould offer: *to put you always in remembrance of theſe things*; of the exerciſe of the above graces, and the performance of the above duties, which ſaints are too apt to forget, and therefore ſhould be reminded of; and it is the duty and buſineſs of the miniſters of the word, frequently to inculcate thoſe things: *tho' ye know them, and be eſtabliſhed in the preſent truth*; for thoſe that know the moſt, know but in part, and may have their knowledge increaſed; and thoſe that are the moſt eſtabliſhed in the truths of the Goſpel, may be confirmed yet more and more. This the Apoſtle mentions as an apology for himſelf, and to prevent an objection that might be made, as if he had ſuggeſted, that they were ignorant and unſtable; or which might inſinuate, that there was no neceſſity of ſuch frequent putting in remembrance; ſince they were both knowing and ſtable: by *the preſent truth* may be meant, either the whole ſcheme of the Goſpel, which was now come by Chriſt, in oppoſition to the exhibition of it under the former diſpenſation, by promiſe and type; and it being ſo called, ſhews, that it is always now, and new; that there will be no alteration in it, nor addition to it, it being like the author of it, the ſame yeſterday, to-day, and for ever, and will not give place to another ſcheme of things; or elſe the particular truth of the coming of Chriſt, either to take vengeance on the *Jewiſh* nation, or to judge the world in righteouſneſs, and introduce his own people into the new heavens, and new earth, ch. iii. 1, 2, 3, 4, 10, 12, 13.

Ver. 13. *Yea, I think it meet*, &c.] Or *juſt*. This is the Apoſtle's other reaſon for his conduct, taken from the duty of his place and office; judging it to be what became him, as an Apoſtle, and elder, and the miniſter of the circumciſion, and was what was due to God and Chriſt, whom he ſerved, and the ſouls of men, under his care: *as long as I am in this tabernacle*; or *body*, as the *Syriac* and *Ethiopic* verſions render it, and ſo ſome copies; for the body is as a tabernacle for the ſoul to dwell in, pitched for a time, and 'ere long, to be taken down; ſee the note on 2 *Cor*. v. 1. *to ſtir you up*; to the lively exerciſe of grace, and conſtant performance of duty: *by putting you in remembrance*; of the ſaid things; for ſaints are apt to be forgetful of their duty, and backward to it, and ſluggiſh and ſlothful in it.

Ver. 14. *Knowing that ſhortly I muſt put off this my tabernacle*, &c.] Which is another reaſon why the Apoſtle was ſo preſſing in this caſe, and ſo much urged the exhortation, and was ſo diligent in reminding the ſaints of it, and ſtirring them up to obſerve it, becauſe he knew he had but a little time to live, and which therefore he was willing to improve for their good. He ſets forth his death in a very eaſy and familiar way, it being not at all terrible and diſtreſſing to him; it was but like the putting off of a garment, or unpinning of a tabernacle, or a removing from a tent to a palace. Saints are pilgrims here, they dwell in tents or tabernacles, at death they remove to their own country, and Father's houſe. Death is not a deſtruction of man, an annihilation of him, neither of his ſoul nor body: the ſoul is not mortal, it dies not with the body; it only removes from this world to another, from a cottage to a kingdom; and the body, tho' it dies, it is not reduced to nothing, it is only like a tabernacle put off, or taken down, which will be put together again in better order than now it is. *Even as our Lord Jeſus hath ſhewed me*; by ſome ſpecial revelation lately made to him; or by ſome ſtrong impulſe upon his mind; juſt as the Apoſtle *Paul* knew that the time of his departure was at hand, 2 *Tim.* iv. 7. or this may have reſpect to the words of Chriſt to *Peter*, above thirty years before, in *John* xxi. 18. which both ſignified what kind of death he ſhould die, and when it ſhould be; namely, when he was old, as now he was.

Ver. 15. *Moreover, I will endeavour*, &c.] He ſignifies, that he ſhould not only uſe all diligence to ſtir them up to, and put them in remembrance of the neceſſary duties of their calling whilſt he was alive, but ſhould make it his ſtudy to concert ſome meaſures, and take ſome ſteps, that *you may be able, after my deceaſe*; or *Exodus*, meaning his going out of this world by death, in alluſion to the *Iſraelites* going out of *Egypt*, and marching for *Canaan*'s land; this world being like *Egypt*, a place of wickedneſs, miſery, and bondage; as heaven, like *Canaan*, a place and ſtate of reſt and happineſs. *To have theſe things always in remembrance*; by which they might be always put in mind of them, or by recurring to which they might have their memories refreſhed; and what he means is, to leave theſe exhortations and admonitions in writing, which they might read, and be of uſe to them when he was dead and gone; and indeed by this, and his former Epiſtle, tho' being dead, he yet ſpeaketh.

Ver. 16. *For we have not followed cunningly deviſed fables*, &c.] Such as *Jewiſh* fables cautioned againſt, *Tit.* i. 14. which their traditionary and oral law, their *Talmud*, and other writings, mention; as concerning the temporal kingdom of the Meſſiah, the ſumptuous feaſt, and carnal pleaſures, and entertainments of that ſtate, with many other things; ſome of which indeed are not very cunningly put together, but weak enough: or *Gentile* fables concerning the theogony and exploits of their deities; and which may be meant by fables and endleſs genealogies in 1 *Tim.* i. 4. and eſpecially reference may be had to the metamorphoſes of their gods, and their fables relating to them, deviſed by *Ovid*, and others, ſince the Apoſtle is about to ſpeak of the metamorphoſis, or transfiguration of Chriſt; and alſo other fables, with which their poets and hiſtories abound; and likewiſe the propheſies of the ſybils, and the oracles at *Delphos*, and elſewhere: or the fabulous accounts of the followers of *Simon Magus* concerning God, angels, the creation of the world, and the ſeveral *Æones*; or the more artful compoſures of the falſe teachers, ſet off with all the cunning, ſophiſtry, wit, and eloquence they were maſters of. Now in order to ſet forth the nature, excellency, and certainty of the doctrine the Apoſtle taught, eſpecially that part of it which reſpected the coming of Chriſt; and to ſhew that it was worth his while to put them in mind of it, and theirs to remember it; he obſerves, that he and his fellow Apoſtles did not proceed in their account of it, on ſuch a foundation, but upon an evidence which they had received, both with their eyes and ears, and alſo on a word of prophecy ſurer than that: *when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*; not his firſt coming, tho' that, and the benefits ariſing from it, were the ſubject of their miniſtry; and that was attended with divine power, which appeared in the incarnation of Chriſt itſelf, which was owing to the power of the higheſt; and was ſeen in his doctrine and miniſtry, which were with great authority; and in the miracles which he wrought, which proved him to have power equal with God, his Father; and in the work of redemption, which he came about and finiſhed; in doing which he made an end of ſin, and ſaved his people from it, redeemed them from the curſe of the law, overcame the world, deſtroyed ſatan, and aboliſhed death; and eſpecially in his reſurrection from the dead, when he was declared to be the Son of God with power: but notwithſtanding his firſt coming was in great humility, in much meanneſs and imbecility, he grew up as a tender plant, and was encompaſſed with infirmities, and at laſt was crucified thro' weakneſs. This therefore was to be underſtood of an after coming of his, which the Apoſtle had wrote of, and made known in his former Epiſtle, ch. i. 7, 13. and iv. 5. and which he puts them in mind of in this, ch. iii. 1, 2, 3, 4, 10, 12, 13. nor is the word παρουσια uſed of any other coming of Chriſt, and this will be with power; and it deſigns his more near coming to take vengeance on the *Jewiſh* nation, and deliver his people from the afflictions and perſecution they laboured under, and which was with great power; ſee *Matt.* xxiv. 3, 30. *Mark* ix. 1. or more remote, namely, at the laſt day, when there will be a great diſplay of power in raiſing the dead, gathering all nations before him, ſeparating them one from another, paſſing the final ſentence on each, and executing the ſame in the utter deſtruction of the wicked, and the compleat glorification of the ſaints. *But were eye-witneſſes of his majeſty*; meaning, not of the glory of his divine nature by faith, and with the eyes of their underſtanding, while others only conſidered him as a mere man; nor of the miracles he wrought, in which there was a diſplay of his glory and majeſty, of all which the Apoſtles were eye-witneſſes; but of that glory and greatneſs which were upon him, when he was transfigured on the mount before them; then his face was as the ſun, and ſuch a glory on his whole body, that it darted thro' his clothes, and made them glitter like light, and as white as ſnow, and ſo as no fuller on earth could whiten them; at which time alſo *Moſes* and *Elias* appeared in glorious forms: and now this was a prelude and pledge of his power and coming, of his kingdom coming with power, and of his coming in his own, and his Father's glory, and in the glory of the holy angels. This was a proof, that notwithſtanding his meanneſs in his incarnate ſtate, yet he was glorified, and would be glorified again; and this was a confirmation of it to the Apoſtles, and might be to others; ſee *Matt.* xvi. 27, 28. and xvii. 1. *Mark* viii. 38. and ix. 1. *Luke* ix. 26, 27, 28.

Ver. 17. *For he received from God the Father honour and glory*, &c.] Not as an inferior from a ſuperior, for he was equal in glory with the Father, and was, and is the brightneſs of his Father's glory; nor eſſentially, having the ſame glory as his Father, and to which nothing can be added; but declaratively, God the Father teſtifying of his glory, declaring the honour that belonged to him, as the Son of God, at the ſame time that an external glory was put on him, and received by him, as the ſon of man: *when there came ſuch a voice to him from the excellent glory*; from the bright cloud which overſhadowed Jeſus, *Moſes*, and *Elias*, and was a ſymbol of the glory and preſence of God, as the cloud in the tabernacle and temple were, *Exod.* xl. 35, 36. 1 *Kings* viii. 10, 11. or from heaven, the habitation of the holineſs and glory of God, and where he diſplays the glory of his being and perfections; or from himſelf,

ſelf, who is the God and Father of glory, and is glorious in himſelf, in all his attributes and works. So כבוד, *glory*, with the *Cabaliſtic Jews*, ſignifies the *Shekinah*, or divine preſence[d]; and every number in the *Cabaliſtic* tree is called by the name of *glory*; the ſecond number, which is *wiſdom*, is called *the firſt glory*; and the third number, *underſtanding*, is called, כבוד עליון, *the ſupreme*, or *chief glory*[e]: ſo the firſt path, which is the ſupreme crown, is ſometimes called the firſt glory, as the Father is here the moſt excellent glory; and the ſecond path, which is the underſtanding enlightening, the ſecond glory[f]. And this voice was not that at his baptiſm; for tho' that was from heaven, and from God the Father, and expreſſed the ſame words as here; yet it was not on a mount, nor from a cloud, nor was it heard by the Apoſtles, who, as yet, were not with Chriſt, nor called by him; nor that of which mention is made in *John* xii. 28. for tho' that alſo was from God the Father, and from heaven, and which declaratively gave honour and glory to Chriſt, yet did not expreſs the words here mentioned; but that voice which came from the cloud, when Chriſt was transfigured on the mount, and which was heard by his three diſciples, *Peter*, *James*, and *John*, when the following words were articulately pronounced, *this is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleaſed*; ſee the note on *Matt.* xvii. 5. The *Vulgate Latin* verſion adds here, as there, *hear ye him*.

Ver. 18. *And this voice, which came from heaven, we heard*, &c.] *Peter*, who wrote this Epiſtle, and *James* and *John*, the favourite diſciples of Chriſt; and who were a ſufficient number to bear witneſs of what they then ſaw and heard: *when we were with him*; and ſaw his glory, and the glory of *Moſes* and *Elias*, and were ſo delighted with his company, and theirs, and with communion with him, that *Peter*, in the name of the reſt, deſired to ſtay there: *in the holy mount*; the *Ethiopic* verſion reads, *in the mountain of his ſanctuary*; and ſo *Grotius* underſtands it of mount *Moriah*, on which the temple was built, called the holy hill, and the holy hill of *Zion*; and ſuppoſes that this voice was heard in the temple, and that it refers to *John* xii. 28. but without any foundation; for the mount on which Chriſt was transfigured is here meant; and which was either, as is generally ſaid, *Tabor*, a mountain in *Galilee*; or it may be *Lebanon*, which was near *Cæſarea Philippi*, in the parts of which Chriſt then was: and it is called *holy*, from his preſence or transfiguration on it, who is the holy one; juſt as the land on which *Moſes* was, and the city and temple of *Jeruſalem*, and mount *Sion*, and *Sinai*, are called *holy*, from the preſence of the holy God there, *Exod.* iii. 5. *Matt.* iv. 5. *Pſ.* ii. 6. and lxviii. 17. Now ſuch a declaration of the honour and glory of Chriſt, as the Son of God being made by God, the Father, in a voice from heaven, which the Apoſtles heard with their ears, at the ſame time that they ſaw with their eyes, his human body glorified in an amazing manner, was to them a confirming evidence that he would come again in power and glory; and upon this evidence, they declared, and made known to the ſaints, the power and coming of Chriſt; tho' not on this evidence only, but alſo upon the more ſure word of prophecy, which entirely agrees with it.

Ver. 19. *We have alſo a more ſure word of prophecy*, &c.] Tho' this word of prophecy is generally underſtood of the writings and propheſies of the Old Teſtament concerning Chriſt, yet different ways are taken to fix the compariſon: ſome think the ſenſe is, that they are more ſure than the cunningly deviſed fables, ver. 16. but as theſe have no certainty nor authority in them, but are entirely to be rejected, the Apoſtle would never put the ſacred writings in compariſon with them: and it is moſt clear, that the compariſon lies between this word of prophecy, and the teſtimony of the Apoſtles, who were eye and ear-witneſſes of the majeſty and glory of Chriſt; but how prophecy ſhould be a ſurer evidence of Chriſt, and the Goſpel, than ſuch a teſtimony, is difficult to underſtand; and is a ſenſe which all agree to reject, by different methods: ſome think, that a comparative is uſed for a poſitive, and that the meaning is, that beſides the teſtimony of the Apoſtles, prophecy is a very ſure evidence; and this is countenanced by the *Syriac* verſion, which renders it, *and we have alſo a firm*, or *true word of prophecy*; to which the *Arabic* agrees, *and we have a word of prophecy very true*: others chuſe to retain the compariſon, and which indeed ought not to be thrown out; but theſe are divided about it; ſome are of opinion, that it is to be underſtood of the *Jews* to whom the Apoſtle writes, and he himſelf was one, and the ſenſe to be this; not that prophecy in itſelf was ſurer than an apoſtolical teſtimony, but that it was ſurer to the *Jews*, and more valid with them, who had been trained up in, and long uſed to the prophetic writings; and who had a greater eſteem for the prophets of the Old Teſtament, than for the Apoſtles of the New; but it is ſcarcely credible that the Apoſtle, who had been an eye and ear-witneſs in the holy mount, would put himſelf in among them, and ſay, *we have*, &c. for what ever prophecy was to them, it could not be ſurer to him than what he had ſeen with his eyes, and heard with his ears. Others ſuppoſe that the meaning is, that prophecy was *now* ſurer to the chriſtians, than it was *before*, it being confirmed and eſtabliſhed by facts and events, and alſo by miracles, and even by the atteſtation of this voice heard on the mount, and by the majeſty of Chriſt ſeen there; but if this had been the ſenſe of the Apoſtle, he would have uſed theſe words, *now* and *before*; and beſides, this puts the compariſon quite out of its place, which manifeſtly ſtands between former prophecy, and the preſent teſtimony of the Apoſtles: but the truth of the matter is, that this word of prophecy is not to be underſtood of the prophetical writings of the Old Teſtament; for tho' theſe are the word of God, and do teſtify of Chriſt, and are to be taken heed, and attended to, as proofs and evidence of Goſpel truths, and are a light to direct and guide in matters, both of faith and practice, yet they are not the only light, and are far from being the cleareſt, and what are only to be attended to; for the Goſpel that came by Chriſt, and is preached by his Apoſtles, and is contained in the writings of the New Teſtament, is a much clearer light, and at leaſt equally to be attended to: nor are the propheſies of the Old Teſtament, which particularly relate to Chriſt, deſigned; there are many of this kind, which put together, may very well be called the word of prophecy, and which were to the *Jews* a light in a dark place, until Chriſt came in the fleſh; and though they are to be attended to, and compared with facts, to ſhew the truth of the divine revelation, yet they are not a ſurer evidence, nor ſo ſure an evidence, as the evangelical teſtimony is, which is of facts, and theſe ſupported by miracles; for now the day ſpring from on high hath viſited us, and Chriſt, the bright and morning-ſtar has appeared: but the word of prophecy, concerning Chriſt's ſecond coming, is here intended, whether it lies in the words of the prophets of the Old Teſtament, as in *Pſ.* xcvi. 13. *Dan.* vii. 9, 10, 13. or in the words of Chriſt, *Matt.* xvi. 27, 28. and xxiv. 3, 30, 44. which latter is moſt likely. The *Ethiopic* verſion underſtands this of ſome particular prophecy, and as if the words were a citation of ſome prophet, rendering the words thus, *and we have a voice more ancient than this, of a prophet, ſaying, ye do well who take heed*, &c. Sir *Iſaac Newton* is of opinion, that the Apoſtle refers to the book of the *Revelation* of St. *John*, which would not be unlikely, could it be proved that it was then written. Now this prophecy, or prediction, concerning Chriſt's coming again with power and great glory, was a ſurer evidence of it, than what the Apoſtles ſaw with their eyes, and heard with their ears upon the mount; nothing was ſurer to them, nor could any thing make it ſurer to them, that he was honoured and glorified, than what they ſaw and heard; but then this did not ſo certainly prove, that he would hereafter be glorified, or come again in glory. What they ſaw and heard was a preſumptive proof that it *might* be ſo, and was a confirming pledge and evidence to them that ſo it *would* be, and was a glorious repreſentation of it; but Chriſt's prophecy or prediction, that ſo it *ſhould* be, more ſtrongly aſcertained it, ſince he ſaid it, to whom all things were known from the beginning, and whoſe counſel ſhall ſtand, and not one word of his ſhall ever fail. *Whereunto ye do well, that ye take heed as unto a light that ſhineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-ſtar ariſe in your hearts.* The prophecy concerning Chriſt's ſecond coming, is *as a light*; 'tis a revelation of that which was in the dark, lay hid as a ſecret and myſtery in the heart of God; and which could not be known by men, had it not been foretold by God; and 'tis made as prophecy in all other caſes is, by throwing light, as to this affair, into the mind of him, or them, to whom it is revealed; and is a light to them to whom it is delivered, and which they ſhould attend unto, as to a lamp or torch, to guide and direct them; tho' in ſome ſenſe it is but a feeble one, and is as a light *that ſhineth in a dark place*; meaning not the world, which is a place of darkneſs, ignorance, and error; nor merely the ſtate of the ſaints in general in this life, who at moſt, and beſt, ſee but thro' a glaſs darkly; but has a particular reſpect to the darkneſs which attends the ſaints, concerning the ſecond coming of Chriſt, and which will eſpecially attend them a little before that time. Prophecy holds out clearly, that Chriſt will come again; that he will come in great glory, in his Father's, and in his own, and in the glory of his angels, and with great power, to raiſe the dead, and judge mankind; and tho' it gives hints, that upon this, the ſaints ſhall be with Chriſt in the air, on earth, and in heaven; and that there will be new heavens, and a new earth; and that the ſaints ſhall reign here with Chriſt a thouſand years, after which the *Gog* and *Magog* army will attack them without ſucceſs; yet theſe are not ſo clear, as for ſaints to be agreed in the ſenſe of them; and much more are they in the dark about the time of his coming. Now prophecy is the ſureſt evidence, and beſt light the ſaints have concerning this matter, *until the day dawn*; not the Goſpel-day, ſo much ſpoken of by the prophets, that had dawned already; rather a more clear knowledge of Chriſt, and Goſpel truths, which will be in the ſpiritual kingdom and reign of Chriſt hereafter; or elſe the latter day-glory, at the perſonal coming of Chriſt, when the light of the moon ſhall be as that of the ſun, and that of the ſun ſhall be ſeven-fold as the light of ſeven days; yea, when there will be no need of ſun or moon, but Chriſt ſhall be come, and be the light of his people; ſee *Iſ.* xxx. 26. and lx. 1, 2. *Rev.* xxi. 23, 24. after which will follow the everlaſting day of glory, when all darkneſs will be gone, and ſaints ſhall ſee face to face, and know as they are known: *and the day-ſtar ariſe in your hearts*; or *the ſun*, as the *Syriac* verſion renders it; not Chriſt, the morning-ſtar, the day-ſpring from on high, and the ſun of righteouſneſs, who was already riſen upon them; nor the grace of God implanted in their hearts, by which they were already called out of darkneſs, and made light in the Lord; but as the day-ſtar is the bringer of light, as the word uſed ſignifies, or the fore-runner of the day, ſo it here intends the immediate ſigns and forerunners of the coming of Chriſt; which when obſerved *in* their *hearts*, and by their underſtandings, as being come to paſs, they may lift up their heads with joy, becauſe their redemption draws near, *Luke* xxi. 28. and ſo the *Ethiopic* here renders it, *and redemption ariſe for you in your hearts.* Now till this time, the ſure word of prophecy concerning Chriſt's ſecond coming is to be *taken heed unto*, as a lamp, light and torch, to direct us to it, to encourage us to love it, long for it, and haſten to it: and in ſo doing we ſhall *do well*; it will be well for the glory of God and Chriſt, this being ſetting our ſeals to them as true; and well for ourſelves, to keep up our faith, hope, and expectation of it unmoved.

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[d] Guido. Dictionar. Syr. Chald. p. 92.

[e] Lex. Cabaliſt. p. 464.

[f] Sepher Jetzirah, p. 1, 4.

Ver. 20. *Knowing this firſt*, &c.] Eſpecially, and in the firſt place, this is to be known, obſerved, and conſidered; *that no prophecy of the ſcripture*, that is contained in ſcripture, be it what it will, *is of any private interpretation*: not that this is levelled againſt the right of private judgment of ſcripture; or to be underſtood, as if a private believer had not a right of reading, ſearching, examining and judging, and interpreting the ſcriptures himſelf, by vertue of the unction which teacheth all things, and who, as a ſpiritual man, judgeth all things; otherwiſe, why are ſuch commended as doing well, by taking heed to prophecy, in the preceding verſe, and this given as a reaſon to encourage them to it? the words may be rendred, *of one's own interpretation*; that is, ſuch as a natural man forms of himſelf, by the meer force of natural parts and wiſdom, without the aſſiſtance of the Spirit of God; and which is done without comparing ſpiritual things with ſpiritual; and which is not agreable to the ſcripture, to the analogy of faith, and mind of Chriſt; tho' rather this phraſe ſhould be rendred, *no prophecy of the ſcripture is of a man's own impulſe*, invention, or compoſition; is not human, but purely divine: and this ſenſe carries in it a reaſon, why the ſure word of prophecy, concerning the ſecond coming of Chriſt, ſhould be taken heed to, and made uſe of as a light, 'till he does come; becauſe as no ſcripture prophecy, ſo not that, is a contrivance of man's, his own project and device, and what his own ſpirit prompts and impells him to, but what is made by the dictates and impulſe of the Spirit of God; for whatever may be ſaid of human predictions, or the falſe prophecies of lying men, who deliver them out, how and when they pleaſe, nothing of this kind can be ſaid of any ſcripture prophecy, nor of this concerning the ſecond coming of Chriſt; and this ſenſe the following words require.

Ver. 21. *For the prophecy*, &c.] The whole ſcripture, all the prophetic writings; ſo the *Jews* call the ſcriptures הנבואה, *the prophecy*[g], by way of eminence, and from the ſubject matter of the ſacred word: *came not in old time by the will of man*; was not brought into the world at firſt, or in any period of time, as and when man would, according to his pleaſure, and as he thought fit: neither *Moſes*, nor *David*, nor *Iſaiah*, nor *Jeremiah*, nor *Ezekiel*, nor *Daniel*, nor any other of the prophets, propheſied when they pleaſed, but when it was the will of God they ſhould; they were ſtirred up to propheſy, not by any human impulſe, but by a divine influence: with this agrees what *R. Sangari* ſays, "that the ſpeech "of the prophets, when the Holy Spirit clothed "them, in all their words was directed by a di"vine influence, and the prophet could not ſpeak "in the choice of his own words," or according to his will: *but holy men of God*; ſuch as he ſanctified by his Spirit, and ſeparated from the reſt of men to ſuch peculiar ſervice; and whom he employed as publick miniſters of his word: for ſo this phraſe *men*, or *man of God* often ſignifies, 1 *Sam.* ii. 27. 2 *Tim.* iii. 17. *ſpake, as they were moved by the Holy Ghoſt*; who illuminated their minds, gave them a knowledge of divine things, and a foreſight of future ones; dictated to them, what they ſhould ſay or write; and moved upon them ſtrongly, and by a ſecret and powerful impulſe, ſtirred them up to deliver, what they did, in the name and fear of God: which ſhews the authority of the Scriptures, that they are the word of God, and not of men; and as ſuch ſhould be attended to, and received with all affection and reverence; and that the Spirit is the beſt interpreter of them, who firſt dictated them; and that they are to be the rule of our faith and practice; nor are we to expect any other, until the ſecond coming of Chriſt.

CHAP. II.

THIS chapter contains a deſcription of falſe teachers, that were then in Chriſtian churches, as there had been falſe prophets among the *Jews*; and they are deſcribed by the doctrines, which they privily introduced; in general, damnable hereſies; in particular, denying the Lord that bought them; and by their ſucceſs, having many followers of them in their pernicious ways; and by the ſad effects, following hereupon; with reſpect to the way of truth, that was blaſphemed; with reſpect to their hearers, they, through the covetouſneſs of theſe falſe teachers, were made merchandize of; and with reſpect to themſelves, ſwift and ſure deſtruction would be brought upon them, *ver.* 1, 2, 3. which is illuſtrated and confirmed by the inſtances of puniſhment in the angels, the men of the old world, and the inhabitants of *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*, ver. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8. and whereas, in theſe inſtances, notice is taken of the deliverance of ſome righteous perſons, as *Noah* and *Lot*, when wicked men were deſtroyed; the Apoſtle draws this concluſion from the whole, that the Lord knows, both how to deliver the ſaints out of afflictions, and to reſerve wicked men until the day of judgment, then to be puniſhed, *ver.* 9. eſpecially ſuch ſhall be then puniſhed, who are deſcribed by their impure courſe of life, their contempt of civil government, and their preſumption and ſelf-will, *ver.* 10. which ſins of theirs are aggravated by the different conduct of angels, ſuperior to them; and by their being like brute beaſts, as ignorant as they, and even below them; whoſe puniſhment will be to periſh in their corruption, as the juſt reward of their unrighteouſneſs, ſince they are open in ſin, take pleaſure in it, and ſport themſelves with it, and are ſpots and blemiſhes in chriſtian ſocieties, *ver.* 11, 12, 13. and theſe, who are no other than the falſe teachers before ſpoken of, are further deſcribed by their adulterous eyes, which cannot ceaſe from ſin; by their beguiling unſtable ſouls; by the covetous practices their hearts were exerciſed with; by their juſt deſert, curſed children; by the courſe they ſteer, forſaking the right way, going aſtray from it, and following the way of *Balaam* in his covetouſneſs, and other wicked practices, for which he was reproved by his aſs; and by various metaphors, which expreſs the emptineſs of theſe perſons, and which alſo point at their deſtruction, and deſcribe their boaſts and brags, and the influence they have, through their laſciviouſneſs and uncleanneſs, on ſome perſons, who have been outwardly reformed, *ver.* 14, 15, 16, 17, 18. and this they obtain over them in a very ſtupid and ſenſeleſs way, by promiſing them liberty, when through being overcome by them, and drawn into ſin, they were brought into bondage, and become ſervants of corruption; and ſo their caſe is worſe, than it was before their reformation, and profeſſion of religion; and better it would have been, not to have had the knowledge they had, than after it to turn from the paths of truth and holineſs; which is illuſtrated by a true ſcripture proverb, which expreſſes the filthy nature of ſin, the character of theſe men, and their irrecoverable ſtate and condition, *ver.* 19, 20, 21, 22.

Ver. 1. *But there were falſe prophets alſo among the people*, &c.] As well as holy men of God, who gave out prophecies by the inſpiration and impulſe of the Holy Spirit; that is, among the people of the *Jews*, God's profeſſing people, whoſe God was the Lord, and who had choſen them to be a ſpecial and peculiar people, above all people of the earth; and had diſtinguiſhed them by his favours from all others: among theſe, tho' the *Syriac* verſion reads *in the world*, there were falſe prophets, who ran, and were not ſent; and who propheſied, and the Lord ſpake not to them: of theſe there were many in *Jeremiah*'s time, and in the times of *Ezekiel*; and in *Ahab*'s time, beſides the four hundred and fifty prophets of *Baal*, ſlain by *Elijah*, there were four hundred that called themſelves the prophets of the Lord; among whom went forth a lying ſpirit, encouraging *Ahab* to go up to *Ramoth Gilead*, promiſing him proſperity and ſucceſs; *Zedekiah* the ſon of *Chenaanah*, with whom *Micajah*, the true prophet, had much contention, was at the head of them; and ſuch there were among that people in all ages, until the times of Chriſt, and in his likewiſe; ſee *Matt.* vii. 15. now from theſe, by an eaſy tranſition, the Apoſtle proceeds to another part of his deſign in this Epiſtle, to deſcribe the characters of falſe teachers under the preſent diſpenſation,

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[g] R. Eliahu in Adderet apud Trigland. de Sect. Karæorum, c. 10. p. 153.

[h] Coſri, par. 5. § 20. fol. 287. 2.

ſation, that ſaints may beware, and avoid their pernicious principles and practices: *even as there ſhall be falſe teachers among you*; which need not to be wondered at, or ſtumble any, it being no new or ſtrange thing, but what was always more or leſs the caſe of the people of God. This is a prophecy of what ſhould be, and agrees with the prediction of our Lord, *Matt.* xxiv. 11, 24. and which regards not only the times immediately following, in which it had a remarkable fulfilment, for falſe teachers now began to ariſe, and appeared in great numbers in the age ſucceeding the Apoſtles, but to all periods of time from hence, to the ſecond coming of Chriſt; and theſe were to ſpring from, and be among ſuch that bore the chriſtian name, and ſo regards not *Mahometans* and deiſts; and it is to be obſerved, that the phraſe is varied in this clauſe, and theſe are called not *prophets* but *teachers*; becauſe as prophecy was more peculiar to the former diſpenſation, ſo is teaching to the preſent: *who privily ſhall bring in damnable hereſies*; errors in the fundamental doctrines of the Goſpel; ſuch as relate to a Trinity of perſons in the Godhead; and to the perſon of Chriſt, to his proper deity, diſtinct perſonality, eternal Sonſhip, and real humanity; and to his office, as mediator, rejecting him as the true Meſſiah, and as the only Saviour of ſinners; denying his ſacrifice and ſatisfaction, and the imputation of his righteouſneſs; and to the Holy Spirit, his deity, perſonality, and divine influences and operations: theſe are *damnable*, or *deſtructive*, or *hereſies of deſtruction*; which lead to eternal deſtruction both thoſe that introduce and propagate them, and thoſe that embrace and profeſs them; for they remove, or attempt to remove, the foundation of eternal life and happineſs: the manner in which theſe are uſually introduced, is *privily*; at unawares, ſecretly, under a diſguiſe, and gradually, by little and little, and not at once, and openly; and which is the conſtant character and practice of ſuch men, who lie in wait to deceive, creep into churches at unawares, and into houſes privately; and inſinuate their principles under ſpecious pretences and appearances of truth, uſing the hidden things of diſhoneſty, walking in craftineſs, handling the word of God deceitfully, and colouring things with falſe gloſſes and feigned words: and *even denying the Lord that bought them*; not the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, but God the Father; for the word κυριος, is not here uſed, which always is where Chriſt is ſpoken of as the *Lord*, but δεσποτης; and which is expreſſive of the power which maſters have over their ſervants [1], and which God has over all mankind; and wherever this word is elſewhere uſed, it is ſpoken of God the Father, whenever applied to a divine perſon, as in *Luke* ii. 29. *Acts* iv. 24. 2 *Tim.* ii. 21. *Rev.* vi. 10. and eſpecially this appears to be the ſenſe, from the parallel text in *Jude* 4. where the Lord God denied by thoſe men is manifeſtly diſtinguiſhed from our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and by whom theſe perſons are ſaid to be bought: the meaning is not, that they were redeemed by the blood of Chriſt, for Chriſt is not intended; and beſides, whenever redemption by Chriſt is ſpoken of, the price is uſually mentioned, or ſome circumſtance or another which fully determines the ſenſe; ſee *Acts* xx. 28. 1 *Cor.* vi. 20. and vii. 23. *Eph.* i. 7. 1 *Pet.* i. 18. 19. *Rev.* v. 9. whereas here is not the leaſt hint of any thing of this kind: add to this, that ſuch who are redeemed by Chriſt are the elect of God only, the people of Chriſt, his ſheep and friends, and church, and who are never left to deny him ſo as to periſh eternally; for could ſuch be loſt, or deceive, or be deceived finally and totally by damnable hereſies, and bring on themſelves ſwift deſtruction, Chriſt's purchaſe would be in vain, and the ranſom price be paid for nought; but the word *bought* regards temporal mercies and deliverance, which theſe men enjoyed, and is uſed as an aggravation of their ſin in *denying* the Lord; both by words, delivering out ſuch tenets as are derogatory to the glory of the divine perfections, and which deny one or other of them, and of his purpoſes, providence, promiſes and truths; and by works, turning the doctrine of the grace of God into laſciviouſneſs, being diſobedient and reprobate to every good work; that they ſhould act this part againſt the Lord who had made them, and upheld them in their beings, and took care of them in his providence, and had followed them with goodneſs and mercy all the days of their lives; juſt as *Moſes* aggravates the ingratitude of the *Jews* in *Deut.* xxxii. 6. from whence this phraſe is borrowed, and to which it manifeſtly refers: *do ye thus requite the Lord, O fooliſh people and unwiſe! is not he thy father that hath bought thee? hath he not made thee, and eſtabliſhed thee?* nor is this the only place the Apoſtle refers to in this chapter, ſee ver. 12, 13. compared with *Deut.* xxxii. 5. and it is to be obſerved, that the perſons he writes to were *Jews*, who were called, the people the Lord had *redeemed* and *purchaſed*, *Exod.* xv. 13, 16. and ſo were the firſt falſe teachers that roſe up among them; and therefore this phraſe is very applicable to them: *and bring upon themſelves ſwift deſtruction*; either in this life, being ſuddenly cut off in the midſt of their days, and by the immediate hand of God, as *Arius* and other hereticks have been; or eternal damnation in the other, which their tenets lead unto, and which will ſwiftly come upon them when they are promiſing themſelves peace and ſafety.

Ver. 2. *And many ſhall follow their pernicious ways*, &c.] Their principles and their practices, which lead to deſtruction. The *Complutenſian* edition, the *Alexandrian* copy, and *ſix* copies of *Beza*'s, and others, read *their laſciviouſneſſes*; and ſo the *Vulgate Latin* verſion renders it, their *luxuries*; and all the *Oriental* verſions ſeem to have read in like manner. The *Syriac* verſion renders it, *their impurity*; and the *Arabic* verſion, *their unchaſtities*; and the *Ethiopic* verſion *their luſt*; and which ſeems to have reſpect to the impure converſation of the followers of *Simon Magus*, the *Nicolaitans*, the *Gnoſtics*, *Carpocratians*, and others, who indulged themſelves in all unnatural luſts and uncleanneſs; and generally, when men make ſhipwrack of faith, they alſo do of a good conſcience, and become immoral in their converſations; and yet, as deſtructive as their principles, and as diſhonourable and ſcandalous as their practices be, many were, and are their followers; ſo it was foretold by Chriſt, *Matt.* xxiv. 11. and ſo it has been, *Rev.* xiii. 3. The road both of error and wickedneſs is a broad one, in which many walk; and a multitude is no proof of the truth of a church, or of the principles of men, nor to be followed: *by reaſon of whom the way of truth ſhall be evil ſpoken of*; that is, either Chriſt, who is truth itſelf, and the true way to eternal life and happineſs; or the Goſpel, the word of truth, which holds forth Chriſt the truth, and points to him, and every other truth, and nothing but truth; or the chriſtian religion, which is the true way, in oppoſition to all ſects and hereſies; and is what ſhould be blaſphemed and ſpoken againſt, either by theſe men or their followers;

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[1] Vid. Ammonium περι ομοιων, in voce δεσπότης.

lowers; for the phraſe may be rendered, *by whom*, as it is in the *Vulgate Latin* verſion, and the meaning be, that they ſhould, in a blaſphemous way, ſpeak and write againſt Chriſt and his truths, reproach and revile them, and in a virulent manner oppoſe them, and trample them under foot: or *for the ſake of them*, as other verſions read; and as we do, *by reaſon of them*; they ſhould be the occaſion, by their impure lives, of the name of Chriſt, and his doctrines, being blaſphemed by prophane and irreligious men; ſee *Rom.* ii. 24. The *Alexandrian* copy, and one of *Stephens*'s, read *the glory of truth*; and ſo the *Ethiopic* verſion, *the glory of his truth*.

Ver. 3. *And thro' covetouſneſs*, &c.] Which is generally a prevailing vice among falſe teachers, they having no other end in view than themſelves; either to gain popular applauſe and vain-glory, which they are always covetous of; or to amaſs riches to themſelves, after which they have an inſatiable deſire: *ſhall they with feigned words*; made words, words of their own deviſing, and not which the Holy Ghoſt teacheth; whereby they cover themſelves, and privily introduce their pernicious principles; and therefore new words and phraſes, are always to be ſuſpected and guarded againſt, eſpecially in articles of moment and importance: or with flattering words and fair ſpeeches, great ſwelling words of vanity, having mens perſons in admiration, becauſe of worldly advantage; and in this way they gain their point: *make merchandize of you*; deal with the ſouls of men, as merchants do with their goods, carry them to market and ſell them; ſo falſe teachers deal with the ſouls of their followers, draw them into their deſtructive principles and practices at their own expence, enrich themſelves by the price of them, and ſell them to ſatan, and they themſelves pay for it; ſee *Zech.* xi. 5. *Rev.* xviii. 13. but in the iſſue, and that in a ſhort time, they'll be no gainers by ſuch practices: *whoſe judgment now of a long time lingereth not*; that is, their condemnation, which God in righteouſneſs has determined, *from the creation of the world*, as the *Ethiopic* verſion reads, or from all eternity, ſee *Jude* 4. to bring them into, for their vile principles and practices is not retarded and delayed; it does not linger and ſtay behind, or ſlacken its pace; it will not tarry, it will come upon them at the appointed time: *and their damnation ſlumbereth not*; an avenging God, who has appointed them to damnation for their ſins, ſlumbers not; the juſtice of God is not aſleep, nor careleſs and negligent, but is awake, and watches over them, to bring the evil upon them they have deſerved, and is in reſerve for them, and will haſten to perform it; the determined deſtruction does not lie dormant, but in a little time will be ſtirred up, and fall with dreadful weight on ſuch ſinners, as may be concluded from the following awful inſtances.

Ver. 4. *For if God ſpared not the angels that ſinned*, &c.] By whom are meant, the devil and his angels; who are ſpirits created by God, and as ſuch were good; their firſt eſtate which they left was pure and holy, as well as high and honourable; they were at firſt in the truth, though they abode not in it; they were once among the morning ſtars and ſons of God, and were angels of light; their numbers are many, and therefore are here expreſſed in the plural number, *angels*, though it cannot be ſaid how large; a legion of them was in one man; one at firſt might be in the rebellion, and draw a large number with him into it, at leaſt was at the head of it, who is called *Beelzebub*, the prince of devils: what their firſt ſin was, and the occaſion of it, is not eaſy to ſay; it is generally thought to be pride, affecting a likeneſs to, or an equality with God; ſince this was what man was tempted to by them, and by which he fell as they are thought to do; and becauſe this is the ſin of ſuch, who fall into the condemnation of the devil; 1 *Tim.* iii. 6. and is the ſin that goes before a fall in common; as it did before the fall of man, ſo it might before the fall of angels, *Prov.* xvi. 18. The paſſage in *John* viii. 44. ſeems moſt clearly of any to expreſs their ſin, which was *not abiding in the truth*; in the truth of the Goſpel, particularly the great truth of the ſalvation of men, by the incarnate Son of God; and which they could by no means brook, and which might ſpring from pride, they not bearing the thought, that the human nature ſhould be exalted above theirs; hence the *Jews*, in oppoſing Chriſt as the Meſſiah and Saviour, is ſaid to be of their father the devil, and to do his luſts; and *Judas* that betrayed him, and fell from his Apoſtleſhip, and the truth, is called a devil; and the hereſies of men, reſpecting the perſon and offices of Chriſt, are ſtiled doctrines of devils; and men that have profeſſed this truth and afterwards deny it, are repreſented in the ſame irrecoverable and deſperate caſe with devils, and muſt expect the ſame puniſhment, *John* viii. 44. and vi. 70. 1 *Tim.* iv. 1. *Heb.* vi. 6. and x. 26, 29. and alſo it may be obſerved on the contrary, that the good angels that ſtand, greatly love, value, eſteem, and pry into the truths of the Goſpel; particularly the ſcheme of man's ſalvation, by the incarnation, obedience, ſufferings, and death of Chriſt: now theſe *God ſpared not*; or *had no mercy on*, as the *Arabic* verſion renders it; he did not forgive their ſin, nor provide a Saviour for them; but directly, and at once, notwithſtanding the dignity and excellency of their nature, in ſtrict juſtice, and awful ſeverity, without any mercy, inflicted due puniſhment on them; wherefore it cannot be thought that falſe teachers, who as they, abide not in the truth, but deny and oppoſe it, ſhould eſcape the vengeance of God: *but caſt them down to hell*; they were hurled out of heaven, from whence they fell as lightning, into the *loweſt*, or inferior places, as the *Syriac* verſion renders it; either into the air, as in *Eph.* ii. 2. or into the earth, as in *Rev.* xii. 9. or into the deep, the abyſs, the bottomleſs pit, where they are detained, as in a priſon, *Luke* viii. 31. *Rev.* ix. 11. and xx. 3, 7. though for certain reaſons, and at certain times, are ſuffered to come forth, and rove about in this earth, and in the air: and theſe, when removed from their antient ſeats in heaven, were not merely bid to go away, as the wicked will at the day of judgment; or were *drove* out, as *Adam* was from the garden of *Eden*, but *caſt down*; with great power, indignation, wrath, and contempt, never to be raiſed and reſtored again: and *delivered* them *into chains of darkneſs*; leaving them under the guilt of ſin, which is the power of darkneſs, and in black deſpair; ſhutting them up in unbelief, impenitence, and hardneſs of mind; being holden with the cords of their ſins, and in the moſt dreadful ſtate of bondage and captivity to their luſts, in juſt judgment on them; and in the moſt miſerable and uncomfortable condition, being driven from the realms of light, deprived of the face and preſence of God, in the utmoſt horror and trembling, and fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation to conſume them; and in utter darkneſs, without the leaſt glimmering of light, joy, peace, and comfort; and where there is nothing but weeping, wailing, and gnaſhing of teeth;

and being alſo under the reſtraints of the power and providence of God, and not able to ſtir or move, or do any thing without divine permiſſion; and being likewiſe by the everlaſting, unalterable, and inſcrutable purpoſes and decrees of God, appointed to everlaſting wrath and deſtruction; by which they are conſigned and bound over to it, and held faſt, that they cannot eſcape it: *to be reſerved unto judgment*; to the day of judgment, to the laſt and general judgment; the judgment of torment, as the *Syriac* verſion here calls it; the words may be rendred, *and delivered them to be kept at judgment, in chains of darkneſs*; when they will be in full torment, which they are not yet in; and then they will be caſt into the lake of fire prepared for them, and be everlaſtingly ſhut up in the priſon of hell, from whence they'll never more be ſuffered to go out; till which time they are indeed under reſtraints, and are held in by Chriſt, who has the power of binding and looſing them at pleaſure; and who then, as the judge of men and devils, will bring them forth, and paſs and execute ſentence on them. The *Jews* give an account of the dejection, fall and puniſhment of the angels, in a manner pretty much like this of *Peter*'s, whom they ſpeak of under different names; ſo of the ſerpent that deceived *Adam* and *Eve*, whom they call *Samael*, and becauſe of that ſin of his, they ſay, [k] that the Lord "caſt "down *Samael* and his company from the place of "their holineſs, out of heaven;" and of *Aza* and *Azael*, angels, who they ſay, ſinned by luſting after the daughters of men, they frequently affirm, that God caſt them down from their holineſs [l], and that, he אפיל לון לתתא, *caſt them down below in chains* [m]; and that God caſt them down from their holineſs from above; and when they deſcended, they were rolled in the air—and he brought them to the mountains of darkneſs, which are called the mountains of the eaſt, and bound them *in chains* of iron, and the chains were ſunk into the midſt of the great deep [n]: and elſewhere they ſay [o], that God caſt them down from their holy degree, out of heaven—from their holy place out of heaven—and bound them in *chains* of iron, in the mountains of *darkneſs*.

Ver. 5. *And ſpared not the old world*, &c.] In diſtinction from the preſent world, that now is; which was, as it were, formed anew out of that, which was deſtroyed by the deluge. The *Vulgate Latin* verſion renders it, *the original world*; and the *Ethiopic* verſion, the *firſt world*; it deſigns the antient inhabitants of the world, as it was from the beginning, before the flood; who being wicked, were not ſpared by God, but had juſt puniſhment inflicted on them: *but ſaved Noah the eighth* perſon; not the eighth from *Adam*, as *Enoch* is ſaid to be the ſeventh from him, *Jude* 14. for he was the tenth; nor is it to be read with the following clauſe, *the eighth preacher of righteouſneſs*; but he was the eighth perſon, or one of the eight perſons, ſaved from the flood; ſee 1 *Pet*. iii. 20. hence the *Ethiopic* verſion, rather as a paraphraſe than a verſion, renders it, *but cauſed to remain ſeven ſouls with Noah, whom he ſaved*; *Hottinger* [p], and Dr. *Hammond* [q] obſerve, from the *Arabic* writers, that the mountain on which the ark reſted, and a town near it, were called *Themanim*; that is, *the eight*, from the number of perſons then and there ſaved: *a preacher of righteouſneſs*; of the righteouſneſs of God, in all his ways and works, and in caſe he ſhould deſtroy the world by a flood, as he had threatned; and of civil and moral righteouſneſs among men, both by words, during the building of the ark, and by works, by his own example, in his righteous life and converſation; and of the righteouſneſs of faith, or of Chriſt, by which he was juſtified, and of which he was an heir, *Heb*. xi. 7. the *Jews* [r] ſay, that *Noah* was a prophet; and they repreſent him alſo as a preacher, and even tell us the very words he uſed in his exhortations to the old world [s], ſaying, "be ye turned from your "evil ways and works, leſt the waters of the flood "come upon you, and cut off all the ſeed of the "children of men:" but though *Noah*, a preacher of righteouſneſs, was ſaved, falſe teachers can't expect to eſcape divine vengeance; who only are transformed as miniſters of righteouſneſs, but in truth are miniſters of unrighteouſneſs; oppoſers of the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, and live unrighteous lives and converſations, and ſo their end will be according to their works: *bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly*; or the *the ungodly of the world*, as רשעי ארעא, *the ungodly of the earth* [t]; ſee *Pſ*. lxxv. 8. though here it indeed means a whole world of wicked men, all but a very few, which were deſtroyed by the flood. This expreſſes both the wickedneſs of the men of that generation, the imagination of the thoughts of whoſe heart, were evil continually; and whoſe lives were filled up with uncleanneſs, violence, rapine, oppreſſion, injuſtice, and corruption, of all ſorts; and likewiſe the large numbers of them, there was a whole world of them; and yet this did not ſecure them from the wrath of God, but ſerved to ſtir it up the more; wherefore falſe teachers and their followers, muſt not build upon their numbers, or hope to be ſcreened from juſt puniſhment on that account; ſince a world of ungodly men, were for their wickedneſs, at once ſwept away, with a flood of God's bringing upon them; cauſing that very uſeful and ſerviceable element of water, to be the means of their deſtruction; for this was not a caſual thing, which came of itſelf, or by chance, but was of God himſelf, who broke up the fountains of the great deep, and opened the windows of heaven, and deſtroyed at once, all mankind, men, women, and children, and every living creature, excepting what were with *Noah* in the ark: and ſince they were perſons of ſuch a character as here deſcribed, it is not to be thought their puniſhment is ended here; it is the general notion of the *Jews* [u], that "the generation of the flood, ſhall "have no part in the world to come, nor ſhall they "ſtand in judgment."

Ver. 6. *And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha into aſhes*, &c.] By raining brimſtone and fire upon them, from heaven, *Gen*. xix. 24. which ſoon reduced them to aſhes, with *Admah* and *Zeboim*, *Deut*. xxix. 23. cities delightfully ſituated, which were as the garden of God, and the land of *Egypt*, together with the inhabitants of them; and after they had received a ſignal mercy, in being reſcued by *Abraham* from the kings who had carried them captive; and tho' *Abraham*, the friend of God, interceded for them, and righteous *Lot* dwelt among them. The firſt of theſe cities, is in the *Hebrew* language called *Sedom*; *Philo* the *Jew* [w] calls it *Sodoma*, as in *Rom*. ix. 29. and in the *Septuagint* on *Gen*.

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[k] Sepher Bahir in Zohar in Gen. fol. 27. 3.
[l] Zohar in Gen. fol. 25. 3.
[m] Ib. fol. 32. 3.
[n] Midraſh Ruth in Zohar in Gen. fol. 45. 1. 2. vid. fol. 77. 3.
[o] Zohar in Numb. fol. 84. 1. vid. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 6. 4. & 9. 4. & Raziel, fol. 14. 2. & 18. 2.
[p] Smegma Orientale, p. 251, 252.
[q] In loc.
[r] Aben Ezra in Gen. 8. 21.
[s] Pirke Eliezer, c. 22.
[t] Targum in Pſ. xlvi. 8.
[u] Miſna Sanhedrin, c. 11. § 3. Vajikra Rabba, §. 4. fol. 149. 1. Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 89. 2.
[w] De Temulentia, p. 272.

Gen. xiii. 10. and xviii. 22; and xix. 1. and *Iſ.* i. 9. here it is ſaid to be a city, and *Joſephus*[x] always calls it the city of the *Sodomites*, but in *Matt.* x. 15. and xi. 24. we read of the land of *Sodom*; and ſo *Philo*[y] the *Jew* ſpeaks of χωρα, the region or country of the *Sodomites*; here the word is of the plural number, as in *Matt.* x. 15. and xi. 23, 24. *Luke* xvii. 29. as it is alſo in the *Septuagint* in *Gen.* x. 19. and xiii. 13. and xiv. 2, 8, 10, 11, 12, 16, 17, 21, 22. and in *Philo* the *Jew*,[z] and ſo is *Gomorrha* in ſome copies of this place, as in *Matt.* x. 15. *Solinus* the hiſtorian, gives an account of theſe cities, in agreement with this; "a good way off of *Jeruſalem*, "he ſays[a], is opened a ſorrowful gulph, which "the black ground, *in cinerem ſoluta*, *reduced* "*to aſhes*, ſhews it to be touched by heaven; "there were two towns, or cities, the one called "*Sodom*, and the other *Gomorrha*; where an apple "is produced, which altho' it has an appearance of "ripeneſs, cannot be eat; for the outward ſkin "that encompaſſes it, only contains a ſort of ſoot, "or embers within, which, ever ſo lightly ſqueezed, "evaporates into ſmoke and duſt;" and ſo the author of the book of *Wiſdom*, ch. x. 7. ſpeaking of the five cities, on which fire fell, ſays, "of whoſe "wickedneſs, even to this day, the waſte land that "ſmoketh is a teſtimony; and plants bearing fruit, "that never come to ripeneſs." *Philo* the *Jew*[b] ſays, that "there are ſhewed to this day in *Syria*, "monuments of this unſpeakable deſtruction, that "happened; as ruins, *aſhes*, ſulphur, ſmoke, and "a weak flame, breaking forth as of a fire burning:" *condemned* them *with an overthrow*; by this ſad *cataſtrophe*, God condemned the ſins of thoſe men of *Sodom* and *Gomorrha*, and adjudged their perſons to everlaſting damnation; of which their temporal puniſhment, was an emblem and figure; ſee *Jude* 7. the word *overthrow*, is generally uſed, when this deſtruction is ſpoken of, *Deut.* xxix. 23. *Iſ.* xiii. 19. *Jer.* l. 40. *Amos* iv. 11. and therefore retained by the Apoſtle here: *making* them *enſamples unto thoſe, who after ſhould live ungodly*; in the commiſſion of any ſins, and be open, bold, and impudent in them, and declare them as they did; and eſpecially that ſhould live in the commiſſion of the ſame ſins, thoſe unnatural luſts and uncleanneſſes, which to this day go by the name of *ſodomy*, and *ſodomitical* practices; now the puniſhment of the inhabitants of theſe cities was an enſample to ſuch wicked livers, ſhewing what they muſt expect, and was a repreſentation of thoſe everlaſting burnings, which ſuch ſinners, as a righteous retaliation for their burning luſts, ſhall be caſt into. The *Jews* ſay[c] the ſame of the men of *Sodom* and *Gomorrha* as of the old world; "the men of "*Sodom* have no part in the world to come, as is "ſaid *Gen.* xiii. 13. *but the men of Sodom were wicked,* "*and ſinners before the Lord exceedingly*; wicked in "this world, and ſinners in the world to come;" ſee the note on *Jude* 7.

Ver. 7. *And delivered juſt Lot*, &c.] Who was a juſt man, being juſtified by the righteouſneſs of Chriſt imputed to him; and having the new man formed in him, which is created in righteouſneſs and true holineſs; and living ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly, though not without ſin; for there is not a juſt man that lives and ſinneth not; this righteous man was delivered from the burning of *Sodom* by the means of angels, *Gen.* xix. 16, 17. The *Jews* are very injurious to this good man's character, and give a very different one of him from this of the Apoſtle's; they call him a wicked man, a perfect wicked man, as wicked as the inhabitants of *Sodom*[d]; and ſay, that becauſe they abounded in ſin, therefore *Lot* choſe to dwell among them[e]; and affirm[f], that all the time he was with *Abraham*, God did not join himſelf to him, and did not commune with *Abraham* on his account; but when he was ſeparated from him did; they call him the evil imagination, and the old ſerpent that was accurſed, and curſed *Lot*[g]; but *Philo* the *Jew*[h] ſpeaks better of him, and ſays, that he did not embrace and delight in the iniquities of the inhabitants, though he did not arrive to the perfection of wiſdom; and the author of the book of *Wiſdom*, ch. x. 6. calls him the *righteous man*, as the Apoſtle does here; and very truly, ſince it follows: *vexed with the filthy converſation of the wicked*; the inhabitants of *Sodom*, who had no regard to the laws of God or man, or to the law and light of nature; but as worſe than brute beaſts, lived daily in the commiſſion of unnatural luſts; and therefore their converſation is rightly ſaid to be filthy, and was a grievous burden to righteous *Lot*; for to a good man, not only his own ſins, but the ſins of others, whether profeſſors or prophane, are a burden, and make him groan under them, being grievouſly fatigued with them, as this good man was, and weary of life becauſe of them, as *Rebekah* was, thro' the daughters of *Heth*.

Ver. 8. *For that righteous man dwelling among them*, &c.] Which is ſometimes the lot of good men, to their great ſorrow and grief, *Pſ.* cxx. 5, 6, 7. *Iſ.* vi. 5. Upon mentioning thoſe words in *Gen.* xiii. 12, 13. *and pitched his tent towards Sodom, but the men of Sodom were wicked*, &c. ſays *R. Eleazar*[i]; "he is a righteous man that dwells between "two wicked men, and does not learn their "works;" and ſuch an one was *Lot*, whatever they are elſewhere pleaſed to ſay of him: *in ſeeing and hearing*; the *Vulgate Latin* verſion reads this in connexion with the word *righteous*, thus, *in ſeeing and hearing he was righteous*: he could not bear to ſee their filthy actions, and hear their obſcene language, but turned away from them, and ſhut his eyes, and ſtopped his ears, by which he appears to be a righteous and good man; tho' rather this belongs to what follows, ſeeing their wicked practices, and hearing their filthy talk: *vexed his righteous ſoul from day to day with their unlawful deeds*; either *they vexed* him, as the *Vulgate Latin* and *Ethiopic* verſions read; or rather *he vexed* himſelf; he fretted and teazed himſelf, and became exceeding uneaſy, and was put upon a rack and torture, as the word ſignifies, continually, with their wicked actions; ſee *Pſ.* cxix. 158.

Ver. 9. *The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly*, &c.] That *fear him*, as the *Syriac* verſion renders it; or that *rightly worſhip*, as the *Arabic*; ſuch as *Noah* and *Lot*, men that know God in Chriſt ſpiritually and experimentally; that believe in him, love him, fear him, worſhip him in ſpirit and truth, and live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly. This verſe is a concluſion from the preceding inſtances and examples, reſpecting both the mercy and juſtice of God; the mercy of God in delivering the godly and righteous *out of temptations*; by which are meant, not the temptations of ſatan to ſin, diſtruſt, and deſpondency, tho' the Lord knows how, and is both able and willing to, and does deliver them from them; but afflictions and tribulations, ſuch as *Noah* and *Lot* were expoſed to; and which are ſo called, becauſe they try the graces, particularly the faith and patience of the godly; and to deliver from theſe is the Lord's work: he grants his preſence in them; he ſupports under them; he ſanctifies them to them, and in his own time delivers out of them; for he knows how, and by what means, and when to do it, and is both able and willing: he has determined to do it, for the nature, meaſure, and duration of afflictions are fixed by him, and in his providence he does do it, as the inſtances before given prove. *And to reſerve the unjuſt unto the day of judgment to be puniſhed.* This is that part of the concluſion from the above premiſes, reſpecting the juſtice of God; and by *the unjuſt* are deſigned, perſons without a righteouſneſs, and that are full of all unrighteouſneſs, and take pleaſure in it, and live unrighteous lives, committing acts of injuſtice, both with reſpect to God and men; and the Lord that has reſerved the fallen angels in chains of darkneſs unto judgment, knows how to reſerve *in priſon*, as the *Arabic* verſion renders it, the ſouls of thoſe in hell, and their bodies in the grave *unto the day of judgment*; of the laſt and general judgment, when Chriſt ſhall judge both quick and dead, and bring every ſecret thing to light, which that day ſhall declare, God has appointed to judge the world in; in order *to be puniſhed* in ſoul and body, with everlaſting and compleat deſtruction, which, as yet, is not. This phraſe, *the day of judgment*, is uſed in *Judith* xvi. 17. and is a *Jewiſh* one.

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[x] Antiqu. l. 1. c. 8. §. 3. c. 11. §. 3.

[y] De Abrahamo, p. 381.

[z] De Temulentia, p. 272.

[a] Polyhiſtor. c. 48.

[b] De vita Moſis, l. 2. p. 662.

[c] Miſn. Sanhedrin, c. 11. §. 3. Vajikra Rabba, §. 4. fol. 149, 1.

[d] Tzeror Hammor, fol. 14, 4. & 16, 4. & 20, 2.

[e] Jarchi in Gen. xiii. 10.

[f] Zohar in Gen. fol. 57, 2. Jarchi in Gen. xiii. 13.

[g] Zohar in Gen. fol. 56, 1, 2. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 7, 3. & 14, 3. & 20, 2. Bereſhit Rabba, §. 44. fol. 39, 1.

[h] De vita Moſis, l. 2. p. 662.

[i] T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 38, 2.

Ver. 10. *But chiefly them that walk after the fleſh*, &c.] Not merely after the dictates of corrupt nature, as all men, and even God's elect do, in a ſtate of unregeneracy; but *after ſtrange fleſh*, as *Jude* expreſſes it, after the fleſh of men: *in the luſt of uncleanneſs*; not of fornication and adultery, but of ſodomy, and ſodomitical practices; ſins exceeding great, not only contrary to the law and light of nature, but diſhonourable to human nature; and are what prevail where idolatry, infidelity, errors, and hereſies do; and which, as they are ſins of the deepeſt dye, deſerve the greater damnation, and are chiefly, and more eſpecially puniſhed by God with great ſeverity: *and deſpiſe government*; of parents, to whom theſe proud boaſters and blaſphemers are generally diſobedient; and of maſters, pretending it to be contrary to their chriſtian liberty; and of magiſtrates on the ſame account, and as being a reſtraint upon their luſts; which is to deſpiſe the ordinance of God, his repreſentatives, and to introduce anarchy and confuſion, and to open a door to all manner of ſin; and alſo the government of Chriſt, as head of the church, and king of *Zion*, whom they will not have to reign over them, and therefore reject his laws, and ſubmit not to his ordinances; and likewiſe the government of the world itſelf by God; and ſo the *Ethiopic* verſion renders it, *deſpiſe their creator*; denying his omniſcience and his providence, giving out, that he neither ſees, obſerves, and takes notice of what is done in the world; nor does he himſelf do either good or evil, or concern himſelf about what is done by men. *Preſumptuous are they*; bold and daring, not fearing to ſpeak againſt men of the moſt exalted character on earth, and againſt God himſelf in heaven; ſee *Pſ.* lxxiii. 8, 9. *Self-willed*; pleaſed with themſelves, and their own conceits, their dogma's and opinions, with their high ſenſe, and profound judgment; and being obſtinate in their ſentiments, and reſolutely bent to retain and defend them. *They are not afraid to ſpeak evil of dignities*; or *glories*; of the Apoſtles, who were ſet in the firſt place in the church, and were the glory of Chriſt, 1 *Cor.* xii. 28. 2 *Cor.* viii. 23. or of angels, ſtiled thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers; or rather of civil magiſtrates, ſet in high places, and to whom glory and honour are due; which to do is contrary to the law of God, and of dangerous conſequence, *Exod.* xxii. 28. *Eccl.* x. 20.

Ver. 11. *Whereas angels, which are greater in power and might*, &c.] Which is not to be underſtood of evil angels, or devils; for beſides, that they are greatly weakned and impaired by their fall, they are the accuſers of men, and railers and ſlanderers of the beſt and greateſt of men, and the origin of all the blaſphemies that are vented againſt God or men; but of good angels, who excel in ſtrength, who are not only guardians to particular men, and encamp about the ſaints, but preſide over provinces and kingdoms, for which their power and might do abundantly qualify them; and in which they are greater, that is, not than the devils, or than the falſe teachers, tho' both are true, but than dominions and dignities, than kings, princes, and civil magiſtrates: and yet theſe *bring not railing accuſation againſt them before the Lord*; either *againſt themſelves*, as the *Arabic* verſion, and one of *Beza*'s copies read; againſt one another, againſt thoſe of their own ſpecies, that are in a higher or lower claſs or office than themſelves; and therefore men ought not to deſpiſe magiſtracy, or the higher powers that are over them: or elſe againſt the fallen angels, the devils, as ſhould ſeem from *Jude* 9. or rather againſt civil magiſtrates, kings, and princes of this world, who, tho' ſo much below them, they vouchſafe to take under their care, and protect them, even heathen princes, *Dan.* x. 20. and tho' there may be oftentimes many things unbecoming in them, yet they don't accuſe them, or rail againſt them before the Lord; and even when, by his orders, they inflict puniſhment on their perſons, as on *Sennacherib*, and *Herod*, and others, yet they do not ſpeak evil of their office; and therefore, ſince angels, who are ſo much above men, even above the moſt dignified among them, behave in this manner, it muſt be an aggravation of the ſin of theſe perſons, who are ſo much below them, to ſpeak evil of them.

Ver. 12. *But theſe, as natural brute beaſts*, &c.] So far are theſe men from acting like the angels, that they are ſunk below their own ſpecies, and are like beaſts, and become brutiſh in their knowledge and behaviour; are like the horſe and the mule, without underſtanding, act as if they were without reaſon; yea, are more ſtupid and ſenſeleſs than the ox, or the aſs, which know their owner, and their crib; and even in thoſe things which they might, and do know by the light of nature, they corrupt themſelves; and being given up to judicial blindneſs, and a reprobate mind, call good evil, and evil good, and do things that are not convenient, and which even brute beaſts do not; and like as they are guided by an inſtinct in nature, to do what they do, ſo theſe men are led and influenced by the force and power of corrupt nature in them, to commit all manner of wickedneſs: and like them are *made to be taken and deſtroyed*; or, as it may be rendered, *to take and deſtroy*; as beaſts and birds of prey, ſuch as lions, tygers, wolves, bears, vultures, hawks, *&c.* to which abuſers of themſelves with mankind, raviſhers of women, extortioners, oppreſſors, thieves, robbers, and plunderers of mens properties, may be compared: or *to be taken and deſtroyed*; that is, they are made or appointed to be taken in the net and ſnare of ſatan, are veſſels of wrath fitted for deſtruction, and are afore ordained to condemnation and ruin: and this being their caſe, they *ſpeak evil of the things they underſtand not*; either of angels, of whoſe nature, office, and dignity they are ignorant; and blaſpheme them, by either aſcribing too much to them, as the creation of the world, and divine worſhip, as were by ſome ancient hereticks; or by ſpeaking ſuch things of them as were below them, and unworthy of them; or of civil magiſtrates, not knowing the nature, and end of magiſtracy and civil government, and therefore ſpoke evil of them, when they ought to pray, and be thankful for them, and live peaceable and quiet lives under them; or of the miniſters of the word, whoſe uſefulneſs for the converſion of ſinners, and edification of ſaints, were not known, at leaſt not acknowledged by theſe men; hence they were traduced, and went thro' ill report among them, being as unknown by them; or of the ſcriptures of truth, which heretical men do not truly know and underſtand, but wreſt to their own deſtruction, or deny; and of the Goſpel and the myſteries of it, which are things not ſeen, known, and underſtood by carnal men, and therefore are blaſphemed, reviled, and reproached by them: *and ſhall utterly periſh in their own corruption*; of which they are ſervants, ver. 19. in their moral corruption, in their filthy and unnatural luſts, which are the cauſe of their everlaſting perdition and deſtruction, to which they are righteouſly appointed of God.

Ver. 13. *And ſhall receive the reward of unrighteouſneſs*, &c.] Due puniſhment, both in body and ſoul, for all their injuſtice to God and men; which will be a juſt recompence of reward they ſhall receive at the righteous judgment of God, who will render to every man according to his works: the juſtice of which appears by what follows, *as they that count it pleaſure to riot in the day-time*; who place all their ſatisfaction and happineſs in ſenſual delight, in rioting and drunkenneſs, in chambering and wantonneſs, day after day; putting away the evil day far from them, ſuppoſing that tomorrow will be as this day, and that there will be no future judgment nor ſtate; and therefore don't take the night for their revels, as other ſinners do, but being without all ſhame, declare their ſin as *Sodom*, and hide it not: *ſpots they are, and blemiſhes*; which defile themſelves, their minds and conſciences, their ſouls and bodies, with ſin, and defile others by their evil communications, and bring diſhonour and diſgrace upon the ways, doctrines, and intereſt of Chriſt: *ſporting themſelves with their own deceivings*; with their ſins and luſts, by which they deceive themſelves and others, it being a ſport to them to commit ſin; and in which they take great pleaſure and paſtime, and not only delight in their own ſins, but in thoſe of others, and in them that do them. Some verſions, as the *Vulgate Latin* and *Arabic*, inſtead of απαταις, *deceivings*, read αγαπαις, *love feaſts*, as in *Jude* 12. and ſo the *Alexandrian* copy; in which they behaved in a very ſcandalous manner, indulging themſelves in luxury and intemperance: to which agrees what follows, *while they feaſt with you*; at the above feaſts, or at the Lord's table, or at their own houſes, which ſhows that they were of them, and among them, as in ver. 1. and carries in it a tacit reproof for the continuance of them, when they were become ſo bad in their principles, and ſo ſcandalous in their lives.

Ver. 14. *Having eyes full of adultery*, &c.] For the ſeventh command is not only violated by unclean actions, and obſcene words, but alſo by unchaſte looks: and ſo the *Jews* explain [k] that precept, "*thou ſhalt not commit adultery*; you ſhall not "go after your hearts, nor after *your eyes*; ſays "*R. Levi*, the heart and the *eye* are ſin's two "brokers." Hence we read [l] of, נואף בעיניו, *one that commits adultery with his eyes*; ſee the note on *Matt.* v. 28. compare *Job* xxxi. 1. *Ezek.* vi. 9. Some read the words, *having eyes full of the adultereſs*; that is, having a leud and infamous woman always in mind and ſight, continually looking at her, and luſting after her: *and that cannot ceaſe from ſin*; which may be underſtood either of theſe wicked men, who are like the troubled ſea, that cannot reſt, but are continually caſting up the mire and dirt of ſin out of their polluted heart; who live and walk in ſin, and are always committing it, their converſation being nothing elſe but one continued ſeries of ſinning; nor can they do otherwiſe, ſince they are ſlaves to their luſts, and are carried away with the force and power of them: or of their eyes, which were always rolling after unlawful objects; their eyes and their hearts were only, and always for their luſt, as the prophet ſays of others, that they were but for their covetouſneſs; *Jer.* xxii. 17. a ſin alſo which reigned in theſe men: *beguiling unſtable ſouls*; ſuch as were unſteady in their principles, and unſtable in their ways; were like children toſſed to and fro with every wind of doctrine, not being rooted in Chriſt, nor eſtabliſhed in the faith; theſe, as the ſerpent beguiled *Eve*, they corrupted from the ſimplicity that is in Chriſt; impoſed falſe doctrines on them, and deceived them by falſe gloſſes, and outward appearances; and by fair words, and good ſpeeches, and by their wanton looks, and carnal luſts, they allured them into the ſin of adultery; or enſnared them, drew them into the net and ſnare of ſatan, and ſo they were taken and led captive. *An heart they have exerciſed with covetous practices*; an immoderate love of money, a covetous deſire after it, is the root of all evil, the bane of religion, and ſource of hereſy, and is a vice which has always prevailed among falſe teachers; and the character here given, well agrees with *Simon Magus*, the father of hereſies, and his followers: hence care is always taken to inſert, among the characters and qualifications of Goſpel-miniſters, that they be not greedy of filthy lucre; this iniquity, when it is a reigning one, and is become an habit, as it was in the perſons here deſcribed, for it had its ſeat in their heart, they were habituated to it, and continually exerciſed it in a multitude of inſtances and wicked practices, is inſatiable and damnable: *curſed children*; or *children of the curſe*; which may be underſtood, either actively, children that do curſe, as children of diſobedience are ſuch as commit acts of diſobedience; ſo theſe were curſing children, who, tho' their mouths might not be full of curſing and bitterneſs, as openly prophane ſinners be, yet they inwardly, and from their hearts, curſed the true followers of Chriſt, and their principles; or paſſively, curſed children who were under the curſe of the law, and from which there was no redemption for them, but at the laſt day will have the awful ſentence pronounced on them, go ye curſed into everlaſting fire.

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[k] T. Hieroſ. Beracot, fol. 3. 3.

[l] Vajikra Rabba, ſ. 23. fol. 165. 1. Vid. A. Gell. Noct. Attic. l. 3. c. 5.

Ver. 15. *Which have forſaken the right way*, &c.] The right way of the Lord, the way of truth, the Goſpel of truth; or Chriſt, who is the way, the truth, and the life; the true way to eternal life, and which is the right way to eternal happineſs; the way of life, righteouſneſs, and ſalvation by Chriſt, the chriſtian faith, and the doctrine of it, which they once profeſſed, but now relinquiſhed: *and are gone aſtray*; from the right way, the way of truth and holineſs, into the paths of error and prophaneneſs: *following the way of Balaam the ſon of Boſor*; which *Jude* calls his *error*, and is the path of covetouſneſs, uncleanneſs, and idolatry, ſins which he was either guilty of himſelf, or taught, adviſed, and ſeduced others to; ſee *Rev.* ii. 14. The *Vulgate Latin* verſion reads *Balaam* out of *Boſor*, taking *Boſor* for the name of a place, of which *Balaam* was; but not *Boſor*, but *Pethor* was the place of *Balaam*'s reſidence, *Numb.* xxii. 5. The *Arabic* and *Ethiopic* verſions ſupply, as we do, *the ſon of Boſor*; and the *Syriac* verſion reads, *the ſon of Beor*, as in *Numb.* xxii. 5. for *Beor* and *Boſor* are the ſame names. The *Sheva* being pronounced by o, as it is by oa in *Boanerges*, and the *Ain* by S. Moreover, the letters צ and ע are ſometimes uſed for one another, as in צאן and עאן, ארץ and ארע, and ſo ע and ש, eſpecially in the *Chaldean* dialect; and *Peter* now being at *Babylon* in *Chaldea*, ſee 1 *Pet.* v. 13. it is no wonder that he ſo pronounced. *Who loved the wages of unrighteouſneſs*; which were the rewards of divination, *Numb.* xxii. 7. which were brought him for his divining or ſoothſaying, and may well be called unrighteous wages, ſince it was for doing unrighteous things, or things in an unrighteous manner; and theſe he loved, deſired, and greedily coveted, and fain would he have taken *Balak*'s gold and ſilver, and have curſed *Iſrael*, but was reſtrained by the Lord: he ſhewed a good-will to it, in going along with the meſſengers, and in building altars, and offering ſacrifice in one place after another, in which there was a great reſemblance between him, and the men here ſpoken of.

Ver. 16. *But was rebuked for his iniquity*, &c.] Which was not merely going along with the meſſengers of *Balak*, for he had leave from the Lord ſo to do; but going along with them with a deſire to curſe *Iſrael*, when it was the will of God he ſhould go and bleſs them, in order to get *Balak*'s money; ſo that his governing iniquity was covetouſneſs, which led him to other ſins; and for this he was rebuked by the angel, as well as reproved by his aſs: for *the dumb aſs*, as it was naturally ſo, the aſs on which he rode, *ſpeaking with man's voice*; which was ſupernatural and miraculous, for it was God that opened the mouth of the aſs: the mouth of that aſs is ſaid, by the *Jews* [m], to be one of the ten things created between the two evenings on the ſixth day of the creation; that is, as the *Gloſs* on it ſays, concerning which it was decreed, that its mouth ſhould be opened to ſpeak, what this aſs ſaid; and the occaſion of it may be ſeen in *Numb.* xxii. 22—30. *Lactantius* [n] obſerves, that there are two ſtars in the conſtellation of *Cancer*, which the *Greeks* call the *aſſes*; and which the poets feign, are thoſe that carried *Liberus* over a river, when he could not paſs it; to one of which he gave this for a reward, ut humana voce loqueretur, *that it ſhould ſpeak with man's voice*; a fable, no doubt, hatched from the ſacred hiſtory, and ſaid in imitation of this aſs. Which *forbad the madneſs of the prophet*; and ſo *Balaam*, tho' a diviner and ſoothſayer, is called by the *Jewiſh* writers [o]; who, they ſay, was firſt a prophet, and then a ſoothſayer, from whom *Jerom* [p] ſeems to have received the tradition; who ſays, that he was firſt a holy man, and a prophet of God, and afterwards, thro' diſobedience, and a deſire of gifts, was called a diviner; for his eyes were opened, and he ſaw the viſion of the Almighty; and the Spirit of God came upon him, and he propheſied many things concerning *Iſrael*, and the Meſſiah, and others, *Numb.* ch. 24. His *madneſs* lay in going with the meſſengers of *Balak*, in order to curſe *Iſrael*, contrary to the will of God; and 'tis madneſs in any to oppoſe God in his counſels, purpoſes, providences, and precepts; and every ſin, which is an act of hoſtility againſt God, has madneſs in it; and this of *Balaam*'s was forbid by his aſs, and he was convinced of it. Very appoſitely is mention made of this dumb aſs, when the perſons here ſpoken of were as natural brute beaſts, and worſe than them, ver. 12.

Ver. 17. *Theſe are wells without water*, &c.] Which look large and deep, promiſe much, and have nothing in them; ſo theſe men looked like angels of light, transformed themſelves as miniſters of righteouſneſs, had a form of godlineſs, and boaſted of their great knowledge; promiſed great advantages to their followers, but were like deceitful brooks, or dry wells, and ſo diſappointed thoſe that came to them, and attended on them; having nothing but the filth and ſlime of error and iniquity, being deſtitute both of the grace of God, comparable to water, and of the truth of heavenly doctrine, which is like the rain that fills the wells, pools, and fountains. *Clouds that are carried with a tempeſt*; theſe falſe teachers may be compared to *clouds* for their number, for many antichriſts and falſe prophets ſoon came into the world; and for their ſudden riſe in the churches, into which they crept privily and unawares; and becauſe of the general darkneſs they ſpread; for when errors and hereſies prevail, 'tis a dark and cloudy day with the churches, a day of gloomineſs and darkneſs, of thick darkneſs, a day of trouble, rebuke, and blaſphemy; and becauſe of the height of them, eſpecially light clouds, as theſe are compared to, who are high in their own conceits and imaginations, and think, and give out themſelves to be ſome great perſons; and alſo becauſe of their ſudden deſtruction, which lingers and ſlumbers not, but comes upon them in a moment, and their glory paſſes away like the morning cloud: and theſe may be ſaid to be as clouds *carried with a tempeſt*; of their own luſts and paſſions, by which they are governed, and are led, and carried away with the force of them, and have no power to reſiſt them, being under the dominion of them, and captives to them; and of ſatan's temptations, who works effectually in them, with all power, ſigns, and lying wonders, and with all deceiveableneſs of unrighteouſneſs, and being taken in his ſnare, are led captive by him at his will: *Jude* ſays, *carried about of winds*; with every wind of falſe doctrine, like meteors in the air; are never at a point, always unſteady and unſettled, and ready to embrace every new and upſtart notion: *to whom the miſt of darkneſs is reſerved for ever*;

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[m] Pirke Abot, c. 5. §. 6. & Jarchi in ib. Sepher Coſri, par. 2. p. 254.

[n] De falſa Religione, l. 1. c. 21.

[o] Peſikta, Ilmedenu & Gerundenſis apud Druſ. in loc. T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 106. 1. Aben Ezra in Numb. xxii. 28.

[p] Tradition. Heb. in Geneſ. fol. 69. D.

ever; the nature of their puniſhment is expreſſed by *darkneſs*, the blackeſt darkneſs, the miſt of darkneſs, and which *Jude* calls blackneſs of darkneſs, the ſame with utter darkneſs; and which ſignifies a moſt forlorn and uncomfortable condition, and is a righteous judgment, and juſt retaliation upon them, who ſtudied to darken counſel by words without knowledge; and the certainty of their puniſhment is ſignified by its being *reſerved*, even as the happineſs of the ſaints, and the ſafety and ſureneſs of it, are repreſented by an inheritance reſerved in heaven: and as God has his treaſures, magazines, and ſtores of grace and mercy, felicity and glory, for his people; ſo he has his wrath and vengeance reſerved, laid up in ſtore with him, and ſealed up among his treaſures, which he will ſurely bring forth in his own time: and the duration of this puniſhment is *for ever*; 'tis a worm that never dies, a fire that is never quenched; 'tis everlaſting fire and burnings, the ſmoke of which aſcends for ever and ever.

Ver. 18. *For when they ſpeak great ſwelling* words *of vanity*, &c.] Marvellous things againſt the God of gods, great things and blaſphemies againſt God, his name, his tabernacle, and his ſaints; ſee *Dan.* xi. 36. *Rev.* xiii. 5, 6. or againſt men, dominions, and dignities, ver. 10. or it may deſign their ſelf-applauſes, and vain-glorying in themſelves, and their empty boaſt of knowledge and learning; and alſo expreſs the windineſs of their doctrines, and the bombaſt ſtile, and high-flown ſtrains of rhetotic in which they were delivered; as likewiſe the flattering titles they beſtowed on men, for the ſake of their own worldly intereſt and advantage; ſee *Jude* 16. and hereby *they allure, through the luſts of the fleſh, through much wantonneſs, thoſe that were clean eſcaped from them who live in error*; that is, from thoſe who lived in the error of heatheniſm or judaiſm, from whom, and which they were clean eſcaped; or truly, really, and entirely delivered, being fully convinced of the falſity thereof, and of the truth of the chriſtian religion; tho' ſome copies, as the *Alexandrian*, and two of *Beza*'s, and two of *Stephens*'s, read, not οντως, *truly*, but ολιγως, *a little*; and the *Vulgate Latin* verſion renders it, *a very little*; to which agrees the *Complutenſian* edition; and the *Syriac* verſion renders it *in a few words*, or *almoſt*; and according to the *Ethiopic* verſion, a *few perſons* are deſigned; but be they more or leſs, and truly, or but a little, and for a little while, or almoſt, eſcaped from their former errors, in which they were brought up, and lived; yet by the carnal luſts and liberties, laſciviouſneſs and wantonneſs, which theſe falſe teachers indulged, they were allured, enſnared, and drawn by them into their wicked principles and practices.

Ver. 19. *While they promiſe them liberty*, &c.] Not chriſtian liberty, which lies in a freedom from ſin, its dominion, guilt, and condemnation, and in ſerving God with liberty, chearfulneſs, and without fear; but a ſinful carnal liberty, a liberty from the law of God, from obedience to it, as a rule of walk and converſation, and from the laws of men, from ſubjection to the civil magiſtrate, and from ſervitude to maſters, and obedience to parents; a liberty to lay aſide and neglect the ordinances of the Goſpel at pleaſure, and to live in all manner of ſin and wickedneſs; a liberty which is contrary to the nature, will, and work of Chriſt, to his Spirit, and to the principle of grace in the heart, and to the Goſpel, and to the conduct and converſation of real ſaints. Now this was the ſnare by which the falſe teachers beguiled unſtable ſouls; liberty being what is greatly deſirable to men, and is ſuited to their carnal luſts and intereſts: but a vain promiſe was this, when *they themſelves are the ſervants of corruption*; of ſin, which has corrupted all mankind in ſoul and body; and particularly the luſt of uncleanneſs, which theſe men walked in, and by which they not only corrupted themſelves, but the good manners of others alſo; and which tended and led them both to ruin and deſtruction, ſignified by the pit of corruption: and yet theſe very preachers, that promiſed liberty to others, were the ſervants of ſin; they were under the power and government of ſin. They were not only born ſo, and were home-born ſlaves to ſin, but they ſold themſelves to work wickedneſs; voluntarily and with delight, they ſerved divers luſts and pleaſures, and were ſlaves and drudges thereunto; as likewiſe to ſatan, whoſe luſts they would do, and by whom they were led captive; ſo that their condition was mean, baſe, and deplorable, and therefore could never make good their promiſe, or give that which they had not themſelves: and which is confirmed by the following reaſoning, *for of whom a man is overcome, of the ſame is he brought in bondage*; as this is a certain point in war, that when one man is conquered by another, he is no longer a free man, but the other's priſoner and captive, and is in a ſtate of ſervitude and bondage; ſo it is when a man is overcome by ſin, which muſt be underſtood not of a partial victory or conqueſt, for a good man may be ſurprized by ſin, and overtaken in a fault, and be overcome and carried captive by it for a time, as was the Apoſtle, ſee *Rom.* vii. 23. *Gal.* vi. 1. and yet not be a ſervant of corruption, or properly in a ſtate of bondage to it; but this is to be underſtood of a total and compleat victory, when a man is wholly under the dominion of ſin, it reigns in his mortal body, and he obeys it in the luſts of it, and yields his members inſtruments of unrighteouſneſs; ſuch a man is neither a free man himſelf, nor can he much leſs promiſe and give liberty to others.

Ver. 20. *For if after they have eſcaped the pollutions of the world*, &c.] The ſins of it, the governing vices of it, which the men of the world are addicted to, and immerſed in; for the whole world lies in wickedneſs, and which are of a defiling nature: the phraſe is *Rabbinnical*; it is ſaid[q], "he that ſtudies not in the law in this world, but is defiled "בטנופי עלמא *with the pollutions of the world*, what "is written of him? and they took him, and caſt him "without:" theſe, men may eſcape, abſtain from, and outwardly reform, with reſpect unto, and yet be deſtitute of the grace of God; ſo that this can be no inſtance of the final and total apoſtacy of real ſaints; for the houſe may be ſwept, and garniſhed with an external reformation; perſons may be outwardly righteous before men, have a form of godlineſs and a name to live, and yet be dead in treſpaſſes and ſins; all which they may have *through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt*. The *Vulgate Latin*, and all the *Oriental* verſions, read *our Lord*, and the latter leave out, *and Saviour*; by which *knowledge* is meant, not a ſpiritual, experimental knowledge of Chriſt, for that is eternal life, the beginning, pledge, and earneſt of it; but a notional knowledge of Chriſt, or a profeſſion of knowledge of him, for it may be rendred *acknowledgment*; or rather the goſpel of Chriſt, which, being only notionally received, may have ſuch an effect on men, as outwardly to reform their lives, at leaſt in ſome inſtances, and for a while, in whoſe hearts it has no place. Now, if after all this knowledge and reformation, *they are again entangled therein*; in the pollutions of the world, in worldly luſts, which are as gins, pits and ſnares: *and overcome*; by them, ſo as to be laden with them, and led away, and entirely governed and influenced by them: *the latter end*, or ſtate, *is worſe with them, than the beginning*; ſee *Matth.* xii. 45. Their beginning, or firſt eſtate, was that in which they were born, a ſtate of darkneſs, ignorance, and ſin, and in which they were brought up, and was either the ſtate of *Judaiſm*, or of *Gentiliſm*; their next eſtate was an outward deliverance and eſcape, from the error of the one, or of the other, and an embracing and profeſſing the truth of the Chriſtian religion, joined with a becoming external converſation; and this their laſt eſtate was an apoſtacy from the truth of the Goſpel they had profeſſed, a reception of error and hereſy, and a relapſe into ſin and immorality, which made their caſe worſe, than it was at firſt; for, generally, ſuch perſons are more extravagant in ſinning; are like raging waves of the ſea, foaming out their own ſhame; and are ſeldom, or ever, recovered; and by their light, knowledge and profeſſion, their puniſhment will be more aggravated, and become intolerable.

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[q] Zohar in Gen. fol. 104. 3. Vid. Bechinot Olam, p. 178.

Ver. 21. *For it had been better for them*, &c.] Not that ignorance is good, or to be excuſed; but it would have been a leſſer evil, and not ſo much aggravated: *not to have known the way of righteouſneſs*; the ſame with *the way of truth*, ver. 2. and *the right way*, ver. 15. the Goſpel, which points out the way and method of a ſinner's juſtification before God, which is not by the works of the law, but by the righteouſneſs of Chriſt imputed to them, and received by faith; and which teaches men to live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly; and a large, notional, tho' not an experimental knowledge, theſe Apoſtates had, of the word and doctrine of righteouſneſs, and indeed of the whole of the Chriſtian religion, which may truly go by this name: *than after they have known it*; owned, embraced, and profeſſed it: *to turn*; the *Vulgate Latin* verſion, and ſome copies, as the *Alexandrian*, and others, add, *to that which is behind*; to their former luſts, or errors, or worſe, which they had turned their backs upon externally: *from the holy commandment delivered unto them*; by the *commandment* is meant the Goſpel alſo, ſee chap. iii. 2. 1 *Tim.* vi. 14. called *holy*, becauſe of its nature and influence, and in oppoſition to the pollutions of the world; and which is the faith once delivered, *Jude* 3. and which they received, as delivered to them; and, particularly, the ordinances of it, which they once ſubmitted to, kept, and obſerved, as they were delivered to them, but now relinquiſhed, or corrupted: wherefore, it would have been better for them to have been in their former ignorance, either in *Judaiſm*, or in *Gentiliſm*, ſince proportionate to a man's light is his guilt, and ſo his puniſhment, ſee *Rom.* ii. 12. *Luke* xii. 47,48.

Ver. 22. *But it is happened unto them, according to the true proverb*, &c.] Which is true, both in fact, and in the application of it, and which lies in the Scriptures of truth, at leaſt the firſt part of it, *Prov.* xxvi. 11. *The dog is turned to his own vomit again, and the ſow that was waſhed, to her wallowing in the mire*; which expreſſes the filthy nature of ſin, ſignified by vomit, mire and dirt, than which nothing is more abominable and defiling; and alſo the juſt characters of theſe apoſtates, who are fitly compared to dogs and ſwine; and likewiſe their irreclaimable and irrecoverable ſtate and condition, it being impoſſible they ſhould be otherwiſe, unleſs their natures were changed and altered. In the *Hebrew* language, a *ſow* is called חזיר from the root חזר, which ſignifies to *return*, becauſe that creature, as ſoon as it is out of the mire and dirt, and is waſhed from its filthineſs, naturally returns to it again: ſo ſuch apoſtates return to what they were before, to their former principles and practices: in this manner the *Jews* explain the proverb, "*Tobiah* returns to *Tobiah*, as it is ſaid, *Prov.* xxvi. 11. *as a dog returneth to his vomit*[*]."

CHAP. III.

IN this chapter the Apoſtle makes mention of the end and deſign of his writing this ſecond Epiſtle; foretels that there would be ſcoffers at the coming of Chriſt in the laſt days; deſcribes the coming of Chriſt, and the burning of the world; and cloſes with the uſe ſaints ſhould make of theſe things. The end of his writing both this and the former Epiſtle, was to put the perſons he writes unto in mind of the doctrines and ordinances of the Goſpel, delivered by the prophets and Apoſtles, ver. 1, 2. and then, agreeable to what the prophets had ſaid, he predicts, that there would be ſcoffers in the laſt day; who are deſcribed by their ſinful courſe of life, and by their words, what they would ſay concerning the coming of Chriſt, and their reaſoning about it, ver. 3, 4. which aroſe from their ignorance of the creation of the heavens and the earth, and of the ſituation of them; and is refuted by ſhewing that things have not remained as they were from the creation; that the earth ſtanding in and out of the water, as it was capable of being overflowed with a flood, ſo it periſhed by one; and that the preſent heavens and earth are reſerved and prepared for a general burning at the day of judgment, in which wicked men will be deſtroyed, ver. 5, 6, 7. but let theſe men ſcoff as they will, the length of time ſince the promiſe of Chriſt's coming was made, ſhould be no objection with the ſaints to the performance of it; ſince the longeſt term of time is nothing with God, however conſiderable it may be with men, ver. 8. beſides, the reaſon of the coming of Chriſt being deferred, is not owing to any dilatorineſs in the performance of the promiſe, but to the long-ſuffering of God towards his elect, being unwilling that any one of them ſhould be loſt, but that all ſhould be brought to repentance, ver. 9. but as for the coming of Chriſt, that is certain, and will be ſudden; at which time will be the general conflagration, which is deſcribed in a very awful manner, ver. 10—12. and the uſe to be made of ſuch a tremendous diſpenſation by the ſaints, is to live a holy and godly converſation, ver. 11. to be eagerly looking for the coming of Chriſt, ver. 12. and to expect, according to his promiſe, new heavens and a new earth, in which will dwell righteous perſons, ver. 13. and to be diligent to be found in peace at that day, ver. 14. and to account the long-ſuffering of God ſalvation; and the whole of this account, and the uſe of it, is ſtrengthened by the teſtimony of the Apoſtle *Paul*, of whom, and of his Epiſtles, a character is given, ver. 15, 16. and the Epiſtle is concluded with ſome cautions and exhortations,

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[*] Vajikra Rabba, §. 16. fol. 158. 4.

hortations to the ſaints, to beware leſt they ſhould be carried away with the errors of wicked men, and ſo fall from any degree of ſtedfaſtneſs in the faith; and to be concerned for a growth in grace, and in the knowledge of Chriſt Jeſus, to whom glory is to be aſcribed for ever and ever, ver. 17, 18.

Ver. 1. *This ſecond Epiſtle, beloved, I now write unto you*, &c.] This is a tranſition to another part of the Epiſtle; for the Apoſtle having largely deſcribed falſe teachers, the ſecret enemies of the chriſtian religion under a profeſſion of it, paſſes on to take notice of the more open adverſaries and prophane ſcoffers of it; and from their ridicule of the doctrine of Chriſt's ſecond coming, he proceeds to treat of that, and of the deſtruction of the world, and the future happineſs of the ſaints: he calls this Epiſtle his *ſecond Epiſtle*, becauſe he had written another before to the ſame perſons; and that the author of this Epiſtle was an Apoſtle, is evident from the following verſe; and which compared with ch. i. 18. ſhews him to be the Apoſtle *Peter*, whoſe name it bears, and who was an eye-witneſs to the transfiguration of Chriſt on the mount: he addreſſes theſe ſaints here, as alſo in ver. 8, 14, 17. under the character of *beloved*; becauſe they were the beloved of God, being choſen by him according to his foreknowledge, and regenerated by him, according to his abundant mercy; and were openly his people, and had obtained mercy from him, and like precious faith with the Apoſtles; and were alſo the beloved of Chriſt, being redeemed by him, not with gold and ſilver, but with his precious blood; for whom he ſuffered, and who were partakers of his ſufferings, and the benefits ariſing from them, and who had all things given them by him, pertaining to life and godlineſs, and exceeding great and precious promiſes; and were likewiſe beloved by the Apoſtle, though ſtrangers, and not merely as *Jews*, or becauſe they were his countrymen, but becauſe they were the elect of God, the redeemed of Chriſt, and who were ſanctified by the Spirit, and had the ſame kind of faith he himſelf had. The *Syriac* and *Arabic* verſions read, *my beloved*; and the *Ethiopic* verſion, *my brethren:* his end in writing both this and the former Epiſtle follows; *in* both *which I ſtir up your pure minds by way of remembrance*; that this was his view both in this and the former Epiſtle, appears from 1 Epiſtle, i. 13. and 2 Epiſtle, i. 12, 13, 14, 15. he calls their *minds pure*; not that they were ſo naturally, for the minds and conſciences of men are univerſally defiled with ſin; nor are the minds of all men pure who ſeem to be ſo in their own eyes, or appear ſo to others; nor can any man, by his own power or works, make himſelf pure from ſin; only the blood of Chriſt purges and cleanſes from it; and a pure mind is a mind ſprinkled with that blood, and which receives the truth as it is in Jeſus, in the power and purity of it, and that holds the myſtery of the faith in a pure conſcience. Some verſions, as the *Vulgate Latin* and *Arabic*, render the word *ſincere*, as it is in *Phil.* i. 10. and may deſign the ſincerity of their hearts in the worſhip of God, in the doctrines of Chriſt, and to one another, and of the grace of the Spirit of God in them; as that their faith was unfeigned, their hope without hypocriſy, and their love without diſſimulation, and their repentance real and genuine; but yet they needed to be ſtirred up by way of remembrance, both of the truth of the Goſpel, and the duties of religion; for ſaints are apt to be forgetful of the word, both of its doctrines and its exhortations; and it is the buſineſs of the miniſters of the word, to put them in mind of them, either by preaching or by writing; and which ſhews the neceſſity and uſefulneſs of the ſtanding miniſtry of the Goſpel: the particulars he put them in mind of, next follow.

Ver. 2. *That ye may be mindful*, &c.] This is an explanation of the above-mentioned end of his writing this and the other Epiſtle; which was, that thoſe ſaints might be mindful of two things more eſpecially: *of the words which were ſpoken before by the holy prophets*; that is, the prophets of the Old Teſtament, who were holy men of God, and therefore their words are to be regarded, and retained in memory; the Goſpel itſelf was ſpoken by them, and ſo was Chriſt, and the things relating to his perſon and offices, and to his incarnation, ſufferings and death, and the glory that ſhould follow; and indeed the Apoſtles ſaid no other than what they did, only more clearly and expreſly; and particularly many things were ſaid by them concerning the ſecond coming of Chriſt to judge the world, and deſtroy it, and to prepare new heavens and a new earth for his people, which is what the Apoſtle has chiefly in view; ſee *Jude* 14. *Iſ.* xi. 3. and lxv. 17. *Mal.* iv. 1. *Dan.* vii. 9, 10, 13, 14. *and of the commandment of us the Apoſtles of the Lord and Saviour*; that is, Jeſus Chriſt, as *Jude* expreſſes it, and the *Ethiopic* verſion adds here; and which likewiſe, and alſo the *Syriac* verſion, and ſome antient copies read, *our Lord and Saviour*, and omit the *us* before the Apoſtles; by whom are meant, the twelve Apoſtles of Chriſt, of which *Peter* was one, and therefore ſays, *us the Apoſtles*; though the *Vulgate Latin* and *Arabic* verſions, and the *Complutenſian* edition read, *your Apoſtles*, and ſo the *Alexandrian* copy; but the former is the received reading: now *the commandment* of theſe intends either the Goſpel in general, ſo called becauſe it was the commandment of our Lord to his Apoſtles to preach it; and therefore the word *commandment* in the original, ſtands between *us the Apoſtles*, and *the Lord and Saviour*, as being the commandment of the one to the other; unleſs it can be thought any regard is had to the new commandment of love, or that of faith, inculcated both by Chriſt and his Apoſtles; *John* xiii. 34. 1 *John* ii. 7, 8. and iii. 23. or rather, particularly the inſtructions, directions, and predictions of the Apoſtles concerning the ſecond coming of Chriſt, and what ſhould go before it, as appears from the following words, and the parallel place in *Jude* 17, 18. the words of the prophets and Apoſtles being here put together, ſhew the agreement there is between them, and what regard is to be had to each of them, and to any thing and every thing in which they agree.

Ver. 3. *Knowing this firſt*, &c.] In the firſt place, principally, and chiefly, and which might eaſily be known and obſerved from the writings of the Apoſtles and prophets; ſee 1 *Tim.* iv. 1, 2. 2 *Tim.* iii. 1. *that there ſhall come in the laſt days ſcoffers*, or *mockers*; ſuch as would make a mock at ſin, make light of it, plead for it, openly commit it, and glory in it; and ſcoff at all religion, as the prejudice of education, as an engine of ſtate, a piece of civil policy, to keep ſubjects in awe, as cant, enthuſiaſm, and madneſs, as a gloomy melancholy thing, depriving men of true pleaſure; and throw out their flouts and jeers at thoſe that are the moſt religious, for the juſt, upright man, is commonly by ſuch laughed to ſcorn, and thoſe that depart from evil make themſelves a prey; and particularly at the miniſters of the word, for a man that has ſcarcely ſo much common ſenſe as to preſerve him from the character of an ideot, thinks himſelf a wit of the age, if he can at any rate break a jeſt upon a

Goſpel miniſter: nor do the ſcriptures of truth eſcape the banter and burleſque of theſe ſcoffers; the doctrines of it being fooliſhneſs to them, and the commands and ordinances in it being grievous and intolerable to them; yea, to thoſe lengths do ſuch proceed, as to ſcoff at God himſelf; at his perſons, purpoſes, providences, and promiſes; at Jehovah the Father, as the God of nature and providence, and eſpecially as the God and father of Chriſt, and of all grace in him; at Jehovah the Son, at his perſon, as being the Son of God, and truly God; at his office, as mediator, and at his blood, righteouſneſs, and ſacrifice, which they trample under foot; and at Jehovah the Spirit, whom they do deſpite unto, as the Spirit of grace, deriding his operations in regeneration and ſanctification, as dream and deluſion; and moſt of all, things to come are the object of their ſcorn and deriſion; as the ſecond coming of Chriſt, the reſurrection of the dead, a future judgment, the torments of hell, and the joys of heaven; all which they repreſent as the tricks and juggles of deſigning men: ſuch as theſe, according to the prophets and Apoſtles, were to come *in the laſt days*; either in the days of the Meſſiah, in the Goſpel diſpenſation, the times between the firſt and ſecond coming of Chriſt; for it is a rule with the *Jews*[*], that wherever the laſt days are mentioned, the days of the Meſſiah are intended; ſee *Heb.* i. 1. when the prophets foretold ſuch ſcoffers ſhould come; or in the laſt days of the *Jewiſh* ſtate both civil and religious, called *the ends of the world*; 1 *Cor.* x. 11. a little before the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, when iniquity greatly abounded; *Matt.* xxiv. 11, 12. or *in the laſt of the days*, as the words may be rendered, and ſo anſwer to באחרית הימים, in *Iſ.* ii. 2. and may regard the latter part of the laſt times; the times of the Apoſtles were the laſt days, 1 *John*, ii. 18. they began then, and will continue to Chriſt's ſecond coming; when ſome time before that, it will be a remarkable age for ſcoffers and ſcorners; and we have lived to ſee an innumerable company of them, and theſe predictions fulfilled; from whence it may be concluded, that the coming of Chriſt is at hand: theſe ſcoffers are further deſcribed as *walking after their own luſts*; either after the carnal reaſonings of their minds, admitting of nothing but what they can comprehend by reaſon, making that the rule, teſt and ſtandard of all their principles, and ſo caſt away the law of the Lord, and deſpiſe the word of the holy one of *Iſrael*; or rather, after their ſinful and fleſhly luſts, making them their guides and governors, and giving up themſelves entirely to them, to obey and fulfil them; the phraſe denotes a continued ſeries of ſinning, a progreſs in it, a deſire after it, and pleaſure in it, and an obſtinate perſiſting in it: ſcoffers at religion and revelation, are generally libertines; and ſuch as ſit in the ſeat of the ſcornful, are in the counſel of the ungodly, and way of ſinners, *Pſ.* i. 1.

Ver. 4. *And ſaying, Where is the promiſe of his coming?* &c.] That is, of the coming of the Lord and Saviour, ver. 2. the object of their ſcorn and deriſion, and whom they name not, through contempt; and the meaning is, What is become of the promiſe of his coming? where the accompliſhment of it? The prophets foretold he would come; he himſelf ſaid he would come again; the angels, at his aſcenſion, declared he would come from heaven in like manner as he went up; and all his Apoſtles gave out, that he would appear a ſecond time to judge both quick and dead, and that his coming was at hand; but where is the fulfilment of all this? he is not come: nor is there any ſign or likelihood of it: *for ſince the fathers fell aſleep*; or *died*; which is the language of the ſcriptures, and here ſneered at by theſe men, who believe them ſo faſt aſleep as never to be awaked, or raiſed more; and by *the fathers* they mean the firſt inhabitants of the world, as *Adam*, *Abel*, *Seth*, &c. and all the patriarchs and prophets in all ages; the *Ethiopic* verſion renders it, *our firſt fathers*: *all things continue as* they were *from the beginning of the creation*; reaſoning, from the ſettled order of things, the conſtant revolution of the ſun, moon, and ſtars, the permanency of the earth, and the ſucceſſion of the inhabitants of it, to the future continuance of things, without any alteration; and conſequently, that Chriſt would not come, as was promiſed, to raiſe the dead, judge mankind, deſtroy the world, and ſet up a new ſtate of things: the fallacy of which reaſoning is expoſed by the Apoſtle in the following words.

Ver. 5. *For this they willingly are ignorant of*, &c.] Namely, what follows; for as theſe men were ſuch as had profeſſed chriſtianity, and had the advantage of revelation, and had the opportunity of reading the ſcriptures, they might have known that the heavens and the earth were from the beginning; and that they were made by the word of God; and that the earth was originally in ſuch a poſition and ſituation as to be overflowed with a flood, and that it did periſh by a general innundation; and that the preſent heavens and earth are kept and reſerved for a general burning; and it might be diſcerned in nature, that there are preparations making for an univerſal conflagration; but all this they choſe not to know, and affected ignorance of: particularly *that by the word of God the heavens were of old*; not only in the times of *Noah*, but *from the beginning*, as the *Ethiopic* verſion reads, and which agrees with the account in *Gen.* i. 1. by *the heavens* may be meant both the third heaven, and the ſtarry heavens, and the airy heavens, with all their created inhabitants; and eſpecially the latter, ſince theſe were concerned in, and affected with the general deluge; and theſe were in the beginning of time, out of nothing brought into being, and ſo were not eternal, and might be deſtroyed again, or at leaſt undergo a change, even though they were of old, and of long duration: for it was *by the word of God* that they at firſt exiſted, and were ſo long preſerved in being; either by the commanding word of God, by his powerful voice, his almighty *fiat*, who ſaid, Let it be done, and it was done, and who commanded beings to riſe up out of nothing, and they did, and ſtood faſt; and ſo the *Arabic* verſion renders it, *by the command of God*; or by his eternal logos, the eſſential word of God, the ſecond perſon in the Trinity, who is often in ſcripture called the word, and the word of God, and as ſome think, by the Apoſtle *Peter*, 1 Epiſtle, i. 23. and certain it is that the creation of all things is frequently aſcribed to him; ſee *John* i. 1, 2, 3. *Col.* i. 16. *Heb.* i. 2, 10. and xi. 3. wherefore, by the ſame word they might be diſſolved, and made to paſs away, as they will; *and the earth ſtanding out of the water and in the water*; that is, *by the word of God*; for this phraſe in the original text, is placed after this clauſe, and laſt of all; and refers not only to the being of the heavens of old, but to the riſe, ſtanding, and ſubſiſtence of the earth, which is here particularly deſcribed for the ſake of the deluge, the Apoſtle afterwards mentions: and it is ſaid to be *ſtanding out*

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[*] Kimchi in Iſ. ii. 2.

of the water, or *conſiſting out of it*; it conſiſts of it as a part; the globe of the earth is terraqueous, partly land and partly water; and even the dry land itſelf has its riſe and ſpring out of water; the firſt matter that was created is called the deep, and waters in which darkneſs was, and upon which the Spirit of God moved, *Gen.* i. 2. agreeable to which *Thales* the *Mileſian* aſſerted [t], that water was the principle of all things; and the *Ethiopic* verſion here renders the words thus, *and the word of God created alſo the earth out of water, and confirmed it*: the account the *Jews* give of the firſt formation of the world is this [u]; "at firſt the world was מים במים, *water in water*; "what is the ſenſe (of that paſſage *Gen.* i. 2.) *and the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters?* "he returned and made it ſnow; *he caſteth forth his ice like morſels*, *Pſ.* cxlvii. 17. he returned and "made it earth; *for to the ſnow he ſaith, be thou earth*, *Job* xxxvii. 6. and the earth ſtood upon "the waters; *to him that ſtretched out the earth above the waters*, *Pſ.* cxxxvi. 6." however, certain it is, that the earth was firſt covered with water, when at the word, and by the command of God, the waters fled and haſted away, and were gathered into one place, and the dry land roſe up and appeared; and then it was that it *ſtood out of the water*; ſee *Gen.* i. 9, 10. *Pſ.* civ. 6, 7. moreover, the earth conſiſts, or is kept and held together by water; there is a general humidity or moiſture that runs through it, by which it is compacted together, or otherwiſe it would reſolve into duſt, and by which it is fit for the production, increaſe, and preſervation of vegetables and other things, which it otherwiſe would not be: and it is alſo ſaid to ſtand *in the water*, or *by the water*; upon it, according to *Pſ.* xxiv. 2. or rather in the midſt of it, there being waters above the firmament or expanſe, in the airy heavens, in the clouds all around the earth, called the windows of heaven; and water below the firmament or expanſe, in the earth itſelf; beſides the great ſea, a large body of waters, is in the midſt of the earth, in the very bowels of it, which feed rivers, and form ſprings, fountains and wells, called the fountains of the great deep; and in this poſition and ſituation was the earth of old, and ſo was prepared in nature for a general deluge, and yet was preſerved firm and ſtable by the word of God, for a long ſeries of time; ſo the *Arabic* verſion renders it, *and the earth out of the water, and in the water ſtood ſtable, by the command of God*; but when it was his pleaſure, he brought the flood on the world of the ungodly, of which an account follows.

Ver. 6. *Whereby the world that then was*, &c.] The old world, as it is called in ch. ii. 5. and as the *Ethiopic* verſion here renders it; the world before the flood, that had ſtood from the creation 1656 years: *being overflowed with water*; by the windows of heaven being opened, and the waters over the earth poured down upon it; and by the fountains of the great deep being broken up in it; thus by theſe waters from above and below, a general inundation was brought upon it; for that the deluge was univerſal, is clear from hence, and from the account by *Moſes*; for as the earth was filled with violence, and all fleſh had corrupted its way, God threatned a general deſtruction, and which was brought by a flood, which overflowed the whole earth; for all the hills that were under the whole heaven were covered with it, and every thing that had life in the dry land died, and every living ſubſtance was deſtroyed, that was upon the face of the ground; ſee *Gen.* vi. 11, 12, 13. and vii. 11, 19, 22, 23. and hence it follows, that hereby the then world *periſhed*; not as to the ſubſtance of it, whatever alteration there might be in its form and poſition; but as to the inhabitants of it; for all creatures, men and cattle, and the creeping things, and fowls of the heaven were deſtroyed, excepting *Noah* and his wife, and his three ſons and their wives, and the creatures that were with him in the ark; ſee *Gen.* vii. 23. 1 *Pet.* iii. 20. and by this inſtance the Apoſtle ſhews the falſhood of the above aſſertion, that all things continued as they were from the beginning of the creation; for the earth was covered with water at firſt, and which, by the command of God, was removed, and after a long ſeries of time, was brought on it again, and by it drowned; and from whence it alſo appears, that this ſort of reaſoning uſed by thoſe ſcoffers, is very fallacious; for though the heavens and the earth may continue for a long time, as they did before the flood, in the ſame form and ſituation, it does not follow from thence, that they always will, for the contrary is evident from what follows.

Ver. 7. *But the heavens and the earth which are now*, &c.] In being, in diſtinction from, and oppoſition to the heavens that were of old, and the earth ſtanding in and out of the water, and the world that then was when the waters of the flood overflowed it: *by the ſame word are kept in ſtore*; that is, by the word of God, as in ver. 5. and the *Syriac*, *Arabic*, and *Ethiopic* verſions read, *by his word*; by the ſame word that the heavens, and the earth were made of old, or in the beginning, are they kept, preſerved, and upheld in their being: or *are treaſured up*; the heavens and the earth are a rich treaſure, they are full of the riches of God, as the God of nature and providence; and they are kept with care, as a treaſure is, not to be touched or meddled with at preſent, but muſt continue in the ſame poſition and uſe; or they are laid up in the ſtores, and ſealed up among the treaſures of divine wrath and vengeance, and will be brought out another day, and made uſe of, to the deſtruction of the ungodly inhabitants of the world, and to aggravate and increaſe their miſery and ruin: for it is further ſaid of them, that they are *reſerved unto fire*; for tho' the world is, and has been preſerved a long time without any viſible alteration in it, yet it will not be always ſo preſerved; and tho' it is, and will be kept from being drowned by water again, thro' the promiſe and power of God, yet it is kept and reſerved for a general conflagration; ſee ver. 10, 12. And as the old world was put into a natural ſituation, ſo as to be drowned by water, there are now preparations making in nature, in the preſent world, for the burning of it; witneſs the fiery meteors, blazing ſtars, and burning comets in the heavens, and the ſubterraneous fires in the bowels of the earth, which in ſome places have already broke out: there are now many *Volcano's*, burning mountains and iſlands, particularly in *Sicily*, *Italy*, and the parts adjacent, the ſeat of the beaſt, and where it is very likely the univerſal conflagration will begin, as *Ætna*, *Veſuvius*, *Strombolo*, and other *Volcano's*; and even in our own *iſland*, we have ſome ſymptoms and appearances of theſe fires under ground, as fiery eruptions in ſome places, and the hot waters at the *Bath*, and elſewhere, ſhow; from all which, 'tis plain, that the heavens and earth, that now are, are not, as they always

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[t] Vid. Laert. l. i. in vit. Thaletiſ.

[u] T. Hieroſ. Chagiga, fol. 77. 1.

ways were, and will be, but are reſerved and prepared for burning; and that things are ripening apace, as mens ſins alſo are, for the general conflagration. *Joſephus*[w] relates, that *Adam* foretold that there would be a deſtruction of all things, once by the force of fire, and once by the power and multitude of water; and it is certain the *Jews* had knowledge of the deſtruction of the earth by fire, as by water: they ſay[x], "that when the law was "given to *Iſrael*, his (God's) voice went from one "end of the world to the other, and trembling laid "hold on all the nations of the world in their temples, "and they ſaid a ſong, as it is ſaid, *Pſ.* xxix. 9. *and* "*in his temple doth every one ſpeak of his glory*; all of "them gathered together to wicked *Balaam*, and ſaid "to him, what is the voice of the multitude which "we hear, perhaps a flood is coming upon the world? "he ſaid unto them, *the Lord ſitteth upon the* "*flood, yea, the Lord ſitteth king for ever*, *Pſ.* "xxix. 10. Thus hath the Lord ſwore, that he "will not bring a flood upon the world; they re"plied to him, a flood of water he will not bring, "but, מבול של אש, *a flood of fire* he will bring, "as it is ſaid, *Iſ.* lxvi. 16. *for by fire will the Lord* "*plead*," or judge: and hence they ſpeak[y] of the wicked being judged with two ſorts of judgments, by water, and by fire: and, according to our Apoſtle, the heavens and earth are kept and reſerved to fire, *againſt the day of judgment, and perdition of ungodly men*; the time when God will judge the world is fixed, tho' it is not known; and it is called a *day*, becauſe of the evidence and light in which things will appear, and the quick diſpatch of buſineſs in it; and the *judgment* ſpoken of is the future judgment, and which is certain, and will be univerſal, righteous, and eternal, and when wicked and ungodly men will be puniſhed with everlaſting deſtruction: the bodies of thoſe that will be alive at the general conflagration, will be burnt in it, tho' not annihilated, and will be raiſed again, and both ſoul and body will be deſtroyed in hell.

Ver. 8. *But beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing*, &c.] Here the Apoſtle addreſſes the ſaints he writes unto, and for whom he had a tender affection and regard, and for whoſe welfare he was concerned, leſt they ſhould be ſtumbled at the length of time, ſince the promiſe of the coming of Chriſt was given, and which theſe ſcoffers object; and therefore he would have them know, obſerve, and conſider this one thing, which might be of great uſe to them to make their minds eaſy, and keep up their faith and expectation of the coming of Chriſt: *that one day is with the Lord as a thouſand years, and a thouſand years as one day*; referring either to *Pſ.* xc. 4. or to a common ſaying among the *Jews*, founded on the ſame paſſage, יומו של הק״בה אלף שנים, *the day of the holy bleſſed God is a thouſand years*[z]; ſuggeſting, that tho' between thirty and forty years had elapſed ſince the promiſe was given out, that Chriſt would come again, and ſhould, even a thouſand, or two thouſand years more, run off, before the coming of Chriſt, yet this ſhould be no objection to the accompliſhment of the promiſe; for tho' ſuch a number of years is very conſiderable among men, yet not *with God*, as the *Arabic* and *Ethiopic* verſions read, with whom a thouſand years, and even eternity itſelf, is but as a day, *Iſ.* xliii. 13. Unleſs this phraſe ſhould be thought to refer, as it is by ſome, to the day of judgment, and be expreſſive of the duration of that: 'tis certain, that the *Jews* interpreted days of millenniums, and reckoned millenniums by days, and uſed this phraſe in confirmation of it. Thus they ſay[a], "in the time "to come, which is in the laſt days, on the ſixth "day, which is the ſixth millennium, when the "Meſſiah comes, for the day of the holy bleſſed "God is a thouſand years."——And a little after, "*the Lord hath created a new thing in the earth*, "*a woman ſhall compaſs a man*. This is in the time "of the Meſſiah, which is in the ſixth day." And elſewhere[b], "the ſixth degree is called the ſixth "day, the day of the holy bleſſed God is a thou"ſand years.——And in that day the king Meſ"ſiah ſhall come, and it ſhall be called the feaſt "of gathering, for the holy bleſſed God will ga"ther in it the captivity of his people." So they call the ſabbath, or ſeventh day, the ſeventh millennium, and interpret[c], "*the ſong for the ſab*"*bath-day*, *Pſ.* xcii. title, for the ſeventh millen"nium, for one day of the holy bleſſed God is a "thouſand years." To which agrees the tradition of *Elias*, which runs thus[d]; "'tis the tradition "of the houſe of *Elias*, that the world ſhall be ſix "thouſand years, two thouſand years void (of the "law), two thouſand years the law, and two thou"ſand years the days of the Meſſiah;" for they ſuppoſe that the ſix days of the creation were expreſſive of the ſix thouſand years in which the world will ſtand; and that the ſeventh day prefigures the laſt millennium, in which will be the day of judgment, and the world to come; for "the ſix days of the creation, they ſay[e], is a ſign "or intimation of theſe things: on the ſixth day "man was created, and on the ſeventh his work "was finiſhed; ſo the kings of the nations of the "world (continue) five millenniums, anſwering to "the five days, in which were created the fowls, "and the creeping things of the waters, and other "things; and the enjoyment of their kingdom is "a little in the ſixth, anſwerable to the creation of "the beaſts, and living creatures created at this time "in the beginning of it; and the kingdom of the "houſe of *David* is in the ſixth millennium, an"ſwerable to the creation of man, who knew his "creator, and rul'd over them all; and in the end "of that millennium, will be the day of judg"ment, anſwerable to man, who was judged in "the end of it; and the ſeventh is the ſabbath, "and it is the beginning of the world to come."

Ver. 9. *The Lord is not ſlack concerning his promiſe*, &c.] The *Syriac* verſion reads in the plural, *his promiſe*, any of his promiſes; tho' the words ſeem rather to regard the particular promiſe of Chriſt's coming, either to take vengeance on the *Jewiſh* nation, of which coming there was a promiſe made, and is often referr'd to by Chriſt, and his Apoſtles; ſee *Mark* ix. 1. *John* xxi. 22. *Heb.* x. 37. and it now being upwards of thirty years ſince, it was given out, ſome men began to charge God with ſlackneſs and dilatorineſs; whereas the true reaſon of the delay of it was, that there might be time for the gathering in of his elect, among them by his angels, or apoſtles and miniſters, ſent into the ſeveral parts of *Judea*, that ſo none of them might periſh, but be brought to faith and repentance; and thus as the time of Chriſt's coming was prolonged more than was thought it would, ſo when the days of afflictions were come, they were ſhortened alſo for theſe elects ſake: or this promiſe regards the ſecond coming of Chriſt, to judge the quick and dead at the laſt day, of which the former was a prelude, preſage, and pledge; that Chriſt would come again, and appear a ſecond time in perſon, was promiſed by himſelf, and often ſpoken of by his Apoſtles; and many of the primitive chriſtians thought it would be very ſoon, and which might be occaſioned by the hints that were given of his coming in the other ſenſe. Now this being deferred longer than was expected, the ſcoffers or mockers, take upon them to charge the Lord with ſlackneſs in the fulfilment of his promiſe: *as ſome men count ſlackneſs*; as if he had either changed his purpoſe, or had prolonged it beyond the appointed time, or was unmindful of his promiſe, and would never fulfil it; whereas he is in one mind, and none can turn him, nor will he delay the fulfilment of his promiſe beyond the ſet time; he has fixed a day for his coming, in which he'll judge the world in righteouſneſs, and he'll keep it: he is not dilatory, *but is long-ſuffering to us-ward*; not to all the individuals of human nature, for the perſons intended by *us* are manifeſtly diſtinguiſhed from *ſome men* in the text, and from ſcoffers, mocking at the promiſe of Chriſt's coming, in the context, ver. 3, 4. and are expreſsly called *beloved*, ver. 1, 8, 14, 17. and God's long-ſuffering towards them, is their ſalvation, ver. 15. nor is it true of all men, that God is not willing that any of them ſhould periſh, and that every one of them ſhould come to repentance, ſince many of them do periſh in their ſins, and do not come to repentance, which would not be the caſe, if his determining will was otherwiſe; beſides, a ſociety or company of men are deſigned, to which the Apoſtle himſelf belonged, and of which he was a part; and who are deſcribed, in his Epiſtles, as the elect of God, called out of darkneſs into marvellous light, and having obtained like precious faith with the Apoſtles; and muſt be underſtood either of God's elect among the *Jews*, for *Peter* was a *Jew*, and they were *Jews* he wrote to; and then the ſenſe is, that the delay of Chriſt's coming is not owing to any ſlackneſs in him, but to his long-ſuffering to his elect among the *Jews*, being unwilling that any of that number among them ſhould periſh, but that all of them repent of their ſins, and believe in him; and therefore he waits till their converſion is over, when a nation ſhall be born at once, and they that have pierced him, look on him and mourn, and ſo all *Iſrael* ſhall be ſaved; or rather of the elect in general, whether among *Jews* or *Gentiles*, upon whom the Lord waits to be gracious, and whoſe long-ſuffering iſſues in their converſion and ſalvation. And upon account of theſe the Lord ſtays his coming till their number is compleat in effectual vocation; and for their ſakes he is long-ſuffering to others, and bears with a wicked world, with the idolatry, ſuperſtition, hereſy, prophaneneſs, and impiety, with which it abounds; but when the laſt man that belongs to that number is called, he'll quickly deſcend in flames of fire, and burn the world, and the wicked in it, and take his choſen ones to himſelf. The *Alexandrian* copy reads, *for you*, or your ſakes; and ſo the *Vulgate Latin*, *Syriac*, and *Ethiopic* verſions. A paſſage ſomewhat like to this is met with in a book of the *Jews*[f], eſteemed by them very ancient. "God prolongs or defers his anger with "men; and one day, which is a thouſand years, "is fixed, beſides the ſeventy years he delivered to "*David* the king. —— And he does not judge "man by his evil works which he continually does, "for if ſo, the world would not ſtand; but the "holy bleſſed God defers his anger with the righteous, and the wicked, that they may return, by "perfect repentance, and be eſtabliſhed in this "world, and in the world to come." And it is an obſervation of theirs[g], that when God is ſaid to be *long-ſuffering*, it is not written, ארך אף, but ארך אפים, intimating, that he is long-ſuffering both to the righteous and the wicked; but then he bears with the latter, for the ſake of the former: compare with this paſſage *Rev.* vi. 9, 10, 11. *not willing that any ſhould periſh*; not any of the *us*, whom he has loved with an everlaſting love, whom he has choſen in his Son, and given to him, and for whom he has died, and who are brought to believe in him. Theſe, tho' they were loſt in *Adam*, did not periſh; and tho' in their own apprehenſions, when awakened and convinced, are ready to periſh; and though their peace, joy, and comfort may periſh for a while, and they may fear a final and total periſhing; yet they ſhall never periſh as others do, or be puniſhed with everlaſting deſtruction: and that this is the will of God, appears by his choice of them to ſalvation; by the proviſions of grace for them in an everlaſting covenant; by the ſecurity of their perſons in the hands of Chriſt; by ſending his Son to obtain ſalvation for them, and his Spirit to apply it to them; and by his keeping them by his power, thro' faith, unto ſalvation. *But that all ſhould come to repentance*; not legal, but evangelical, without which all muſt periſh; and which all God's elect ſtand in need of, as well as others, being equally ſinners; and which they can't come to of themſelves, and therefore he not only calls them to it, in his word, and by his Spirit and grace, but beſtows it upon them; he has exalted Chriſt at his own right hand, to give it to them; and repentance is a grant from him, a free gift of his grace; and the Spirit is ſent down into their hearts to work it in them, to take away the ſtony heart, and give an heart of fleſh; without which, whatever time and ſpace may be given, or means afforded, even the moſt awful judgments, the greateſt mercies, and the moſt powerful miniſtry, will be of no avail.

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[w] Antiq. Jud. l. 1. c. 2. §. 3.

[x] T. Bab. Zebachim, fol. 116. 1.

[y] Zohar in Gen. fol. 50. 4. & 51. 1.

[z] Bereſhit Rabba, §. 8. fol. 7. 3. Vajikra Rabba, §. 19. fol. 160. 2. Bemidbar Rabba, §. 14. fol. 216. 1. Shirhaſhirim Rabba, fol. 20. 1. Zohar in Exod. fol. 60. 1. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 157. 1. & Niſhmat Chayim Orat. 1. c. 5. fol. 12. 1.

[a] Zohar in Gen. fol. 13. 4.

[b] Ib. fol. 16. 1.

[c] Bartenora in Miſn. Tamid, c. 7. §. 4.

[d] T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 97. 1. & Avoda Zara, fol. 9. 1.

[e] Ceſeph Miſna in Maimon. Hilchot Teſhuva, c. 9. §. 2.

Ver. 10. *But the day of the lord will come, as a thief in the night*, &c.] That is, the Lord will come in that day, which he has fixed, according to his promiſe, than which nothing is more certain; and he will come, as a thief in the night: he will come *in the night*, which may be literally underſtood; for as his firſt coming was in the night; ſee *Luke* ii. 8, 10, 11. ſo perhaps his ſecond coming may be in the night ſeaſon; or, figuratively, when it will be a time of great darkneſs; when there will be little faith in the earth, and both the wiſe and fooliſh virgins will be ſlumbering and ſleeping; when it will be a ſeaſon of great ſecurity, as it was in the days of *Noah*, and at the time of the burning of *Sodom* and *Gomorrha*. The *Vulgate Latin*, *Syriac* and *Ethiopic* verſions leave out the phraſe, *in the night*; and the *Alexandrian* copy uſes the emphatic article, *in the night*: and he will come, *as a thief*, in the dark, indiſcernibly; it will not be known, what hour he will come; he will come ſuddenly, at an unawares, when he is not expected, to the great ſurprize of men, and eſpecially of the ſcoffers; when the following awful things will be done: *in the which the heavens ſhall paſs away with a great noiſe*; not the third heaven, the ſeat of angels and glorified ſaints, and even of God himſelf; but the ſtarry and airy heavens, which ſhall paſs away, not as to their matter and ſubſtance, but as to ſome of their accidents

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[f] Zohar in Gen. fol. 83. 3.

[g] T. Hieroſ. Taanioth, fol. 65. 2. T. Bab. Bava Kama, fol. 50. 2.

and qualities, and the preſent uſe of them; and that with a great noiſe, like that of a violent ſtorm, or tempeſt; though the *Ethiopic* verſion renders it, *without a noiſe*; and which is more agreeable to his coming as a thief, which is not with noiſe, but in as ſtill a manner, as poſſible; and ſome learned men obſerve, that the word ſignifies ſwiftly, as well as with a noiſe; and, accordingly, the *Syriac* verſion renders it *ſuddenly*; and the *Arabic* verſion *preſently*, immediately; that is, as ſoon as Chriſt ſhall come, immediately, at once, from his face ſhall the earth and heavens flee away, as *John* in a viſion ſaw, *Rev.* xx. 11. *and the elements ſhall melt with fervent heat*; not what are commonly called the four elements, earth, air, fire, and water, the firſt principles of all things: the ancient philoſophers diſtinguiſhed between principles and elements; principles, they ſay [h], are neither generated, nor corrupted; τα τε στοιχεια κατα την εκπυρωσιν φθειρεσθαι, *but the elements will be corrupted, or deſtroyed by the conflagration*; which exactly agrees with what the Apoſtle here ſays: by the elements, ſeem to be meant, the hoſt of heaven, being diſtinguiſhed from the heavens, as the works of the earth are diſtinguiſhed from the earth in the next clauſe; and deſign, the firmament, or expanſe, with the ſun, moon and ſtars in it, which will be purged and purified by this liquefaction by fire; *the earth alſo* will be purged and purified from every thing, that is noxious, hurtful, unneceſſary, and diſagreeable; though the matter and ſubſtance of it will continue: *and the works that are therein, ſhall be burnt up*; all the works of nature, wicked men, cattle, trees, *&c.* and all the works of men, cities, towns, houſes, furniture, utenſils, inſtruments of arts of all ſorts, will be burnt by a material fire, breaking out of the earth, and deſcending from heaven, for which the preſent heavens and earth are reſerved: this general conflagration was not only known to the *Jews*, but to the heathens, to the poets, and *Platoniſt* and *Stoic* philoſophers, who frequently [i] ſpeak of it in plain terms. Some are of opinion, that theſe words refer to the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*; and ſo the paſſing away of the heavens may deſign the removal of their church ſtate and ordinances, *Heb.* xii. 26, 27. and the melting of the elements, the ceaſing of the ceremonial law, called the elements of the world, *Gal.* iv. 3. 9. and the burning of the earth, the deſtruction of the land of *Judea*, expreſſed in ſuch a manner in *Deut.* xxix. 23. and xxxii. 22. and particularly of the temple, and the curious works in that, which were all burnt up and deſtroyed by fire, though *Titus* endeavoured to prevent it, but could not [k]: which ſenſe may be included, inaſmuch as there was a promiſe of Chriſt's coming to deſtroy the *Jewiſh* nation, and was expected; and which deſtruction was a prelude of the deſtruction of the world, and is ſometimes expreſſed in ſuch like language, as that is; but then this muſt not take place, to the excluſion of the other ſenſe: and whereas this ſenſe makes the words to be taken, partly in a figurative, and partly in a literal way; and ſeeing the heavens and the earth are in the context only literally taken, the former ſenſe is to be preferred; and to which beſt agrees the following uſe to be made of theſe things.

Ver. 11. *Seeing then, that all theſe things ſhall be diſſolved*, &c.] By fire; the heaven with all its hoſt, ſun, moon and ſtars, clouds, meteors, and fowls of the air; the earth, and all that is upon it, whether of nature, or art; and, ſince nothing is more certain, than ſuch a diſſolution of all things, *what manner of perſons ought ye to be in* all *holy converſation and godlineſs?* not as the ſcoffers and prophane ſinners, who put away this evil day far from them, but as men, who have their loins girt, and their lights burning, waiting for their Lord's coming; being continually in the exerciſe of grace, and in the diſcharge of their religious duties, watching, praying, hearing, reading; living ſoberly, righteouſly and godly; guarding againſt intemperance and worldly mindedneſs, and every worldly and hurtful luſt.

Ver. 12. *Looking for, and haſting unto the coming of the day of God*, &c.] The ſame with *the day of the Lord*, ver. 10. and ſo the *Vulgate Latin* and *Arabic* verſions here read; and it intends the day of Chriſt's ſecond coming to judgment, and ſo is a proof of the deity of Chriſt; and is called *the day of God*, in diſtinction from man's day, or human judgment, 1 *Cor.* iv. 3. which is often fallacious; whereas the judgment of God is according to truth; and becauſe in that day Chriſt will appear moſt clearly to be truly and properly God, by the manifeſt diſplay of his omniſcience, omnipotence, and other glorious perfections of his; and becauſe it will be, as the day of God is, a thouſand years; and alſo the day, in which God will finiſh all his works, as on the ſeventh day, the works of creation, on this the works of providence; when all his purpoſes, promiſes and threatnings, relating to the final ſtate of all perſons and things will be fulfilled, and every work be brought to light, and into judgment, and every thing will ſtand in a clear light; for the day will declare it, either reſpecting God, or men; and there will be a diſplay, as of his grace and mercy, to his church and people; for it will be the day of his open eſpouſals to them, and of the gladneſs of his heart; ſo of his wrath and anger towards the wicked: for this great and dreadful day of the Lord ſhall burn like an oven, and deſtroy the wicked, root and branch: and it will be the day of Chriſt's glorious appearing, and of his kingdom, in which he will reign, before his ancients, glorioully; and when it is ended, God, Father, Son and Spirit, will be all in all: now *the coming* of this day ſaints ſhould be *looking for* by faith; believing that it certainly will come, ſince the patriarchs, prophets, Chriſt himſelf, the angels of heaven, and the apoſtles of the lamb, have all declared and aſſerted the coming of this day; and they ſhould look for it, and love it, as with the ſtrongeſt affection for it, and moſt vehement deſire of it, ſince they will then appear with Chriſt in glory; and they ſhould look out, and keep looking out for it, as what will be quickly; and tho' it is not, as ſoon as they deſire and expect, yet ſhould ſtill look wiſhly for it, and with patience and chearfulneſs wait for it: yea, they ſhould be *haſting unto* it, or *haſtening* it; for though the day is fixed for the coming of Chriſt, nor can it be altered, as his coming will not be longer, it cannot be ſooner, yet it becomes the ſaints to pray earneſtly for it, that it may be quickly, and for the accompliſhment of all things that go before it, prepare for it, and lead unto it; ſuch as the converſion of the *Jews*, and the bringing in of the fullneſs of the *Gentiles*; and by putting him in mind of, and pleading with him, his promiſes concerning

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[h] Diog. Laert. l. 7. in Vita Zenonis.

[i] Vid. Diog. Laert. ib. & l. 9. in Vita Heraclit. & Heſych. de Philoſ. p. 36. Arrian. Epict. l. 3. c. 13. Phurut. de Natura Deorum, p. 39. Ovid. Metamorph. fab. 7. Min. Felix, p. 37. & Juſtin. Martyr. Apol. 2. p. 66.

[k] Vid. Joſeph. de Bello Jud. l. 3. c. 9, 10. & l. 7. c. 14, 16.

cerning theſe things, and giving him no reſt till they are accompliſhed; there ſeems to be ſome reference to the prayers of the *Jews* for the Meſſiah's coming, which they deſire may be במהירה, *in haſte*; which will ſhow that they are in haſte for the coming of this day; and all which things God will haſten, though it will be in his own time: and moreover, ſaints ſhould be haſting to it by their readineſs for it, having their loins girt, and their lights burning, and their lamps trimmed, and they waiting for their Lord's coming, and going forth in acts of faith and love, and in the duties of religion, to meet him, and not ſlumber and ſleep: *wherein*; in which day, as in ver. 10. or *by which*; by which coming of Chriſt, or of the day of God, *the heavens being on fire ſhall be diſſolved, and the elements ſhall melt weth fervent heat*; at whoſe coming and preſence, and from whoſe face the heavens and earth ſhall flee away, juſt as the earth ſhook, and the heavens dropped, and *Sinai* itſelf moved, when God appeared upon it; ſee *Rev.* xx. 11. *Pſ.* lxviii. 8. This is a repetition of what is ſaid in ver 10. exciting attention to the exhortation given.

Ver. 13. *Nevertheleſs we, according to his promiſe*, &c.] Or *promiſes*, as the *Alexandrian* copy, and the *Vulgate Latin* verſion; namely thoſe in *Iſ.* lxv. 17. and lxvi. 22. *look for new heavens and a new earth*; not figuratively, the world to come in diſtinction from the *Jewiſh* world or ſtate; a new church-ſtate, the Goſpel-diſpenſation, with new ordinances, as baptiſm and the Lord's-ſupper, all legal ceremonies and ordinances being gone, and every thing new; for theſe things had taken place already, and were not looked for as future: but theſe phraſes are to be underſtood literally, as the heavens and the earth are in every paſſage in the context, ver. 5, 7, 10. and deſigns not new heavens and earth for ſubſtance, but for qualities; the heavens and elements being melted and diſſolved, and ſo purged and purified by fire, and the earth and its works being burnt up with it, and ſo cleared of every thing noxious, needleſs, and diſagreeable, new heavens and a new earth will appear, refined and purged from every thing which the curſe brought thereon for man's ſin: and ſuch heavens and earth the ſaints look for by faith and hope, and earneſt expectation, and with deſire and pleaſure; and therefore are not diſtreſſed, as they have no reaſon to be, with the burning of the preſent heavens and earth, as awful as theſe things will be; and they expect them not upon their own fancies and imaginations, or the vain conjectures and cunningly deviſed fables of men, but according to the promiſes of God recorded in the above paſſages, and in which they may be confirmed by the words of Chriſt, and by the viſion of *John*, *Rev.* xx. 1, 5. The *Alexandrian* copy reads, *and his promiſes*; as if it reſpected other promiſes the ſaints looked for beſides the new heavens and earth; namely, the reſurrection of the dead, eternal life, the incorruptible inheritance, the ultimate glory and happineſs: *wherein dwelleth righteouſneſs*; meaning not the heavenly felicity, called ſometimes the crown of righteouſneſs, and the hope of righteouſneſs, to which righteouſneſs gives a right, and where it will be perfect, for the Apoſtle is not ſpeaking of the ultimate glory of the ſaints; nor the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, as dwelling in the ſaints, as if the ſenſe was this, we in whom righteouſneſs dwells, look for new heavens and a new earth; for though the righteouſneſs of Chriſt is unto and upon them that believe, yet it is not in them; it is in Chriſt, and dwells in him, and not in them; it is not inherent in them, but imputed to them: by *righteouſneſs* is meant righteous men; ſuch as are ſo not in and of themſelves, or by the deeds of the law, or by works of righteouſneſs done by them, but who are made righteous by the obedience of Chriſt, and are righteouſneſs itſelf in him; ſee *Jer.* xxxiii. 16. 2 *Cor.* v. 21. now theſe, and theſe only, will be the inhabitants of the new heavens and the new earth; there will be no unrighteous perſons there, as in the preſent world, which lies in wickedneſs, and is full of wicked men; and they will be ſtocked with inhabitants after this manner; all the elect will now be gathered in, and Chriſt, when he comes, will bring all his ſaints with him from heaven, and will raiſe their bodies, and re-unite them to their ſouls; and thoſe that are alive will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, and will make up together the general aſſembly and church of the firſt-born, whoſe names are written in heaven; and whereas upon the coming of Chriſt, the preſent heavens and earth will be burnt or purified by fire, and ſo made new and fit for the ſpirits of juſt men made perfect, who being again embodied, will fill the face of them, and ſhall inherit the earth, and reign with Chriſt on it for a thouſand years, during which time there will not be a wicked man in them; for the wicked that will be alive at Chriſt's coming, will be burnt with the earth, and the wicked dead ſhall not riſe till the thouſand years are ended, and who being raiſed, will, together with the devils, make the *Gog* and *Magog* army; wherefore none but righteous perſons can look for theſe new heavens and earth, for to theſe only are they promiſed, and ſuch only ſhall dwell in them; ſo the *Targum* on *Jer.* xxiii. 23. paraphraſes the words, "I God have created the world from "the beginning, ſaith the Lord, I God will *renew* "*the world for the righteous*:" and this will be, the *Jews* ſay, for the ſpace of a thouſand years; "it is a tradition, they ſay [l], of the houſe of *Elias*, "that the righteous, whom the holy bleſſed God "will raiſe from the dead, ſhall not return to their "duſt, as is ſaid, *Iſ.* iv. 3. *and it ſhall come to paſs*, "&c. as the holy one continues for ever, ſo they "ſhall continue for ever; and if you ſhould ſay "thoſe years (ſome editions read, *thoſe thouſand* "*years*, and ſo the *Gloſs* upon the place) in which "the holy bleſſed God *renews the world*; as it is "ſaid *Iſ.* ii. 11. *and the Lord alone*; &c. what ſhall "they do? the holy bleſſed God will make them "wings as eagles, and they ſhall fly upon the face "of the waters:" and this renovation of the heavens and the earth they ſay, will be in the ſeventh millennium; "in the ſeventh thouſand year, they "aſſert [m], there will be found new heavens and a "new earth;" which agree with theſe words of *Peter*.

Ver. 14. *Wherefore, beloved, ſeeing ye look for theſe things*, &c.] For the burning of the heavens and the earth, for the coming of Chriſt, and for the new heavens and new earth, *be diligent that ye may be found of him*; Chriſt, or αυτω, *in him*, as in *Phil.* iii. 9. for ſuch as are in Chriſt will have an undoubted right to the new heavens and the new earth, and will certainly dwell in them, becauſe they'll be found not in their own righteouſneſs, but in the righteouſneſs of Chriſt: or *before him*, as the *Arabic* verſion renders it; before him the judge of all, at whoſe tribunal they muſt ſtand; but being cloathed with his righteouſneſs, and ſo without ſpot and blemiſh, they'll not be aſhamed before him: or *by him*; Chriſt firſt finds his in redemption, and next in effectual vocation, and laſt of all at his coming, when all the elect will be looked up, gathered in, and preſented firſt to himſelf, and then to his father, compleat and perfect, not one wanting: and thus to be found in him, and before him, and by him, ſhould be the concern of all that look for the glorious things here ſpoken of, and particularly that they be found in the following ſituation and circumſtances: *in peace*; intereſted in that peace Chriſt has made by the blood of his croſs; for ſuch as are reconciled to God by his death, ſhall be ſaved by his life, and live with him in the new heavens and new earth, and for ever in the ultimate glory; and in enjoying that peace of conſcience which he himſelf gives, and which flows from his blood, righteouſneſs and atonement; ſo that the day of his coming by death, or at judgment, will not be terrifying to them, but they will look for theſe things with great delight and ſatisfaction: or in peace one with another; for peace-makers and keepers are called the children of God, and ſo heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Chriſt; or in happineſs and glory, expreſſed by peace, which is the end of the righteous man, which he enters into at death, and will reſt in to all eternity: *without ſpot and blemiſh*; no man is ſo in himſelf, ſanctification is imperfect, and many are the ſlips and falls of the ſaints, tho' their deſire is to be harmleſs and inoffenſive, and to give no juſt occaſion for blame or ſcandal; but the ſaints are ſo in Chriſt Jeſus, being waſhed in his blood, and cloathed with his righteouſneſs, and will be found ſo by him when he comes again, when he will preſent them to himſelf a glorious church, without ſpot or wrinkle, and alſo before the preſence of his father's glory, as faultleſs, with exceeding joy; and ſo will they be fit and meet to be the inhabitants of the new heavens and new earth, and reign with him therein, and be with him to all eternity.

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[l] T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 92, 1, 2. Ed. Coch. p. 317.

[m] Zohar in Gen. fol. 35, 3.

Ver. 15. *And account that the long-ſuffering of our Lord*, &c.] Not his long-ſuffering towards the wicked, and his forbearance with them, for that is not the means of, nor the way to, nor does it iſſue in, their ſalvation, but in their ſorer puniſhment and greater damnation, ſee *Rom.* ii. 4. and ix. 22. but towards the elect, as in ver. 9. whom he bears much and long with before converſion, whilſt in their ſins, and in a ſtate of unregeneracy, and waits to be gracious to them, as he is in their vocation, and to make known and apply his great ſalvation to them; and as with particular perſons, ſo with the whole body of them, till they are all gathered in, and even with the world for their ſakes; and particularly the Lord's long-ſuffering here intends, the deferring of his coming, or his ſeeming ſlackneſs in the performance of his promiſe: the reaſon of which is, *ſalvation*; the ſalvation of all his choſen ones, and in that it iſſues; he waits, he ſtays, that none of them might periſh, but that they might be all brought to faith and repentance, and ſo be ſaved: wherefore the Apoſtle would have the ſaints conſider it in this light, and not imagine and conclude, with the ſcoffing infidels, that he is ſlack and dilatory, and will not come, but that his view in it is the ſalvation of all his people, which by this means is brought about: in confirmation of which, and other things he had delivered, he produces the teſtimony of the Apoſtle *Paul*; *even as our beloved brother Paul alſo*; he calls him a *brother*, both on account of his being a believer in Chriſt, one that belonged to the ſame family with him, and was of the houſhold of faith, born of the ſame father, and related to the ſame redeemer the firſt born among many brethren, and likewiſe on account of his being a fellow Apoſtle; for though he was not one of the twelve Apoſtles, but his call and miſſion were later than theirs, yet *Peter* does not diſdain to put him among them, and upon an equal foot with them, nor was he a whit behind the chief of them: he ſtiles him a *beloved* brother; expreſſing his affection for him which the relation between them called for, and which he bore to him, notwithſtanding his public oppoſition to him, and ſharp reproof of him, *Gal.* ii. 11. and perhaps loved him the more for it; ſee *Pſ.* cxli. 5. *Prov.* xxvii. 5, 6. and he makes mention of him, and that under theſe characters, partly to ſhew their agreement and conſent in doctrine; and partly to recommend him to the *Jews*, to whom he writes, who had, upon report of his doctrine and miniſtry, entertained an ill, at leaſt a mean opinion, of him; as alſo to ſet us an example to ſpeak well of one another, both as miniſters and private believers: *according to the wiſdom given unto him, hath written unto you*; meaning not all his Epiſtles, as being written for the general good of all the ſaints, as well as for thoſe particular churches or men to whom they were ſent; for what *Peter* ſpeaks of is what was particularly written to them, and is diſtinguiſhed in the following verſe from the reſt of *Paul*'s Epiſtles; nor does he intend the Epiſtle of *Paul* to the *Romans*, for the long-ſuffering of God ſpoken of in that, as in ch. ii. 4. and ix. 22. is his long-ſuffering to the wicked, which iſſues in their deſtruction, and not his long-ſuffering to his elect, which is ſalvation, as here; but he ſeems maniſeſtly to have in view the Epiſtle to the *Hebrews*, for *Peter* wrote both his firſt and ſecond Epiſtles to *Jews*; wherefore, ſince none of *Paul*'s Epiſtles but that were written particularly to them, it ſhould ſeem that that is deſigned, and ſerves to confirm his being the author of it; in which he writes to the *Hebrews* concerning the coming of Chriſt, and of the deferring of it a little while, and of the need they had of patience to wait for it, *Heb.* x. 36, 37. and in it alſo are ſome things difficult to be underſtood concerning *Melchizedek*, the old and new covenant, the removing of the *Aaronical* prieſthood, and the abrogation of the whole ceremonial law, *&c.* things not eaſily received by that nation; and the whole is written with great wiſdom, reſpecting the perſon and office of Chriſt, the nature of his prieſthood, and the glory of the goſpel-diſpenſation; and in a moſt admirable manner is the whole *Moſaic* œconomy laid open and explained: he was indeed a wiſe maſter-builder, and whatever he wrote was *according to wiſdom*; not fleſhly wiſdom, the wiſdom of this world, nor with enticing words of mens wiſdom, but according to the divine wiſdom, under the influence of the Spirit of wiſdom and revelation; for he had not this of himſelf naturally, nor did he learn it at *Gamaliel*'s feet, but it was what was *given to him*; it came from above, from God, who gives it liberally; and as he himſelf always owned it to be a free-grace-gift of God beſtowed on him, and that all his light and knowledge were by the revelation of Chriſt, ſo *Peter* aſcribes it to the ſame, that God might have all the glory, and all boaſting in man be ſtopped.

Ver. 16. *As alſo in all his Epiſtles*, &c.] From whence it appears, that the Apoſtle *Paul* had, by this time, wrote ſeveral of his Epiſtles, if not all of them; and they were all written according to the ſame wiſdom, and under the influence of the ſame Spirit, as his Epiſtle to the *Hebrews*: *ſpeaking in them of thoſe things*; of the ſame things *Peter* had been ſpeaking of, of the coming of Chriſt, as that he ſhould appear a ſecond time to them that look for him, and would come as a thief in the night, and that the faſhion, ſcheme, and form of this world ſhould paſs away, and that ſaints ſhould look and wait for his coming, and love it: ſomething of this kind is ſaid in all his Epiſtles; ſee *Heb.* ix. 28. 1 *Theſſ.* v. 2. 1 *Cor.* vii. 31. and i. 7. *Tit.* ii. 13. 2 *Tim.* iv. 8. and alſo of mockers, ſcoffers, ſeducers, and wicked men that would ariſe in the laſt days; ſee 1 *Tim.* iv. 1. 2 *Tim.* iii. 1. *in which are ſome things hard to be underſtood.* The phraſe, *in which*, refers either to the Epiſtles, or the things ſpoken in them. The *Alexandrian* manuſcript, and three of *Robert Stephens*'s copies read, εν αις, *in which* Epiſtles, but the generality of copies read, εν οις, *in*, or *among which things*, ſpoken of in them, concerning the ſubject here treated of, the coming of Chriſt; as the time of Chriſt's coming, which is ſometimes repreſented by the Apoſtle, as if it would be whilſt he was living; and the manner of his coming in perſon with all his ſaints, and his mighty angels, with a ſhout, the voice of the archangel, and trump of God, things not eaſily underſtood; and the deſtruction of antichriſt at his coming, which will be with the breath of his mouth, and the brightneſs of his coming; as alſo the reſurrection of the dead, of the ſaints that will riſe firſt, and that with ſpiritual bodies; and likewiſe the change of the living ſaints, and the rapture both of living and raiſed ſaints together, in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and the ſtanding of them before the judgment-ſeat of Chriſt, and the account that every one muſt give to him, 1 *Theſſ.* iv. 15, 16, 17. 2 *Theſſ.* i. 7, 8. and ii. 8. 1 *Cor.* xv. 44, 51, 52. 2 *Cor.* v. 10. *Rom.* xiv. 12. *which they that are unlearned*; untaught of God, who have never learned of the Father, nor have learned Chriſt, nor have that anointing which teacheth all things; who, tho' they may have been in the ſchools of men, were never in the ſchool of Chriſt; and tho' they have been ever learning, yet will never come to the knowledge of the truth; for men may have a large ſhare of human literature, and yet be unlearned men in the ſenſe of the Apoſtle; and very often it is, that ſuch wreſt and pervert the ſcriptures to the ruin of themſelves, and others: *and unſtable*; unſettled in their principles, who are like children toſſed to and fro with every wind of doctrine; the root of the matter is not in them; nor are they rooted and built up in Chriſt, and ſo are not eſtabliſhed in the faith; they are not upon the foundation Chriſt, nor do they build upon, and abide by the ſure word of God, or form their notions according to it, but according to their own carnal reaſonings, and fleſhly luſts; and ſo *wreſt* the word of God, diſtort it from its true ſenſe and meaning, and make it ſpeak that which it never deſigned; dealing with it as innocent perſons are ſometimes uſed, put upon a rack, and tortured, and ſo forced to ſpeak what is contrary to their knowledge and conſciences; and ſo were the words of the Apoſtle *Paul* wreſted by ill deſigning men, as about the doctrines of grace and works, ſo concerning the coming of Chriſt; ſee *Rom.* iii. 8. 2 *Theſſ.* ii. 1, 2. *as they do alſo the other ſcriptures*; the writings of *Moſes*, and the prophets of the Old Teſtament, the Goſpels, the *Acts* of the Apoſtles, and the other Epiſtles of the Apoſtles of the New Teſtament: and which is eventually, *unto their own deſtruction*; for by ſo doing they either add unto, or detract from the ſcriptures, and ſo bring the curſe of God upon them; and they give into doctrines of devils, and into hereſies, which are damnable, and bring upon themſelves ſwift deſtruction, which lingers not, and ſlumbers not. Now from hence it does not follow, that the ſcriptures are not to be read by the common people; for not all the parts of ſcripture, and all things in it, are hard to be underſtood, there are many things very plain and eaſy, even every thing reſpecting eternal ſalvation; there's milk for babes, as well as meat for ſtrong men: beſides, not the ſcriptures in general, but *Paul*'s Epiſtles, only, are here ſpoken of, and not all of them, or any one whole Epiſtle among them, only ſome things in them, and theſe not impoſſible, only difficult to be underſtood; and which is no reaſon why they ſhould be laid aſide, but rather why they ſhould be read with greater application and diligence, and be followed with fervent prayer, and frequent meditation; and tho' unlearned and unſtable men may wreſt them to their perdition, thoſe that are taught of God, tho' otherwiſe illiterate, may read them to great profit and advantage.

Ver. 17. *Ye therefore, beloved, ſeeing ye know theſe things before,* &c.] As that there will be ſuch mockers and ſcoffers in the laſt days, and ſuch unlearned and unſtable men that will deprave the ſcriptures, and wreſt them in ſuch a miſerable manner: *beware, leſt ye alſo being led away with the error of the wicked*; from the ſimplicity of the Goſpel, along with ſuch wicked men, that wax worſe and worſe, deceivers and being deceived, by giving into any of their errors which reſpect the grace of God, or the perſon and offices of Chriſt, or particularly his ſecond coming; be upon the watch and guard againſt them, having previous notice of them, for they lie in wait to deceive: leſt ye *fall from your own ſtedfaſtneſs*; which was proper to them, and which, by the grace of God, they had, and retained, both in the faith of Chriſt, and doctrine of the Goſpel; for tho' the ſaints can never finally and totally fall into ſin, or from the truth, yet they may fall from their ſtedfaſtneſs, both as to the exerciſe of the grace of faith, and as to their profeſſion of the doctrine of faith; and to be fluctuating, heſitating, and doubting in either reſpect, muſt be very uncomfortable and diſhonourable.

Ver. 18. *But grow in grace*, &c.] In the gifts of grace, which, under a divine bleſſing, may be increaſed by uſing them: gifts neglected decreaſe, but ſtirred up and uſed, are improved and increaſe. And tho' men are to be thankful for their gifts, and be contented with them, yet they may lawfully deſire more, and in the uſe of means ſeek an increaſe of them, which may be a means of preſerving themſelves, and others, from the error of the wicked. Moreover, by *grace* may be meant internal grace. The work of grace is gradual; it is like a grain of muſtard-ſeed, or like ſeed caſt into the earth, which ſprings up, it is not known how, firſt the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear; ſaints are firſt babes, and from children they grow to young men, and from young men to fathers. There is ſuch a thing as growth in grace, in this ſenſe; every grace, as to its act and exerciſe, is capable of growing and increaſing; faith may grow exceedingly, hope abound, love increaſe, and patience have its perfect work, and ſaints may grow more humble, holy, and ſelf-denying: this is indeed God's work, to cauſe them to grow, and it is owing to his grace; yet ſaints ſhould ſhow a concern for this, and make uſe of means which God owns and bleſſes for this purpoſe, ſuch as prayer, attending on the word, and looking over the promiſes of God, for an increaſe of faith; recollecting paſt experiences, and looking to the death and reſurrection of Chriſt for the encouragement of hope, and to the love of God and Chriſt, for the ſtirring up of love to both, and to the ſaints; conſidering the ſufferings of Chriſt, the deſert of ſin, and the glories of another world, to promote patience, and ſelf-denial, and the pattern of Chriſt, to excite to humility; tho' *grace* may alſo intend the Goſpel, the knowledge of which is imperfect, and may be increaſed in the uſe of means, and which is a ſpecial preſervative againſt error, a growth in which ſaints ſhould be concerned for: *and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt*; of his perſon, office, and grace, than which nothing is more valuable, and is to be preferred to every thing; it is the principal thing in grace, and is the beginning and pledge of eternal life, and will iſſue in it; for an increaſe of which, and a growth in it, the word and ordinances are deſigned; and nothing can be a greater ſecurity againſt error than an experimental growing knowledge of Chriſt. The *Syriac* verſion adds, *and of God the Father*; and ſo ſome copies read: *to him be glory, both now, and for ever*; or *to the day of eternity*; that is, to Chriſt, who is truly God, or otherwiſe ſuch a doxology would not belong to him, be aſcribed the glory of deity, of all divine perfections; the glory of all his offices and work as mediator; the glory of man's ſalvation; and the glory of all that grace, and the growth of it, together with the knowledge of himſelf, which ſaints have from him; and that both in this world, and that which is to come. *Amen*; ſo be it.

AN EXPOSITION, &c.

The Firſt Epiſtle General of JOHN.

THE Author of this Epiſtle was *John*, the ſon of *Zebedee*, the diſciple whom Jeſus loved: he was the youngeſt of the Apoſtles, and ſurvived them all. He does not indeed put his name to this Epiſtle, as the Apoſtles *Paul*, *Peter*, *James*, and *Jude* do to theirs; and it is eaſy to obſerve, that when this diſciple, in his writings, had any occaſion to ſpeak of himſelf, it was uſually by ſuch a circumlocution, as the diſciple whom Jeſus loved, or the other diſciple, ſtudiouſly concealing his name: ſo that his not putting his name to this Epiſtle, need not create any ſcruple about his being the author of it, which every where breathes the temper and ſpirit of this great Apoſtle; and whoever compares this Epiſtle, and the Goſpel written by him, together, will eaſily conclude it to be his, both from the ſtile and ſubject-matter of it: beſides, as *Euſebius* aſſerts[a], this Epiſtle was generally received without ſcruple, both by ancient and modern writers. It is called *general*, becauſe it was not written and ſent to any particular church, or perſon, and not becauſe it was for the general uſe of the churches, for ſo are all the particular Epiſtles; but becauſe it was written to the chriſtians in general, or to the believing *Jews* in general, where-ever they were; for that it was written to the *Jews*, ſeems evident from ch. ii. 2. It was called, by ſome of the ancients, the Epiſtle of *John* to the *Parthians*[b]; by whom muſt be meant, not the natives of *Parthia*, but the *Jews* profeſſing to believe in Chriſt, who dwelt in that empire. We read of *Parthian Jews* at the feaſt of *Pentecoſt*, *Acts* ii. 9. who at that time might be converted, and upon their return to their own country, lay the foundation of a Goſpel church-ſtate there. Dr. *Lightfoot*[c] conjectures from a paſſage in 3 *John* 9. that this Epiſtle was written to the *Corinthians*; but there does not ſeem to be any ſufficient reaſon for it. As for the time when, and place where, this Epiſtle was written, it is not eaſy to ſay: ſome think it was written at *Patmos*, whither the Apoſtle was baniſhed in the reign of *Domitian*, and where he wrote the book of the *Revelations*; ſee *Rev.* i. 9. and here ſome ſay he wrote his Goſpel, and this Epiſtle, and that a little before the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, and which he calls the laſt time or hour; and that his deſign in writing it, was to exhort the believing *Jews*, either in *Parthia*, or ſcattered about in other countries, to brotherly love, and to warn them againſt falſe Chriſts and falſe prophets, which were now gone forth into the world to deceive men; ſee ch. ii. 18. and iv. 1. Others think that it was written by him, when a very old man, after his return from his exile to *Epheſus*, where he reſided during his life, and where he died, and was buried. It is called his *firſt* Epiſtle general, not that it is the firſt general Epiſtle, for the other two are written to particular perſons, but is the firſt he wrote, and which is general: the occaſion, and manifeſt deſign of it is to promote brotherly love, which he enforces upon the beſt principles, and with the ſtrongeſt arguments, taken from the love of God and Chriſt, from the commandment of Chriſt, and its being an evidence of regeneration, and the truth and glory of a profeſſion of religion: and alſo to oppoſe and ſtop the growth of licentious principles, and practices, and heretical doctrines. The licentious principles and practices he condemns are theſe, that believers had no ſin in them, or need not be concerned about it, nor about their outward converſation, ſo be they had but knowledge; and theſe men boaſted of their communion with God, notwithſtanding their impieties; and which were the ſentiments and practices of the *Nicolaitans*, *Gnoſticks*, and *Carpocratians*. The hereſies he ſets himſelf againſt, and refutes, are ſuch as regard the doctrine of the Trinity, and the perſon and office of Chriſt. There were ſome who denied a diſtinction of perſons in the Trinity, and aſſerted there was but one perſon; that the Father was not diſtinct from the Son, nor the Son from the Father; and by confounding both, tacitly denied there was either, as *Simon Magus*, and his followers; regard is had to theſe in ch. ii. 22. and v. 7. and others, as the unbelieving *Jews*, denied, that Jeſus was the Meſſiah, or that Chriſt was come in the fleſh; theſe are taken notice of in ch. ii. 22. and iv. 2, 3. and v. 1. Others, that profeſſed to believe in Jeſus Chriſt, denied his proper deity, and aſſerted he was a mere man, and did not exiſt before he took fleſh of the virgin, as *Ebion* and *Cerinthus*; theſe are oppoſed in ch. i. 1, 2. and iii. 16. and v. 20. And others denied his real humanity, and affirmed, that he was a mere phantom; that he only had the appearance of a man, and aſſumed human nature, and ſuffered, and died, and roſe again in ſhew only, and not in reality; of which ſort were the followers of *Saturninus* and *Baſilides*, and which are confuted in ch. i. 1, 2, 3. This Epiſtle is, by *Clemens Alexandrinus*[d], called his *greater* or *larger Epiſtle*, it being ſo in compariſon of the other two that follow.

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[a] Eccl. Hiſt. l. 3. c. 24.

[b] Auguſtin. apud Grotium.

[c] Hor. Hebr. in 1 Cor. i. 14.

CHAP. I.

IN this chapter the Apoſtle gives a ſummary of the Goſpel, and the evidence of it, and from thence preſſes to a holy life and converſation. The ſum of the Goſpel is Jeſus Chriſt, who is deſcribed both as God and man; his deity is expreſſed by being that which was from the beginning, the word of life, life, and eternal life; his humanity by being the life manifeſted in the fleſh, of which the Apoſtles had full evidence by the ſeveral ſenſes of ſeeing, hearing, and handling, and ſo were capable of bearing witneſs to the truth thereof, ver. 1, 2. And the ends had in view in giving this ſummary, evidence, and teſtimony, were, that the ſaints wrote unto might have fellowſhip with the Apoſtles, whoſe fellowſhip was with the Father, and his Son Jeſus Chriſt, and that their joy on hearing theſe things might be full, ver. 3, 4. And the amount of the meſſage declared by them was, that God is light, or a pure and holy being, and that there is no darkneſs of ſin, or unholineſs in him; wherefore all ſuch that pretend to communion with him, and live a ſinful courſe of life, are liars; only ſuch have fellowſhip with him, and with his Son, whoſe blood cleanſes them from all ſin, who live holy lives and converſations, ver. 5, 6, 7. not that it is to be expected that men ſhould be clear of the being of ſin in this life, only that they ſhould, as often as they ſin, be humbled for it, and confeſs it before God, who will forgive them, and cleanſe them from all unrighteouſneſs; but as for thoſe who affirm they have no ſin in them, or any done by them, they are ſelf-deceivers, the truth of grace is not in them, nor the word of God, and they make him a liar, ver. 8, 9, 10.

Ver. 1. *That which was from the beginning*, &c.] By which is meant not the Goſpel, as if the Apoſtle's deſign was to aſſert the antiquity of that, and clear it from the charge of novelty; for tho' that is called the Word, and the Word of life, and is the Spirit which gives life, and is the means of quickning dead ſinners, and brings the report of eternal life and ſalvation by Chriſt, yet the ſeeing of it with bodily eyes, and handling it with corporeal hands, do not agree with that; but Jeſus Chriſt is here intended, who in his divine nature *was*, really exiſted as a divine perſon, as the everlaſting Jehovah, the eternal I AM, which is, and was, and is to come, and exiſted *from the beginning*; not from the beginning of the preaching of the Goſpel by *John* only, for he was before the Goſpel was preached, being the firſt preacher of it himſelf, and before *John* was; yea, before the prophets, before *Abraham*, and before *Adam*, and before all creatures, from the beginning of time, and of the creation of the world, being the maker of all things, even from everlaſting; for otherwiſe he could not have been ſet up in an office-capacity ſo early, or God's elect be choſen in him before the foundation of the world, and they have grace and bleſſings given them in him before the world began, or an everlaſting covenant be made with him; ſee *John* i. 1. *which we have heard*; this, with what follows, proves him to be truly and really man; for when the Word was made fleſh, and dwelt among men, the Apoſtles heard, and ſaw, and handled him; they not only heard a voice from heaven, declaring him to be the Son of God, but they often heard him ſpeak himſelf, both in private converſation with them, and in his public miniſtry; they heard his many excellent diſcourſes on the mount, and elſewhere, and thoſe that were particularly delivered to them a little before his death; and bleſſed were they on this account, *Matt.* xiii. 16, 17. *which we have ſeen with our eyes*; with the eyes of the body, with their own, and not another's; and they ſaw him in human nature, and the common actions of life he did, as eating, drinking, walking, *&c.* and his many miracles; they ſaw him raiſe the dead, cleanſe the lepers, reſtore ſight to the blind, cauſe the lame to walk, the dumb to ſpeak, and the deaf to hear; and they ſaw him transfigured on the mount. *John* was one that was preſent at that time, and ſaw his glory, as he alſo was when he hung upon the croſs, and ſaw him bleeding, gaſping, and dying there; they ſaw him after his reſurrection from the dead, he ſhewed himſelf to them alive, and was ſeen of them forty days; they ſaw him go up to heaven, and a cloud receiving him out of their ſight: *which we have looked upon*; wiſhly and intently, once and again, and a thouſand times, and with the utmoſt pleaſure and delight; and knew him perfectly well, and were able to deſcribe exactly his perſon, ſtature, features, and the lineaments of his body: *and our hands have handled of the word of life*; as *Peter* did when Jeſus caught him by the hand on the water, when he was juſt ready to ſink; and as this Apoſtle did, when he leaned on his boſom; and as *Thomas* did, even after his reſurrection, when he thruſt his hand into his ſide; and as all the Apoſtles were called upon to ſee and handle him, that it was he himſelf, and not a Spirit, which has not fleſh and bones as he had. Now as this is ſaid of Chriſt, *the Word of life*, who is ſo called, becauſe he has life in himſelf, as God, as the mediator, and as man, and is the author of life, natural, ſpiritual, and eternal, it muſt be underſtood as he, the Word, is made manifeſt in the fleſh; for he, as the Word, or as a divine perſon, or as conſidered in his divine nature, is not to be ſeen nor handled: this therefore is ſpoken of the Word, or of the perſon of Chriſt, God-man, with reſpect to his human nature, as united to the Logos, or Word of God; and ſo is a proof the truth and reality of his human nature, by ſeveral of the ſenſes.

Ver. 2. *For the life was manifeſted*, &c.] That is, the Word of life, who is life itſelf, the fountain of life, having it, as God, in and of himſelf, without derivation from, and independent of another, originally and eternally, and who is the cauſe, author, and giver of life in every ſenſe to others; this living God, who from all eternity, was inviſible, was in the fullneſs of time manifeſted in human nature; ſee *John* i. 14. 1 *Tim.* iii. 16. 1 *John* iii. 8. *And we have ſeen it*; as before with the eyes of their bodies: *and bear witneſs*; for they were both eye and ear-witneſſes of the word, and of the truth of his incarnation, and bore a faithful record both to his proper deity, and real humanity: *and ſhow unto you that eternal life*; Jeſus Chriſt, the true God, and eternal life, as in ch. v. 20. ſo called, becauſe he has everlaſting life in himſelf; as he is the living God, and becauſe he has eternal life for all his people; not only the purpoſe and promiſe of it are in him, but the thing itſelf; and it is in his power and gift to beſtow it on all the Father hath given to him, and to them he does give it. The beginning of it lies in the knowledge of him, and the conſummation of it will be in the everlaſting viſion and enjoyment of him: *which was with the Father*; that is, which life, eternal life, and Word of life, was from the beginning, or from all eternity with God the Father; which phraſe is expreſſive of the eternal exiſtence of Chriſt, as the Word and Son of God, with his Father, his relation to him, his oneneſs in nature, and equality with him, and his perſonal diſtinction from him; ſee *John* i. 1. *and was manifeſted unto us*; in human nature, as before obſerved, and that to the Apoſtles, as he was not to the patriarchs and prophets; for though they ſaw him in promiſe, in prophecy, in type, and figure, and he ſometimes appeared in an human form, for a ſhort time, to them, yet they did not ſee him incarnate, in actual union with human nature; nor had they him dwelling among them, and converſing with them, as the Apoſtles had; this was an happineſs peculiar to them.

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[d] Stromat. l. 2. p. 389.

Ver. 3. *That which we have ſeen and heard*, &c.] This is repeated, both to confirm and illuſtrate what had been before ſaid, and to carry on the diſcourſe to what follows: *declare we unto you*; in the miniſtry of the word; the perſon and offices of Chriſt being the ſum and ſubſtance of the Goſpel-miniſtration, that declares him to be the true God, and eternal life, God over all, bleſſed for ever; and truly man, made of a woman, and made under the law; and to be the only mediator between God and man, to be prophet, prieſt, and king, and to be the alone ſaviour and redeemer: this declares the greatneſs and excellency of his ſalvation, what an able, proper, and ſuitable ſaviour he is; and what precious promiſes, and ſpiritual bleſſings are in him, even all grace, and eternal glory. And this declaration of him is made in the Goſpel, for the following ends and purpoſes, *that ye alſo may have fellowſhip with us*; in hearing, ſeeing, and handling of Chriſt in a ſpiritual ſenſe; and by enjoying the ſame privileges in God's houſe and family, the ſame ordinances and ſpiritual proviſions; joining and partaking with them in all the immunities and advantages of a Goſpel church-ſtate here; and by being with them to all eternity hereafter. *And truly our fellowſhip is with the Father*; the Father of Chriſt, the covenant God and Father of his people; and which they have with him, when under the influence and witneſſings of the Spirit of adoption, and can in the ſtrength of faith call him their Father, draw nigh to him thro' Chriſt as ſuch, and are indulged with his preſence, and the diſcoveries of his love: *and with his Son Jeſus Chriſt*; being in union to him, they become partakers of him, and of his bleſſings; they receive out of his fulneſs, and grace for grace; they are admitted to an intimacy and familiarity with him; they are had into his chambers of ſecret retirement; they are brought into his banquetting houſe, where his banner over them is love, and where he ſups with them, and they with him; and into this fellowſhip are they called by the grace of God, thro' the Goſpel; as alſo they have fellowſhip with the bleſſed Spirit, tho' not here mentioned; ſee 2 *Cor*. xiii. 14.

Ver. 4. *And theſe things write we unto you*, &c.] Concerning the deity and eternity of Chriſt, the Word; and concerning the truth of his humanity, and the manifeſtation of him in the fleſh; and concerning that eternal life and ſalvation which is declared in the Goſpel to be in him; and concerning the ſaints fellowſhip one with another, and with God the Father, and with Jeſus Chriſt: *that your joy may be full*; meaning either their ſpiritual joy in this life, which has Chriſt for its object, and is increaſed by the conſideration of his proper deity, his incarnation and mediation; by a view of free juſtification, by his righteouſneſs and atonement by his blood; by a ſight of his glorious perſon by faith, and by intimate communion with him, and a diſcovery of his love, which paſſeth knowledge: and which joy, when it is large, and very great, may, in a comparative ſenſe, be ſaid to be full, tho' not abſolutely ſo, and being as much as can well be enjoyed in this ſtate; and nothing can more contribute to it than a declaration of the above things in the Goſpel, and an experimental acquaintance with them, and enjoyment of them: or elſe it may intend the joy of the ſaints in the world to come, in the preſence of Chriſt, where are fulneſs of joy, and pleaſures for evermore; and ſo may expreſs the ultimate glory and happineſs of God's people, which is the chief end, as of his purpoſes, promiſes, and covenant, ſo of the Goſpel, and the declaration of it. The *Syriac* verſion renders it, *that our joy, which is in you, may be full*; for it is the joy of the miniſters of the word, when the ſaints are eſtabliſhed in the faith of Chriſt's perſon and offices, and have communion with him, with which view they declare him, and bear record of him. Some copies read, *our joy*.

Ver. 5. *This then is the meſſage*, &c.] Of God by his Son the Word, or from Chriſt by his Apoſtles. The *Syriac* verſion renders it, *this is the Goſpel*; which is good news from a far country, a meſſage ſent from the king of kings to ſinful men; or *this is the annuntiation*, or declaration; that is, the thing declared, or ſhewed. Some render it, *this is the promiſe*, that whereas God is light, ſuch who walk in the light ſhall have communion with him, and others ſhall not: *which we have heard of him*; of Chriſt, who has declared him, that he is light without any mixture of darkneſs; that he is a pure Spirit, and muſt be worſhipped in a ſpiritual way; and that only ſpiritual worſhippers are ſuch as he ſeeks, and admits to communion with him. Moreover, they might hear and learn this of Chriſt, by his telling them that he himſelf was light, who is the image of the inviſible God, inſomuch, that he that has ſeen the Son, has ſeen the Father alſo. Wherefore, if the one is light, the other muſt be likewiſe; nor is there any coming to the Father, and enjoying communion with him, but through Chriſt; all which our Lord told his diſciples. The *Ethiopic* verſion reads, *which ye have heard*, very wrongly; for the words regard the Apoſtles, who made a faithful declaration of the meſſage they heard, and had from Chriſt, which is as follows: *and declare unto you that God is light*; that is, God the Father, as diſtinguiſhed from *him*, Chriſt, of whom they had heard this meſſage, and from Jeſus Chriſt *his Son*, ver. 7. what is declared of him, agreeable to the report of Chriſt, is, that he is *light*; that is, as light is oppoſed to the darkneſs of ſin; he is pure and holy in his nature and works, and of ſuch pure eyes as not to behold iniquity; and ſo perfectly holy, that angels cover their faces before him, when they ſpeak of his holineſs: and as light is oppoſed to the darkneſs of ignorance, he is wiſe and knowing; he knows himſelf, his own nature, being, and perfections, his Son and Spirit, and their diſtinct modes of ſubſiſting; he ſees clearly all things in himſelf, all things he could do, or has determined ſhall be done; he has perfect knowledge of all creatures and things, and the darkneſs and the light are alike unto him, nor can the former hide from him: he is knowable, and to be diſcerned; he is clothed with light, and dwells in it; he may be known by the works of creation and providence; even the inviſible things of him, his eternal power and Godhead may be clearly ſeen and underſtood by them, and eſpecially in his word, and moſt clearly in his Son; it is owing to the darkneſs of men, and not to any in and about God, who is light, that he is ſo little known as he is: and like the light he illuminates others; he is the Father of lights, the author and giver of all light; of the light of reaſon to men in general; and of grace here, and glory hereafter to his own people, which are both ſignified by light; in whoſe light they ſee light; and he refreſhes and delights their ſouls, with the light of his countenance now, and with his glorious preſence in the other world: *and in him is no darkneſs at all*; no darkneſs of ſin; nothing more is contrary to him, or more diſtant from him: nor any darkneſs of error and ignorance; what is unknown to men, as the times and ſeaſons; what angels were ignorant of, and even Chriſt, as man, as the day and hour of *Jeruſalem*'s deſtruction, were known to the Father; in him is no ignorance of any thing whatever; nor is there any variableneſs or ſhadow of turning in him, as there is in the luminous body of the ſun; but God is always the ſame pure and holy, wiſe and knowing being. It is uſual, with the *Cabaliſtic Jews* [e], to call the ſupreme being, אור, *light*; the moſt ſimple light, hidden light, and infinite light, with reſpect to his nature, glory, and majeſty, and with regard alſo to his grace and mercy, juſtice and judgment; though, as *R. Sangari* ſays [f], this is to be underſtood of him figuratively.

Ver. 6. *If we ſay that we have fellowſhip with him*, &c.] The *Alexandrian* copy reads, *for if we ſay*; that is, if any profeſs to be partakers of the divine nature, to be like unto God, and to have communion with him, to have the light of his countenance, and the diſcoveries of his love: *and walk in darkneſs*; in the darkneſs of ſin, ignorance, and unbelief, or are in a ſtate of unregeneracy, and blindneſs; whoſe underſtandings are darkened, and they know not God in Chriſt, nor have any true ſight and ſenſe of themſelves, their ſin and danger; and are ignorant of Chriſt, and his righteouſneſs, and the way of ſalvation by him; and are ſtrangers to the Spirit of God, and the work of his grace; and are unacquainted with the truths of the Goſpel; and not only ſo, but go on in darkneſs more and more; prefer it to the light, love it, and the works of it; have fellowſhip with them, and chuſe them; take pleaſure in the ways of ſin and wickedneſs, and continue, and walk on in them; if ſuch perſons pretend to fellowſhip with God, they are liars: *we lye*; it cannot be, it is a contradiction, the thing is impoſſible and impracticable; what communion hath light with darkneſs? or what fellowſhip can the throne of iniquity, or thoſe in whom ſin reigns, have with God? for God is light, and were they partakers of him, or like unto him, or had communion with him, they would conſequently be in the light, and not in darkneſs, and much leſs walk in it: wherefore they are liars, *and do not the truth*; they don't ſay the truth, nor act according to it; they don't act uprightly, or ſincerely, but are hypocrites, and pretend to that which they have not; and if they did the truth, they would come to the light, and not walk in darkneſs; ſee *John* iii. 21.

Ver. 7. *But if we walk in the light*, &c.] Are perſons enlightned by the Spirit of God, ſo as to have a true ſight and ſenſe of ſin, to know Chriſt, and the way of ſalvation by him; and are children of the light, and are going on and increaſing in ſpiritual light and knowledge; walk on in Chriſt, the light, by faith, and in the light and truth of the Goſpel, and as becomes it, and as children of light; and as ſuch who are called out of darkneſs into marvellous light: *as he is in the light*; according to the light which he has given, who is light itſelf, is in it, and dwells in it. This *as* denotes not equality, but likeneſs: when this is the caſe, then it is a clear point, that *we have fellowſhip one with another*; not with the ſaints, with the Apoſtles, and other chriſtians, but with God: *we have mutual communion*, as the *Arabic* verſion renders it; God with us, and we with him. Some copies read, *with him*, as in ver. 6. and ſuch a reading the ſenſe requires; and agreeable to this the *Ethiopic* verſion renders it, *and we are partakers among ourſelves with him*; that is, we all jointly and mutually appear to be like him, and partake of his nature, and have communion with him; and not only ſo, but with his Son Jeſus Chriſt, as appears from our having a ſhare in the cleanſing efficacy of his blood: *and the blood of Jeſus Chriſt, his Son, cleanſeth us from all ſin*; there is a pollution on human nature, which is original, natural, univerſal, and internal, and is ſuch that nothing can remove but the blood of Chriſt; not ceremonial ablutions and ſacrifices, nor moral duties, nor evangelical performances, or ſubmiſſion to Goſpel-ordinances, and particularly baptiſm, which is not the putting away the filth of the fleſh; nor even the graces of the Spirit, no, not faith, no otherwiſe than as it has to do with this blood; for this cleanſing is not to be underſtood of ſanctification, for that more properly belongs to the Spirit of God, and beſides, does not cleanſe from all ſin; for notwithſtanding this, ſin is in the ſaints: but either of the atonement of ſin, by the ſacrifice of Chriſt, and ſo of a compleat juſtification from it by his blood, which is put for both his active and paſſive obedience, the one being finiſhed in the other; or rather of the pardon of ſin, procured by the blood of Chriſt, and the application of that blood to the conſcience, which purges it from dead works, and which has a continued virtue in it for that purpoſe. Chriſt's blood, being applied by the Spirit of God, has been always cleanſing from ſin; it had this virtue in it, and was of this uſe, even before it was actually ſhed, to the Old Teſtament ſaints; whence Chriſt is ſaid to be the Lamb ſlain from the foundation of the world; and it has the ſame efficacy now, as when firſt ſhed, and will have to the end of the world; and being ſprinkled upon the conſcience, by the Spirit of God, it takes away the ſins of believers, and cleanſes from them, as faſt as the corruption of nature riſes, or ſins appear; and removes them out of their ſight, and ſpeaks peace to their ſouls; and which is owing, as to the dignity of Chriſt's perſon, and the value of his ſacrifice, ſo to his continual interceſſion, advocacy, and mediation; and which reaches to all ſin, original and actual, ſecret and open ſins; ſins of heart, thought, lip, and life; ſins of omiſſion and commiſſion, greater or leſſer ſins, committed againſt light and knowledge, grace and mercy, law and Goſpel, all but the ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt; and in this Chriſt was the antitype of the ſcape-goat, of which the *Jews* ſay [f], that "it atoned for all " the tranſgreſſions of the law, whether ſmall or " great, ſins of preſumption, or of ignorance, " known, or not known, which were againſt an " affirmative or negative command, which deſerved " cutting off, (by the hand of God) or death by " the *Sanhedrim*." The *Arabic* and *Ethiopic* verſions render it, *from all our ſins*; and this muſt be aſcribed to the greatneſs of his perſon, as the Son of God; wherefore the emphaſis lies on theſe words, *his ſon*; the Son of God, who is equal with God, and is truly and properly God: as it muſt be the blood of man that muſt, according to the law, be ſhed, to atone for, and expiate ſin, and cleanſe from it, and that of an innocent man, who is holy, harmleſs, and without ſin; ſo it muſt not be the blood of a mere man, tho' ever ſo holy, but the blood of one that is God, as well as man; ſee *Acts* xx. 28. The divine nature of the Son of God, being in union with the human nature, put virtue into his blood to produce ſuch an effect, which ſtill continues, and will, as long as there is any occaſion for it.

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[e] Lex. Cabaliſt. p. 63, 64.

[f] Sepher Coſri, par. 2. §. 2. fol. 61. 2.

Ver. 8. *If we ſay that we have no ſin*, &c.] Notwithſtanding believers are cleanſed from their ſins by the blood of Chriſt, yet they are not without ſin; no man is without ſin: this is not only true of all men, as they come into the world, being conceived in ſin, and ſhapen in iniquity, and of all that are in a ſtate of unregeneracy, and of God's elect, while in ſuch a ſtate, but even of all regenerated and ſanctified perſons in this life; as appears by the ingenuous confeſſions of ſin made by the ſaints in all ages; by their complaints concerning it, and groans under it; by the continual war in them between fleſh and ſpirit; and by their prayers for the diſcoveries of pardoning grace, and for the freſh application of Chriſt's blood for cleanſing; by their remiſſneſs in the diſcharge of duty, and by their frequent ſlips and falls, and often backſlidings: and though their ſins are all pardoned, and they are juſtified from all things by the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, yet they are not without ſin; tho' they are freed from the guilt of ſin, and are under no obligation to puniſhment on account of it, yet not from the being of it; their ſins were indeed transferred from them to Chriſt, and he has bore them, and took them and put them away, and they are redeemed from them, and are acquitted, diſcharged, and pardoned, ſo that ſin is not imputed to them, and God ſees no iniquity in them in the article of juſtification; and alſo, their iniquities are cauſed to paſs from them, as to the guilt of them, and are taken out of their ſight, and they have no more conſcience of them, having their hearts ſprinkled and purged by the blood of Jeſus, and are clear of all condemnation, the curſe of the law, the wrath of God, or the ſecond death, by reaſon of them; yet pardon of ſin, and juſtification from it, though they take away the guilt of ſin, and free from obligation to puniſhment, yet they don't take out the being of ſin, or cauſe it to ceaſe to act, or don't make ſins ceaſe to be ſins, or change the nature of actions, of ſinful ones, to make them harmleſs, innocent, or indifferent; the ſins of believers are equally ſins with other perſons, are of the ſame kind and nature, and equally tranſgreſſions of the law, and many of them are attended with more aggravating circumſtances, and are taken notice of by God, and reſented by him, and for which he chaſtiſes his people in love: now tho' a believer may ſay, that he has not this or that particular ſin, or is not guilty of this or that ſin, for he has the ſeeds of all ſin in him, yet he cannot ſay he has no ſin; and though he may truly ſay he ſhall have no ſin, for in the other ſtate the being and principle of ſin will be removed, and the ſaints will be perfectly holy in themſelves, yet he cannot, in this preſent life, ſay that he is without it: if any of us who profeſs to be cleanſed from ſin by the blood of Chriſt, ſhould affirm this, *we deceive ourſelves*; ſuch perſons muſt be ignorant of themſelves, and put a cheat upon themſelves, thinking themſelves to be ſomething when they are nothing; flattering themſelves what pure and holy creatures they are, when there is a fountain of ſin and wickedneſs in them; theſe are ſelf-deceptions, ſad deluſions, and groſs impoſitions upon themſelves: *and the truth is not in us*; it is a plain caſe the truth of grace is not in ſuch perſons, for if there was a real work of God upon their ſouls, they would know and diſcern the plague of their own hearts, the impurity of their nature, and the imperfection of their obedience; nor is the word of truth in them, for if that had an entrance into them, and worked effectually in them, they would in the light of it diſcover much ſin and iniquity in them; and indeed there is no principle of truth, no veracity in them; there is no ſincerity nor ingenuity in them; they don't ſpeak honeſtly and uprightly, but contrary to the dictates of their own conſcience.

Ver. 9. *If we confeſs our ſins*, &c.] Not to one another; for though it is our duty to confeſs our faults to our fellow-creatures and fellow-chriſtians which are committed againſt them, yet are under no obligation to confeſs ſuch as are more immediately againſt God, and which lie between him and ourſelves; or at leaſt it is ſufficient to confeſs and acknowledge in general what ſinful creatures we are, without entring into particulars; for confeſſion of ſin is to be made to God, againſt whom it is committed, and who only can pardon: and a man that truly confeſſes his ſins is one that the Spirit of God has convinced of it, and has ſhown him its exceeding ſinfulneſs, and filled him with a godly ſorrow for it, and given him repentance unto ſalvation, that needeth not to be repented of; and who under ſuch a ſight and ſenſe of ſin, and concern for it, comes and acknowledges it before the Lord, humbly imploring, for Chriſt's ſake, his pardoning grace and mercy; and ſuch obtain it: *he is faithful and juſt to forgive us our ſins*; forgiveneſs of ſin here intends not the act of forgiveneſs, as in God, proceeding upon the bloodſhed and ſacrifice of Chriſt, which is done at once, and includes all ſin, paſt, preſent, to come; but an application of pardoning grace to a poor ſenſible ſinner, humbled under a ſenſe of ſin, and confeſſing it before the Lord; and confeſſion of ſin is not the cauſe or condition of pardon, nor of the manifeſtation of it, but is deſcriptive of the perſon, and points him out, to whom God will and does make known his forgiving love; for to whomſoever he grants repentance, he gives the remiſſion of ſin; in doing of which he is *faithful*, to his word of promiſe; ſuch as in *Prov.* xxviii. 13. *Iſ.* lv. 7. *and juſt*;

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[f] *Miſn. Shebuot*, c. 1. §. 6.

in being *true*, as the *Arabic* verſion adds, to his word; and ſhewing a proper regard to the blood and ſacrifice of his Son; for his blood being ſhed, and hereby ſatisfaction made to the law and juſtice of God, it is a righteous thing in him to juſtify from ſin, and forgive the ſinner for whom Chriſt has ſhed his blood, and not impute it to him, or puniſh him for it; though the word here uſed may anſwer to the *Hebrew* word צדיק, which ſometimes carries in it the notion and idea of mercy and beneficence; hence mercy to the poor is ſometimes expreſſed by righteouſneſs; and the righteous acts of God intend his mercies and benefits unto men; ſee *Dan.* iv. 27. 1 *Sam.* xii. 7. and ſo forgiveneſs of ſin ſprings from the tender mercies of our God, and is both an act of juſtice and of mercy; of juſtice, with reſpect to the blood of Chriſt, and of pure grace and mercy to the pardoned ſinner: the following clauſe, *and to cleanſe us from all unrighteouſneſs*, is but the ſame thing expreſſed in different words; for all unrighteouſneſs is ſin, and to cleanſe from ſin is to remove the guilt of it, by an application of the blood of Chriſt for pardon. The antecedent to the relative *he* in the text, is either God, who is light, and with whom the ſaints have fellowſhip; or his ſon Jeſus Chriſt, who is the neareſt antecedent, and who being truly God, has a power to forgive ſin.

Ver. 10. *If we ſay that we have not ſinned*, &c.] Have never ſinned, in time paſt as well as now; deny original ſin, and that men are born in ſin, but affirm they come into the world pure and holy; and aſſert that concupiſcence is not ſin; and ſo not regarding internal luſts and deſires as ſinful, only what is external, fancy they have ſo lived as to have been without ſin: but if any of us give out ſuch an aſſertion, *we make him a liar*; that is God, who in his word declares that the wicked are eſtranged from the womb, and go aſtray as ſoon as they be born, ſpeaking lyes; that his own people are tranſgreſſors from the womb; that all have ſinned and come ſhort of his glory; and that there is none that does good, no not one, but all are under ſin, under the power and guilt of it, and become filthy by it, and ſo obnoxious to the wrath of God: *and his word is not in us*; either Chriſt the word of God, or rather the word of God which declares theſe things; no regard is had unto it; it *is not with us*, as the *Syriac* and *Ethiopic* verſions render it; it is not uſed and attended to as the rule and ſtandard of truth, but is caſt away and deſpiſed; at leaſt it has no place in the hearts of ſuch, nor does it work effectually; for was this the caſe, they would have other notions of themſelves than that of ſinleſs creatures. The Apoſtle has regard either to the *Gnoſtics*, a ſett of hereticks of this age, who fancied themſelves pure, ſpiritual, and perfect, even in the midſt of all their impurities, and notwithſtanding their vicious lives; or to *Judaizing* chriſtians, and it may be to the *Jews* themſelves, who entertained ſuch ſort of notions as theſe of being perfect and without ſin [h].

CHAP. II.

IN this chapter the Apoſtle comforts the ſaints under a ſenſe of ſin; urges them to an obſervance of the commandments of God in imitation of Chriſt, particularly to the new commandment of brotherly love, and gives his reaſons for it; dehorts them from the love of the world, and the things of it; cautions them againſt falſe teachers and antichriſts, and exhorts them to abide in Chriſt, and perſevere in the faith of him. He firſt declares that the end of his writing was to prevent their ſinning; but ſuppoſing any ſhould fall into ſin through infirmity, he comforts them with the conſideration of the advocacy of Chriſt, and of his being the propitiation for the ſins both of *Jews* and *Gentiles*, ver. 1, 2. and whereas ſome perſons might boaſt of their knowledge of Chriſt, and neglect his commands, he obſerves, that the keeping of them is the beſt evidence of true knowledge, and of the ſincerity of their love to God, and of their being in Chriſt; and that ſuch who ſhew no regard to them are liars, and the truth is not in them; and ſuch that profeſs to be in Chriſt and abide in him, ought to walk as they have him for an example, ver. 3, 4, 5, 6. and inſtances in a particular commandment, to love one another, which on different accounts is called an old and a new commandment, and which has been verified both in Chriſt and in his people; for which a reaſon is given in the latter, the darkneſs being paſt, and the true light ſhining, ver. 7, 8. upon which ſome propoſitions are founded, as that he that profeſſes to be in the light, and hates his brother, is in darkneſs to this very moment; and that he that loves his brother is evidently in the light, nor will he eaſily give or take offence; and that he that hates his brother is not only in darkneſs, but walks in it, being blinded by it, and ſo knows not whither he is going, ver. 9, 10, 11. and this commandment of love the Apoſtle writes to the ſaints, as diſtinguiſhed into the ſeveral claſſes of fathers, young men, and children; and urges it on them from the conſideration of the bleſſings of grace peculiar to them; as ancient knowledge to fathers, ſtrength and victory to young men, knowledge of the father, and remiſſion of ſins to children, ver. 12, 13, 14. and then he diſſuades from the love of worldly things, ſeeing the love of them is not conſiſtent with the love of God; and ſeeing the things that are in it are vain and ſinful, and are not of God, but of the world; and ſince the world and its luſt paſs away, when he that does the will of God abides for ever, ver. 15, 16, 17. he next obſerves unto them, that there were many antichriſts in the world; which was an evidence of its being the laſt time; and theſe he deſcribes as ſchiſmaticks and apoſtates from the chriſtian churches, ver. 18, 19. but as for the ſaints he writes to, they were of another character, they were truly chriſtians, having an anointing from the holy one, by which they knew all things; nor did the Apoſtle write to them as ignorant, but as knowing perſons, and able to diſtinguiſh between truth and error, ver. 20, 21. and then he goes on with his deſcription of antichriſtian liars, ſhewing that they were ſuch who denied Jeſus to be the Meſſiah, and the relation that is between the Father and the Son, ver. 22, 23. and cloſes the chapter with an exhortation to perſeverance in the doctrine of Chriſt; ſince it was what they had heard from the beginning, and ſince by ſo doing they would continue in the Father and in the Son, and beſides had the promiſe of eternal life, ver. 24, 25. and indeed this was the main thing in view in writing to them concerning ſeducers, to preſerve them from them, though indeed this was in a great meaſure needleſs, ſince the anointing they had received abode in them; and taught them all things, and according as they regarded its teaching they would abide in Chriſt, ver. 26, 27. to which he exhorts them from the conſideration of that boldneſs and confidence it would give them at his appearance, who they muſt know are righteous, and ſo that every one that doth righteouſneſs is born of him, ver. 28, 29.

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[h] Vid. T. Bab. Temura, fol. 15, 2. & Bava Kama, fol. 80, 1. T. Hieroſ. Sota, fol. 24, 1. & Chagiga, fol. 77, 4.

Ver. 1. *My little children*, &c.] The Apoſtle may addreſs the ſaints under this character, on account of their regeneration by the Spirit and grace of God, in which they were as new-born babes; and on account of his being the inſtrument of their converſion, and ſo was their ſpiritual father, and therefore calls them his own children; and he might the rather uſe ſuch a way of ſpeaking, becauſe of his advanced age, being now in his old age, and *John* the elder in age as well as in office; as well as to ſhew his paternal affection for them, and care of them, and that what he had wrote, or ſhould write, was not from any diſreſpect, but from pure love to them; and it might ſerve to put them in mind of their weakneſs in faith, in knowledge, and ſpiritual ſtrength, that they might not entertain high notions of themſelves, as if they were perfect and without infirmities; and it is eaſy to obſerve, that this is one of Chriſt's expreſſions, *John* xiii. 33. from whoſe lips the Apoſtle took it, whoſe words and phraſes he greatly delighted in, as he ſeems to do in this, by his frequent uſe of it; ſee ver. 18, 28. and iii. 7, 18. and iv. 4. and v. 21. *Theſe things write I unto you*; concerning the purity and holineſs of God, who is light itſelf; concerning fellowſhip with him, which no one that lives in ſin can have; concerning pardon and cleanſing from ſin by the blood of Chriſt, and concerning ſin being in them, and they not without it. The *Ethiopic* verſion reads, *we write*, as in ch i. 4. *that ye ſin not*; not that he thought they could be entirely without it, either without the being of it, or the commiſſion of it, in thought, word, or deed, for this would be to ſuppoſe that which is contrary to his own words, in ch. i. 8, 10. but he ſuggeſts that the end of his writing on theſe ſubjects was, that they might not live in ſin, and indulge themſelves in a vicious courſe of living, give up themſelves to it, and walk in it, and work it with all greedineſs: and nothing could be more ſuitably adapted to ſuch an end than the conſideration of the holineſs of God, who calls by his grace; and of the neceſſity of light and grace and holineſs in men to communion with him; and of the pardoning grace of God and cleanſing blood of Chriſt, which when ſavingly applied, ſets men againſt ſin, and makes them zealous of good works; and of the indwelling of ſin in the ſaints, which puts them upon their guard againſt it: *and if any man ſin*; as every man does, even every one that is in the light, and walks in it, and has fellowſhip with God; every one that believes in Chriſt, and is juſtified through his righteouſneſs, and pardoned by his blood; every one of the little children; for the Apoſtle is not ſpeaking of mankind in general who ſin, for Chriſt is not an advocate for all that ſin, but of theſe in particular; hence the *Arabic* verſion renders it, *if any of you ſin*; and this, with the following, he ſays not to encourage in ſin, but to comfort under a ſenſe of it: *we have an advocate with the father, Jeſus Chriſt the righteous*; Chriſt is an advocate, not for juſt or righteous perſons, for as he came not to call theſe to repentance, nor to die for them, ſo ſuch have no need of an advocate, nor is he one for them; but as he came to call ſinners, and to ſave them, and died for them, the juſt for the unjuſt, ſo he is an advocate, and makes interceſſion for tranſgreſſors; and not for all men, though they have all ſinned; not for the world, or thoſe ſo called in diſtinction from the perſons given him by his Father, for theſe he prays not; but for all the elect, and whatſoever charges are brought againſt them he anſwers to them, and for them; and for all that believe in him, be they weak or ſtrong, even for the Apoſtles as well as others; for they were not without ſin, were men of like paſſions as others, and carried about with them a body of ſin, and had their daily infirmities, and ſo needed an advocate as others; and hence *John* ſays, *we have an advocate*, &c. but then Chriſt is not an advocate for ſin, tho' for ſinners; he does not vindicate the commiſſion of ſin, or plead for the performance of it; he is no patron of iniquity; nor does he deny that his clients have ſinned, or affirm that their actions are not ſins; he allows in court all their ſins, with all their aggravated circumſtances; nor does he go about to excuſe or extenuate them; but he is an advocate for the non-imputation of them, and for the application of pardon to them: he pleads in their favour, that theſe ſins have been laid upon him, and he has bore them; that his blood has been ſhed for the remiſſion of them, and that he has made full ſatisfaction for them; and therefore in juſtice they ought not to be laid to their charge; but that the forgiveneſs of them ſhould be applied unto them, for the relief and comfort of their burdened and diſtreſſed conſciences: and for this he is an advocate for his poor ſinning people *with the Father*; who being the firſt perſon, and the Son the advocate, and the Spirit ſuſtaining a like character, is only mentioned; and he being God againſt whom ſin is committed, and to whom the ſatisfaction is made; and the rather, as he is the Father of Chriſt, and of thoſe for whom he is an advocate; ſeeing it may be concluded that his pleadings will be with ſucceſs, ſince he is not only related to him, and has an intereſt in him himſelf, but the perſons alſo whoſe patron he is, are related to him, and have a ſhare in his paternal affection and care: moreover, this phraſe, as it expreſſes the diſtinct perſonality of Chriſt from the Father, ſo his being with him in heaven at his right-hand, and nearneſs to him; where he diſcharges this office of his, partly by appearing in perſon for his people in the preſence of God; and partly by carrying in and preſenting their confeſſions of ſin, and their prayers for the freſh diſcoveries and applications of pardoning grace, which he offers up to his Father with the ſweet incenſe of his mediation; and chiefly by pleading the virtue of his blood, righteouſneſs, and ſacrifice, which are carried within the vail, and are always in ſight, and call aloud for peace and pardon; as alſo by anſwering and removing the charges and accuſations of the court-adverſary, the accuſer of the brethren, the devil; as well as by the declarations of his will, demanding in point of juſtice, in conſideration of his ſufferings and death, that ſuch and ſuch bleſſings be beſtowed upon his people, as pardon, righteouſneſs, grace, and ſupplies of grace, and at laſt glory; and by applying theſe benefits to their ſouls as a *comforter*, which the word here uſed alſo ſignifies, and is ſo rendered, *John* xiv. 16, 26. and xv. 26. and xvi. 7. and by the *Arabic* verſion here. Now the ſaints have but one advocate, and that is enough for them; the Apoſtle does not ſay we have advocates, but *an advocate*; not angels, nor ſaints departed, but Jeſus Chriſt only, who is the one mediator between God and man: and he is a continual one, he ever lives to make interceſſion; his blood is always ſpeaking, and he is always pleading; and therefore 'tis ſaid *we have*, not we have had, or we ſhall have an advocate: and he is a prevalent one, he is always heard, he thoroughly pleads the cauſe he undertakes, and ever carries it; which is owing to the dignity of his perſon, his intereſt with his Father, and the virtue and value of his ſacrifice: and he is every way fit for ſuch a work, for he is *righteous*; not only in his natures, both divine and human, but in his office, as mediator, which he faithfully and righteouſly performs; he is a very proper perſon to plead for guilty perſons, which he could not do if he himſelf was guilty; but he is ſo holy and righteous that nothing can be objected to him by God; and it need not be doubted by men that he will act the faithful part to them, and righteouſly ſerve them and their cauſe; and it is moreover his righteouſneſs which he has wrought out, and is imputed to them, that carries the cauſe for them; and therefore this character of Chriſt is fitly added, as is alſo the following. The *Jews* [i] have adopted the word in the text into their language, but have applied it to a different purpoſe, to alms-deeds, repentance, and good works. Much more agreeably *Philo* the *Jew* [k] ſpeaks of the ſon of perfect virtue, παρακλητω, *as an advocate* for the forgiveneſs of ſins, and for a ſupply of everlaſting good things.

Ver. 2. *And he is the propitiation for our ſins*, &c.] For the ſins of us who now believe, and are *Jews: and not for ours only*; but for the ſins of Old Teſtament ſaints, and of thoſe who ſhall hereafter believe in Chriſt, and of the *Gentiles* alſo, ſignified in the next clauſe: *but alſo for* the ſins *of the whole world*; the *Syriac* verſion renders it, *not for us only*, *but alſo for the whole world*; that is, not for the *Jews* only, for *John* was a *Jew*, and ſo were thoſe he wrote unto, but for the *Gentiles* alſo. Nothing is more common in *Jewiſh* writings than to call the *Gentiles* עלמא, *the world*; and כל העולם, the whole world; and אומות העולם, *the nations of the world* [l]; ſee the note on *John* xii. 19. and the word *world* is ſo uſed in ſcripture; ſee *John* iii. 16. and iv. 42. *Rom.* xi. 12, 15. and ſtands oppoſed to a notion the *Jews* have of the *Gentiles*, that אין להן כפרה, *there is no propitiation for them* [m]: and it is eaſy to obſerve, that when this phraſe is not uſed of the Gentiles, it is to be underſtood in a limited and reſtrained ſenſe; as when they ſay [n] "it happened to a certain high "prieſt, that when he went out of the ſanctuary "כולי עלמא, *the whole world* went after him;" which could only deſign the people in the temple. And elſewhere [o] it is ſaid, "כולי עלמא, *the whole* "*world*, has left the *Miſna*, and gone after the "*Gemara*;" which at moſt can only intend the *Jews*; and indeed only a majority of their doctors who were converſant with theſe writings: and in another place [p], "כולי עלמא, *the whole world*, "fell on their faces, but *Raf* did not fall on his "face;" where it means no more than the congregation. Once more, it is ſaid [q] when "*R. Simeon* "*ben Gamaliel* entred (the ſynagogue) כולי עלמא, "*the whole world*, ſtood up before him;" that is, the people in the ſynagogue: to which may be added [r], "when a great man makes a mourning, "כולי עלמא, *the whole world* come to honour him;" *i. e.* a great number of perſons attend the funeral pomp: and ſo theſe phraſes, כולי עלמא לא פליגי, *the whole world* is not divided, or does not diſſent [s]; כולי עלמא סברי, *the whole world* are of opinion [t], are frequently met with in the *Talmud*, by which an agreement among the *Rabbins*, in certain points, is deſigned; yea, ſometimes the phraſe *all the men of the world* [u] only intend the inhabitants of a city where a ſynagogue was, and at moſt, only the *Jews*: and ſo this phraſe, *all the world*, or *the whole world*, in ſcripture, unleſs when it ſignifies the whole univerſe, or the habitable earth, is always uſed in a limited ſenſe, either for the *Roman* empire, or the churches of Chriſt in the world, or believers, or the preſent inhabitants of the world, or a part of them only, *Luke* ii. 1. *Rom.* i. 8. and iii. 19. *Col.* i. 6. *Rev.* iii. 10. xii. 9. and xiii. 3. and ſo it is in this Epiſtle, ch. v. 19. where the whole world lying in wickedneſs is manifeſtly diſtinguiſhed from the ſaints, who are of God, and belong not to the world; and therefore cannot be underſtood of all the individuals in the world; and the like diſtinction is in this text itſelf, for *the ſins of the whole world* are oppoſed to *our ſins*, the ſins of the Apoſtle and others to whom he joins himſelf; who therefore belonged not to, nor were a part of the whole world, for whoſe ſins Chriſt is a propitiation, as for theirs: ſo that this paſſage cannot furniſh out any argument for univerſal redemption; for beſides theſe things, it may be further obſerved, that for whoſe ſins Chriſt is a propitiation, their ſins are atoned for and pardoned, and their perſons juſtified from all ſin, and ſo ſhall certainly be glorified, which is not true of the whole world, and every man and woman in it; moreover, Chriſt is a propitiation through faith in his blood, the benefit of his propitiatory ſacrifice is only received and enjoyed through faith; ſo that in the event it appears that Chriſt is a propitiation only for believers, a character which does not agree with all mankind; add to this, that for whom Chriſt is a propitiation he is alſo an advocate, ver. 1. but he is not an advocate for every individual perſon in the world; yea, there is a world, he will not pray for, and conſequently, is not a propitiation for them. Once more, the deſign of the Apoſtle in theſe words is to comfort his *little children* with the advocacy and propitiatory ſacrifice of Chriſt, who might fall into ſin through weakneſs and inadvertency; but what comfort would it yield to a diſtreſſed mind, to be told that Chriſt was a propitiation not only for the ſins of the Apoſtles and other ſaints, but for the ſins of every individual in the world, even of thoſe that are in hell? Would it not be natural for perſons in ſuch circumſtances to argue rather againſt, than for themſelves, and conclude that ſeeing perſons might be damned notwithſtanding the propitiatory ſacrifice of Chriſt, that this might, and would be their caſe. In what ſenſe Chriſt is a propitiation, ſee the note on *Rom.* iii. 25. The *Jews* have no notion of the Meſſiah as a propitiation or atonement: ſometimes they ſay [w], repentance atones for all ſin; ſometimes the death of the righteous [x]; ſometimes incenſe [y]; ſometimes the prieſts garments [z]; ſometimes it is the day of atonement [a]; and indeed they are in the utmoſt puzzle about atonement; and they even confeſs in their prayers [b], that they have now neither altar, nor prieſt to atone for them; ſee the note on ch. iv. 10.

Ver. 3. *And hereby we do know that we know him*, &c.] Either the Father, with whom Chriſt is an advocate; not as the God of nature, and by the light of it, nor as the law-giver and judge of the whole earth, and by the law of *Moſes*; but as the God of all grace, as a God pardoning iniquity, tranſgreſſion, and ſin, as the Father of Chriſt, and as in him, by the Goſpel; and this not in a mere notional and ſpeculative way, but with love and affection; not with fear and trembling, as devils know him, nor in theory, as formal profeſſors and hypocrites, but with a knowledge, joined with hearty love of him, and chearful obedience to him: or elſe Chriſt the advocate and propitiation for ſin; and him alſo, not with a mere notional knowledge of his perſon and offices, which carnal men and devils themſelves have of him, but with that which is ſpiritual, ſpecial, and ſaving, being from the Spirit and grace of God; and regards Chriſt as a Saviour, as a propitiatory ſacrifice for ſin, and an advocate with God the Father; and by which he is approved as ſuch, to the rejection of all other ſaviours, ſacrifices, and advocates; and is truſted, confided, and believed in as ſuch, and affectionately loved, and that above all others, in ſincerity and truth; and is readily obeyed in his word and ordinances; for where there is true knowledge of Chriſt, there is faith in him; and where there is faith in him, there is love to him, for faith works by love; and where there is love to him, there will be an obſervance of his commands; and this is here made the evidence of the true knowledge of him: for it follows, *if we keep his commandments*; not the commandments of men, for the keeping of them ariſes from ignorance of God, and is a proof of it; nor the commandments of the ceremonial law, which are aboliſhed, particularly circumciſion, which is oppoſed to the keeping of the commandments of God, 1 *Cor.* vii. 19. but either thoſe of the moral law, and which are more particularly the commandments of God the Father; the obſervance of which, though it can't be with perfection, yet being in faith, and from love to God, and with a view to his glory, is an evidence of the true knowledge of him, and of his will: or elſe thoſe commandments, which are more eſpecially the commandments of Chriſt Jeſus; ſuch as the ordinances of baptiſm and the Lord's-ſupper, which are peculiar to the Goſpel-diſpenſation; and which being kept as they were delivered by Chriſt, and in his name and ſtrength, and to his glory, without depending on them for life and ſalvation, is an argument and proof of the right knowledge of him; and particularly his new commandment of loving one another, may be chiefly deſigned, that being what the Apoſtle has greatly in view throughout this Epiſtle; now let it be obſerved, that keeping of the commands of God, or Chriſt, is not the knowledge of either of them itſelf, for much may be done in an external way, yet neither God nor Chriſt be ſpiritually and ſavingly known; nor is it the cauſe of ſuch knowledge, for that is owing to the Spirit and grace of God; but is an effect or conſequence of ſpiritual knowledge, and ſo an evidence of it; hereby is not the knowledge itſelf, but the knowledge of that knowledge, that is, that it is true and genuine.

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[i] Pirke Abot, c. 4. §. 11. T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 32, 1. T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 10, 1.
[k] De vita Moſis, l. iii. p. 673.
[l] Jarchi in Iſ. liii. 5.
[m] T. Hieroſ. Nazir, fol. 57, 3. vid. T. Bab. Succa, fol. 55, 2.
[n] T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 71, 2.
[o] T. Bab. Bava Metzia, fol. 33, 2.
[p] T. Bab. Megilla, fol. 22, 2.
[q] T. Bab. Horayot, fol. 13, 2.
[r] Piſke Toſeph. Megilla, Art. 104.
[s] T. Bab. Cetubot, fol. 90, 2. & Kidduſhin, fol. 47, 2. & 49, 1. & 65, 2. & Gittin, fol. 8, 1. & 60, 2.
[t] T. Bab Kidduſhin, fol. 48, 1.
[u] Maimon. Hilch. Tephilla, c. 11. §. 16.
[w] Zohar in Lev. fol. 29, 1.
[x] Ib. fol. 24, 1. T. Hieroſ. Yoma, fol. 38, 2.
[y] T. Bab. Zebachim, fol. 88, 2. & Erachin, fol. 16, 1.
[z] T. Bab. Zebachim, ib. T. Hieroſ. Yoma, fol. 44, 2.
[a] T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 87, 1. & T. Hieroſ. Yoma, fol. 45, 2, 3.
[b] Seder Tephillot, fol. 41, 1. Ed. Amſterd.

Ver. 4. *He that ſaith I know him*, &c.] God or Chriſt, as the *Gnoſtics* did, who pretended to great, even perfect knowledge of divine things: *and keepeth not his commandments*; which the above perſons had no regard to, and as many who profeſs great light and knowledge, in our days, ſhew no concern for: *is a liar*; he contradicts what he ſays, and gives the lye to it; for though in words he profeſſes to know God, in works he denies him, and which betrays his ignorance of him: *and the truth is not in him*; there is no true knowledge of God and Chriſt in him; nor is the truth of the Goſpel in his heart, however it may be in his head; nor is the truth of grace in him, for each of theſe lead perſons to obedience. The *Ethiopic* verſion renders it, *the truth of God is not with him*; ſee the note on ch. i. 8.

Ver. 5. *But whoſo keepeth his word*, &c.] Either the word of the Goſpel, and the truths of it, who receives it in love, cordially embraces and retains it, and will by no means part with it, but holds it faſt, and ſtands faſt in it; or the precepts and ordinances of the word, who loves theſe, and eſteems them above fine gold, and concerning all things to be right, and obſerves them as they ſhould be: *in him verily is the love of God perfected*; not the love wherewith God loves him, for that is perfect in himſelf, and admits of no degrees, and cannot be more or leſs in his heart, and is intirely independent of the obedience of men, or any works of theirs; it is true indeed the manifeſtations of this love to the ſaints are imperfect, and may be more and greater, and greater manifeſtations of love are promiſed to ſuch that love Chriſt, and keep his commandments, *John* xiv. 21, 23. but here it is to be underſtood not actively, but paſſively, of the love wherewith God is loved by his people; and intends not the abſolute perfection of it in them, in whom it often waxes cold, and is left, or the fervour of it abated, but the ſincerity and reality of it; for by keeping the word of God, both his truths and his ordinances, it is clearly ſeen that their love to him is without diſſimulation, and is not in tongue only, but in deed and in truth: now it is not the keeping of the word of God that cauſes this love, or makes it perfect or ſincere, for it is a fruit of the Spirit, and is owing to the grace of God; but love on the other hand, is the cauſe of keeping of the word; and the latter being a conſequent and an effect of the former, is the evidence of it, of the truth and ſincerity of it: *hereby know we that we are in him*; in Chriſt, not merely nominally, or by profeſſion, as all that name the name of Chriſt, and are in a Goſpel church-ſtate, may be ſaid to be; but really, firſt ſecretly, through the love of Chriſt, the election of God, and the covenant of grace, and then openly, in converſion and effectual vocation, thro' believing in Chriſt, when the ſaints appear to be in him as branches in the vine; and which is known by their fruits, as here, by keeping the word, and doing the commandments of Chriſt, which do not put a man into Chriſt, but only ſhew that he is there; for a man's being in Chriſt is owing to the grace of God; this is the firſt thing done in grace, 1 *Cor.* i. 30.

Ver. 6. *He that ſaith, he abideth in him*, &c.] As all do that are in him; once in Chriſt, and always in Chriſt; they are ſet as a ſeal on his arm and heart, which can never be removed; they are in his arms, and can never be plucked from thence; and are members of him, and can never be diſunited from him: or *dwelleth in him*, as in *John* vi. 56. that is, by faith; who under a ſenſe of ſin and danger, have fled to Chriſt, as to a ſtrong tower and place of defence, where they dwell ſafely, peaceably, pleaſantly, and comfortably, enjoying whatever is neceſſary for them. The *Syriac* and *Ethiopic* verſions read, *he that ſaith I am in him*; loved by him, choſen in him, united to him, a member of his, and have communion with him: *ought himſelf alſo to walk even as he walked*; as Chriſt walked, lived, and acted, ſo ought he; that is, to imitate him and follow him, as he has him for an example; not in his miraculous works, in raiſing the dead, healing the ſick, and walking upon the waters, &c. which were wrought as proofs of his deity and of his Meſſiahſhip, and not intended for imitation; nor in his mediatorial performances, as in his propitiatory ſacrifice and advocacy; but in the exerciſe of grace, and duties of religion as a man, and in a private way; and may chiefly regard walking in love, as he walked, ſee *Eph.* v. 2. and is what is in the following verſes inſiſted on, namely, the new commandment of love to the brethren; which ſhould be to all, as his was, and, like his, conſtant and laſting; and, when the caſe requires, ſhould be ſhewn by laying down life for them. The *as* is not a note of equality, but of likeneſs; for it cannot be thought that ſaints ſhould walk in that degree of perfection, in humility, patience, love, and in the exerciſe of every other grace, and in the diſcharge of duty, as Chriſt did; only that they ſhould copy after him, and make his obedience and life the rule of theirs.

Ver. 7. *Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you,* &c.] Some underſtand this of faith, which this Apoſtle calls a commandment, ch. iii. 23. but it rather intends the commandment of love, eſpecially to the brethren, of which the Apoſtle ſays the ſame things as here, in his ſecond Epiſtle, ver. 5, 6. and this ſenſe agrees both with what goes before, and follows after, and is a conſiderable branch of the commandments of Chriſt to be kept, and of walking as he walked; and the word *brethren*, prefixed to this account, may direct to, and ſtrengthen this ſenſe, though the *Vulgate Latin* and *Syriac* verſions read, *beloved*; and ſo the *Alexandrian* copy, and others: and this commandment is ſaid to be not a new one, *but an old commandment, which ye had from the beginning*; it being in its original a part of the eternal law of truth, founded upon the unalterable nature and eternal will of God, who is love itſelf, and requires it in all his creatures; being what was written on *Adam*'s heart in a ſtate of innocence, and a branch of the divine image inſtamped upon him; and is what was delivered in the law of *Moſes*, for love to God and men is the ſum and ſubſtance of that; and was taught by Chriſt and his Apoſtles, from the beginning of the Goſpel-diſpenſation; and was what theſe ſaints had been acquainted with, and influentially inſtructed in from their firſt converſion, being taught of God in regeneration to love one another; ſo that this was no novel doctrine, no upſtart notion, no new law, but of the greateſt and moſt venerable antiquity, and therefore to be regarded in the moſt reſpectful manner. *The old commandment is the word which ye have heard from the beginning*; or this ancient law of love is contained in, and enforced by, that word or doctrine, which was delivered from the beginning of time; and which theſe ſaints had heard of, concerning the ſeed of the woman's bruiſing the ſerpent's head, which includes the work of redemption and ſalvation by Chriſt, atonement by his ſacrifice, forgiveneſs of ſin thro' his blood, and juſtification by his righteouſneſs, than which nothing can more powerfully engage to love God, and Chriſt, and one another; and which is alſo ſtrongly encouraged by the word of God, and Goſpel of Chriſt, which they had heard, and had a ſpiritual and ſaving knowledge of, from the time they were effectually called by the grace of God: the phraſe, *from the beginning*, is left out in the *Alexandrian* copy, and others, and in the *Vulgate Latin*, *Syriac*, and *Ethiopic* verſions; it is omitted in both clauſes of the text in the latter.

Ver. 8. *Again, a new commandment I write unto you,* &c.] Which is the ſame with the former, conſidered in different reſpects. The command of brotherly love is a new one; that is, it is an excellent one, as a new name is an excellent name, and a new ſong is an excellent one; it is renewed by Chriſt under the Goſpel-diſpenſation; it is newly explained by him, and purged from the falſe gloſſes of the *Scribes* and *Phariſees*; ſee *Matt.* v. 43, 44. and enforced by him with a new argument, and by a new example of his own, even his own love to his people; and which is obſerved by them in a new manner, they being made new creatures; and this law being anew written in their hearts, under the renewing work of the Spirit of God, as a branch of the new covenant of grace; ſee *John* xiii. 34. The *Jews*[c] expect, תורה חדשה, *a new law* to be given them by the hands of the Meſſiah; and a new one he has given, even the new commandment of love, and which is the fulfilling of the law. *Which thing is true in him, and in you.* The *Alexandrian* copy reads, *in us*; the ſenſe is either, it is true *in itſelf*, as the phraſe will bear to be rendered, and it is verified in you, or in us, to be a new commandment; or it is true in Chriſt, it is yea and amen in him; it has its full completion in him, who is the fulfilling end of the law, as well as it has been faithfully delivered, truly explained, and warmly and affectionately recommended and urged by him; and he is the great pattern and exemplar of it: and the love which this new commandment requires, is really and truly in the ſaints, implanted in them in regeneration, is a fruit of the Spirit, and which faith works by, and will always continue in them; and ſhould be in its actings like Chriſt's true, ſincere, cordial, affectionate, conſtant, and univerſal: and ſome think the word ἐϛι, or ἔϛω, *is*, or *let it be*, is wanting in the laſt clauſe, and may be read, *which thing is true in him, and is*, or *let it be in you*; that is, as love to the brethren is true and ſincere in Chriſt, ſo it is, or ſhould be in you; it ſhould be without diſſimulation, and ſo it was, as the reaſon following ſhews: *becauſe the darkneſs is paſt*; or *is paſſing*; meaning either the darkneſs of the ceremonial law, which lay in dark types and ſhadows, and in cloudy ſacrifices, and myſtical repreſentations of things, and was a ſhadow of good things to come; and its ſhadows were now fleeing away apace, in fact as well as in right; and ſo the *Alexandrian* copy reads, *becauſe the ſhadow is paſſing away*; the night of *Jewiſh* darkneſs was far ſpent, and the Goſpel-day was not only broke, but it was, or near noon-day, which brought the light of faith, and the heat of love with it: or elſe the darkneſs of ſin and ignorance, of a ſtate of nature, and of the kingdom of ſatan, in which the people of God are before converſion; which then paſſes away gradually, by little and little, for it is not removed at once, or wholly gone; for though the ſaints are at once removed out of a ſtate of darkneſs, and from the kingdom of darkneſs, and the power of it, yet they are not wholly free from the darkneſs of ſin and ignorance, they ſtill ſee but thro' a glaſs darkly: and the words are better rendered, *the darkneſs paſſes*, or *is paſſing away*, and not, *is paſt*, or *has paſſed away*; for as yet it is not entirely gone: *and the true light now ſhineth*; either the Goſpel, which is a light, and a true and ſubſtantial one, in diſtinction from the dim light of nature, or the ſhadowy law of *Moſes*; and which now, under the preſent diſpenſation, ſhines out in a moſt glorious manner, as the ſun in its full ſtrength; and ſo the *Ethiopic* verſion renders it,

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[c] Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 461.

the light of truth; the word of truth, the Goſpel of our ſalvation: or Jeſus Chriſt, who is ſo called, *John* i. 9. in diſtinction from typical lights, as the *Urim* on the high-prieſt's breaſt-plate, the candleſtick in the tabernacle and temple, and the pillar of fire by night, which guided the *Iſraelites* thro' the wilderneſs; and in oppoſition to all falſe lights, to the *Scribes* and *Phariſees*, to falſe Chriſts, and falſe prophets, which are ſo many *ignes fatui*; but Chriſt is the ſun of righteouſneſs that is riſen in our *horizon*, and the true light which ſhines out in a moſt illuſtrious manner: or the light of grace is here intended, that light which the Spirit of God illuminates with in converſion; in which a man ſees ſin in its true colours, and has a ſpiritual and ſaving ſight of Chriſt, of pardon, peace, life, righteouſneſs, and ſalvation by him; which is no other than the light of faith, by which an enlightened perſon ſees the Son, looks to him, and has an evidence of the unſeen glories of another world. Now this is a true light, things are ſeen by the believer in a right light, both his own ſins, and the perſon, blood, and righteouſneſs of Chriſt; this is a ſhining one, which cannot but be obſerved by himſelf, and ſhines more and more to the perfect day; and it now ſhines as it did not before, in a ſtate of nature, and continues to ſhine, and ever will: this light will never be put out, and is the cauſe of brotherly love, being truly in the ſaints, and of the continuance of it; before this light ſhines, men live in malice, but when it comes and ſhines, as they walk in light, they walk in love.

Ver. 9. *He that ſaith he is in the light*, &c.] Is in Chriſt the light, or has the true knowledge of the light of the Goſpel, or is illuminated by the Spirit of God; for perſons may profeſs to be enlightened ones, and not be ſo: wherefore the Apoſtle does not ſay, he that is in the light, but he that ſays he is, *and hateth his brother*; who is ſo either by creation, as all men are brethren, having one Father, that has made them, and brought them up; or by regeneration, being born of God, the Father, and in the ſame family and houſhold of faith; and ſo regards ſuch who are in a ſpiritual relation, whom to hate internally, or not to love, is inconſiſtent with being in the light, or having faith, which is always naturally and neceſſarily accompanied with the heat of love; for as light and heat, ſo faith and love go together: wherefore, let a man's profeſſion of light be what it will, if love to his brother is wanting, he *is in darkneſs even until now*; he is in a ſtate of nature and unregeneracy, which is a ſtate of darkneſs and ignorance; he is under the power of darkneſs, and in the kingdom of ſatan, who is the ruler of the darkneſs of this world; he ever was ſo from his birth; he never was called, nor delivered out of it, but is ſtill in it to this moment, and ſo remains. This ſeems to be very much levelled againſt the *Jews*, who make hatred of the brother in ſome caſes lawful: for they ſay [d], "if one man obſerves " ſin in another, and reproves him for it, and he " does not receive his reproof, מותר לשנאותו, *it* " *is lawful to hate him*;" ſee the note on *Matt.* v. 43.

Ver. 10. *He that loveth his brother*, &c.] As ſuch, and becauſe he is his brother in Chriſt, and that cordially and ſincerely, without hypocriſy and diſſimulation, and by love ſerves him, both in things temporal and ſpiritual, and ſo obſerves the new, and yet old commandment, *abideth in the light*: it is a plain caſe, that ſuch a man is in the light of grace, and continues in it; for tho' it is not his love to the brethren, which is the cauſe of his light, of his being and continuing in it, for that is owing to the Spirit of light and knowledge, but on the contrary, light is the cauſe of his love; yet it is an evidence of it, that by which it is known, as the cauſe is known by the effect; ſee 1 *John* iii. 14. *and there is none occaſion of ſtumbling in him*; or *there is no ſcandal*, or *offence in him*; he gives no offence to his brother, or at leaſt as much as in him lies, he takes care that he gives none; he avoids as much as can be, putting a ſtumbling-block, or an occaſion to fall in his brother's way, by the uſe of things indifferent, or by any other action; nor will he eaſily take offence at what is ſaid or done unto him, for charity or love is not eaſily provoked, it ſuffers long, and bears all things; ſee 1 *Cor.* xiii. 4, 5, 7. nor does he ſo much, and ſo frequently tranſgreſs the laws of God, and particularly thoſe which regard his neighbour, or his brother, and ſo eaſily fall into the ſnares of ſatan, becauſe he is in the light, and walks in the light, and ſees his way, and what lies in his way, and ſo ſhuns and avoids occaſion of ſtumbling and falling. There is not in him that wrath, and malice, and envy, which lead on to the commiſſion of other ſins; for love works no ill, but fulfills the law, and will not ſuffer him to commit adultery, to kill, to ſteal, or bear falſe witneſs againſt his neighbour, friend, and brother; ſee *Rom.* xiii. 9, 10. and ſuch an one enjoys great peace, tranquillity, and happineſs; he has much comfort in himſelf, and pleaſure in the ſaints, and delight in their company; he walks inoffenſively, and in an harmleſs manner, without hurting himſelf, or any other, *Pſ.* cxix. 165.

Ver. 11. *But he that hateth his brother is in darkneſs*, &c.] As is before expreſſed in ver. 9. to which is added, *and walketh in darkneſs*; he goes on in it, and takes delight in it, as dangerous and uncomfortable as it is: *and knoweth not whither he goeth*; he can't diſcern between good and evil; he puts darkneſs for light, and light for darkneſs; he ſees not what is before him, nor what ſtumbling-blocks lie in the way; he is not aware of the ſnares, pits, and traps he is in danger of falling into; nor does he know and conſider what theſe paths of darkneſs, of ſin, and ignorance, and infidelity lead unto, even unto utter darkneſs, where is weeping, wailing, and gnaſhing of teeth: and the reaſon is, *becauſe that darkneſs hath blinded his eyes*; either ſatan, the God of this world, who blinds the minds of them that believe not, and who is darkneſs itſelf, and the cauſe of darkneſs in himſelf, and in others, and one of whoſe names this was with the *Jews* [e]; ſee the note on *Luke* xxii. 53. or that natural darkneſs which ſin has brought upon the underſtanding, and has blinded the eyes of it, called the blindneſs of the heart, *Eph.* iv. 18. ſo that a man, under the power of it, is ignorant of himſelf, and knows not that he is blind and miſerable; is a ſtranger to the way of peace, and life by Chriſt, and knows not what he is about, and where he is, or whither he is going, and what his end will be.

Ver. 12. *I write unto you little children*, &c.] By whom the Apoſtle means in common all the ſaints he writes to, whom he afterwards diſtributes into fathers, young men, and little children; for the ſame word is uſed here, as in ver. 1. and a different one from that which is rendered *little children* in the next verſe; and beſides, the following bleſſing of pardon of ſin is common to all the children of God of different ages: now what the Apoſtle ſays he writes

[d] Moſes Kotſenſis Mitzvot Tora, pr. neg. 5.

[e] Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 44. 4.

writes unto them, intends not the Epiſtle in general, but the new commandment of love in particular: and which he urges and enforces on them all, for this reaſon, *becauſe your ſins are forgiven you for his name ſake*; theſe little children had been ſinners by nature and practice, and were not now without ſin, but they ſhared in the bleſſing of the forgiveneſs of it; which ariſes from the abundant mercy and rich grace of God, and proceeds on the blood and ſacrifice of Chriſt; and therefore is ſaid to be *for his name ſake*; not for the ſake of any merits in men, any ſervices or works of theirs, but for the ſake of Chriſt, his blood, ſacrifice, and ſatisfaction; and it reaches to all ſins, original and actual, ſecret and open, paſt, preſent, and to come; and here intends the application of it by the Spirit of God, and the reception of it by faith: and which, as it is a reaſon and argument encouraging love to God, who freely and fully forgives, and to Chriſt, whoſe blood was ſhed for the remiſſion of ſin, ſo to their brethren and fellow-chriſtians; who are equally ſharers in the ſame bleſſing, and whom they ſhould love, becauſe they are loved of God and Chriſt; and whom they ſhould forgive, becauſe God, for Chriſt's ſake, has forgiven them. It may be, they may be called here *little children*, with a view to their intereſt in this bleſſing of grace. So the *Jews* ſay [f], that *Saul* was called "*the ſon of one* "*year in his reign*, 1 *Sam.* xiii. 1. becauſe all his "iniquities were forgiven him, כתינוק, *as a ſuck-* "*ing child* of a year old."

Ver. 13. *I write unto you fathers*, &c.] Not merely in age, tho' they might be men in years who are here intended, or only with reſpect to their long ſtanding in the church, which might be the caſe; tho' perſons may be in years, and of a long ſtanding in the church, and yet be children in knowledge and experience: but here it deſigns ſuch, who, in compariſon of others, were perfect, and were ſpiritual, and judged all things; had a well-informed and eſtabliſhed judgment in divine things, and were in underſtanding men, fathers, and not babes in Chriſt; ſo the *Jews* uſed to call their men of wiſdom, and knowledge, and underſtanding, אבות, *Abot, fathers*. Hence there is a whole treatiſe in the *Miſna* called *Pirke Abot*, which contains the apothegms, wiſe ſayings, and ſentences of their fathers, or wiſe men. Now the Apoſtle writes the new commandment of love, and urges it on theſe, for this reaſon, *becauſe ye have known him that is from the beginning*; either God the Father, who is from everlaſting to everlaſting, the ancient of days, the eternal I AM, whom to know is life eternal; whoſe everlaſting love to them, whoſe covenant of grace with his Son for them, before the world was, and the ancient tranſactions and ſettlements of his grace on their account, they were acquainted with: or Jeſus Chriſt, the Logos or Word, which was from the beginning, who exiſted from all eternity, as a divine perſon, as the Son of God, co-eternal with the Father; as the eternal choice made in him, and the everlaſting covenant with him ſhow; and who in his office-capacity, as mediator, was ſet up from everlaſting; and who, with reſpect to the virtue of his blood, righteouſneſs, and ſacrifice, was from the beginning of the world, and was the ſame yeſterday, to-day, and for ever; it being by his blood that all the patriarchs, from the beginning of time, were pardoned, and by his righteouſneſs they were juſtified, and by his grace they were ſaved; all which reſpecting the antiquity of Chriſt's perſon, office, and grace, was known to theſe fathers: they knew him, ſo as to approve of him, truſt in him, and appropriate him to themſelves, and which obliged them to the new commandment of love, not only to God and Chriſt, but to one another; and the reaſon here given, engaging to it, is exceeding ſuitable to their character, it being what fathers and aged men delight in, even ancient things, to call them to remembrance, to talk of them as things well known unto them; but nothing is more ancient than what is here inſtanced in, and nothing ſo honourable and profitable to know as this, or to be gloried in; and therefore the argument from hence to love thoſe that belong to him, who is the everlaſting Father, is very ſtrong and forcible. *I write unto you young men*; who are warm and zealous for God, for his cauſe and intereſt, for the glory of a redeemer, for his truths and ordinances; and are lively in the exerciſe of grace, and fervent in the diſcharge of duty; and are active, diligent, and induſtrious, always abounding in the work of the Lord; and are ſtrong and robuſt, able to go alone, to walk by faith, being ſtrong in it, and in the grace that is in Chriſt, and don't need the ſtaff that old age does, nor the hand to lead and teach to go as children do: to theſe the Apoſtle writes the new commandment of love, for this reaſon, *becauſe ye have overcome the wicked one*; ſatan, who is eminently ſo, being the firſt that was, and the worſt that is ſo; for he is wickedneſs itſelf, he is wholly, entirely, immutably, and unalterably wicked; and his whole work and employment is in wickedneſs. Now theſe young men had overcome him, not only in Chriſt their head, who has ſpoiled him, deſtroyed him, and led him captive in triumph, in whom they were more than conquerors; but in themſelves, thro' the power of divine grace, holding up, and making uſe of the ſhield of faith againſt him, whereby they quenched his fiery darts, and got the victory over him: and this is alſo ſaid in perfect agreement with the character of young men, who are apt to glory in their ſtrength, and are fond of getting the advantage, or a victory over others; and which is uſed to teach ſuch as are ſo in a ſpiritual ſenſe, not to glory in their ſtrength, but in the Lord; and to love him whom they know, and whoſe loving-kindneſs is exerciſed towards them, and in Chriſt; and to love him thro' whom they get the victory, and to bear the infirmities of weaker ſaints, to whom they ſhould be ſtrongly affected. *I write unto you little children*; or babes in Chriſt, ſuch as were new-born babes, juſt born again, not able to go alone, or walk by faith, but were dandled on the knee, and lay at the breaſts of divine conſolation; could ſpeak but ſtammeringly, and not plain, it being as much as they could do, to ſay *Abba*, father. To theſe the Apoſtle writes, and urges the new commandment of love, for this reaſon, *becauſe ye have known the Father*; the Father of Chriſt, and him, as their Father in Chriſt, under the witneſſings of the Spirit of adoption; ſo as, in ſome good meaſure, to hope and believe he was their Father, and to love, honour, and obey him as ſuch, to apply to him for whatever they ſtood in need of, and always to put themſelves under his care and protection; and a conſideration of this their relation to him, and intereſt in him, is a ſtrong and prevailing argument why they ſhould not only love him, their Father and Chriſt, who is begotten of him, but alſo all the ſaints who are

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[f] T. Hieroſ. Biccurim, fol. 65. 4.

the children of this their Father, and their brethren; and very aptly does the Apoſtle mention their knowledge of the Father as ſuitable to their age and character, it being one of the firſt and moſt neceſſary things for a child to know.

Ver. 14. *I have written unto you fathers*, &c.] This, with the reaſon annexed to it, is repeated, to raiſe the attention of the aged ſervants of Chriſt, and to quicken them to a diſcharge of their duty, who are apt to abate in their zeal, to grow lukewarm and indifferent, to cleave to the world, and to the things of it, which they are cautioned againſt in the following verſe. The whole of this, with the reaſon, *becauſe ye have known him that is from the beginning*, is left out in the *Vulgate Latin* verſion, and *Complutenſian* edition. *I have written unto you young men*; this repetition to them, with ſome additions, is alſo made, to ſtir them up the more to love the ſaints, who are too apt to be carried away with the luſt of the fleſh, the luſt of the eyes, and the pride of life, warned againſt in ver. 16. *becauſe ye are ſtrong*; not naturally, for ſin has ſadly weakened human nature, ſo that a man, by the ſtrength of nature, can do nothing that is ſpiritually good; nor in themſelves, tho' regenerated, but in Chriſt, in whom are righteouſneſs and ſtrength; without whom they can do nothing, tho' they can do all things thro' him ſtrengthening them; and ſo are ſtrong in the exerciſe of grace on him, and in the performance of every duty, being ſtrengthened by him with ſtrength in their ſouls: *and the word of God abideth in you*; either Chriſt the Logos, the eſſential Word of God, who might be ſaid to be in them, and abide in them, becauſe his grace was implanted in their hearts, called Chriſt, formed there, and becauſe he dwelt in their hearts by faith, and lived in them; and hence they had their ſtrength, or came to be ſo ſtrong as they were, and alſo overcame ſatan, becauſe he that was in them was greater than he that is in the world: or elſe the Goſpel is meant, which cometh not in word only, but in power, has a place in the heart, and works effectually, and dwells richly there; and this is a means of ſpiritual ſtrength againſt ſin and temptation, and to perform duty, and to ſtand faſt in the truth againſt the errors and hereſies of men; and is that piece of ſpiritual armour, the ſword of the Spirit, by which ſatan is often foiled, and overcome: hence it follows, *and ye have overcome the wicked one*; ſee the note on ver. 13.

Ver. 15. *Love not the world*, &c.] The habitable earth, the world in which men live; this is not to be loved by ſaints, as if it was their habitation, where they are always to be, and ſo loth to remove from it, ſeeing they are but ſojourners, and pilgrims, and ſtrangers here; this is not their reſt, nor dwelling-place, their continuing city, or proper country, that is heaven. Nor ſhould they love the men of the world, who are as they came into it, are of it, and mind the things of it, and lie in wickedneſs, and are wicked men; for tho' theſe are to be loved, as men, as fellow-creatures, and their good, both ſpiritual and temporal, is to be ſought, and good is to be done to them, as much as lies in our power, both with reſpect to ſoul and body; yet their company is not to be choſen, and preferred to the ſaints, but to be ſhunned and avoided, as diſagreeable and dangerous; their evil converſation, and wicked communications, are not to be loved, but abhorred, and their works of darkneſs are to be reproved; nor are their ways to be imitated, and their cuſtoms followed, or their manners to be conformed unto: *neither the things that are in the world*; good men that are in the world, tho' they are not of the world, are to be loved; and the kingdom of Chriſt, tho' it is not of the world, yet it is in the world, and is to be regarded and promoted to the uttermoſt; and there are the natural and civil things of the world, called this world's goods, which may be loved within due bounds, and uſed in a proper manner, tho' they are not to be loved inordinately and abuſed. This is the character of worldly men; ſo the *Jews* call ſuch, אהבי העולם הזה, *ſuch that love this world*[t]. Near relations and friends in the world, and the bleſſings of life, may be loved and enjoyed in their way, but not above God and Chriſt, or ſo as to take up ſatisfaction and contentment in them, to make idols of them, and put truſt and confidence in them, and prefer them to ſpiritual and heavenly things, and be ſo taken with them, as to be unconcerned for, and careleſs about the other; but the evil things of the world, or at leaſt the evil uſe of them, and affection for them, are here intended, as appears from the following verſe. Now it is chiefly with reſpect to the fathers, and young men, that this exhortation is given; and the repetition of what is ſaid to them before, is made, to introduce this; which is exceeding ſuitable to their age and characters. Old men are apt to be covetous and love the world, and worldly things, juſt when they are going out of it, and about to leave them; and young men are apt to be carried away with luſt, vanity, ambition, and pride: and therefore, from each of theſe, the Apoſtle diſſuades, from the following arguments, *if any man love the world*, *the love of the Father is not in him*; that is, *the love of God*, as the *Alexandrian* copy, and the *Ethiopic* verſion read; who is the Father of Chriſt, and of all the elect in him; and who is indeed, by creation, the Father of all men, the Father of ſpirits, of the ſouls of men, and of angels, and the Father of mercies, and of lights, and by the love of him is meant, either the love with which he loves his people, and which being ſhed abroad in the heart, attracts the ſoul to himſelf, and cauſes it to love him above the world, and all things in it; and ſuch an one eſteems of it, and an intereſt in it, more than life, and all the enjoyments of it, and is by it looſened to the world, and ſets light by it, and can part with all good things in it, and ſuffer all evil things chearfully, under the conſtraints and influence of this love; ſo that it is a clear caſe, that when the affections of men are ſet upon the world, and they are glued to the things of it, their hearts are not warmed with a ſenſe of the love of God, or that is not ſenſibly in them, or ſhed abroad in their hearts: or elſe by the love of God is meant love to God, which is inconſiſtent with the love of the world, or with ſuch an inordinate love of mammon, as to ſerve it; for a man may as ſoon ſerve two maſters, as ſerve God and mammon, which he can never do truly, faithfully, and affectionately; and which alſo is not conſiſtent with friendſhip with the men of the world, or a converſation and fellowſhip with them, in things that are evil, whether ſuperſtition or prophaneneſs; ſee *Matt.* vi. 24. *James* iv. 4.

Ver. 16. *For all that is in the world*, &c.] This is the ſum of the evil things in the world; or theſe following are the objects of ſin in the world, or about which wicked men are converſant; even ſuch as are carnal or grateful to the fleſh, viſible to the eye, and belong to this vain life, or ſerve to fill with pride and vanity; or theſe are the main things, which men that love the world, moſt highly value and eſteem: *the luſt of the fleſh*; by which is meant, not luſt in general, or concupiſcence, the corruption of nature, which is the fountain of all ſin, or indwelling ſin, the fleſh, or that corrupt principle, which luſts againſt the ſpirit; nor the various luſts of the fleſh, fleſhly luſts, which war againſt the ſoul, and which are many, and are alſo called worldly luſts; but ſome particular one, *a luſt of the body*, as the *Syriac* verſion reads; either the luſt of uncleanneſs, which includes all unchaſte deſires, thoughts, words, and actions, fornication, adultery, rape, inceſt, ſodomy, and all unnatural luſts; and which make up a conſiderable part of the all that is in the world: or elſe intemperance in eating and drinking, gluttony and drunkenneſs, exceſs of wine, ſurfeitings, rioting, and revellings, and all the ſenſual pleaſures of life, by which the carnal mind, and the luſts of it, are gratified; whereby the ſoul is deſtroyed, the body is diſhonoured, and a wound, diſhonour, and reproach brought on the character, not to be removed; for which reaſons the world, and the things of it, are not to be loved: the next follows, *the luſt of the eyes*; after unlawful objects, and may deſign unchaſte and laſcivious looks, eyes full of adultery, and whereby adultery is committed; ſee *Matt.* v. 28. but then this falls in with the other, unleſs that be confined to intemperance; rather then this may intend a ſinful curioſity of ſeeing vain ſights, and ſhows, with which the eye of man is never ſatisfied, *Eccl.* i. 8. and againſt which the pſalmiſt prays, *Pſ.* cxix. 37. or rather the ſin of covetouſneſs is here deſigned, the objects of which are viſible things, as gold, ſilver, houſes, lands, and poſſeſſions, with which riches, the eyes of men are never ſatisfied, and which ſin is drawn forth and cheriſhed by the eyes; and indeed, a covetous man has little more ſatisfaction than the beholding his ſubſtance with his eyes, and in which he takes much ſinful pleaſure; ſee *Eccl.* iv. 8. and v. 11. and what a poor vain empty thing is this? therefore, love not the world, ſince this is a principal thing in it: as is alſo *the pride of life*; by which ſeems to be meant, ambition of honour, of chief places, and high titles, as in the *Scribes* and *Phariſees*, *Matt.* xxiii. 6, 7. or of grand living, for the word ſignifies not ſo much life as living; living in a ſumptuous, gay, luxurious, and pompous manner, in rich diet, coſtly apparel, having fine ſeats, palaces, and ſtately buildings, and numerous attendance; all which is but vanity and vexation of ſpirit; ſee *Eccl.* ii. 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 11. The *Syriac* and *Arabic* verſions read, *the pride of the age*; and every age has ſome peculiar things in which the pride of it appears. Now neither of theſe *is of the Father*; of God the Father, as the *Ethiopic* verſion reads; the things which are deſired and luſted after are of God, but not the luſt itſelf; God is not the author of ſin, nor is it agreeable to his will: *but is of the world*; of the men of it, and agreeable to their carnal minds; and is a reaſon why things of the world are not to be loved by the ſaints, who are not of it, but choſen and called out of it; and beſides, all theſe things are mean, baſe, vile, and contemptible, and unworthy of their love and affection.

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[t] Kimchi in Pſ. xlix. 9. Ben Melech in ib. ver. 14.

Ver. 17. *And the world paſſeth away*, &c.] Not the matter and ſubſtance, but the faſhion, form, and ſcheme of it, 1 *Cor.* vii. 31. kingdoms, cities, towns, houſes, families, eſtates, and poſſeſſions, are continually changing, and caſting into different hands, and different forms; the men of the world, the inhabitants of it, are continually removing; one generation goes, and another comes; new faces are continually appearing; the riches and honours of the world are fading, periſhing, and tranſitory things; every thing is upon the flux, nothing is permanent; which is another argument why the world, and the things of it, are not to be loved: *and the luſt thereof*; alſo paſſes away; and objects of luſt are fading and fleeting, as beauty, and riches, and honours; theſe are continually taking away from men, or men are taken away from them, and will not be hereafter; and even the pleaſure of luſt itſelf paſſes away, as ſoon as enjoyed; the pleaſures of ſin are but for a ſeaſon, and a very ſhort one; and are indeed but imaginary, and leave a real bitterneſs and ſorrow behind them, and at length bring a man to ruin and deſtruction: *but he that doeth the will of God*; not perfectly as contained in the law, which is the good, and perfect, and acceptable will of God; for no man can do that in ſuch a manner, tho' a regenerate man deſires to do it, even as it is done in heaven, and ſerves the law of God with his mind, and under the influence of the Spirit of God; and does walk in his ſtatutes, and keeps his judgments from a principle of love, in faith, and without mercenary views, and ſiniſter ends, without depending on what he does for life and ſalvation; and ſuch an one may be ſaid to be a doer of the will of God: tho' rather here it intends ſuch an one as believes in Chriſt, as the propitiation for his ſins, and as his advocate with the Father, and who makes Chriſt his pattern and example, and walks as he walked; and particularly obſerves the new commandment of love, loves God, and Chriſt, and his fellow-chriſtians, and not the world, and the things of it: and ſuch a man is happy, for he *abideth for ever*; in the love of God, which will never depart from him, nor ſhall he be ſeparated from that; and in the hands and arms of Chriſt, out of which none can pluck him; and in the family and houſhold of God, where he, as a ſon, abides for ever, and ſhall never be caſt out; and in a ſtate of juſtification, and ſhall never enter into condemnation; and in a ſtate of grace and holineſs, from whence he ſhall never fall, totally and finally; and in heaven, with Chriſt, to all eternity: the reaſon of this his abiding, is not his doing the will of God, which is only deſcriptive of him manifeſtatively, and not the cauſe of his perpetuity and immoveableneſs; but his eternal election of God, which ſtands ſure, not on the foot of works, but of him that calleth; and the covenant of grace, in which he is intereſted, and which is immoveable, ſure, firm, and inviolable; and the foundation Jeſus Chriſt, on which he is built; and the principle of grace in him, which always remains, and is connected with eternal life.

Ver. 18. *Little children, it is the laſt time*, &c.] Or *hour*; not of the *Jewiſh* civil and church-ſtate, for that had been at an end for ſome time; this Epiſtle was written ſome years after the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*; nor the laſt hour of the Goſpel-diſpenſation, or world to come, for this was but the firſt age of that; and much leſs the laſt hour of time, or of the preſent world itſelf, for that has been many hundreds of years ſince; but the laſt hour of the apoſtolic age. All the Apoſtles were now dead, *John* was the laſt of them; perilous times were now coming on, impoſtors and hereticks were riſing apace, againſt which the Apoſtle cautions his little children; and ſo ſtill he writes to them, agreeable to their age and character, who, being ſuch, were moſt likely to be impoſed upon by thoſe who lie in wait to deceive. *And as ye have heard that antichriſt ſhall come*; or *is coming*; and begins to ſhow himſelf in the falſe teachers and deceivers, who were his fore-runners; and this they had heard and underſtood, either from the words of Chriſt in *John* v. 43. or from the account the Apoſtle *Paul* gave to the *Theſſalonians* concerning him, 2 *Theſſ.* ii. 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 10. or rather it may be from what the Apoſtle had ſaid to the elders of the church at *Epheſus*, where the Apoſtle *John* now was, when he met them at *Miletus*, *Acts* xx. 29, 30. *even now there are many antichriſts.* The *Syriac* and *Ethiopic* verſions read, *falſe Chriſts*; but ſuch are not intended here, that ſet up for Meſſiahs, whom Chriſt foretold ſhould ariſe before the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, *Matt.* xxiv. 24. for that was now over, and thoſe falſe Chriſts had ariſen and were gone: if this ſenſe could be admitted, *Bar Cocab* in *Adrian*'s time, bids fair to be the falſe Chriſt, or Meſſiah, in the preceding clauſe, as the ſame verſions there read; but ſuch as were adverſaries of Chriſt, as the *Arabic* verſion renders it, are meant, who ſet themſelves againſt Chriſt, and were oppoſers of his perſon, incarnation, and office; who either denied that he was the Chriſt, or that he was come in the fleſh, the truth of his incarnation, or his proper deity, or real humanity, ſuch as *Ebion*, *Cerinthus*, and others. The Apoſtle might well ſay there were many, ſince in his time were the followers of *Simon Magus*, the *Menandrians*, *Saturnilians*, *Baſilidians*, *Nicolaites*, *Gnoſticks*, *Carpocratians*, *Cerinthians*, *Ebionites*, and *Nazarenes*, as reckoned up by *Epiphanius*. And hence we learn, that antichriſt is not one ſingle individual, but many; antichriſt in the former clauſe is explained by antichriſts in this; ſee ver. 22. and iv. 1, 3. 2 *Ep.* 7. and tho' the popes of *Rome* are, by way of eminence, the antichriſt that ſhould come, and which thoſe deceivers were the fore-runners of, and paved the way for; yet they are not the only antichriſts, there were others before them, and there are many now beſides them. *Whereby we know that it is the laſt time*; the pure apoſtolic age was now going off, with the doctrines, diſcipline, and worſhip of it, which was eaſy to be diſcerned by the multitude of antichriſts which now appeared; and it may well be thought to be the laſt time, or near the end of things with us, ſince almoſt every hereſy is revived among us.

Ver. 19. *They went out from us*, &c.] Which intends not the perſons that went down from *Judea* to *Antioch*, *Acts* xv. 1, 24. who preached deſtructive doctrines to the *Gentiles*, which the Apoſtles, and the church of *Judea*, diſowned and cenſured; by which it appeared, that all the preachers of theſe doctrines were not of them, and of the ſame mind with them: for this ſenſe makes theſe antichriſts to be only preachers; whereas, tho' many of them might be ſuch, yet not all; for whoever, in a private capacity denied the Father, and the Son, or that Chriſt was come in the fleſh, was antichriſt; and to theſe, private believers are oppoſed in the next verſe; and it alſo makes the *us* to be the Apoſtles, whereas they were all dead but *John*; and theſe antichriſts were men, that had riſen up then in the laſt time, and therefore could not, with propriety, be ſaid to go out from the Apoſtles; beſides, whenever the Apoſtle uſes this pronoun *us*, he includes with himſelf all true believers, and may more eſpecially here intend the churches of *Aſia*; or rather the members of the church at *Epheſus*, where he was; nor is it likely he ſhould have in view the church of *Judea*, and a caſe in which that was concerned near forty years ago: moreover, ſuch a ſenſe makes the going out to be merely local and corporal, and which is in itſelf not criminal; the perſons that went from *Judea* to *Antioch* were not blameable for going thither, nor for going out from the Apoſtles thither, but for troubling the diſciples with words, to the ſubverting of their ſouls; nor was a corporal departure from the Apoſtles any evidence of not being of the ſame mind with them; for they often departed one from other, yet continued of the ſame mind, and in the ſame faith: but the ſenſe is, that there were ſome perſons in the Apoſtle *John*'s time, who had made a profeſſion of religion, were members of the church, and ſome of them perhaps preachers, and yet they departed from the faith, and dropped their profeſſion of it, and withdrew themſelves from the church, or churches to which they belonged, and ſet up ſeparate aſſemblies of their own: *but they were not of us*; they were of the church, and of the ſame mind with it, at leaſt in profeſſion, antecedent to their going out; for had they not been in communion with the church, they could not be properly ſaid to go out of it; and if they had not been of the ſame mind and faith in profeſſion, they could not be ſaid to depart from it; but they were not truly regenerated by the grace of God, and ſo apparently were not of the number of God's elect: notwithſtanding their profeſſion and communion with the church, they were of the world, and not of God; they were not true believers; they had not that anointing which abides, and from which perſons are truly denominated chriſtians, or anointed ones: *for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us*; in the doctrine of the Apoſtles, and in the fellowſhip of the church, as true believers do: if their hearts had been right with God, they would have remained ſtedfaſt to him, his Goſpel, truths, and ordinances, and faithful with his ſaints; for ſuch who are truly regenerate, are born of an incorruptible ſeed; and thoſe that have received the anointing which makes them truly chriſtians, that abides, as does every true grace, faith, hope, and love; and ſuch who are truly God's elect cannot poſſibly fall into ſuch errors and hereſies, as theſe did, and be finally deceived, as they were: *but they went out; they went out from us*, ſo the *Syriac* verſion reads: *that they might be made manifeſt, that they were not all of us*; the word *all* is left out in the *Syriac* verſion. The defection and apoſtacy of theſe perſons were permitted by God, that it might appear they had never received the grace of God in truth; and their going out was in ſuch a manner, that it was a certain argument that they were not of the elect; ſince they became antichriſts, denied the deity or ſonſhip of Chriſt, or that he was come in the fleſh, or that he was the Chriſt, and therefore are ſaid to be of the world, and not of God, ver. 22. and iv. 1, 3, 4, 5, 6. ſo that this paſſage furniſhes out no argument againſt the ſaints perſeverance, which is confirmed in the following verſe.

Ver. 20. *But ye have an unction from the holy one*, &c.] Meaning the Spirit, and his graces, with which Chriſt the head, is anointed without meaſure, and his members in meaſure; from whence he is called Chriſt, and they chriſtians. Theſe were really the Lord's anointed ones; they were true believers; were the wiſe virgins who had oil in their veſſels with their lamps, which would never go out. The grace of the Spirit is called a chriſm, or an ointment, or an anointing, in alluſion to the anointing oil under the law; ſee the note on *Matt.* xxv. 3. of which anointing oil the *Jews* ſay [h], that it continues all of it, לעתיד לבוא, *to time to come*, (*i. e.*

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[h] T. Hieroſ. Horayot, fol. 47. 3.

to the times of the Meſſiah) as it is ſaid, *Exod.* xxx. 31. Now this theſe ſaints had, *from the holy one*; or *that holy one*; meaning, not the Holy Spirit of God, tho' it is true that this anointing, or theſe graces, were from him; he is the author of them, and may truly be ſaid to anoint with them; nor the Father, who is holy in his nature, and in his works, and is the God of all grace, and is ſaid to anoint the ſaints too, 2 *Cor.* i. 21. but rather the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who is holy, both as God and man, and from whoſe fulneſs all grace is had. This oil, or ointment, was firſt poured on him without meaſure, and from him it deſcends to all the members of his myſtical body, as the ointment poured on *Aaron*'s head deſcended to his beard, and to the ſkirts of his garments; ſee ver. 27. *and ye know all things*; for this anointing is a teaching one; it makes perſons of quick underſtanding; it enlightens their underſtandings, refreſhes their memories, and ſtrengthens all the powers and faculties of the ſoul; it leads into the knowledge of all ſpiritual things, into all the myſteries of grace, and truths of the Goſpel, into all things neceſſary for ſalvation; for theſe words are not to be taken in the largeſt ſenſe, in which they are only applicable to the omniſcient God, but to be reſtrained to the ſubject-matter treated of, and to thoſe things chiefly in which the antichriſts, and deceivers erred; and regard not a perfect knowledge, for thoſe that know moſt of theſe things, under the influence of this unction, know but in part. The *Syriac* verſion reads, *all men*, and ſo refers to that diſcerning of ſpirits, of the Spirit of truth, from the ſpirit of error; a gift which was beſtowed on many in the primitive times, by which they could diſtinguiſh hypocrites from true believers, and antichriſts and deceivers from the faithful miniſters of the word. One of *Stephens*'s copies read, *and ye all know*.

Ver. 21. *I have not written unto you*, &c.] Either this Epiſtle, or rather what particularly here regards thoſe apoſtates from the truth, in order to ſhun them, and not be deceived by them: the Apoſtle here obviates an objection that he ſaw might be made upon what he laſt ſaid, that they knew all things; and if ſo, why then did he write the things he did, ſince they knew them before? to which he anſwers, that he did not write to them as to ignorant, but as to knowing perſons: *becauſe ye know not the truth, but becauſe ye know it*; the Father, who is the God of truth; Chriſt, who is truth itſelf; and the Spirit, who is the Spirit of truth; and the Goſpel, which is the word of truth; and the ſcriptures, which are the ſcriptures of truth, and from whence truth is to be fetched, and by them to be confirmed and defended; and which, if they had not known, it would have been to no purpoſe for him to have written to them about the antichriſts that were come into the world; and tho' they did know the truth, it was very proper to put them in remembrance of it, and to eſtabliſh them in it, againſt theſe deceivers, which ſuppoſes former knowledge of it: *and that no lye is of the truth*; either ſprings from it, or is according to it, but juſt the reverſe. The Apoſtle has reſpect to the errors and hereſies of the above apoſtates, which were flagrant contradictions to the Goſpel, and as diſtant from it, as a lye is to truth; and of ſuch lyes, and of thoſe liars, he ſpeaks in the next verſes. The *Arabic* verſion reads, *and that every liar is not of the truth*.

Ver. 22. *Who is a liar, but he that denieth that Jeſus is the Chriſt?* &c.] Or that very Chriſt, and true Meſſiah, who was ſpoken of by all the prophets, ſince the beginning of the world, and ſo much, and ſo long deſired by the Old Teſtament ſaints: he that denies that Jeſus of *Nazareth* is the Meſſiah of the prophets, is not indeed the only liar in the world, but he is the greateſt of liars; this is a conſummate lye, being oppoſed to a glaring truth, to a fact clear and indiſputable; and which reſts not merely on the teſtimony of Jeſus, who is truth itſelf, and who, in expreſs words, more than once, declared and aſſerted himſelf to be the Chriſt; but all the characters of the Meſſiah, every thing that is ſaid of him in the prophets, meet in Jeſus; and the miracles which were done by him, are flagrant proofs, and undeniable evidences of his being the Chriſt of God; and all the Apoſtles believed, and were ſure that he was Chriſt, the Son of the living God: to which may be added the teſtimony of *John*, who was ſent, and came to bear witneſs of him, and did; and who was a prophet, and a man of great probity and integrity. But there was a greater witneſs than he, even God himſelf, by a voice from heaven, bore a teſtimony to him; and angels, at his incarnation, declared him to be the ſaviour, which is Chriſt the Lord; yea, the devil himſelf, who is a liar, and the father of lyes in other things, knew and owned Jeſus to be the Chriſt; ſo that thoſe that deny him are the worſt of liars, even worſe than the devil himſelf. This may have regard not only to the *Jews*, that deny Jeſus to be the Meſſiah, but chiefly to ſuch who went by the name of Chriſtians; who denied either his proper deity, or real humanity, as *Ebion* and *Cerinthus*, which was denying him to be the God-man, the mediator, and Meſſiah; and is true of all ſuch that deny him in any of his offices, or in things relating to them, as his Goſpel, and any of the peculiar doctrines of it, delivered by him, and ſo deny his prophetic office; or any of his ordinances, inſtitutions, and appointments, as lawgiver in his houſe, and king of ſaints, and ſo deny him in his kingly office; or reject him as the alone ſaviour, joining their own works with him, in the buſineſs of ſalvation, and oppoſe his ſacrifice and ſatisfaction, and deſpiſe his imputed righteouſneſs, and ſo deny him in his prieſtly office. Now theſe are ſome of the liars, and theſe ſome of the doctrinal lyes, which are not of the truth, as in the preceding verſe. *He is antichriſt that denieth the Father and the Son*; that denies the Father of Chriſt to be the creator of the world, but aſſerts that it was made by angels, as ſome ancient hereticks did; or that the Father of Chriſt is not the God of the Old Teſtament, as *Marcion*; or that denies that God is the Father of Chriſt, and that Chriſt is the Son of God; who will not allow that there is any ſuch relation in nature between them; who affirm that Chriſt is only the Son of God by adoption, or becauſe of his love to him, or becauſe of his incarnation and reſurrection from the dead; or that he is not his true and proper Son, only in a figurative and metaphorical ſenſe; that he is not the natural and eternally begotten Son of God, only by office, and as mediator, and that God is only his Father, as having inſtalled him into an office; or he that denies that theſe two are diſtinct from each other, but affirms that the Father is the Son, and the Son is the Father, and ſo confounds them both, and by confounding both, denies that there are either Father or Son; and all ſuch perſons are antichriſts, or oppoſers of Chriſt.

Ver. 23. *Whoſoever denieth the Son*, &c.] Jeſus Chriſt to be the true, proper, natural, eſſential, and eternal Son of God: *the ſame hath not the Father*;

or does not hold the Father; or *believe the Father*, as the *Syriac* verſion renders it; for there can't be a father without a ſon; and he that honours not the Son, by owning him as ſuch, honours not the Father; and whatever reflects diſhonour on the Son, reflects diſhonour on the Father. If Chriſt is not truly and properly the Son of God, the Father is not truly and properly the Father of Chriſt; if Chriſt is only a Son in a figurative and metaphorical ſenſe, the Father is only a father in a figurative and metaphorical ſenſe; if Chriſt is a ſon only by office, then the Father is a father only by office, which is monſtrouſly ſtupid. Such an one does not hold the true doctrine of the Father, and does not appear to have true faith in him, true love unto him, or real intereſt in him, only by profeſſion: *but he that acknowledgeth the Son, hath the Father alſo*; this clauſe is left out in many copies, and ſtands as a ſupplement in our verſion; but is in the *Alexandrian* copy, in four of *Beza*'s manuſcripts, and in ſome others; and in the *Vulgate Latin*, *Syriac*, and *Ethiopic* verſions; and confirms, and illuſtrates what is before ſaid; for as he that denies the ſonſhip of Chriſt, cannot hold the paternity of God, ſo he that owns the ſonſhip of Chriſt, the ſecond perſon, maintains the paternity of the firſt; for theſe two are correlates, and mutually put, or take away each other: no mention is made of the Spirit, becauſe, as yet, no controverſy had riſen concerning him.

Ver. 24. *Let that therefore abide in you*, &c.] Meaning the word of God, ver. 14. the Goſpel of Chriſt, which there was reaſon to believe had a place in their hearts, and which they had embraced and profeſſed; and therefore the Apoſtle exhorts them to perſeverance in it; and particularly not to let go the doctrine concerning the Father and the Son, and this their relation to each other, which is the foundation of the doctrine of the Trinity, and of the diſtinct perſonality of Father, Son, and Spirit; the contrary to which leaves the three without either name, or diſtinction from each other: the arguments to enforce this exhortation follow, *which ye have heard from the beginning*; they had heard it not externally only, but internally; they had hearkened to it, and from the heart obeyed it; they had mixed it with faith, and received the love of it; they had heard it from the Apoſtles of Chriſt, who were eye and ear-witneſſes of the word; and this they had heard at the firſt preaching of the Goſpel to them, at the firſt of their converſion: the Apoſtles of Chriſt began their miniſtry with the ſonſhip of Chriſt, and greatly inſiſted on it, in it, and required a profeſſion of it before baptiſm, and which was made in order to it; and theſe believers had been baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, as ſtanding in ſuch a relation to each other; ſee *Acts* ix. 20. and viii. 37. *Matt.* xxviii. 19. and therefore ought not to relinquiſh this truth, and receive a new and upſtart notion: and for further encouragement to continue in it, 'tis added, *if that which ye have heard from the beginning ſhall remain in you, ye alſo ſhall continue in the Son, and in the Father*; as thoſe that are once in either always will; what is here ſaid is not either the cauſe or condition of men being in the Father, and in the Son, or of their continuance in them, but is deſcriptive of the perſons that are in them, and is an open and manifeſt evidence of their being and continuance in them. Such are in union with Chriſt, and at times enjoy ſenſible communion with him, and ſhall never be finally and totally removed from it; they are in the love of Chriſt, from whence there is no ſeparation, and in the arms and hands of Chriſt, out of which none can pluck them; and they abide by him in the exerciſe of faith and love, and cleave unto him with full purpoſe of heart, and will hold on and out, profeſſing his name to the end: and they are, and abide in the love of God the Father, which is from everlaſting to everlaſting; and in the covenant of his grace, which is ſure and inviolable; and in the participation of all the bleſſings and promiſes of it, among which, the following one, eternal life, is a principal one.

Ver. 25. *And this is the promiſe that he hath promiſed us*, &c.] Either God the Father, who is that God that cannot lye, who in the covenant of his grace, before the world began, made this promiſe unto his people, even *eternal life*; which promiſe, with all others, was put into the hands of Chriſt, where, with them, it is yea and amen; and alſo the thing itſelf promiſed, where it is hid, and lies ſafe and ſecure: or the Son, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who has promiſed it in the Goſpel; for this is the ſum of the Goſpel-declaration, that whoever believes in him ſhall have everlaſting life; and this lies in the knowledge of the Father, and of the Son, and in the enjoyment of them, and conformity to them; wherefore the doctrine reſpecting them ought to be retained, and firmly adhered to.

Ver. 26. *Theſe things have I written unto you*, &c.] The little children, who were moſt likely to be impoſed upon by antichriſts and deceivers: *concerning them that ſeduce you*. The *Syriac*, *Arabic*, and *Ethiopic* verſions render it, *for them that ſeduce you*; not that they were actually ſeduced and carried away with the error of the wicked; for tho' God's elect may be ſtaggered and waver, and be toſt to and fro by falſe teachers, and their doctrines, yet they cannot be totally and finally deceived: but the ſenſe is, theſe men endeavoured to ſeduce them; they lay in wait to deceive, and attempted to deceive them, by walking in craftineſs, and handling the word of God deceitfully; and therefore, that they might be known, and ſo ſhunned and avoided, the Apoſtle points them out, and ſhews who they are; that they are ſuch who deny that Jeſus is the Chriſt, and do not own neither the Father nor the Son; in doing which he acted the part of a tender father, a faithful ſhepherd, and a careful monitor.

Ver. 27. *But the anointing which ye have received of him*, &c.] The Spirit, and the grace of the Spirit, which they had received out of the fulneſs of grace which is in Chriſt; and is compared to oil or ointment; ſee the note on ver. 20. for Chriſt, the anointed, is the fountain of it all, and it is had from him in a way of giving and receiving. So the ſecond *Sephirah*, or number in the *Jews Cabaliſtic* tree, which is wiſdom, has for one of its ſurnames, the fountain of the oil of unction [1]: this *abideth in you*; the *Syriac* and *Arabic* verſions render it, *if it abideth*, which ſpoils the text, for the words are not conditional but affirmative; grace is an internal thing, it is oil in the veſſel of the heart, and where it once is, it abides; as does every grace of the Spirit, as faith, hope, love, and every other: grace can never be taken away; God will not take it away, where he has once beſtowed it, and men and devils cannot; it can never be loſt as to the principle and being of it; it is an incorruptible ſeed, and a living principle, which can never be deſtroyed, notwithſtanding all the corruptions in a man's heart, the pollutions of the world, and the temptations of ſatan: *and ye need not that any man teach you*; not that they were perfect in knowledge, for no man is abſolutely, only comparatively ſo, in this life; or that they needed not, and was above and exempt from the inſtructions of Chriſt's faithful ſervants; for *John* himſelf taught them, and to teach and inſtruct them was the end of his writing this Epiſtle to them; but the ſenſe is either that they needed not the teachings of theſe men before-mentioned, the antichriſts, liars, and ſeducers, being better taught, and having an unction by which they knew all things; or they needed not to be taught as if they were babes in Chriſt, as unſkilful in the word of righteouſneſs, but ſo as to increaſe in ſpiritual knowledge, and go on to perfection, and be eſtabliſhed in the preſent truth, at leaſt ſo as to be put in remembrance of them; or rather, they needed not, nor were they to regard any mere human revelation and doctrine, for the whole Goſpel was come by Jeſus Chriſt, and no other is to be expected or received by men, nor any doctrine but what is according to the revelation of Chriſt; wherefore ſaints under the Goſpel-diſpenſation are taught of God, by his Spirit, according to the word of truth, and by the miniſtry of it, and have no need of learning every man from his neighbour, or from his brother, any ſeparate revelation; ſo that this paſſage does not militate againſt the external miniſtry of the Goſpel, or human teachings according to that perfect rule and declaration of the whole mind and will of God by Chriſt under the Goſpel-diſpenſation: *but as the ſame anointing*. The *Vulgate Latin* and *Arabic* verſions read, *his anointing*; that is God's or Chriſt's; and ſo the *Syriac* verſion renders it, *that unction which is of God*; meaning the ſame as before: the *Ethiopic* verſion renders it, *his Spirit*, which, tho' not a true verſion, is no improper or impertinent ſenſe of the phraſe: and this *teacheth you of all things*; truths and doctrines neceſſary to ſalvation, as in ver. 20. *and is truth, and is no lye*; or true, and not a liar; which is a juſt character of the Spirit of truth, in oppoſition to the ſpirit of error; and holds good of the grace of the Spirit, which is truth in the inward parts, and is genuine and ſincere: *and even as it hath taught you, ye ſhall abide in him*; in Chriſt, from whom they received this anointing, ſee the note on ver. 24. or in the anointing itſelf, in the grace of the Spirit, in which they ſtood. Some verſions read in the imperative, *abide in him*, or *it*, as in the following verſe.

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[1] Cabala Denudata, par. 2. p. 8.

Ver. 28. *And now little children abide in him*, &c.] The Apoſtle having finiſhed his ſeparate inſtructions and exhortations to the fathers, young men, and children, returns to the whole body of the ſaints in general, whom he addreſſes, as in ver. 1, 12. under the name of little children; ſee the note on ver. 1. and whom he exhorts to abide in Chriſt, that is, in the exerciſe of faith on him, of hope in him, and love to him; and to hold to him the head, and to hold faſt his word and Goſpel, and abide by his truth and ordinances, and adhere to his cauſe and intereſt, and not to be moved away on any conſideration; to which the following encouragement is given: *that when he ſhall appear*; that is Chriſt, who is now hid, and out of the ſight of bodily eyes, is in heaven, at the right-hand of God; but ere long he will appear a ſecond time, and not only to thoſe that look for him, but even every eye ſhall ſee him; and his appearance will be a glorious one, and his ſaints ſhall appear in glory with him, and ſhall be like him, and ſee him as he is: *we may have confidence*; boldneſs or freedom, as now at the throne of grace, ſo then at the throne of judgment; where the ſaints will ſtand with courage and intrepidity, when the wicked will flee to the rocks and mountains, being filled with amazement, terror, and trembling: *and not be aſhamed before him at his coming*; they'll not be put to ſhame by him; nor will they be aſhamed of their confidence, faith, hope, and expectation; their hope will not make them aſhamed, for they will now enjoy what they hoped for; and, notwithſtanding all their ſins and infirmities, they'll not be aſhamed, for they will have on the wedding-garment, the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, and will ſtand before the throne without fault, ſpot, or blemiſh; nor will Chriſt be aſhamed of them who have not been aſhamed of him and his words, but have confeſſed him, and have been faithful unto death, and have cleaved to him and his cauſe with full purpoſe of heart to the end. Some think, miniſters of the goſpel are here meant, who, when thoſe that are under their care abide faithful, and perſevere to the end, will give up their account with joy; and will have what they have expreſſed confidence in, and will have their expectations anſwered, and not diſappointed, by having ſuch ſouls as their joy and crown of rejoicing.

Ver. 29. *If ye know that he is righteous*, &c.] That is, Chriſt, who is righteous, as God, in his nature and in his works; and as man, in his obedience, life, and converſation; and as mediator, in faithfully diſcharging the work he undertook; and is the author of an everlaſting righteouſneſs, which is imputed by God, revealed in the Goſpel, and received by faith; all which they knew, for this is not ſaid as doubting, but rather as taking it for granted that they did know it; *if*, or *ſeeing ye know*, &c. then it follows: *ye know*, or *know ye*; ye may aſſure yourſelves, *that every one that doth righteouſneſs*; not merely works of righteouſneſs, eſpecially in order to juſtify him before God; for ſuch an one is ſo far from being born of God, or born again, that he is manifeſtly in a ſtate of nature, and of oppoſition to, and enmity againſt God; he is not ſubject to him, he does not ſubmit to the righteouſneſs of God, but goes about to eſtabliſh his own, and betrays his ignorance and want of grace; but it intends ſuch an one who with the heart believes unto righteouſneſs, and lays hold by faith, and lives upon the righteouſneſs of Chriſt for juſtification; and who performs good works in faith, and from a principle of love, not to obtain a juſtifying righteouſneſs, but becauſe he is juſtified by the righteouſneſs of Chriſt: and ſuch an one *is born of him*; either of God, or rather of Chriſt; being regenerated by his Spirit, having his grace implanted in him, as appears by his faith in his righteouſneſs, and by his works of righteouſneſs, as fruits of faith; and having his image inſtamped on him, and he himſelf formed in him, and ſo made like unto him; by all which it is evident, he is one of his ſpiritual ſeed and offſpring. The *Syriac* verſion reads, *is of him*; belongs to him, is one of his; and this makes way for what is ſaid of adoption in the following chapter, and which ſhould begin here.

CHAP. III.

IN this chapter the Apoſtle exhorts to a holy life and converſation in general, and to the exerciſe of brotherly love in particular. The former of theſe is urged from the conſideration of the great bleſſing of adoption, which ſprings from the free love and favour of God, is unknown to the men of the world, and indeed, in the preſent ſtate of things, does not appear to the ſaints themſelves in all its fulneſs and advantages, as it will do in the future ſtate, when the children of God will be like to Chriſt, and ſee him as he is; the hope of which ſhould engage them to purity of life and converſation, ver. 1, 2, 3. and this is further enforced from the nature of ſin, which is a tranſgreſſion of the law, ver. 4. from the end of Chriſt's manifeſtation in the fleſh, which was to take away ſin, and who was without it, ver. 5. from communion with Chriſt, expreſſed by abiding in him, ſeeing and knowing him, which ſuch muſt be ſtrangers to, that live a ſinful courſe of life, ver. 6. from this, that only ſuch that do righteouſneſs are righteous perſons, and theſe are righteous as Chriſt is, ver. 7. and from a man's being of the devil, that is of a vicious converſation, who was a ſinner from the beginning, and whoſe works Chriſt was manifeſted in the fleſh to deſtroy, ver. 8. and from the nature of the new man, or that which is born of God, which is not to ſin, nor can it, ver. 9. and from the diſtinction there is between the children of God and the children of the devil, thoſe not being of God who do not righteouſneſs, nor love their brethren, ver. 10. from hence the Apoſtle paſſes to brotherly love, and excites and engages to that, from its being a meſſage which had been heard from the beginning, ver. 11. which is illuſtrated by its contrary in the inſtance of *Cain*, who by the inſtigation of ſatan ſlew his brother, becauſe his works were righteous, and his own were evil, ver. 12. wherefore, it is no wonder that good men ſhould be hated by the world, who, as *Cain*, are of the ſame wicked one, ver. 13. brotherly love is further urged unto, from its being an evidence of paſſing from death to life, or of regeneration; whereas he that hates his brother openly continues in a ſtate of death, is a murderer, and ſo has not eternal life abiding in him, ver. 14, 15. and from the great inſtance of Chriſt's love, in laying down his life for his people, the ſaints are incited to lay down their lives for one another; to ſuch a pitch does the Apoſtle carry brotherly love, ver. 16. wherefore, he that is rich, and is incompaſſionate to his brother in diſtreſs, cannot be thought to have the love of God dwelling in him, ver. 17. hence he preſſes the exhortation to brotherly love, that it be not in profeſſion only, but true, real, and cordial, ver. 18. and that by obſerving the advantages of it, as that hereby men know they are of the truth, and can aſſure their hearts before God; and which is illuſtrated by the contrary, the condemnation of the heart, ver. 19, 20. the advantages of non-condemnation of the heart are confidence before God, and receiving whatſoever we aſk of him; the reaſon of which is, becauſe his commandments are kept, and things done which are pleaſing to him, ver. 21, 22. the commandments are explained of faith in Chriſt, and love to one another, ver. 23. and the happineſs of them that do them is, that Chriſt dwells in them, and they in him, the evidence of which is, the Spirit that is given unto them, ver. 24.

Ver. 1. *Behold what manner of love*, &c.] See, take notice, conſider, look by faith, with wonder and aſtoniſhment, and obſerve, how great a favour, what an inſtance of matchleſs love, what a wonderful bleſſing of grace, *the Father hath beſtowed upon us*; the Father of Chriſt, and the Father of us in Chriſt, who hath adopted us into his family, and regenerated us by his grace, and hath freely given us the new name: *that we ſhould be called the ſons of God.* The *Alexandrian* copy, and ſome others, and the *Vulgate Latin* verſion add, *and we are*, or *be*; and the *Ethiopic* verſion, *and have been*; for it is not a mere name that is beſtowed, but the thing itſelf in reality; and in the *Hebrew* language, *to be called*, and *to be*, are terms ſynonymous, ſee *Iſ.* ix. 6. *Hoſ.* i. 10. in what ſenſe the ſaints are the ſons of God, ſee the note on *Gal.* iv. 6. this bleſſing comes not by nature, nor by merit, but by grace, the grace of adoption; which is of perſons unto an inheritance they have no legal right unto; the ſpring of it is the everlaſting and unchangeable love of God, for there was no need on the adopter's ſide, he having an only-begotten and beloved Son, and no worth and lovelineſs in the adopted, they being by nature children of wrath; it is a privilege that exceeds all others, and is attended with many; ſo that it is no wonder the Apoſtle breaks out in this pathetic manner, and calls upon the ſaints to view it with admiration and thankfulneſs: *therefore the world knoweth us not*; that is, the greater part of the world, the world that lies in wickedneſs, the men of the world, who have their portion in this life, whom the God of this world has blinded, and who only mind the things of the world, and are as when they came into it, and have their converſation according to the courſe of it; theſe don't know the ſaints are the ſons of God; the new name of ſons is what no man knoweth, but he that receiveth it; they don't own the ſaints as theirs, as belonging to them, but reckon them as the filth of the world, and the offſcouring of all things; nor do they love them, and that becauſe they are not their own, but hate them and perſecute them: the reaſon is, *becauſe it knew him not*; neither the Father, whoſe ſons they are, and who has beſtowed the grace upon them; wherefore they know not, and diſown and perſecute his children; ſee *John* xvii. 25. and xv. 21. and xvi. 3. nor the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the only begotten of the Father, the firſt-born among many brethren; who, though he made the world, and was in it, was not known by it, but was hated, abuſed, and perſecuted; and therefore it need not ſeem ſtrange that the ſaints, who are the ſons of God by adoption, ſhould be treated in like manner.

Ver. 2. *Beloved, now are we the ſons of God*, &c.] By adoption, ſecretly in God's predeſtination, and in the covenant of grace; and openly in regeneration, thro' faith in Chriſt, and by the teſtimony of the Spirit: *and it doth not yet appear what we ſhall be*; though they are ſons, they don't appear now as ſuch, as they will do, when they ſhall be introduced into their father's houſe, and into the many manſions there prepared for them; when Chriſt ſhall publickly own them as the children given unto him, and when they ſhall be put into the poſſeſſion of the inheritance they are heirs of; beſides, they will appear then not only to be kings ſons, but kings themſelves, as they now are; they'll then inherit the kingdom prepared for them, and will ſit down on a throne of glory, and have a crown of righteouſneſs, life, and glory put upon them; and will appear not only perfectly juſtified, their ſins being not to be found, and the ſentence of juſtification afreſh pronounced, and they placed out of the reach of all condemnation; but they will be perfectly holy and free from all ſin, and perfectly knowing and glorious; they have a right to glory now, and glory is preparing for them, and they for that; and they are now repreſentatively glorified in Chriſt, but then they'll be perſonally glorified: now, though all this ſhall certainly be, yet it does not now manifeſtly appear; it appears to God, who calls things that are not as though they were; and to Chriſt, whoſe delights were with the ſons of men, theſe children of God, before the world was, and ſaw them in all the glory they were to be brought to; but not even to angels, until they are owned and confeſſed before them; much leſs to the world, who don't know what they are now, and ſtill leſs what they will be, ſeeing them now in poverty, meanneſs, under many reproaches, afflictions, and perſecutions; and even this does not appear to the ſaints themſelves, whoſe life is a hidden life; and that by reaſon of darkneſs, deſertion, and diffidence, for want of more knowledge, and from the nature of the happineſs itſelf, which is at preſent unſeen: *but we know that when he ſhall appear*; that is Jeſus Chriſt, who is now in heaven, and out of ſight, but will appear a ſecond time; the time when, is not known, but the thing itſelf is certain: *we ſhall be like him*; in body, faſhioned like to his glorious body, in immortality and incorruption, in power, in glory, and ſpirituality, in a freedom from all imperfections, ſorrows, afflictions, and death; and in ſoul, which likeneſs will lie in perfect knowledge of divine things, and in complete holineſs: *for we ſhall ſee him as he is*; in his human nature, with the eyes of the body, and in his glorious perſon, with the eyes of the underſtanding; not by faith as now, but by ſight; not thro' ordinances, as in the preſent ſtate, but thro' thoſe beams of light and glory darting from him, with which the ſaints will be irradiated; and this ſight, as it is now exceeding deſireable, will be unſpeakably glorious, delightful, and raviſhing, ſoul-ſatisfying, free from all darkneſs and error, and interruption; will aſſimilate and transform into his image and likeneſs, and be for ever. *Philo* the *Jew* obſerves [k], that *Iſrael* may be interpreted one that ſees God; but adds, ουχ οιος εϛιν ο Θεος, *not what God is*, for this is impoſſible: it is indeed impoſſible to ſee him eſſentially as he is, or ſo as to comprehend his nature, being, and perfections; but then the ſaints in heaven will ſee God and Chriſt as they are, and as much as they are to be ſeen by creatures; God will be ſeen as he is in Chriſt; and Chriſt will be ſeen as he is in himſelf, both in his divine and human natures, as much as can be, or can be deſired to be ſeen and known of him.

Ver. 3. *And every man that hath this hope in him*, &c.] Or *on him*, Jeſus Chriſt; for a true hope of that eternal happineſs, which lies in likeneſs to Chriſt, and in the viſion of him, is only founded on his perſon, blood, righteouſneſs, and ſacrifice: and this hope every man has not, only he who is born again; for this grace is implanted in regeneration, when men are of abundant mercy begotten unto it, and have it beſtowed upon them as a free-grace-gift; and which is of great ſervice to them both in life and in death; and among the reſt it has this influence and effect upon them, that every ſuch perſon that has it, *purifieth himſelf even as he is pure*; not that any man can purify or cleanſe himſelf from ſin, this is only owing to the grace of God and blood of Chriſt; nor that any man can be ſo pure and holy as Chriſt is, who is free from all ſin, both original and actual; but this muſt be underſtood either of a man that has faith and hope in Chriſt, dealing by theſe with the blood of Chriſt for purity and cleanſing, with whom and which theſe graces are converſant for ſuch purpoſes; or of ſuch a perſon's imitating of Chriſt in the holineſs of his life and converſation, making him his pattern and example, ſtudying to walk as he walked; to which he is the more excited and ſtimulated by the hope he has of being a ſon of God, a dear child of his, and therefore ought to be a follower of him, and walk as Chriſt walked, in humility, love, patience, and in other acts of holineſs; and by the hope he has of being like unto him, and with him in the other world to all eternity: but then this *as* is only expreſſive of ſome degree of likeneſs and ſimilitude, and not perfect equality, which is not to be expected in this, or in the world to come; believers indeed who have faith and hope in the juſtifying righteouſneſs of Chriſt, may, and ſhould conſider themſelves pure and righteous, and free from ſin, as Chriſt is; being clothed upon with his robe of righteouſneſs, in which they ſtand without fault before the throne, without ſpot or wrinkle, or any ſuch thing; but this does not ſeem to be the ſenſe of the place here, the argument being to engage the ſaints to purity and holineſs of life and converſation, from the conſideration of the great love of God beſtowed upon them in their adoption, and from their hope of eternal happineſs, as the context ſhews; ſee 2 *Cor*. vii. 1. other arguments follow.

Ver. 4. *Whoſoever committeth ſin*, &c.] This, in connection with what follows, is true of any ſin, great or ſmall, but here deſigns a courſe of ſinning, a wilful, obſtinate perſiſting in ſin: *tranſgreſſeth alſo the law*; not of man, unleſs the law of men is founded on, and agrees with the law of God, for ſometimes to tranſgreſs the laws of men is no ſin, and to obey them would be criminal; but the law of God, and that not the ceremonial law, which was now aboliſhed, and therefore to neglect it, or go contrary to it, was not ſinful; but the moral law, and every precept of it, which regards love to God or to our neighbour, and which may be tranſgreſſed in thought, word, and deed; and he that commiteth ſin tranſgreſſes it in one or all of theſe ways, of which the law accuſes and convicts, and for it pronounces guilty before God, and curſes and condemns; and this therefore is an argument againſt ſinning, becauſe it is againſt the law of God, which is holy, juſt and good, and contains the good and acceptable, and perfect will of God, which is agreeable to his nature and perfections; ſo that ſin is ultimately againſt God himſelf: *for ſin is a tranſgreſſion of the law*; and whatever is a tranſgreſſion of the law, is ſin; the law requires a conformity of nature and actions to it, and where there is a want of either, it is a breach of it; it is concerned with the will and affections, the inclinations and deſires of the mind, as well as the outward actions of life; concupiſcence or luſt is a violation of the law, as well as actual ſin; and eſpecially a courſe of ſinning both in heart, lip, and life, is a continued tranſgreſſion of it, and expoſes to its curſe and condemnation, and to the wrath of God; and is inconſiſtent with a true hope of being the ſons and heirs of God: but then the tranſgreſſion of what is not the law of God, whether the traditions of the elders among the *Jews*, or the ordinances of men among papiſts, pagans, and *Turks*, or any other, is no ſin, nor ſhould affect the conſciences of men.

Ver. 5. *And ye know that he was manifeſted*, &c.] This is a truth of the Goſpel the ſaints were well inſtructed in and acquainted with; that Jeſus Chriſt, the word and ſon of God, who is here meant, who was with the Father, and lay in his boſom from all eternity, was in the fulneſs of time made manifeſt in the fleſh, or human nature, by aſſuming it into union with his divine perſon; in which he came and dwelt among men, and became viſible to them: the end of which manifeſtation was, *to take away our ſins*; as the antitype of the ſcape-goat, making reconciliation and ſatisfaction for them, through the ſacrifice of himſelf; which was doing what the blood of bulls and goats, or any legal ſacrifices or moral performances could never do: and this he did by taking the ſins of his people upon himſelf, by carrying them up to the croſs, and there bearing them, with all the puniſhment due unto them, in his body; by removing them quite away, and utterly deſtroying them, finiſhing and making an end of them; and by cauſing them to paſs away from them, from off their conſciences, through the application of his blood by his Spirit: *and in him is no ſin*; neither original, nor actual; no ſin inherent; there was ſin imputed to him, but none in him, nor done by him; and hence he became a fit perſon to be a ſacrifice for the ſins of others, and by his unblemiſhed ſacrifice to take them away; and anſwered the typical ſacrifices under the law, which were to be without ſpot and blemiſh: and this ſhews that he did not offer himſelf for any ſins of his own, for there were none in him, but for the ſins of others; and which conſideration therefore, is a ſtrong diſſuaſive from ſinning, and as ſuch, is mentioned by the Apoſtle; for, ſince ſin is of ſuch a nature that nothing could atone for it but the blood and ſacrifice of Chriſt, an innocent, as well as a divine perſon, it ſhould be abhorred by us; and ſince Chriſt has taken it away by the ſacrifice of himſelf, it ſhould not be continued and encouraged by us; and ſince in him is no ſin, we ought to imitate him in purity of life and converſation; the end of Chriſt's bearing our ſins was, that we might live unto righteouſneſs, and to purify to himſelf a peculiar people, zealous of good works; and his love herein ſhould conſtrain us to obedience to him: ſo the *Jews*[1] ſpeak of a man after the image of God, and who is the myſtery of the name *Jehovah*; and in that man, they ſay, there is no ſin, neither ſhall death rule over him; and this is that which is ſaid, *Pſ.* v. 4. *neither ſhall evil dwell with thee.*

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[k] De Præmiis & Pænis, p. 917.

Ver. 6. *Whoſoever abideth in him,* &c.] As the branch in the vine, deriving all light, life, grace, holineſs, wiſdom, ſtrength, joy, peace, and comfort from Chriſt; or dwells in him by faith, enjoys communion with him as a fruit of union to him; and ſtands faſt in him, being rooted and grounded in him, and abides by him, his truths and ordinances, takes up his reſt, and places his ſecurity in him, and perſeveres thro' him: *ſinneth not*; not that he has no ſin in him, or lives without ſin, but he does not live in ſin, nor give up himſelf to a vicious courſe of life; for this would be inconſiſtent with his dwelling in Chriſt, and enjoying communion with him: *whoſoever ſinneth*; which is not to be underſtood of a ſingle action, but of a courſe of ſinning: *hath not ſeen him, neither known him*; that is, he has never ſeen Chriſt with an eye of faith; he has never truly and ſpiritually ſeen the glory, beauty, fullneſs, and ſuitableneſs of Chriſt, his need, and the worth of him; he has never ſeen him ſo as to enjoy him, and have communion with him; for what communion hath Chriſt with *Belial*, or light with darkneſs, or righteouſneſs with unrighteouſneſs? nor has he ever ſavingly known him, or been experimentally acquainted with him; for though he may profeſs to know him in words, he denies him in works.

Ver. 7. *Little children, let no man deceive you,* &c.] Neither by falſe doctrines, nor by wicked practices, drawing into the belief of the one, or into the performance of the other; ſuggeſting, as the *Gnoſticks* did, that knowledge without practice was enough, and that it was no matter how a man lived, provided his notions of the Goſpel were right: *he that doth righteouſneſs, is righteous*; not that any man is made righteous by the works of the law, or by his obedience to the law of works, for this is contrary to the expreſs word of God; and beſides, the beſt righteouſneſs of man is imperfect, and can never conſtitute or denominate him righteous before God; and was he juſtified by it, it would not only lay a foundation for boaſting in him, which ought not to be, but would make the death, the ſacrifice, and righteouſneſs of Chriſt, to be in vain; men are only made righteous by the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, which he has wrought out, which is revealed in the Goſpel, and received by faith, and which God imputes without works; ſo that he that doth righteouſneſs is he that being convinced of the inſufficiency of his own righteouſneſs, and of the excellency and ſuitableneſs of Chriſt's righteouſneſs, renounces his own, and ſubmits to his; who lays hold upon it, receives it, and excerciſes faith on it, as his juſtifying righteouſneſs; and in conſequence of this, lives in a courſe of holineſs and righteouſneſs, in oppoſition to, and diſtinction from one that commits ſin, or lives a ſinful courſe of life; which, though it does not make him righteous in the ſight of God, yet it ſhews him to be righteous in the ſight of men, and proves that faith to be right which lays hold on the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, by which he is truly righteous: *even as he is righteous*; as Chriſt himſelf is righteous; and ſo the *Syriac* verſion reads; not as perſonal, or as he is perſonally and eſſentially righteous as God; but as myſtical, every member of his body being clothed with the ſame robe of righteouſneſs the whole body of Chriſt is, and indeed juſtified by the ſame righteouſneſs that he as mediator was, when he roſe from the dead, as the repreſentative of his people: moreover, as Chriſt ſhewed himſelf to be righteous as man, by doing good, ſo believers in him, by imitating him, and walking as he walked, ſhew themſelves to be good and righteous, like, tho' not equal to him; for as a tree is known by its fruits, ſo is a good man by his good works, and a righteous man by doing righteouſneſs; and as good fruit does not make a good tree, but ſhews it to be good, ſo good works don't make a good man, nor a man's own righteouſneſs make him a righteous man, but ſhew him to be ſo.

Ver. 8. *He that committeth ſin is of the devil,* &c.] Not every one that ſins, or commits acts of ſin, then every man is of the devil, becauſe no man lives without the commiſſion of ſin; but he who makes ſin his conſtant buſineſs, and the employment of his life, whoſe life is a continued ſeries of ſinning, he is of the devil; not as to origin and ſubſtance, or by proper generation, as ſome have literally underſtood the words; but by imitation, being like him, and ſo of him their father, doing his luſts, living continually in ſin, as he does, and ſo reſemble him, as children do their parents; and hereby alſo appear to be under his government and influence, to be led captive by him at his will, and ſo to belong to him, and ſuch as will have their part and portion with him in the lake which burns with fire and brimſtone; ſo living and dying: *for the devil ſinneth from the beginning*; not of his creation, for he was made by God a pure and holy creature; but from the beginning of the world, or near it, at leaſt from the beginning of man's creation; for he not only ſinned by rebelling againſt God himſelf, and by drawing in the reſt of the apoſtate angels into the rebellion with him, but by tempting man as ſoon as created, to ſin againſt God: what was his firſt and particular ſin is not certain, whether pride or envy, or what; it ſeems to be, his not abiding in the truth, or an oppoſition to the truth of the Goſpel, reſpecting the incarnation of the Son of God, mentioned in the following clauſe; ſee *John* viii. 44. however he has been continually ſinning ever ſince: he *ſinneth*; he is always ſinning, doing nothing elſe but ſin; ſo that he that lives a vicious courſe of life is like him, and manifeſtly of him: *for this purpoſe the Son of God was manifeſted*; in human nature, as in ver. 5. whence it appears that he was the Son of God before his incarnation, and ſo not by it; he did not become ſo thro' it, nor was he denominated ſuch on account of it; he was not made the Son of God by it, but was manifeſted in it what he was before; and for this end: *that he might deſtroy the works of the devil*; and the devil himſelf, and all his dominion and power, and particularly his power over death, and death itſelf; and eſpecially the ſins of men, which are the works of the devil, which he puts them upon, influences them to do, and takes delight in; and which are deſtroyed by Chriſt, by his ſacrifice and death, being taken, carried, removed away, finiſhed, and made an end of by him; ſee the note on ver. 5.

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[1] Sepher Tikkunim, fol. 112. 1, apud Rittangel. de ver. Rel. Chriſt. p. 68.

Ver. 9. *Whoſoever is born of God*, &c.] In a figurative and ſpiritual ſenſe; who are regenerated, or born from above; who are quickened by the grace of God, and have Chriſt formed in them; who are made partakers of the divine nature, and new creatures in Chriſt; which ſpiritual birth is not owing to men, to the powet and will of men, but to the grace of God; and is ſometimes aſcribed to the Father, who of his own will and abundant mercy begets ſouls again to a lively hope, and ſaves them by the waſhing of regeneration; and ſometimes to Chriſt, who quickens whom he will, whoſe grace is implanted, and image inſtamped in it, and by whoſe reſurrection from the dead men are begotten again; and chiefly to the Spirit of God, who is the author of regeneration, and of the whole of ſanctification: and ſuch as are born of him are alive thro' him, the Spirit of life entring into them, and live to God and upon Chriſt, and breathe after divine and ſpiritual things, and have their ſenſes to diſcern them; they ſee, hear, feel, taſte, and ſavour them; and deſire the ſincere milk of the word, for their nouriſhment and growth; and have every grace implanted in them, as faith, hope, and love: and of every ſuch an one it is ſaid, he *doth not commit ſin*; does not make it his trade and buſineſs; it is not the conſtant courſe of his life; he does not live and walk in ſin, or give up himſelf to it; he is not without the being of it in him, or free from acts of ſin in his life and converſation, but he does not ſo commit it, as to be the ſervant of it, a ſlave unto it, or to continue in it; and that for this reaſon: *for his ſeed remaineth in* 1 *him*; not the word of God, or the Goſpel, tho' that is a ſeed which is ſown by the miniſters of it, and bleſſed by God, and by which he regenerates his people; and which having a place in their hearts, becomes the engrafted word, and there abides, nor can it be rooted out; where it powerfully teaches to avoid ſin, is an antidote againſt it, and a preſervative from 2. it: nor the Holy Spirit of God, tho' he is the author of the new birth, and the principle of all grace; and where he once is, he always abides; and thro' the power of his grace believers prevail againſt ſin, and mortify the deeds of the body, and live: but rather 3r. the grace of the Spirit, the internal principle of grace in the ſoul, the new nature, or new man formed in the ſoul is meant; which ſeminally contains all grace in it, and which, like ſeed, ſprings up and gradually increaſes, and always abides; and is pure and incorruptible, and neither ſins itſelf, nor encourages ſin, but oppoſes, checks, and prevents it: *and he cannot ſin*; Neg. not that it is impoſſible for ſuch a man to do acts of ſin, or that it is poſſible for him to live without ſin; for the words are not to be underſtood in the ſenſe of thoſe who plead for perfection in this life; for tho' the ſaints have perfection in Chriſt, yet not in themſelves; they are not impeccable, they are not free from ſin, neither from the being nor actings of it; ſin is in them, lives in them, dwells in them, hinders all the good, and does all the miſchief it can: or in ſuch ſenſe, as if the ſins of believers were not ſins; for tho' they are pardoned and expiated, and they are juſtified from them, yet they don't ceaſe to be ſins; they are equally contrary to the nature, will, and law of God, as well as the ſins of others; and are oftentimes attended with more aggravated circumſtances, and which God in a fatherly way takes notice of, and chaſtizes for, and on the account of which he hides his face from them: nor does the 2. phraſe intend any particular ſingle ſin, which cannot be committed; tho' there are ſuch, as ſinning wilfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, or denying Chriſt to be the Saviour of ſinners, and a ſacrifice for ſin, and hatred of a chriſtian brother as ſuch, and ſinning the ſin unto death, or the unpardonable ſin; neither of which can be committed by a regenerate man: nor is the meaning only, tho' it is a 3 ſenſe that will very well bear, and agrees with the context, that ſuch perſons cannot ſin as unregenerate men do; that is, live in a continued courſe of ſinning, and with pleaſure, and without reluctance, Affir. and ſo as to lye in it, as the whole world does: but rather the meaning is, he that is born of God, as he is born of God, or that which is born of God in him, the new man, or new creature, cannot ſin; for that is pure and holy; there is nothing ſinful in it, nor can any thing that is ſinful come out of it, or be done by it; it is the workmanſhip of the Holy Spirit of God; it is a good work, and well-pleaſing in the ſight of God, who is of purer eyes than to behold ſin with delight; and an incorruptible ſeed, which neither corrupts, nor is corrupted; and though it is as yet an imperfect work, it is not impure: the reaſon of the immpeccability of the regenerate man, as ſuch, is, *becauſe he is born of God*; for that which is born of God in him, does, under the influence of the Spirit, power, and grace of God, preſerve him from the temptations of ſatan, the pollutions of the world, and the corruptions of his own heart; ſee 1 *John* v. 18. which the *Vulgate Latin* verſion there renders, *the generation of God*, meaning regeneration, or that which is born of God, *preſerveth him*: this furniſhes out a conſiderable argument for the perſeverance of the ſaints.

Ver. 10. *In this the children of God are manifeſt*, &c.] By regenerating grace, and not ſinning, in the ſenſe before explained, in conſequence of it: adoption is an act of God's grace and ſovereign will; it is ſecret in his own heart, and is ſecured in divine predeſtination, and in the covenant of grace, and is antecedent to regeneration: regeneration and faith do not make men the children of God, but manifeſt them to be ſo; adoption makes them the children of God, and intitles them to the inheritance; regeneration gives them the nature of the children of God, and makes them meet for it, and manifeſts their right unto it; not to the men of the world, but to themſelves and other ſaints: *and the children of the devil*; ſuch as imitate him, do his will and his luſts, and are openly under his power and influence; theſe are diſtinguiſhable from regenerate perſons, and the children of God by their lives and converſations; ſo the people of the nations of the world are called, בנוי, *the children* of *Samael*, and the ſerpent, by the *Jews* [m], which are with them the names of the devil. *Whoſoever doth not righteouſneſs is not of God*; that is, he does not appear to be born of God, who does not by faith lay hold on the righteouſneſs of Chriſt for his juſtification before God, and acceptance with him; and who does not do works of righteouſneſs in faith from a principle of love, and with a view to the glory of God; for where regenerating grace is, there will be ſuch graces and ſuch practices: *neither he that loveth not his brother*; for as he that loveth God, and Chriſt, and the brethren, appears manifeſtly to be born again, and to have paſſed from death to life, ſo he that does not, is in darkneſs, in a ſtate of unregeneracy, and walks and continues therein; for was he born again, he would be taught of God to love the ſaints; ſee 1 *John* iv. 7. and iii. 14. and ii. 11.

Ver. 11. *For this is the meſſage*, &c.] Sent from God by Chriſt, or what he in his miniſtry declared, and is the commandment which was ſo frequently urged by him, *John* xiii. 34. and xv. 12, 17. *that ye have heard from the beginning*; of the preaching of the Goſpel to them, and of their converſion; ſee chap. ii. 7. *that we ſhould love one another*; to which the command of Chriſt, the reaſon with which it is enforced, and the early notice of it ſhould engage.

Ver. 12. *Not as Cain*, &c.] That is, let us not be like him, or do as he did, hate the brethren. The Apoſtle illuſtrates brotherly love by its contrary, in the inſtance of *Cain*, who was the firſt inſtance and example of hatred of the brethren, and of fratricide, and a very deteſtable one, by which he would diſſuade from ſo vile and abominable a practice: who *was of that wicked one*; ſatan, a child of his, an imitator of him, one that appeared to be under his influence, and to belong unto him. So the *Jews* ſay of *Cain* [n], that "he was of "the ſide of the ſerpent, (the old ſerpent the de"vil) and as the way of the ſerpent is to ſlay and "to kill, ſo *Cain* immediately became a murderer." And again, "becauſe *Cain* came from the ſide of "the angel of death, he ſlew his brother [o];" tho' they ſay that he afterwards repented, and became worthy of paradiſe [p]. *And ſlew his brother*; ſee *Gen.* iv. 8. According to the tradition of the *Jews* [q], he ſtruck a ſtone into his forehead, and killed him: *and wherefore ſlew he him?* what was the cauſe and occaſion of it? what moved him to it? *becauſe his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous*; or *his work*, as the *Ethiopic* verſion reads: the ſacrifice which he offered up, which, tho' it was not evil as to the matter and ſubſtance of it, yet was ſo, being offered with an evil mind, and with an hypocritical heart, and without faith in the ſacrifice of Chriſt, and ſo was unacceptable to God; whereas, on the other hand, the ſacrifice his brother brought was offered up in the faith of Chriſt, by which he obtained a teſtimony that he was righteous, and that the work he did was a righteous work, being done in faith, and ſo was acceptable to God; which *Cain* perceiving, was filled with envy, and this put him upon killing him. The *Jews* [r] relate the occaſion of it after this manner; "*Cain* ſaid to *Abel* "his brother, come, and let us go out into the open "field; and when they were both out in the open "field, *Cain* anſwered and ſaid to *Abel* his brother, "there's no judgment, nor judge, nor another "world; neither will a good reward be given to "the righteous, nor vengeance be taken on the "wicked; neither was the world created in mercy, "nor is it governed in mercy; or why is thy of"fering kindly accepted, and mine is not kindly "accepted? *Abel* anſwered and ſaid to *Cain*, there "is judgment, and there is a judge, and there is "another world; and there are gifts of a good re"ward to the righteous, and vengeance will be "taken on the wicked; and the world was created "in mercy, and in mercy it is governed, for ac"cording to the fruit of good works it is govern"ed; becauſe that my works are better than thine, "my offering is kindly accepted, and thine is not "kindly accepted; and they both ſtrove together "in the field, and *Cain* roſe up againſt *Abel* his "brother, and ſlew him." In the *Hebrew* text in *Gen.* iv. 8. there is an extraordinary large pauſe, as if a diſcourſe of this kind, which paſſed between the two brothers, was to be inſerted. *Philo* the *Jew* ſays [s], that in the contention or diſpute between *Cain* and *Abel*, *Abel* attributed all things to God, and *Cain* aſcribed every thing to himſelf; ſo that the controverſy was about grace and works, as now; and as then *Cain* hated his brother upon this account, ſo now carnal men hate and perſecute the ſaints, becauſe they will not allow their works to be the cauſe of juſtification and ſalvation: and from hence alſo it may be obſerved, that a work may be, as to the matter of it, good, and yet as to its circumſtances, and the end and view of it, evil.

Ver. 13. *Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you.*] By *the world* is meant the inhabitants of the world, the wicked part of them; theſe hate the ſaints, tho' without a cauſe, any juſt cauſe, and for no other reaſon, but becauſe they are choſen and called out of the world, and don't live the wicked life they do: and this hatred of theirs is not at all to be wondred at; ſo it was from the beginning, and has been in all ages ſince; immediately upon the fall there was enmity between the ſeed of the woman, and the ſeed of the ſerpent, which ſhowed itſelf in *Cain*, the inſtance juſt given, who hated and murdered his righteous brother; *Iſhmael* that was born after the fleſh, perſecuted *Iſaac*, that was born after the Spirit; and as it was then, 'tis now, the *Jews* perſecuted the prophets of old, and hated Chriſt, and his Apoſtles. This is the common lot of all the ſaints, of all that will live godly in Chriſt Jeſus; and therefore it ſhould not be reckoned a ſtrange and unuſual thing; it always was ſo, even from the beginning, as ſoon as ever there were two ſorts of perſons, good and bad, righteous and wicked. This is a corollary or concluſion drawn from the above inſtance of *Cain*.

Ver. 14. *We know that we have paſſed from death to life*, &c.] From a death in ſin, a moral or ſpiritual death; which lies in a ſeparation from God, Father, Son, and Spirit; in an alienation from the life of God; in a loſs of the image of God, of righteouſneſs, holineſs, and knowledge, in which man was created; in a privation of all true ſenſe of ſin, and in a ſervitude to it, which is unto death, and is no other than death: and from a legal death, or death in a law ſenſe, under the ſentence of which all men are, as conſidered in *Adam*; and which God's elect are ſenſible of, when convinced by the Spirit of God, and are in their own apprehenſion as dead men. Now in regeneration, which is a quickning of ſinners dead in ſin, a reſurrection of them from the dead, the people of God paſs from this death of ſin, and the law, to a life of ſanctification, having principles of grace and life implanted in them; and to a life of juſtification, and of faith on Chriſt, as the Lord their righteouſneſs; and to a life of communion with Chriſt; and to ſuch a life as is to the glory of Chriſt; and to a right to eternal life. And this paſſing from the one to the other, is not of themſelves, it is not their own act; no man can quicken himſelf, or raiſe himſelf from the dead; in this men are paſſive: and ſo the words are rendered in the *Vulgate Latin*, *Syriac*, and *Arabic* verſions, *we know that we are tranſlated*; that is, by God the Father, who delivers from the power of darkneſs, and death, and tranſlates into the kingdom of his dear Son, which is a ſtate of light and life; or by Chriſt, who is the reſurrection and the life, who is the author of the reſurrection from the death of ſin, to a life of grace; or by the Spirit of life from Chriſt, by whom ſouls are quickened, and of whom they are born again: and this paſſage from death to life, or regeneration, is a thing that may be, and is known by the regenerate man; who, as he knows ſurely, that whereas he was blind he now ſees, ſo that whereas he was dead in ſin, he is now alive; and among other things it may be known by this, *becauſe we love the brethren*: this is not the cauſe of paſſing from death to life, but the effect of it, and ſo an evidence of it, or that by which it is known; brotherly love being what the ſaints are taught of God in regeneration, and is a fruit of the Spirit of God, and is what true faith works by, and is what ſhows itſelf as ſoon as any thing in a regenerate man; nor can any one love the ſaints, as ſuch, as brethren in Chriſt, unleſs he is born agian; a man may indeed love a ſaint, as a natural relative, as a good neighbour, and becauſe he has done him ſome good offices, and becauſe of ſome excellent qualities in him, as a man of learning, ſenſe, candour, civility, &c. tho' he has not the grace of God; but to love him as a child of God, a member of Chriſt, and becauſe he has his image inſtamped on him, no man can do this, unleſs he has received the grace of God; ſo that this is a certain evidence of it: *he that loveth not his brother, abideth in death*; in the death of ſin, in a ſtate of nature and unregeneracy; under the ſentence of condemnation and death; and he is liable to eternal death, which is the wages of ſin, under the power of which, ſuch a man manifeſtly is. This is ſaid to deter from hatred, as alſo what follows.

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[m] Raya Mehimna in Zohar in Lev. fol. 34. 2.

[n] Midraſh Ruth in Zohar in Gen. fol. 42. 4.

[o] Zohar in ib. fol. 43. 1.

[p] Ib. fol. 41. 1, 2.

[q] Targum Jon. in Gen. iv. 8. Pirke Eliezer, c. 21.

[r] Targum Hieroſ. & Jon. in Gen. iv. 8.

[s] Quod Det. Potior. p. 161.

Ver. 15. *Whoſoever hateth his brother is a murderer*, &c.] A ſoul-murderer, as the *Ethiopic* verſion renders it; not only of himſelf, for every ſinner, by ſinning, wrongs and deſtroys his own ſoul; but of his brother whom he hates: he is a murderer of him in his heart, even as he that luſts after a woman hath committed adultery with her in his heart, out of which ariſe murders, as well as adulteries; it is not only taking away life, but alſo cauſeleſs anger, malice, and hatred, that is a breach of the ſixth command; ſee *Matt*. v. 21, 22, 28. and xv. 19. *and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him*; he has not the grace of life, or the beginning of eternal life in him; he has no meetneſs for it, being unregenerate; and no right unto it, being unrighteous; nor has he the earneſt and pledge of it, being deſtitute of the Spirit of God; all which a regenerate man has, and has them abiding in him: not but that the ſin of murder may be forgiven; a man guilty of it may truly repent, and have pardoning grace applied unto him, and enjoy eternal life, thro' the grace of the Spirit, and the blood and righteouſneſs of Chriſt; but without theſe he is ſo far from having eternal life, that he is not only puniſhable with a corporal death, according to the laws of God and man, but he is expoſed unto, and will die the ſecond, or an eternal death.

Ver. 16. *Hereby perceive we the love* of God, &c.] The phraſe *of God* is not in the *Oriental* verſions, nor in the *Greek* copies, but is in the *Complutenſian* edition, and in the *Vulgate Latin* verſion, and is favoured by the *Syriac* verſion, which reads, *by this we know his love to us*; and ſo the *Ethiopic* verſion, *by this we know his love*. That is, the love of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who is truly and properly God, the great God, the mighty God, the true God, and God over all, bleſſed for ever. His love is manifeſted to his people, and perceived by them in various inſtances; but in nothing is it more clearly ſeen, than in the following one: *becauſe he laid down his life for us*; of the life of Chriſt, and his laying it down in the room of his people, ſee the note on *John* xv. 13. which ſhows his love, his free grace and favour; for this aroſe not from any merit, or worth in the perſons he died for; not from their love, lovelineſs, or duty, but from his rich mercy, and the great love wherewith he loved them; and which, tho' it cannot be equalled, ſhould be imitated: *and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren*; not in ſuch ſenſe, or for ſuch ends and purpoſes, as Chriſt laid down his life for us; for no man, as by giving his money, ſo by laying down his life, can redeem his brother, or give to God a ranſom for him: but the meaning is, that ſaints ought to riſque their lives, and expoſe themſelves to dangers, for the ſake of their brethren, when they are called to it, and the caſe requires it; as *Priſcilla* and *Aquila* laid down their necks, or ventured their lives for the Apoſtle *Paul*, *Rom*. xvi. 3, 4. and they ſhould alſo, when called unto it, freely lay down their lives in the cauſe of Chriſt, and for the ſake of his Goſpel, for the gaining of ſouls to Chriſt, and for the confirming of the faith of the brethren in him, as the Apoſtles of Chriſt, and the martyrs of Jeſus, have done; this is an argument for brotherly love in the higheſt inſtance of it, taken from the example of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, than which nothing is more forcible, or can lay a greater obligation on the ſaints.

Ver. 17. *But whoſo hath this world's good*, &c.] The poſſeſſions of this world, worldly ſubſtance, the temporal good things of it; for there are ſome things in it, which are honeſtly, pleaſantly, and profitably good, when uſed lawfully, and not abuſed, otherwiſe they are to the owner's hurt: or *the living of this world*; that which the men of the world give up themſelves to, are bent upon, and purſue after; or on which men live, and by which life is maintained, and preſerved, and made comfortable in the preſent ſtate of things; ſuch as meat, drink, apparel, money, houſes, lands, &c. The *Ethiopic* verſion renders it, *he that hath the government of this world*; as if it pointed at a perſon that is in ſome high office of worldly honour and profit, and is both great and rich; but the words are not to be reſtrained to ſuch an one only, but refer to any man that has any ſhare of the outward enjoyments of life; that has not only a competency for himſelf, and family, but ſomething to ſpare, and eſpecially that has an affluence of wordly ſubſtance; but of him that has not, it is not required; for what a man diſtributes ought to be his own, and not another's, and in proportion to what he has, or according to his ability: *and ſeeth his brother have* *need*; meaning, not merely a brother in that ſtrict and natural relation, or bond of conſanguinity; tho' ſuch an one in diſtreſs ought to be, in the firſt place, regarded, for no man ſhould hide himſelf from, overlook and neglect his own fleſh and blood; but any, and every man, *his neighbour*, as the *Ethiopic* verſion reads, whom he ought to love as himſelf; and eſpecially a brother in a ſpiritual relation, or one that is of the houſhold of faith: if he has need; that is, is naked and deſtitute of daily food, has not the common ſupplies of life, and what nature requires; and alſo, whoſe circumſtances are low and mean, tho' not reduced to the utmoſt extremity; and if he ſees him in this diſtreſs with his own eyes, or if he knows it, hears of it, and is made acquainted with it, otherwiſe he cannot be blame-worthy for not relieving him. *And ſhutteth up his bowels* of compaſſion *from him*; hardens his heart, turns away his eyes, and ſhuts his hand; has no tenderneſs in him for, nor ſympathy with his diſtreſſed brother, nor gives him any ſuccour: and this ſhews, that when relief is given, it ſhould be not in a moroſe and churliſh manner, with reflection and reproach, but with affection and pity; and where there is neither one nor the other, *how dwelleth the love of God in him?* neither the love with which God loves men; for if this was ſhed abroad in him, and had a place, and dwelt in him, and he was properly affected with it, it would warm his heart, and looſen his affections, and cauſe his bowels to move to his poor brother: nor the love with which God is loved; for if he don't love his brother whom he ſees in diſtreſs, how ſhould he love the inviſible God? chap. iv. 20. nor that love which God requires of him, which is to love his neighbour as himſelf.

Ver. 18. *My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue*, &c.] Which tho' it holds good of love to God, and to Jeſus Chriſt, yet here is to be underſtood of love to the brethren, as the context ſhows; and ſo the *Syriac* verſion reads, *let us not love one another in word*, &c. that is, without the heart, or with a double heart; ſpeaking one thing with the lip, and deſigning another thing in the heart; ſpeaking peaceably with the mouth, and with the heart laying wait; or we ſhould not love in this manner *only*; and ſo the *Arabic* verſion of *De Dieu* adds. It is very lawful and right to expreſs our love to one another, and to all men in words, to give good words, and uſe courteous language, and ſpeak in a kind, tender, and affectionate manner, and eſpecially to perſons in diſtreſs; but this ſhould not be all, it will be of no avail to ſay to ſuch, be warmed and filled, and give them nothing, but theſe good words, nothing to warm and fill them with; ſee *James* ii. 15, 16. *but in deed and in truth*; for true love is a laborious and operative grace, hence we read of the work and labour of love; it ſhews itſelf by the ſaints ſerving one another, in ſpirituals; as by bearing one another's burdens, forbearing with, and forgiving one another, praying for each other, and building up one another on their moſt holy faith; exhorting each other to the duties of religion, and not ſuffering ſins upon one another, but admoniſh in love, and reſtore with meekneſs; and in temporals, diſtributing to the neceſſities of the ſaints, miniſtring to them of their wordly ſubſtance, and ſupplying their daily wants: and this is loving *in deed*, or *in work*; this is actual love, love in fact, and what is apparent and evident: and it is *in truth*, when it is in reality, and not in ſhow only; and when it is cordially and heartily done, with chearfulneſs, and without grudging.

Ver. 19. *And hereby we know that we are of the truth*, &c.] By the ſaints loving one another in deed and in truth, they know, as the cauſe is known by the effect, that they are of God, who is the true God, the God of truth, and cannot lye, and is truth itſelf; that they are the children of God, and are born of him, ſince they love thoſe that are, and every like loves it like; and that they are of Jeſus Chriſt, who is the way, the truth, and the life; that they belong to him, are his, ſince they have his Spirit, as appears by his fruits in them, and this, among the reſt, love to the brethren; and that they are his diſciples, which others, even all men know, as well as themſelves, by their mutual brotherly love; and that they are of the Goſpel, which is truth, and the word of truth; that they are begotten, and born again, according to the will and grace of God by it, and are on the ſide of it, and can do nothing againſt, but all for it; and that they are true, ſincere, and upright perſons, true believers in Chriſt, whoſe faith works by love, and and are real lovers of him, and his, ſince they love not in word only, but in deed, and in truth. *And ſhall aſſure our hearts before him*; or *perſuade our hearts*; arrive to a full aſſurance of faith, hope, and underſtanding, that we are of the truth, do belong to God, are loved by him with an everlaſting love, are choſen by him unto ſalvation, and are his adopted and regenerated ones, having paſſed from death to life, of which brotherly love is a ſure evidence, ver. 14. Some render the words, *ſhall pacify*, or *make our hearts tranquil*, or *quiet*; this only the blood of Chriſt can do, and does, being ſprinkled on the conſcience: he only has a quiet mind, or true peace of conſcience, that looks to the righteouſneſs of Chriſt for juſtification, and deals with his blood for the full and free remiſſion of his ſins: it is true indeed, that one that loves his brother heartily and ſincerely, has peace of mind in it, tho' not for it; when, on the other hand, there is no peace to the wicked man, that hates his brother; for where there is envying, malice, hatred, and ſtrife, there is no true peace, pleaſure, and comfort, but confuſion, uneaſineſs, diſtraction, and every evil work. Or this paſſage may refer to that holy confidence before God, which true believers in Chriſt, and cordial lovers of the brethren have; both now at the throne of grace, where they can come with boldneſs, intrepidity, and freedom, to aſk for what they want, and confidently believe they ſhall receive what is proper and needful for them; and alſo hereafter, at the throne of judgment, and in the day of judgment, when they ſhall have boldneſs, and not be aſhamed before the judge at his coming; who will particularly take notice of their love in feeding, clothing, and viſiting the leaſt of his brethren, which he takes as done to himſelf.

Ver. 20. *For if our heart condemn us*, &c.] Of want of love to the brethren, and of hypocriſy in it, as well as of any other ſin; for the conſcience, which is meant by the heart here, is accuſer, witneſs and judge; it accuſes of the evil of ſin, and is as good as a thouſand witneſſes; and upon its own teſtimony pronounces guilty, and condemns. *God is greater than our heart*; for he is the maker of it, and he has the power over it, and the management of it; it is in his hands, and to be turned by him as he pleaſes; and he is the ſearcher and trier of it; and beſides, is a ſwifter witneſs than conſcience, and a ſuperior judge unto it. *And knoweth all things*; that are in the heart; the principles of actions, and all the actions of men, for which their hearts condemn them; and all the ſinfulneſs in them, and the aggravations of them; wherefore, as he knows them more perfectly, he judges of them more exactly, and will reprove more ſharply, and condemn more ſeverely for them: hence, if the condemnation of mens hearts and conſciences be ſo very great, as ſometimes to be intolerable and inſupportable, what will be the righteous judgment, and dreadful condemnation of God? how fearful a thing will it be to fall into the hands of the living God? this ſenſe is confirmed by the *Syriac* verſion rendering it, *how much greater is God than our hearts*: there is another ſenſe given by ſome, which is not by way of terror, but comfort, and that is, that if the hearts of believers accuſe, reprove, and condemn for ſin thro' unbelief, or want of clear view of pardon and righteouſneſs by Chriſt, God is greater, as in power, ſo in knowledge, than the hearts of men; and he knows the thoughts he has towards them, which are of peace, and not of evil; the covenant he has made with his Son, of which he is ever mindful; and what his Son has done, that he has made full ſatisfaction for ſin, and brought in an everlaſting righteouſneſs; ſo that let ſin, or ſatan, or the world, or the law, or their own hearts condemn them, there is no condemnation of any avail unto them. But the former ſenſe ſeems beſt to agree with the context.

Ver. 21. *Beloved, if our heart condemn us not,* &c.] Which muſt be underſtood, not of a ſtupidity of mind, as is in unregenerate men, who have no ſenſe of ſin, no ſorrow for it, or remorſe of conſcience on account of it; or as is in them who are paſt feeling; having their conſciences ſeared as with a red-hot iron; ſuch cannot be intitled to the advantages that follow; nor is it of ſuch perſons the Apoſtle ſpeaks, but of himſelf, and other chriſtians, the beloved of the Lord, and one another, who had an experience of the grace of God upon their ſouls, and made a profeſſion of religion: nor does it deſign ſuch a purity of heart and life in believers, as that their hearts do not ſmite, reproach, and condemn them for ſin at any time, for ſuch a ſtate of perfection is not to be attained to, and expected in this life; but rather a conſcience purged by the blood of Chriſt, or an heart ſprinkled from an evil conſcience by that blood, which ſpeaks peace and pardon, ſo that there is no more conſcience of ſin, for the removal of which that is applied; and this gives boldneſs and confidence at the throne of grace: tho' it is beſt of all to confine it to the caſe of brotherly love; for the ſenſe is not, if our heart condemn us not of any thing but of the want of brotherly love, or inſincerity in it, then *have we confidence towards God*; or with him, at the throne of his grace: ſuch can draw nigh to him, and ſtand before him with an holy and humble confidence, when ſuch as hate the brethren, as *Cain* did, in whom the Apoſtle inſtances, and thoſe that go in his way cannot; whoſe heart condemned him, his conſcience ſmote him, and he went from the preſence of the Lord; but thoſe that love the brethren have confidence of their relation to God; by this they know their regeneration, and by that their adoption, and ſo that they are the children of God; and can therefore draw nigh to God as their father, and call him ſo; they can come with an holy boldneſs and intrepidity of mind before him, and uſe a ϖαῤῥησια, freedom of ſpeech with him; can tell him all their mind, pour out their ſouls unto him, and lay before him their caſe and wants; they have confidence of his power, faithfulneſs, and willingneſs to ſupply their need, and fulfil all his promiſes to them, and that their prayers will be heard, anſwered, and regarded by him in his own time.

Ver. 22. *And whatſoever we aſk we receive of him,* &c.] According to his promiſe, *Matt.* vii. 7. that is, whatever is aſked according to the will of God, in the name of Chriſt, and for his ſake, and in faith, nothing wavering, but believing in God, in his covenant and promiſes, for theſe are proviſo's in the caſe; and ſuch as aſk in this way may exerciſe an holy confidence that they ſhall receive; and indeed they do receive what they aſk for; ſee 1 *John* v. 14. *John* xiv. 13, 14. *Matt.* xxi. 22. *becauſe we keep his commandments*; not that keeping the commands of God is the meritorious cauſe of receiving any thing from him; for when men have done all they can, or are aſſiſted to do, they are but unprofitable ſervants in point of merit: whatever is received from God, as it is in conſequence of aſking, ſo it is entirely owing to his own grace and favour, and for the ſake of Chriſt; but keeping the commands of God is a neceſſary adjunct, or, as *Calvin* on the text calls it, an inſeparable accident, or what neceſſarily belongs unto, and enters into the character of ſuch, who are heard and anſwered by God, and receive at his hands; for there is a great deal of truth in what the *Jews* ſay to the blind man, *John* ix. 31. and which may ſerve as a comment on theſe words: *and do thoſe things that are pleaſing in his ſight*; as keeping of his commandments is; not that theſe things ingratiate into the love and favour of God, or are the cauſes and conditions of it, for the love of God is prior to any thing of this kind; nor are they the cauſes of mens acceptance with God, for the acceptance both of perſons and ſervices is only in Chriſt the beloved; but theſe things are what God approves of, when done in faith, from a principle of love, and with a view to his glory: and ſince he hears ſuch perſons that are worſhippers of him, and do his will, and has promiſed good things to them; this is therefore a reaſon ſtrengthening their confidence in him, that what they aſk, they ſhall receive.

Ver. 23. *And this is his commandment,* &c.] Having mentioned the keeping of the commandments of God, the Apoſtle proceeds to ſhew what they are; that they are faith in Chriſt, and love to one another; which two are reduced to one, becauſe they are inſeparable; where the one is, the other is; faith works by love. *That we ſhould believe on the name of his Son Jeſus Chriſt*; Chriſt is the object of faith, and he is ſo, as he is Jeſus, a ſaviour; faith deals with him as ſuch, and will have no other ſaviour but he: and now to believe in him, is not merely to believe that he is the Son of God, the true Meſſiah, the ſaviour of the world, that he is come in the fleſh, has ſuffered, and died, and roſe again from the dead, is aſcended into heaven, and is ſet down at the right hand of God, makes interceſſion for his people, and will come again to judge the quick and dead; but it is to go forth in ſpecial and ſpiritual acts upon him, ſuch as looking at him, coming to him, venturing on him, truſting in him for life and ſalvation, committing all into his hands, and expecting all from him. And this is called a *commandment*, and comes under the notion of one; not that it is properly a law, or belongs to the law; for faith in Chriſt Jeſus is a fruit of electing grace, and a bleſſing of the covenant of grace; it is the free gift of God, and the operation of his Spirit, and is peculiar to the elect of God, and ſheep of Chriſt; and ſo cannot belong to the law of works; but, as the *Hebrew* words, תורה, and מצוה, both ſignify any doctrine, and inſtruction in general; ſee *Pſ.* xix. 7, 8. ſo the word here uſed deſigns an evangelical doctrine, a divine inſtruction of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, in the Goſpel, which declares that he that believes in Chriſt ſhall be ſaved; and ſo the word is uſed for a doctrine in this Epiſtle, ch. ii. 7. and that of the next command or doctrine, which follows, *and love one another as he gave us commandment*; that is, as Chriſt taught and inſtructed his diſciples, *John* xiii. 34. and xv. 12, 17.

Ver. 24. *And he that keepeth his commandments*, &c.] Attends to thoſe inſtructions and declarations concerning faith in Chriſt, and love to the brethren, and acts according to them: *dwelleth in him, and he in them*; that is, he dwells in Chriſt, and Chriſt dwells in him; the ſame is ſaid of believing in Chriſt under the figurative expreſſions of eating his fleſh, and drinking his blood, in *John* vi. 56. ſee the note there: *and hereby we know that he abideth in us*; or *dwelleth in us*, as before, *by the Spirit which he hath given us*; which if underſtood of private chriſtians, as the preceding verſes incline to, the ſenſe is, that union to Chriſt, and the continuance of it, or his indwelling as a fruit of union, and the permanency of that, are evidenced by the Spirit of God; who is given in conſequence of union and relation to Chriſt, as a Spirit of regeneration and ſanctification, of faith, and love, of adoption, and as the earneſt of the heavenly inheritance; but if of the Apoſtles and miniſters of the word, it may regard the gifts of the Holy Spirit beſtowed on them, fitting them for their work and office, and who is a Spirit of truth, and not of error; and by having and enjoying theſe, they knew that Chriſt abode in them, and had reaſon to believe, according to his promiſe, that he would be with them, and with his miniſtring ſervants in ſucceſſion, to the end of the world; and this ſenſe ſeems to be encouraged by the former part of the following chapter.

CHAP. IV.

IN this chapter the Apoſtle cautions againſt ſeducing ſpirits; adviſes to try them, and gives rules by which they may be known, and by which they are diſtinguiſhed from others; and then returns to his favourite ſubject, brotherly love. He exhorts the ſaints not to believe every man that came with a doctrine to them, but to try them, ſince there were many falſe teachers in the world; and gives a rule by which they may be tried and judged, as that whatever teacher owns Chriſt to be come in the fleſh, is of God, but he that does not, is not of God, but is the ſpirit of antichriſt that ſhould come, and was in the world, ver. 1, 2. but for the comfort of thoſe to whom he writes, he obſerves, that they were of God, and had overcome theſe falſe teachers, thro' the mighty power of the divine Spirit in them, who is greater than ſatan, and all his emiſſaries, ver. 4. He diſtinguiſhes between ſeducing ſpirits, and faithful miniſters of the word; the former are of the world, ſpeak of worldly things, and worldly men hear them; but the latter are of God, and they that have any ſpiritual knowledge of God hear them; but ſuch as are not of God, do not hear them, by which may be known the ſpirit of truth from the ſpirit of error, ver. 5, 6. And then the Apoſtle returns to his former exhortation, to brotherly love, which he enforces by the following reaſons, becauſe it is of God, a fruit of his Spirit and grace, and becauſe it is an evidence of being born of God, and of having a true knowledge of him; whereas he that is deſtitute of it does not know him, ſeeing God is love, ver. 7, 8. and having affirmed that God is love, he proves it, by the miſſion of his Son, to be a propitiation for the ſins of ſuch that did not love him, and that they might live thro' him; wherefore he argues, that if God had ſuch a love to men, ſo undeſerving of it, then the ſaints ought to love one another, ver. 9, 10, 11. Other arguments follow, engaging to it, as that God is inviſible; and if he is to be loved, then certainly his people, who are viſible; and that ſuch who love one another, God dwells in them, and his love is perfected in them; and that he dwells in them, is known by the gift of his Spirit to them, ver. 12, 13. and that God the Father ſo loved the world, as to ſend his Son to be the ſaviour of it, before aſſerted, is confirmed by the Apoſtles, who were eye-witneſſes of it; who alſo declare, that whoever confeſſes the Sonſhip of Chriſt, God dwells in him, and he in God; and who had an aſſurance of the love of God to them, who is love itſelf; ſo that he that dwells in God, and God in him, dwells in love, ver. 14, 15, 16. And great are the advantages ariſing from hence, for hereby the ſaints love to God is made perfect; they have boldneſs in the day of judgment, ſince as he is, ſo are they in this world, and fear is caſt out by it, ver. 17, 18. but leſt too much ſhould be thought to be aſcribed to love, that is ſaid to be owing to the love of God to them, which is prior to theirs to him, and the reaſon of it, ver. 19. And the chapter is cloſed with obſerving the contradiction there is between a profeſſion of love to God, and hatred of the brethren, ſeeing God, who is inviſible, cannot be loved, if brethren that are ſeen are hated; and alſo the commandment, that he that loves God ſhould love his brother alſo, ver. 20, 21.

Ver. 1. *Beloved, believe not every ſpirit*, &c.] The Apoſtle having mentioned the word *ſpirit* in the latter part of the preceding chapter, takes an occaſion from thence to return to what he had been ſuggeſting in the *ſecond* chapter, concerning the many antichriſts that then were, and whom he points out, and here cautions againſt. By *every ſpirit* he means, either every doctrine that is pretended to come from the Spirit of God, or every teacher, who profeſſes to be qualified and ſent by him, and to have his light, knowledge, and doctrine from him. Every true miniſter of the Goſpel has the Spirit, and the gifts of the Spirit, more or leſs, to qualify him for his work; he is ſeparated, and called to it by him, and receives his ſpiritual light and knowledge from him; it is he that teaches him ſound doctrine, and leads him into all truth, as it is in Jeſus, and brings every neceſſary truth to his remembrance; and who ſucceeds his miniſtrations to the good of ſouls: but there are ſome who call themſelves the miniſters of the Goſpel, who, tho' they may have ſome natural abilities, and a ſhare of human learning, and a notional knowledge of things, yet have never received either grace or gifts from the Spirit; nor have they been ever called by him; nor are their miniſtrations according to that divine word which is inſpired by him, nor attended with his demonſtration and power; wherefore,

fore, tho' ſome profeſſing to have the Spirit of Chriſt are to be believed, yet not every one; and tho' the Spirit is not to be quenched in any, nor propheſying to be deſpiſed, yet care ſhould be taken what is heard and received: ſome perſons are ſo obſtinate and incredulous as not to believe any thing that is declared, be the evidence what it will; as the *Jews* would not believe Chriſt and his Apoſtles, tho' what they ſaid agreed with *Moſes* and the prophets, and was confirmed by miracles; and others are too credulous; at once receive every teacher, and embrace every upſtart doctrine: this they ſhould not do, *but try the ſpirits whether they are of God*; not by human reaſon, eſpecially as carnal and unſanctified; for tho' the doctrines of the Goſpel are not contrary to true reaſon, they are above it, and not to be judged of by it, and are diſapproved of, and rejected by carnal reaſon; but by the word of God, which is the ſtandard of all doctrine; and whatever agrees with that, is to be received, and what does not ſhould be rejected. And ſo to do is very commendable, as appears from the inſtance of the *Beræans*, who on this account are ſaid to be more noble than thoſe of *Theſſalonica*, *Acts* xvii. 11. and from the commendation of the church at *Epheſus*, *Rev.* ii. 2. And this is what every believer, every private chriſtian ſhould do; to them it belongs to read and ſearch the ſcriptures, and prove all things, and judge for themſelves of the truth of doctrine; and to ſuch a probation or trial of the ſpirits, ſpiritual light, knowledge, judgment, ſenſe, experience, and divine guidance are neceſſary, which ſhould be aſked of God, and an increaſe thereof; and all ſuch diligent ſearchers, and humble enquirers, are capable of making judgment of perſons and doctrines, whether they are from the Spirit of God or not, for the Spirit of God never ſpeaks contrary to his word: and the reaſon why ſuch a trial ſhould be made, is, *becauſe many falſe prophets are gone out into the world*; ſuch who pretended either to a revelation of future things, and to foretel things to come; or rather to a gift of propheſying, or preaching in Chriſt's name, to be *prophets* and ſpiritual men, and miniſters of the word, but were *falſe* ones; who either predicted what did not come to paſs, or rather preached falſe doctrine, by corrupting the word, and handling it deceitfully, and ſo impoſed upon; and ruined the ſouls of others, as well as deceived their own: and there were not only one, or two, or a few of theſe, but *many*, as our Lord had foretold, *Matt.* xxiv. 11, 24. and which makes the reaſon the ſtronger for not believing every ſpirit, but trying them; and the rather, ſince they were not ſent of God, nor called out by his churches, but were *gone out* of themſelves; of their own heads, and without any miſſion from God or man: and *into the world* too; they were in every part of it, and eſpecially where there were any churches of Chriſt; into which they firſt crept in privily, and at unawares, but afterwards became publick preachers of the word, and then ſeparating from them, ſet up openly in the world for themſelves.

Ver. 2. *Hereby know ye the Spirit of God*, &c.] This is a rule by which believers may know, whether a man profeſſing to have the Spirit of God, and to be called and ſent by him, and whether the doctrine he preaches is of him or no: *every ſpirit that confeſſeth that Jeſus Chriſt is come in the fleſh, is of God*; or of the Spirit of God; that is, every doctrine which carries this truth in it; or every man that owns, and profeſſes, and publiſhes this doctrine concerning Chriſt, is on the ſide of God and truth; and which contains ſeveral articles in it, reſpecting the perſon and office of Chriſt; as that he exiſted before he came in the fleſh, not in the human nature, or as man, or as an angel, but as the Son of God, as a divine perſon, being truly and properly God; ſo that this confeſſion takes in his divine Sonſhip, and proper deity, and alſo his true and real humanity; that the Meſſiah was incarnate, againſt the *Jews*, and was God and man in one perſon; and that he was really man, and not in appearance only, againſt the hereticks of thoſe times: and it alſo includes his offices, as that *Jeſus* of *Nazareth* was the Chriſt, the Meſſiah, which the *Jews* denied, and that he was the anointed prophet, prieſt, and king; and ſo is a confeſſion or acknowledgment of all the doctrines of the Goſpel, which came by him, as a prophet; and of his ſatisfaction, ſacrifice, and interceſſion, as a prieſt; and of all his ordinances and commands as a king; and that he is the only ſaviour and redeemer of men. Now, whoever owns and declares this ſyſtem of truth, *is of God*; not that every one that aſſents unto this, or preaches it, is born of God; a man may believe, and confeſs all this, as the devils themſelves do, and yet be deſtitute of the grace of God; but the Spirit, or doctrine, which contains theſe things in it, is certainly of God, or comes from him; or whoever brings theſe truths with him, and preaches them, he is, ſo far as he does ſo, on the ſide of God and truth, and to be regarded.

Ver. 3. *And every ſpirit that confeſſeth not*, &c.] The proper deity and Sonſhip of Chriſt, his true and real humanity, and his Meſſiahſhip; or any of his offices, doctrines, and ordinances; or his ſatisfaction and righteouſneſs; or that peace, pardon, juſtification, life, and ſalvation are by him; all which are meant by what follows, *that Jeſus Chriſt is come in the fleſh*: this clauſe is left out in the *Ethiopic* verſion, and that without hurting the ſenſe, ſince it is eaſily ſupplied from the preceding verſe; and the *Alexandrian* copy, and the *Vulgate Latin* verſion, only read *Jeſus*; and the latter reads the whole thus, *and every ſpirit that diſſolves Jeſus*; that ſeparates the two natures, human and divine, in him, and makes two perſons of them; or denies either of them, either that he is truly God, or really man, or denies him to be *Jeſus*, the ſaviour; who, as much as in him lies, deſtroys his perſon, office, and work, and makes void his obedience, ſufferings, and death: *is not of God*; neither he, nor his doctrine are of God; his doctrine cannot come from God, being contrary to the word of God; and he himſelf is neither born of God, nor on his ſide. *And this is that* ſpirit *of antichriſt*; who is againſt Chriſt, or oppoſes himſelf to him; as he who denies his Sonſhip, his deity, his humanity, his offices, and his grace, manifeſtly does; every doctrine that is calculated againſt theſe truths, is the ſpirit and doctrine of antichriſt: *whereof you have heard, that it ſhould come; and even now already is it in the world*; in the falſe teachers, the fore-runners of antichriſt; ſee the note on ch. ii. 18.

Ver. 4. *Ye are of God, little children*, &c.] This, with what follows, is ſaid for the comfort of the ſaints, and to deliver them from the fears of being drawn aſide by the deluſions of the falſe prophets, and antichriſts; ſince they belonged to God, were his elect, and therefore could not be finally and totally ſeduced; they were the children of God by adopting grace, and could not become the ſervants of men; they were born of God, and ſo were kept by the power of God unto ſalvation, as all that are begotten unto a lively hope are; they were enlightned by the Spirit of God, and had a diſcerning of truth from error, and therefore could not be impoſed upon: *and have overcome them*; the falſe prophets, being in a good cauſe, fighting the good fight of faith, and having good weapons, particularly, the ſword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, and invincible arguments from thence; and alſo gracious aſſiſtance from the Spirit of God, who gives a mouth that none can ſhut, and wiſdom that none can reſiſt; as well as an inward experience of the truth, and power of Goſpel doctrines; a teſtimony within themſelves, which will ſtand the whole ſhock and oppoſition of the enemy: the *Vulgate Latin* verſion reads, *and have overcome him*; antichriſt, whoſe ſpirit was then in the world; or the world itſelf, or ſatan, the God of the world; and ſo the *Ethiopic* verſion reads, *and have overcome the evil one*, as in ch. ii. 13, 14. the reaſon of which victory, and which adds to the comfort and ſupport of ſaints in their preſent warfare, is, *becauſe greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world*; by *he that is in the world* is meant, either the devil, the prince and God of the world, and who goes up and down in it, dwells in the hearts of the men of it, under whoſe influence they are, and in whom he works effectually; or antichriſt, whoſe ſpirit was now in the world, and whoſe doctrine was propagated by the falſe teachers, in whom he began to appear; but he that is in the ſaints, either God who dwells in them, and they in him, ver. 15. is mighter than the man of ſin, and his emiſſaries, to keep and preſerve from all corruptions, and every falſe way; or Chriſt, who dwells in their hearts by faith, and is ſtronger than the ſtrong man armed, and able to ſave and deliver out of his hands; or the Spirit of God; and ſo the *Arabic* verſion reads, *the Spirit that is in you*; who is in the ſaints, as a Spirit of regeneration and ſanctification, as a Spirit of adoption, and the earneſt of their inheritance; he is able to carry on the work of grace in them, and finiſh it, and will do it; and he, as a Spirit of truth, is more powerful than the ſpirit of error; and when the enemy comes in like a flood, or pours in a flood of errors and hereſies, he lifts up a ſtandard againſt him; cauſes him to fly, and ſecures the ſaints from being carried away with it: compare with this the *Septuagint* verſion of *Pſ.* cxxiv. 1, 2. *if it had not been the Lord who was on our ſide*; which render it thus, *if the Lord had not been in us*.

4 Ver. 5. *They are of the world*, &c.] That is, the falſe prophets and teachers that were gone out into the world, and had the ſpirit of antichriſt in them; theſe were as they were when they came into the world, under the pollution, guilt, and dominion of ſin, in a ſtate of unregeneracy, carnality, and darkneſs; they properly belonged unto it, and walked after the courſe of it, and were under the influence of the God of it, who led them into error; and were ſenſual, and indulged themſelves in worldly luſts, and were ſeeking after worldly things; ſuppoſed that gain was godlineſs, and had mens perſons in admiration becauſe of advantage; their nature and diſpoſition, their principles and practices, and their ends and views, were worldly; and were quite different from Chriſt and his Apoſtles, *John* xvii. 14, 16. *therefore ſpeak they of the world*; they ſpeak the wiſdom of the world, or that in which the world thinks wiſdom lies, and cry up for true knowledge, and right principles; and this they do with the enticing words of man's wiſdom, or in words which man's wiſdom teacheth; ſpeaking great ſwelling words of vanity, which take with vain and carnal minds; and preach doctrines ſuited to their own taſte, and the taſte of others, as carnal and worldly men; ſuch as the purity of human nature, in its firſt conception and birth, its freedom from any original corruption, and from any concern with the ſin of *Adam*, only with actual ſin of its own; and the power of it to do that which is good, keep the law of God, and obtain his favour; the non-neceſſity of any internal work of efficacious grace, a reformation of life and manners, being thought ſufficient to render a man acceptable to God, and prepare him for eternal happineſs; the doctrine of juſtification and ſalvation by works; all which are pleaſing to carnal men: hence it follows, *and the world heareth them*; the wicked of the world; worldly and unregenerate men attend on their miniſtry, approve of what they deliver, and receive it with pleaſure, and believe it: this expreſſes both the quality of the hearers of falſe teachers, that they are that part of the world, the worſe part of it, which lies in wickedneſs; and the quantity of them, the greater part of the world, as it was foretold by Chriſt, and his Apoſtles, that they ſhould deceive many, that many ſhould follow their pernicious ways, and that they ſhould draw many diſciples after them; wherefore the numbers that attend ſuch perſons, ~~as it~~ need not be wondered at, ſince both preachers and hearers, and the doctrines preached and heard, are all alike, they are of the world, ſo it ſhould not be ſtumbling to the people of God.

Ver. 6. *We are of God*, &c.] Not only as the choſen of God, the children of God, regenerated ones, and believers, but as miniſters of the Goſpel; they were choſen, and called, and ſent of God to preach the Goſpel, and were qualified for it, by gifts received from him, and had their doctrine from him, as well as their commiſſion and miſſion: they were not of the world, and therefore did not ſpeak of the world, nor things ſuited to worldly men; but being of God, they ſpoke the words of God, which were agreeable to him, which made for the glory of the three divine perſons, and were conſiſtent with the divine perfections; which maintained the honour and dignity of the perſons in the Godhead; which magnified the grace of God in ſalvation, and debaſed the creature: *he that knoweth God*; not only as the God of nature and providence, but as in Chriſt, and that not only profeſſionally, but practically; that has an experimental knowledge of him, that knows him, as exerciſing loving kindneſs, having taſted of his grace and goodneſs; that knows him ſo as to truſt in him, and love him; for ſuch a knowledge of God is meant, as has true real affection to him joined with it; ſo that it is he that loves his name, his glory, his truths, and his ordinances: he *heareth us*; not only externally, conſtantly attending on the miniſtry of the word, as ſuch do; but internally, underſtanding what is heard, receiving it in love, cordially embracing it, and firmly believing it, and acting according to it: *he that is not of God*; who is not born of God, but is as he was when born into the world, and is of it; and who does not righteouſneſs, nor loves his brother, nor confeſſes the divinity, humanity, and offices of Chriſt, and ſo is not on the ſide of truth, nor has the truth of grace in him; ſee ch. iii. 10. and iv. 3. ſuch a man *heareth not us*; he is a mere natural man, a carnal and unregenerate man; and ſuch an one cannot attend on a Goſpel miniſtry, or receive Goſpel doctrines, which are with him ſenſeleſs, ſtupid, and fooliſh notions, yea, fooliſhneſs itſelf; nor can he know and underſtand them through ignorance, and want of a ſpiritual diſcerning; they are hard ſayings, and he cannot hear, nor bear them; and when this is the caſe, it is a plain token of unregeneracy, and that ſuch perſons are not of God; ſee *John* viii. 47. *Hereby know we the ſpirit of truth, and the ſpirit of error*; the difference between truth and error; can diſtinguiſh one from another, and diſcern who are the true miniſters of Chriſt, and who are the falſe teachers; for not only the word of God, the ſcriptures of truth, are the teſt and ſtandard, the touchſtone to bring them to, and try them by; and the doctrines they ſeverally bring ſhew who they are; but even their very hearers diſtinguiſh them. Spirits, or men pretending to the Spirit of God, may be known in a great meaſure by their followers; they who have the ſpirit of error, and are of the world, they are followed, and careſſed, and aplauded by the men of the world, by unregenerate perſons; they who have the ſpirit of truth, and are of God, they are heard and approved of, and embraced by ſpiritual men, by ſuch who know God in Chriſt, and have taſted that the Lord is gracious.

Ver. 7. *Beloved, let us love one another*, &c.] The Apoſtle having finiſhed what he propoſed to ſay concerning the trying of ſpirits, returns to his former exhortation to brotherly love, and which comes with freſh force and ſtrength; for ſince worldly men follow, hear, embrace, and cleave to the falſe teachers; ſuch as are of God, and on the ſide of truth, ſhould love one another, and their faithful miniſters, and ſtand faſt in one ſpirit by the truths of the Goſpel, in oppoſition to every error: *for love is of God*; to love one another is the command of God, it is his revealed will, and is well-pleaſing in his ſight; it comes from him, is a gift of his grace, and a fruit of his Spirit, and which he teaches regenerate ones to exerciſe: *and every one that loveth* God, as the *Alexandrian* copy reads, or Chriſt, and the ſaints, who ſeem to be particularly meant: *is born of God*; for love to the brethren is an evidence of regeneration; ſee the note on ch. iii. 14. *and knoweth God*; he knows God in Chriſt, and therefore loves thoſe who have the grace of God in them, and the image of Chriſt upon them; he knows the mind and will of God, being taught of God to love the brethren; and he knows the love of God, and has had an experience of the grace of God, which influences him to love the ſaints.

Ver. 8. *He that loveth not, knoweth not God*, &c.] If a man loves not the children of God, thoſe that are born of him, he does not know, ſo as to love, God, the Father of them; for to pretend love to God, the begetter of them, whom he ſees not, and not love thoſe who are begotten by him, and are viſible objects of reſpect, is a contradiction, and cannot be reconciled; ſee ver. 20. This clauſe is left out in the *Ethiopic* verſion, and is tranſpoſed in the *Syriac* verſion, which reads the text thus, *for God is love, and whoever loveth not, knoweth not God*. By which reading, the following reaſon ſtands in cloſe connexion with ver. 7. *For God is love*; he loves himſelf; there is an entire love between the three divine perſons, who are in the ſtricteſt, and in the moſt unconceivable and inexpreſſible manner affected to each other; their love is natural and eſſential: God loves all his creatures as ſuch, nor does he hate any of them, as ſo conſidered; and he bears an everlaſting, unchangeable, and invariable love to his elect in Chriſt Jeſus; of which an inſtance is given in the following verſes, and is a reaſon why the ſaints ſhould love one another; that they might be like their heavenly Father, by whom they are begotten, and of whom they are born, and whoſe children they are; ſeeing he is love itſelf, and in his breaſt is nothing elſe but love. So the *Shekinah* is, by the Cabaliſtic *Jews* [t], called, אהבה, *love*.

Ver. 9. *In this was manifeſted the love of God towards us*, &c.] The love of God here ſpoken of, and inſtanced in, is not his general love to all his creatures, which is ſhown in the make of them, and in the ſupport of them in their beings, and in his providential care of them, and kindneſs to them; but his ſpecial love towards his elect, and which was before it was manifeſted; it was ſecretly in his heart from everlaſting, and did not begin to be at the miſſion of Chriſt into the world, but was then in a moſt glaring manner manifeſted: there were ſeveral acts of it before, as the choice of them in Chriſt, the appointment of him to be their ſaviour, and the covenant of grace made with him on their account; theſe were more ſecret and hidden; but now the love and kindneſs of God appeared, broke forth, and ſhone out in its glory; this is a moſt flagrant and notorious inſtance of it, in which it is exceedingly conſpicuous; this is a moſt clear proof, a plain and full demonſtration of it: *becauſe that God ſent his only-begotten Son into the world*; the ſender is God the Father, who is diſtinguiſhed from the Son that is ſent; of which act of ſending, ſee the notes on *Rom.* viii. 3. and *Gal.* iv. 4. and for him, who is that God againſt whom we have ſinned, and is that lawgiver that is able to ſave, and to deſtroy, and of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, to ſend his Son to be the ſaviour of ſinful men, is an amazing inſtance of love; and which appears the more manifeſt, when 'tis obſerved that it is *his only-begotten Son* that is ſent; of which ſee the note on *John* i. 14. and the place he was ſent into is the *world*, where his people are, and where their ſins are committed, he came to expiate; and where he was treated with great indignity and contempt, and ſuffered many things, and at laſt death itſelf: the end of his miſſion was, *that we might live thro' him*; who were dead in *Adam*, dead in ſin, and dead in law, and could not quicken themſelves; nor obtain eternal life for themſelves, by their performances. Chriſt came, being ſent, that they might have life, and that more abundantly than *Adam* had in innocence, or man loſt by the fall; and accordingly they were quickned together with him; when he was quickned, after he had been put to death, they were virtually and repreſentatively quickned and juſtified in him; and in conſequence of his death and reſurrection from the dead, they are regenerated and made ſpiritually alive, and live unto righteouſneſs; and thro' his righteouſneſs wrought out for them, and imputed to them, they are in a law-ſenſe alive unto God, and alive and comfortable in their own ſouls, living by faith on Chriſt, and have a right and title to eternal life; and which they alſo have thro' him, and which is chiefly intended here; for the deſign is not only that they may live ſpiritually and comfortably here, but eternally hereafter.

Ver. 10. *Herein is love*, &c.] The love of God, free love, love that cannot be matched: herein it is manifeſted, as before; this is a clear evidence of it, an undoubted proof, and puts it out of all queſtion: *not that we loved God*; the love of God is antecedent to the love of his people; it was when theirs were not; when they were without love to him, yea enemies in their minds, by wicked works, and even enmity itſelf, and therefore was not procured by theirs; but on the contrary, their love to him is cauſed by his love to them; hence his love, and a continuance in it, do not depend on theirs; nor does it vary according to theirs; wherefore there is good reaſon to believe it will continue, and never be removed; and this ſhows the ſovereignty and freeneſs of the love of God, and that it is ſurprizing and matchleſs: *but that he loved us*; that is, God; and ſo the *Syriac* verſion reads, *but that God himſelf loved us*. The *Vulgate Latin* verſion adds, *firſt*, as in ver. 19. the inſtance of this love follows: *and ſent his Son* to be *the propitiation for our ſins*; this is a ſubordinate end to the other, mentioned in the preceding verſe; for, in order that ſinful men may poſſeſs everlaſting life and happineſs, 'tis neceſſary that their ſins be expiated, or atonement be made for them, which is meant by Chriſt's being a propitiation for them; that the juſtice of God ſhould be ſatisfied; that peace and righteouſneſs, or love and juſtice, ſhould be reconciled together, and kiſs each other; and that all obſtructions be removed out of the way of the enjoyment of life, which are brought in by ſin; and that the wrath of God which ſin deſerved, be averted or appeaſed, according to our ſenſe and apprehenſion of it; for otherwiſe the love of God to his people is from everlaſting, and is unchangeable, and never alters, or never changes from love to wrath, or from wrath to love; nor is the love of God procured by the ſatisfaction and ſacrifice of Chriſt, which are the effects of it; but hereby the way is laid open for the diſplay of it, and the application of its effects, in a way conſiſtent with the law and juſtice of God. This phraſe is expreſſive of the great love of Chriſt to his people, and of his ſubſtitution in their room and ſtead; and ſo it is uſed among the *Jews* for a ſubſtitution in the room of others, לרוב אהבתו, *to expreſs the greatneſs of love*[a]; ſee the notes on *Rom.* iii. 25. and ix. 3.

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[t] Shirhaſhirim Rabba, fol. 15. 1. & Lex. Cabal. p. 43, 44.

Ver. 11. *Beloved, if God ſo loved us*, &c.] As to ſend his Son to be a propitiatory ſacrifice for our ſins, and to obtain eternal life for us thro' his ſufferings and death: the Apoſtle uſes the ſame language his lord and maſter did, *John* iii. 16. *we ought alſo to love one another*; for thoſe who are the objects of God's love, ought to be the objects of ours; and if God has loved our fellow-chriſtians and brethren to ſuch a degree, as to ſend his Son to die for them, we ought to love them too; and if we are intereſted in the ſame love, the obligation is ſtill the greater; and if God loved them with ſo great a love, when they did not love him, but were enemies to him, then ſurely we ought to love them now they are become the friends of God, and ours alſo; as God loved them freely, and when unlovely, and us likewiſe in the ſame manner, and under the ſame circumſtances, then we ought to love, and continue to love the ſaints, tho' there may be ſomething in their temper and conduct diſagreeable: God is to be imitated in his love; and his love to us, which is unmerited and matchleſs, ſhould influence and engage us to the love of the brethren, who have a far greater claim to our love than we can make to the love of God; and which indeed is none at all, but what he is pleaſed to give us.

Ver. 12. *No man hath ſeen God at any time*, &c.] The ſame is ſaid by the Evangeliſt *John*, ch. i. 18. but here it is obſerved with a different view, and upon another account; there it ſignifies that no man has ſeen and looked into the counſels and deſigns of God, and been able to make a diſcovery and declaration of his mind and will, his love and grace, and which is there aſcribed to the Son of God, ſee the note there: but here the ſenſe is, that whereas God is inviſible in his nature, and incomprehenſible in his being and perfections, ſo that there is no coming to him, and ſeeing of him, and converſing with him in a familiar way, and ſo not of loving him as he is in himſelf, and ought to be loved, as one friend ſees, converſes with, and loves another, and finds his love increaſed by ſight and converſation; then we ought to love the ſaints and people of God, who are viſible, may be ſeen, come at, and converſed with, ſee ver. 20. for this clauſe ſtands among the arguments and reaſons for brotherly love: *if we love one another God dwelleth in us*; not as he does in his Son, by union of nature; nor as in heaven, by the diſplays of his glory; nor as in the whole world, by his omnipreſence and power; but by his Spirit, and the communications of his love, and by his gracious preſence and communion, which he indulges the ſaints with; for ſuch who love one another, as they appear to have the Spirit of God, of which that grace is a fruit, ſo they are by the Spirit built up a fit habitation for God, and by which Spirit he dwells in them; and ſuch may expect the preſence of God, for they who live in peace, the God of love and peace ſhall be with them: *and his love is perfected in us*; not that love of God, with which he loves his people; for that admits of no degrees and is not more or leſs in itſelf, or in his heart; but is always invariably and unchangeably the ſame, and is full, compleat, and perfect in his own breaſt, as it was from all eternity; and does not paſs by degrees, or gradually riſe from a love of benevolence to a love of complacency and delight, or increaſe as our love does to him and to one another, on which it has no dependance: nor is this love perfected in the ſaints in this life; that is to ſay, they have not perfect knowledge and enjoyment of it; nor have they all the effects of it beſtowed upon them, and applied unto them; the perfection of it, in this ſenſe, will be in heaven: but the love with which God is loved is here deſigned; and it is called his, becauſe he is both the object and the author of it; and this is not perfect as to degrees; yea, ſometimes, inſtead of abounding and increaſing, it goes back, it is left, and waxes cold; and it will not have its completion till the ſaints come to heaven, and then it will be in its full perfection and glory, when faith and hope ſhall be no more: but the ſenſe is, that this grace of love is ſincere and hearty, and without diſſimulation; it is unfeigned love; and it is in deed and in truth, and not in word and in tongue only; and this appears to be ſo, by the love which is ſhown to the brethren, the children of God; ſo that love to God in the ſaints is perfected by love to the brethren, juſt in ſuch ſenſe as faith is made perfect by works, *Jam.* ii. 22. that is, is made to appear to be genuine, right, and true.

Ver. 13. *Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us*, &c.] That there is a communion between God and us, and a communication of his love and grace to us, and an exerciſe of grace upon him; for God dwells in his people by his Spirit and grace, and they dwell in him by the exerciſe of faith and love upon him: and this is known, *becauſe he hath given us of his Spirit*; not of the eſſence and nature of the Spirit, which is the ſame with the nature of the Father and of the Son, and is incommunicable; but either of the gifts of the Spirit, which are divided to every man as he pleaſes, and which being beſtowed on men, and uſed by them, for the profit and advantage of the church of God, ſhow that God is with them, and dwells among them of a truth; or of the graces of the Spirit, ſuch as faith, hope,

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[a] Miſn. Negaim, c. 2. §. 1. Maimon. & Bartenora in ib. Miſn. Sanhedrin, c. 2. §. 1. & Jarchi & Bartenora in ib. vid. T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 23. 1. & Succa, fol. 20. 1.

hope and love, which are ſeverally the gifts of God; and theſe being beſtowed and exerciſed, are proofs of the mutual indwelling of God and his people; ſee the note on ch. iii. 24.

Ver. 14. *And we have ſeen, and do teſtify*, &c.] This ſeems to be particularly ſaid of the Apoſtles, who had a clear diſcerning of the love and grace of God, manifeſted in the miſſion of Chriſt into the world; for tho' no man had ſeen his nature and his perſon, yet they had ſeen his love, and the exceeding riches of his grace, which he had ſhewn forth in Chriſt Jeſus; and they had alſo ſeen Chriſt, God manifeſt in the fleſh; they had ſeen his glory, as the glory of the only-begotten of the Father; they had ſeen him with their bodily eyes; they had ſeen his works and miracles; they had ſeen him dying and riſen again from the dead, and go up to heaven; they were witneſſes, and eye-witneſſes of him, and bore a faithful teſtimony of him, and for him, and particularly ſet their ſeal to this truth, *that the Father ſent the Son* to be *the Saviour of the world*; not of every individual perſon in it, for there are ſome that will go into everlaſting puniſhment, and even a world that will be condemned; Chriſt is not in fact the Saviour of all the individuals of human nature, and therefore was not ſent to be ſuch; for if he was, the end of his miſſion is not fully anſwered; nor of the *Jews* only, but of the *Gentiles* alſo, and who are chiefly intended by the world; ſee the note on ch. ii. 2. and even of all the elect of God, ſtiled his people, his ſheep, his friends, his church, and the ſons of God; and it may be ſaid of all that believe in him throughout the whole world, without any diſtinction of nation, age, ſex, ſtate or condition: and Chriſt is the Saviour both of the ſouls and bodies of theſe, from all their ſins, original and actual; from the power of ſatan, the bondage and curſe of the law, and wrath to come; and he is the only, able, willing, and complete Saviour, and who ſaves with an everlaſting ſalvation.

Ver. 15. *Whoſoever ſhall confeſs that Jeſus is the Son of God*, &c.] The only-begotten of the Father; that he is not a mere man, as the *Jews*, and *Ebion* and *Cerinthus* ſaid, but a divine perſon, equal with the Father; which contains all that relates to the dignity of his perſon, and his fitneſs for his office as a Saviour, and which was the teſt of faith in thoſe times, and the grand article of belief: not that a bare aſſent to this had what followed annexed to it; for the devils believed and owned that Jeſus was the Son of God; and ſo might, and did, unregenerate perſons, as the centurion at the croſs of Chriſt, who know nothing what communion with God is; but this confeſſion is ſuch as is attended with a believing in Chriſt from the heart unto righteouſneſs, life, and ſalvation, and a chearful obedience to his ordinances and commands, from a principle of love to him, and faith in him, things not to be found in devils and carnal men; ſee *Rom.* x. 9, 10. *God dwelleth in him, and he in God*; ſee the note on ver. 13. this ſhould encourage to an open and hearty confeſſion of Chriſt as the Son of God, and Saviour of ſinners, and to a public profeſſion of his name, and faith in him, and an holding it faſt without wavering.

Ver. 16. *And we have known and believed*, &c.] Or have a full aſſurance and knowledge of, and faith in, *the love that God hath to us*; ſhewn as in many inſtances, ſo more eſpecially in ſending his Son to be the propitiation for our ſins, to be the Saviour of us, and that we might live thro' him. *God is love*; as in ver. 8. ſee the note there: *and he that dwelleth in love*; who dwells by faith upon the love of God as diſplayed in Chriſt, and abides in the exerciſe of love to God, and to the ſaints: *dwelleth in God, and God in him*; ſee the note on ver. 13. the laſt clauſe, *and God in him*, is left out in the *Syriac* verſion.

Ver. 17. *Herein is our love made perfect*, &c.] Or *love with us*; which ſome underſtand of the love of God towards his people, and which is ſhed abroad in them: this indeed removes all fear of an awful judgment, and renders that amiable and deſireable; and ſuch who are intereſted in it, ſhall ſtand in that day with intrepidity and boldneſs; and this ſenſe may ſeem to be favoured by the *Syriac* verſion, which reads, *his love with us*; and eſpecially by the *Vulgate Latin* verſion, which renders it, *the love of God with us*: but it is beſt to underſtand it agreeable to the context, of our love to God, which is with, and in our hearts; and which is made, or made to appear to be perfect, true, and genuine, by our love to the brethren; ſince the love of God to us does not admit of degrees, nor does it, or the reality and ſincerity of it, depend upon our love to the ſaints; ſee the note on ver. 12. *that we may have boldneſs in the day of judgment*; not of mens judgment, when brought before judges, governors, and kings, for the ſake of Chriſt and the Goſpel, and ſtand at their bar, where ſaints, who have true love to God and Chriſt, and the brethren, have ſtood with great courage and intrepidity, and ſhown much boldneſs, and uſed great freedom of ſpeech; nor of judgment in this life, which ſometimes begins at the houſe of God, tho' the ſaints often have great boldneſs and preſence of mind, and freedom of expreſſion both to God and man in a day of affliction, as *Job* had; but of the future judgment, which, tho' it will be very awful and ſolemn, Chriſt the judge will appear with great majeſty and glory, and all men will ſtand before him, and the books will be opened, and the judgment will proceed with great ſtrictneſs and juſtice, and will iſſue in the everlaſting perdition of devils and wicked men, yet the ſaints will have boldneſs in it: whilſt evil men and devils tremble at the thoughts of it now, they rejoice and are glad; they love it, look for it, long for it, and haſten to it; and will ſtand fearleſs, and without the leaſt dread, whilſt others will flee to the rocks, and into the holes of the earth; and they will uſe freedom of ſpeech with Chriſt, as the word here ſignifies; they'll ſing his new ſong, and aſcribe the glory of their ſalvation to him, and expreſs their praiſes of him, and love to him, then and to all eternity: and this boldneſs the ſaints may be ſaid to arrive at thro' a perfect, or ſincere, and genuine love of the brethren; for by this they know they are born again, and are born to an inheritance incorruptible, which they have both a meetneſs for, and a right unto; and knowing hereby that they are paſſed from death to life, they juſtly conclude they ſhall not enter into condemnation, and therefore are not afraid of the awful judgment: hereby they know that their faith is right, and that therefore they are manifeſtly the children of God; and if children, then heirs, and ſo ſhall be ſaved, and have everlaſting life: *becauſe as he is, ſo are we in this world*; which may be underſtood either of God, to whom the ſaints are like; for ſuch who are born again, as thoſe who love the brethren are, they are partakers of the divine nature, and bear a reſemblance to God, even in this preſent ſtate of things; and as it becomes them to be holy in all manner of converſation, as he is holy, and to be merciful to wicked men, as he is merciful, ſo to love the ſaints as he does, and to be kind, tenderhearted, and forgive one another as he for Chriſt's ſake has forgiven them; for as God is love, they ſhould be all love likewiſe: or of Chriſt, ſee ch. iii. 3, 7. and that with reſpect to God; as he is the Son of God, ſo are they the ſons of God; he by nature, they by grace and adoption; as he is loved by God with an everlaſting and unchangeable love, with a love of complacency and delight, ſo are they loved by him with the ſame kind of love, even whilſt they are in this world; and as he is the choſen of God, and precious, ſo they are choſen in him, and unto ſalvation by him. The *Syriac*, *Arabic*, and *Ethiopic* verſions render it, *as he was*; and the ſenſe may be, as he was in this world, ſo are they; and which may regard not ſo much likeneſs in nature, though there is an agreement in that, excepting ſin, but the ſameneſs of ſtate and condition; as he was a man of ſorrows, attended with afflictions, loaded with reproaches, and followed with the perſecutions of men, ſo are they; nor need they wonder that they are the objects of the world's hatred and contempt, ſince he was alſo; as he was tempted by ſatan, forſaken by his friends, and deſerted by his God, ſo ſometimes are they in this world; and as he went through a variety of ſufferings, and death itſelf, to glory, ſo thro' many tribulations do they enter the kingdom: moreover, as he now is in heaven, ſo are they in this world; even as he is in heaven, ſo are they repreſentatively in him, whilſt in this world; and as he is righteous, being juſtified and acquitted from all the charge of ſin he took upon him, and therefore will appear a ſecond time without ſin, ſo they are compleatly righteous in him: and once more, as he is, ſo they are, or ſhould be in this world; they ſhould be holy as he is holy, and be humble, meek, and patient, as he is, and walk as he walked; and particularly love the ſaints and one another, as he does; and which ſeems to be greatly intended here, and muſt be underſtood not of an equality, but of a likeneſs. The *Arabic* verſion reads the words conditionally, and as depending on the preceding clauſe, *if as he was, we are in this world*; and then the ſenſe is, that the ſaints ſhall have boldneſs in the day of judgment, provided they are in this world as Chriſt was.

Ver. 18. *There is no fear in love*, &c.] In the love of the brethren; where that is, there is no fear; ſo far as that prevails and gains ground, fear removes; not the filial fear of God, the new-covenant grace of fear, which is the beginning of wiſdom, and is conſiſtent with faith, hope, love, and ſpiritual joy; but either the fear of men, which brings a ſnare: thoſe that truly love Chriſt, his Goſpel, and his people, they are not afraid of men; the ſpirit of power, love, and of a ſound mind, is oppoſite to a ſpirit of fear, nor can they ſtand together; and ſuch ſtrength there is ſometimes in brotherly love, that the ſaints are not afraid of death itſelf, but freely lay down their lives for one another; ſee ch. iii. 16. or it may be rather, that they are not afraid of the day of judgment, and of hell and damnation; where hatred of the brethren has place, there is a fear and dread of theſe things, as were in *Cain*; but thoſe that love the brethren, they know they are paſſed from death to life, and ſhall not enter into condemnation, and therefore are in no fear of any of theſe things: *but perfect love caſteth out fear*; when love to the brethren appears to be perfect, that is genuine and ſincere, and a man knows that from the bottom of his heart he ſincerely loves the ſaints, he concludes from hence, as he may, the truth of his faith, which works in this way; and this frees him from the fears of men and devils, and of the future judgment, and wrath to come. The *Jews* have a ſaying [*], "worthy is his portion that rules over "the place of fear, for lo there is nothing that rules "over the degree of *fear* but *love*." *Becauſe fear hath torment*; it diſtreſſes a man, fills him with anguiſh, and makes him reſtleſs and uneaſy, and keeps him in ſervitude; thro' the fear of men, of the devil, death, judgment, and hell, he is all his life-time, or as long as this fear laſts, ſubject to bondage: or *fear has puniſhment*, as it may be rendered, and is by the *Vulgate Latin* verſion; it is a puniſhment itſelf to a man; and its being criminal, deſerves puniſhment, and is puniſhable; ſee *Rev.* xxi. 8. *he that feareth is not made perfect in love*; or *by love*; that is, he that is poſſeſſed, and under the power of a ſervile fear of puniſhment, is one who is not, by the love to the brethren, made to appear to himſelf to be a ſincere lover of God, and true believer in Chriſt; for was he, he would not be in fear of deſtruction and death, ſince whoever truly loves God, and believes in Chriſt, ſhall certainly be ſaved; though ſuch perſons, at times, may not be without their doubts and fears.

Ver. 19. *We love him becauſe he firſt loved us.*] Leſt love to God, and ſo to one another, ſhould be thought to be of ourſelves, and too much be aſcribed unto it, the Apoſtle obſerves, that God's love to us is prior to our love to him; his love is from everlaſting, as well as to everlaſting; for he loves his people as he does his Son, and he loved him before the foundation of the world; his chooſing them in Chriſt as early, and bleſſing them then with all ſpiritual bleſſings, the covenant of grace made with Chriſt from all eternity, the gift of grace to them in him before the world began, and the promiſe of eternal life to them ſo ſoon, ſhew the antiquity and priority of his love: his love ſhown in the miſſion and gift of his Son, was before theirs, and when they had none to him; and his love in regeneration and converſion is previous to theirs, and is the cauſe of it; his grace in regeneration brings faith and love with it, and produces them in the heart; and his love ſhed abroad there, is the moving cauſe of it, or what draws it firſt into act and exerciſe; and the larger the diſcoveries and applications of the love of God be, the more does love to him increaſe and abound; and nothing more animates and enflames our love to God, than the conſideration of the earlineſs of his love to us, of its being before ours; which ſhews that it is free, ſovereign, diſtinguiſhing, and unmerited. Some read the words as an exhortation, *let us love him*; and others as in the ſubjunctive mood, *we ſhould love him, becauſe*, &c. ſome copies read, *we love God*, and ſo the *Vulgate Latin*, *Syriac*, and *Ethiopic* verſions, and the *Alexandrian* copy read, *becauſe God firſt loved us*; and ſo ſome others.

Ver. 20. *If a man ſay I love God, and hateth his brother*, &c.] Than which profeſſion, nothing can be more contradictory, not black and white, or hot and cold in the ſame degree: *he is a liar*; it is not truth he ſpeaks, it is a contradiction, and a thing impoſſible: *for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath ſeen*; his perſon, which might have drawn out his affection to him; and ſomething valuable and worthy in him, which might have commanded reſpect; or his wants and diſtreſſes, which ſhould have moved his pity and compaſſion: *how can he love God, whom he hath not ſeen?* it cannot be thought he ſhould; the thing is not reaſonable to ſuppoſe; it is not poſſible he ſhould; ſee the note on ver. 12.

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[*] Zohar in Exod. fol. 87. 1.

Ver. 21. *And this commandment have we from him,* &c.] Either *from God,* as the *Alexandrian* copy and the *Vulgate Latin* verſion read; and that to love the brethren is a commandment of God, is clear from ch. iii. 23. or from Chriſt, for it is alſo a command of his, even his new commandment, which he has given, and his people have received from him: *that he who loveth God, love his brother alſo*; ſee *John* xiii. 34. and xv. 12, 17. which is an argument perſuading to attend to the one as well as to the other; for the ſame command that requires the one, requires the other; and he that tranſgreſſes it in one caſe, is a tranſgreſſor of it, as well as in the other.

CHAP. V.

IN this chapter the Apoſtle treats of the nature of faith and love; of Chriſt the object of both, and of the witneſs that is bore to him; of the neceſſity of believing the teſtimony concerning him; of the confidence of prayer being heard, and concerning whom it ſhould be made; of the happineſs of regenerate perſons, and of their duty to keep themſelves from idols. Faith in Chriſt is the evidence of regeneration, and where that is, there will be love to the author of regeneration, and to them that are regenerated; and love to them is known by love to God, and keeping his commandments; and keeping the commandments of God, and which are not grievous, is a proof of love to God, ver. 1, 2, 3. and whereas every regenerate man overcomes the world, it is by his faith, the evidence of his regeneration, that this victory is obtained; nor can any other man be pointed out that overcomes the world, but he that believes that Jeſus is the Son of God, ver. 4, 5. and Chriſt the Son of God, the object of this victorious faith, is deſcribed by his coming by water and blood, of which the Spirit is witneſs, who is a true one; and ſix witneſſes of the truth of this and of his divine Sonſhip are produced, three in heaven, the Father, Word, and Spirit, who are the one God, and three on earth, the Spirit, water, and blood, who agree in their teſtimony, ver. 6, 7, 8. wherefore, this teſtimony concerning the Son of God, ought to be received, ſince it is the teſtimony of God, which is greater than that of men; beſides, he that believes in Chriſt has a witneſs of this in himſelf, and honours God, whereas he that believes not, makes God a liar, not giving credit to his record concerning his Son; the ſum of which is, that God has made a grant of eternal life to ſome perſons, which is in his Son, which thoſe that believe in the Son of God have, but thoſe that do not believe in him have it not: all which ſhew the neceſſity of receiving the above teſtimony; and the ends propoſed in writing theſe things were, to believe in Chriſt, and that it might be known they had eternal life in him, ver. 9, 10, 11, 12, 13. and from faith in Chriſt the Apoſtle paſſes to confidence in prayer, as a particular effect and fruit of it; as, that whatever is aſked according to the will of God is heard; and that ſuch who are ſatisfied of this, that they are heard, may be aſſured that they have the petitions they deſire to have, ver. 14, 15. and whereas it is one branch of prayer to pray for others as well as for ourſelves, the Apoſtle directs who we ſhould pray for; for the brethren in general, and in particular for ſuch who have ſinned, but not unto death, and life ſhall be given to ſuch: but as for thoſe who have ſinned unto death, he does not ſay prayer ſhould be made for them, for though all unrighteouſneſs in general is ſin, yet there is a particular ſin which is unto death, and is not to be prayed for, ver. 16, 17. but happy are thoſe who are born of God, for they do not ſin this ſin; and thro' the uſe of the armour of God, and the power of divine grace, they keep themſelves from the evil one, and he cannot come at them, to draw them into this ſin; alſo they know that they are of God, and are diſtinguiſhed from the world, which lies in wickedneſs; yea, they know that the Son of God is come in the fleſh, and hath given them an underſtanding of the true God, by which they know that they are in him, and in his Son Jeſus Chriſt, who is with him, and the divine Spirit, the one true God, and the author and giver of eternal life, ver. 18, 19, 20. and the chapter, and with it the Epiſtle, is concluded with an exhortation to theſe regenerate ones, as they had kept themſelves from ſatan, that they would alſo keep themſelves from idols of all ſorts, ver. 21.

Ver. 1. *Whoſoever believeth that Jeſus is the Chriſt,* &c.] Or the Meſſiah that was propheſied of of old, was long promiſed to the *Jews*, and whom they expected; there was a perſon ſpoken of in the writings of the Old Teſtament under this character, *Pſ.* ii. 2. *Dan.* ix. 25, 26. and the *Jews* looked for him; and *Jeſus* of *Nazareth* is he, as appears by all the characteriſtics of the Meſſiah in prophecy being found upon him: this the *Jews* deny, but is the grand article of faith embraced by the Apoſtles and followers of Jeſus, and is of very great importance; he that denies it is a liar, and he that does not believe it ſhall die in his ſins: the word ſignifies *anointed*, and includes all the offices of the Son of God, to which he was anointed, as prophet, prieſt, and king; ſo that to believe him to be the Chriſt, is to believe him to be that prophet *Moſes* ſaid ſhould come, and who has declared the whole mind and will of his Father; and that he is that prieſt that ſhould ariſe after the order of *Melchizedek*, and make atonement for ſin, and interceſſion for tranſgreſſors; and that he is that king whom God has ſet over his holy hill of *Zion*, whoſe laws are to be obeyed, and his commands obſerved: but to believe that Jeſus is the Chriſt, or the Meſſiah, is not barely to give an aſſent to this truth, or to acknowledge it; ſo the devils themſelves have done, *Luke* iv. 41. and whole nations of men, multitudes of which were never born of God; it is not a mere profeſſion of it before men, or an idle, inoperative faith, which is deſtitute of love to Chriſt, and obedience to him; but whereas his work and buſineſs, as the Chriſt of God, was to bring in an everlaſting righteouſneſs, to procure the remiſſion of ſin, and to make peace and reconciliation for it, and to obtain eternal ſalvation; true faith in him as the Meſſiah is a believing with the heart unto righteouſneſs, or a looking to, and truſting in the righteouſneſs of Chriſt for juſtification; and a dealing with his blood for pardon and cleanſing, under a ſenſe of guilt and filth; and a laying hold on his atoning ſacrifice for the expiation of ſin, and peace with God; and a reception of him as the only Saviour and redeemer, or a dependance on him for life and ſalvation; and which faith ſhows itſelf in love to him, and in a profeſſed ſubjection to his Goſpel, and chearful ſubmiſſion to his ordinances: and every ſuch perſon *is born of God*; is a partaker of the divine nature; has Chriſt formed, and every grace of the Spirit implanted in him, among which faith in Chriſt is a conſiderable one; and ſuch an one in conſequence is openly a child and heir of God; wherefore, to be born of God is an inſtance of great grace, and an high honour and privilege, and of the greateſt moment and importance. Regeneration is not owing to the power and will of man, but to the abundant mercy and good-will of God, and is an inſtance of his rich mercy, great love, and free favour, and commands love again: *and every one that loveth him that begat*; that is, God the Father, who has begotten them again to a lively hope, according to his abundant mercy and ſovereign will; and as he is their Father that has begotten them, they cannot but love him: and ſuch an one *loveth him alſo that is begotten of him*; not only Jeſus Chriſt, who by nature is the only-begotten of the Father; for thoſe who know God to be their Father by adoption and regeneration, will love Chriſt, who is the Son of God by nature; ſee *John* viii. 42. but alſo every regenerate perſon, all that are born of God; ſince they are the children of the ſame Father with them, belong to the ſame houſhold and family, and bear the image and likeneſs of their heavenly Father on them.

Ver. 2. *By this we know that we are the children of God*, &c.] The *Ethiopic* verſion reads, *by this we know that we love God*; which, in connexion with what follows, makes a tautology, and is a proving *idem per idem*; whereas the Apoſtle's view is to ſhew when love to the ſaints is right; and that is, *when we love God, and keep his commandments*: love to the brethren may ariſe from ſuch a cauſe, as may ſhew that it is not brotherly love, or of a ſpiritual kind; it may ariſe from natural rerelation, or civil friendſhip, or from a benefit or favour received from them, and from ſome natural external excellency ſeen in them; and a man may do acts of love and kindneſs to the brethren, from what may be called good nature in himſelf, or with ſiniſter views; but true love to the brethren ſprings from love to God: ſuch who love the ſaints aright, and by which they may know they do ſo, they love them, becauſe they themſelves love God, and in obedience to his command; they love them, becauſe they belong to God, and are the objects of his love; becauſe his grace is wrought in them, and his image inſtamped upon them.

Ver. 3. *For this is the love of God that we keep his commandments*, &c.] Keeping of the commandments of God is an evidence of love to God; this ſhows, that love is not in word and tongue, in profeſſion only, but in deed and in truth; and that ſuch perſons have a ſenſe of the love of God upon their ſouls, under the influence of which they act; and ſuch ſhall have, and may expect to have, greater manifeſtations of the love of God unto them: *and his commandments are not grievous*; heavy, burdenſome, and diſagreeable; by which are meant, not ſo much the precepts of the moral law, which thro' the weakneſs of the fleſh are hard to be kept, and cannot be perfectly fulfilled; tho' believers indeed being freed from the rigorous exaction, curſe, and condemnation of the law, delight in it after the inward man, and ſerve it chearfully with their Spirit; and ſtill leſs the commands of the ceremonial law, which were now aboliſhed, and were grievous to be born; but rather thoſe of faith in Chriſt, and love to the ſaints, ch. iii. 23. or it may be the ordinances of the Goſpel, baptiſm, and the Lord's ſupper, with others, which tho' diſagreeable to unregenerate perſons, who don't care to be under the yoke of Chriſt, however eaſy and light it is, yet are not heavy and burdenſome to regenerate ones; and eſpecially when they have the love of God ſhed abroad in them, the preſence of God with them, communion with Jeſus Chriſt, and a ſupply of grace and ſtrength from him; then are theſe ways ways of pleaſantneſs, and paths of peace, and the tabernacles of the Lord are amiable and lovely.

Ver. 4. *For whatſoever is born of God*, &c.] Which may be underſtood either of perſons born of God; or of the new creature, or principle of grace wrought in them, particularly faith hereafter mentioned, which is an heaven-born grace, the gift of God, and the operation of his Spirit: this *overcometh the world*; the God of the world, ſatan; the luſts which are in the world; falſe prophets gone forth into the world; and the wicked men of the world, who by temptations, ſnares, evil doctrines, threatenings, promiſes, and ill examples, would avert regenerate ones from obſerving the commands of God; but ſuch are more than conquerors over all theſe, thro' Chriſt that has loved them: *and this is the victory that overcometh the world*, even *our faith*. The *Arabic* and *Ethiopic* verſions read, *your faith*; great things, heroic actions, and wonderful victories, are aſcribed to faith; ſee *Heb.* xi. 33, 34. which muſt not be underſtood of the grace itſelf, as ſeparately conſidered, but of Chriſt the object of it, as ſupported, ſtrengthened, aſſiſted, and animated by him; and then it does wonders, when it is enabled to hold Chriſt, its ſhield, in its hand, againſt every enemy that oppoſes.

Ver. 5. *Who is he that overcometh the world*, &c.] This queſtion carries in it a ſtrong affirmation, that no other perſon is the conqueror of the world: *but he that believeth that Jeſus is the Son of God?* and this points out what that faith is which obtains the victory over the world; and ſhows that it is not that truſt and confidence which has a man's ſelf, or any mere creature, thing, or perſon for its object, but only Jeſus Chriſt, and that as he is the Son of God; and which is not a mere aſſent to ſuch a propoſition, to which devils and unregenerate perſons may aſſent, and do; but it is a ſeeing of the Son in the glory, fulneſs, and ſuitableneſs of his perſon, office, and grace; a going to him being drawn by the Father; and a living upon him as the Son of God, and truſting in him for life, righteouſneſs, and ſalvation: and this ſhows, that the victory over the world is not owing to faith itſelf, but to its object Chriſt, who has overcome it, and makes true believers in him more than conquerors over it.

Ver. 6. *This is he that came by water and blood, even Jeſus Chriſt*, &c.] By *water* is not meant the ablutions or waſhings of the ceremonial law; Chriſt came not by theſe, but to make an end of them; his blood, which cleanſeth from all ſin, being the antitype, and ſo the fulfilling end of them: nor the purity of his nature, life, and converſation; tho' he came into the world, that holy thing which is called the Son of God; and was holy in his nature, and harmleſs in his life, and did no ſin, and ſo was fit to be a ſacrifice for the ſins of others: nor does it intend the waſhing and cleanſing of his people from their ſins; this is what he came to do, and has done, and not what he came by: but the ordinance of water-baptiſm is deſigned; and tho' Chriſt did not come baptizing with water, he having a greater baptiſm to adminiſter, yet that he might be made manifeſt, *John* came baptizing in that way; and Chriſt, as the Son of God, came, or was made manifeſt by *John* as ſuch, at the waters of *Jordan*, and at his baptiſm; there he was declared to be the Son of God by his Father's voice from heaven: *not by water only*; he did not come by water only, as *Moſes* did, who was drawn out of it, and therefore ſo called; or as *John*, who came adminiſtring water-baptiſm externally only: *but by water and blood*; by *blood* as well as water; by which is meant, not the blood of bulls and goats, Chriſt came to put an end unto, and lay aſide the ſhedding of that blood; but his own blood is intended, and not reconciliation and atonement for the ſins of his people, which was what he came to do, and has done, and not what he came by: but the ſenſe is, that as at baptiſm, ſo at his ſufferings and death he was made manifeſt to be the Son of God; as he was to the centurion and others, that were with him, when they obſerved the earthquake, and the things that were done; and at his reſurrection from the dead he was declared to be the Son of God with power: and this might be ſeen in the cleanſing and atoning virtue of his blood, which is owing to his being the Son of God. There may be here an alluſion to the water and blood which came out of his ſide, when pierced on the croſs, which this Apoſtle *John* was an eye-witneſs of. Some copies add here, and in the former clauſe, *and by the Spirit*, as the *Alexandrian* copy, three of *Beza*'s copies, and the *Ethiopic* verſion: but it ſeems unneceſſary, ſince it follows, *and it is the Spirit that beareth witneſs*; by which may be meant, either the Goſpel, which is the Spirit that gives life, and is ſo called, becauſe by it the Spirit of God, in his gifts and graces, is received, and which is a teſtimony of the perſon, as well as of the offices and grace of Chriſt; or rather thoſe miraculous works which Chriſt did by the Spirit, to which he often appeals, as witneſſes of his divine Sonſhip, and equality with the Father, as well as of his being the true Meſſiah; or elſe the Holy Spirit, who bore teſtimony to Chriſt, by his deſcent on him at his baptiſm, and upon his Apoſtles at the day of *Pentecoſt*, and by attending, ſucceeding, and confirming the Goſpel, which is the teſtimony of him; and he is elſewhere, as well as here, and in the context ſpoken of as a witneſs of Chriſt, *Acts* v. 32. *becauſe the Spirit is truth*; he is the Spirit of truth, and truth itſelf; he is eſſentially truth; his teſtimony is moſt true, and firmly to be believed. The *Vulgate Latin* verſion reads, *becauſe Chriſt is the truth*.

Ver. 7. *For there are three that bear record in heaven*, &c.] That is, that Jeſus is the Son of God. The genuineneſs of this text has been called in queſtion by ſome, becauſe it is wanting in the *Syriac* verſion, as it alſo is in the *Arabic* and *Ethiopic* verſions; and becauſe the old *Latin* interpreter has it not; and it is not to be found in many *Greek* manuſcripts; nor cited by many of the ancient fathers, even by ſuch who wrote againſt the *Arians*, when it might have been of great ſervice to them: to all which it may be replied, that as to the *Syriac* verſion, which is the moſt ancient, and of the greateſt conſequence, it is but a verſion, and a defective one. The hiſtory of the adulterous woman in the eighth of *John*, the ſecond Epiſtle of *Peter*, the ſecond and third Epiſtles of *John*, the Epiſtle of *Jude*, and the book of the *Revelations*, were formerly wanting in it, till reſtored from Biſhop *Uſher*'s copy by *De Dieu* and Dr. *Pocock*, and who alſo, from an Eaſtern copy, has ſupplied this verſion with this text. As to the old *Latin* interpreter, it is certain it is to be ſeen in many *Latin* manuſcripts of an early date, and ſtands in the *Vulgate Latin* edition of the *London Polyglot* bible; and the *Latin* tranſlation, which bears the name of *Jerom*, has it, and who in an Epiſtle of his to *Euſtochius*, prefixed to his tranſlation of theſe canonical Epiſtles, complains of the omiſſion of it by unfaithful interpreters. And as to its being wanting in ſome *Greek* manuſcripts, as the *Alexandrian*, and others, it need only be ſaid, that it is to be found in many others; it is in an old *Britiſh* copy, and in the *Complutenſian* edition, the compilers of which made uſe of various copies; and out of ſixteen ancient copies of *Robert Stephens*'s, nine of them had it: and as to its not being cited by ſome of the ancient fathers, this can be no ſufficient proof of the ſpuriouſneſs of it, ſince it might be in the original copy, though not in the copies uſed by them, thro' the careleſſneſs or unfaithfulneſs of tranſcribers; or it might be in their copies, and yet not cited by them, they having ſcriptures enow without it, to defend the doctrine of the Trinity, and the divinity of Chriſt: and yet, after all, certain it is, that it is cited by many of them; by *Fulgentius*[z], in the beginning of the *ſixth* century, againſt the *Arians*, without any ſcruple or heſitation; and *Jerom*, as before obſerved, has it in his tranſlation made in the latter end of the *fourth* century; and it is cited by *Athanaſius*[a] about the year 350; and before him by *Cyprian*[b], in the middle of the *third* century, about the year 250; and is referred to by *Tertullian*[c] about the year 200; and which was within a *hundred* years, or little more, of the writing of the Epiſtle; which may be enough to ſatisfy any one of the genuineneſs of this paſſage; and beſides, there never was any diſpute about it till *Eraſmus* left it out in the firſt edition of his tranſlation of the New Teſtament; and yet he himſelf, upon the credit of the old *Britiſh* copy before mentioned, put it into another edition of his tranſlation. The heavenly witneſſes of Chriſt's Sonſhip are, *the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghoſt*. The *Father* is the firſt perſon, ſo called, not in reference to the creatures, angels, or men, he is the creator, and ſo the Father of; for this is common to the other two perſons; but in reference to his Son Jeſus Chriſt, of whoſe Sonſhip he bore witneſs at his baptiſm and transfiguration upon the mount. The *Word* is the ſecond perſon, who ſaid and it was done; who ſpoke all things out of nothing in the firſt creation; who was in the beginning with God the Father, and was God, and by whom all things were created; he declared himſelf to be the Son of God, and proved himſelf to be ſo by his works and miracles; ſee *Mark* xiv. 61, 62. *John* v. 17, *&c.* and x. 30, *&c.* and his witneſs of himſelf was good and valid; ſee *John* viii. 13—18. and becauſe it is his Sonſhip that is here teſtified of, therefore the phraſe, *the Word*, and not *the Son*, is here uſed. The *Holy Ghoſt* is the third perſon who proceeds from the Father, and is alſo called the Spirit of the Son, who teſtified of Chriſt's Sonſhip alſo at his baptiſm, by deſcending on him as a dove, which was the ſignal given to *John the Baptiſt*, by which he knew him, and bare record of him, that he was the Son of God. Now the number of theſe witneſſes was three, there being ſo many perſons in the Godhead; and ſuch a number being ſufficient, according to law, for the eſtabliſhing of any point: to which may be added, that they were witneſſes in heaven, not to the heavenly inhabitants, but to men on earth; they were ſo called, becauſe they were in heaven, and from thence gave out their teſtimony; and which ſhows

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[z] Reſponſ. contr. Arian. obj. 10. & de Trinitate, c. 4.

[a] Contr. Arium, p. 109.

[b] De Unitate Eccleſ. p. 255. & in Ep. 73. ad Jubajan. p. 184.

[c] Contr. Praxeam, c. 25.

the firmneſs and excellency of it, it being not from earth, but from heaven, and not human but divine; to which may be applied the words of *Job*, in ch. xvi. 19. It follows, *and theſe three are one*; which is to be underſtood not only of their unity and agreement in their teſtimony, they teſtifying of the ſame thing, the Sonſhip of Chriſt; but of their unity in eſſence or nature, they being the one God. So that this paſſage holds forth and aſſerts the unity of God, a Trinity of perſons in the Godhead, the proper deity of each perſon, and their diſtinct perſonality; the unity of eſſence in that they are one; a Trinity of perſons in that they are three, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghoſt, and are neither more nor fewer; the deity of each perſon, for otherwiſe their teſtimony would not be the teſtimony of God, as in ver. 9. and their diſtinct perſonality; for were they not three diſtinct perſons, they could not be three teſtifiers, or three that bare record. This being a proper place, I ſhall inſert the faith of the ancient *Jews* concerning the doctrine of the Trinity; and the rather, as it agrees with the Apoſtle's doctrine in words and language, as well as in matter. They call the three perſons in the Godhead three degrees: they ſay [d], "*Jehovah*, *Elohenu* (our God) Jehovah, *Deut*. vi. 4. theſe are the three degrees with reſpect to this ſublime myſtery, *in the beginning Elohim*, or *God*, *created*, *Gen*. i. 1, &c." And theſe three, they ſay, tho' they are diſtinct, yet are one, as appears by what follows [e]: "come ſee the myſtery of the word; there are three degrees, and every degree is by itſelf, yet they are all one, and are bound together in one, and one is not ſeparated from the other." Again, 'tis ſaid [f], "this is the unity of *Jehovah* the firſt, *Elohenu*, *Jehovah*, lo, all of them are one, and therefore called one; lo, the three names are as if they were one, and therefore are called one, and they are one; but by the revelation of the Holy Spirit it is made known, and they by the ſight of the eye may be known, דתלתא אלין אחד, *that theſe three are one*: and this is the myſtery of the voice which is heard; the voice is one, and there are three things, fire, and ſpirit, and water, and all of them are one in the myſtery of the voice, and they are but one: ſo here, *Jehovah*, *Elohenu*, *Jehovah*, they are one, the three, גוונין, forms, modes, or things, which are one." Once more [g], "there are two, and one is joined unto them, and they are three; and when the three are one, he ſays to them, theſe are the two names which *Iſrael* heard, *Jehovah*, *Jehovah*, and *Elohenu* is joined unto them, and it is the ſeal of the ring of truth; and when they are joined as one, they are one in one unity." And this they illuſtrate by the three names of the ſoul of man [h]; "the three powers are all of them one, the ſoul, ſpirit, and breath, they are joined as one, and they are one; and all is according to the mode of the ſublime myſtery," meaning the Trinity. "Says *R. Iſaac* [i], worthy are the righteous in this world, and in the world to come, for lo the whole of them is holy, their body is holy, their ſoul is holy, their ſpirit is holy, their breath is holy, holy are theſe three degrees, *according to the form above*.——Come ſee theſe three degrees cleave together as one, the ſoul, ſpirit, and breath." The three firſt ſephirot, or numbers, in the *Cabaliſtic* tree, intend the three divine perſons; the firſt is called the chief crown, and firſt glory, whoſe eſſence no creature can comprehend [k], and deſigns the Father, *John* i. 18. the ſecond is called wiſdom, and the intelligence illuminating, the crown of the creation, the brightneſs of equal unity, who is exalted above every head; and he is called, by the *Cabbaliſts*, the ſecond glory [l]; ſee 1 *Cor*. i. 24. *John* i. 9. *Rev*. iii. 14. *Heb*. i. 3. *Eph*. i. 21. This is the Son of God: the third is called underſtanding ſanctifying, and is the foundation of ancient wiſdom, which is called the worker of faith; and he is the parent of faith, and from his power faith flows [m]; and this is the Holy Spirit; ſee 1 *Pet*. i. 2. 2 *Cor*. iv. 13. Now they ſay [n], that theſe three firſt numbers are intellectual, and are not, מדות, *properties*, or *attributes*, as the other ſeven are. *R. Simeon ben Jochai* ſays [o], "of the three ſuperior numbers it is ſaid, *Pſ*. lxii. 11. *God hath ſpoken once, twice have I heard this*; one and two, lo the ſuperior numbers, of whom it is ſaid, one, one, one, three ones, and this is the myſtery of *Pſ*. lxii. 11." Says *R. Judah Levi* [p], "behold the myſtery of the numberer, the number, and the numbered; in the boſom of God 'tis one thing, in the boſom of man three; becauſe he weighs with his underſtanding, and ſpeaks with his mouth, and writes with his hand." It was uſual with the ancient *Jews* to introduce Jehovah ſpeaking, or doing any thing in this form, I and my houſe of judgment; and it is a rule with them, that where-ever it is ſaid, *and Jehovah*, he and his houſe of judgment are intended [q]; and *Jarchi* frequently makes uſe of this phraſe to explain texts where a plurality in the Godhead is intended, as *Gen*. i. 26. *Cant*. i. 11. and it is to be obſerved, that a houſe of judgment, or a *Sanhedrim*, among the *Jews*, never conſiſted of leſs than three. They alſo had uſed to write the word *Jehovah* with three *Jods*, in this form, ,י, as repreſenting the three divine perſons: one of their more modern [r] writers has this obſervation on the bleſſing of the prieſt in *Numb*. vi. 24, 25, 26. "theſe three verſes begin with a *Jod*, in reference to the three *Jods* which we write in the room of the name, (*i. e.* Jehovah) for they have reſpect to the three ſuperior things."

Ver. 8. *And there are three that bear witneſs on earth*, &c.] To the ſame truth of the Sonſhip of Chriſt: *the ſpirit, and the water, and the blood*; by the *ſpirit* is not meant the human ſpirit or ſoul of Chriſt; for however that may be a witneſs of the truth of his human nature, yet not of his divine Sonſhip; and moreover cannot be ſaid to be a witneſs in earth; rather the Goſpel called the Spirit, which is a teſtimony of Chriſt's perſon, office, and grace, and is preached by men on earth; or elſe the gifts of the Spirit beſtowed on men on earth, both in an extraordinary and ordinary way, by which they have been qualified to bear witneſs to this truth; or it may be the Holy Spirit itſelf is intended, as he is in the hearts of his people here on earth, where he not only witneſſes to the truth of their Sonſhip, but alſo of the Sonſhip of Chriſt, and is that witneſs a believer has within himſelf of it, mentioned in ver. 10. By *water* is deſigned, not internal ſanctification, which tho' an evidence of regeneration and adoption, yet not of Chriſt's Sonſhip; but water-baptiſm, as adminiſtred on earth in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt; and which is a noble and ſtanding teſtimony to the proper, natural, and eternal Sonſhip of Chriſt: and by *blood* is intended, not juſtification by the blood of Chriſt, but rather the blood of the ſaints, the martyrs of Jeſus, who have ſhed it on earth, in teſtimony of their faith in the Son of God, and thereby ſealing the truth of it; or rather the ordinance of the Lord's ſupper, which is the communion of the blood of Chriſt; and repreſents that blood which was ſhed for the remiſſion of ſins, and has a continual virtue to cleanſe from all ſin, which is owing to his being the Son of God. The three witneſſes on earth ſeem therefore to be the Goſpel, attended with the Spirit and power of God, and the two ordinances of baptiſm, and the Lord's ſupper: *and theſe agree in one*; in their teſtimony of Chriſt, the word and ordinances agree together; and the ſum and ſubſtance of them is Chriſt; they come from him, and center in him; they are like the cherubim over the mercy-ſeat, that looked to one another, and to that; and the two ordinances are the churches two breaſts, which are equal, and like to one another; there is a great agreement between them, they are like to two young roes that are twins.

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[d] Zohar in Gen. fol. 1. 3.
[e] Ib. in Lev. fol. 27. 2.
[f] Ib. in Exod. fol. 18. 3, 4.
[g] Ib. in Num. fol. 67. 3.
[h] Ib. in Exod. fol. 73. 4.
[i] Ib. in Lev. fol. 29. 2.
[k] Sepher Jetzira, Semit. 1.
[l] Ib. Semit. 2.
[m] Ib. Semit. 3.
[n] R. Menachem apud Rittangel. in Jetzira, p. 193.
[o] Tikkune Zohar apud ib. p. 64.
[p] Apud ib. p. 38.
[q] Zohar in Gen. fol. 48. 4. Jarchi in Gen. xix. 24. Vid. T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 6. 1. & Gloſſ. in ib. & Sanhedrin, fol. 3. 2.
[r] R. Abraham Seba in Tzeror Hammor, fol. 113. 2.

Ver. 9. *If we receive the witneſs of men,* &c.] The witneſs of a ſufficient number of credible men, of men of good character and report, is always admitted in any caſe, and in any court of judicature; it was allowed of in the law of *Moſes*; every thing was proved and eſtabliſhed hereby; upon this men were juſtified or condemned, cognizance was taken of mens ſins, and puniſhment inflicted, yea, death itſelf, *Deut.* xvii. 6. and xix. 15. *Heb.* x. 28. and even in this caſe concerning the Son of God, his coming into the world, and the dignity of his perſon, the teſtimony of men is credited; as that of the wiſe men, who declared, that the king of the *Jews* was born, and his ſtar had been ſeen in the eaſt, which *Herod* himſelf gave credit to, and upon it ſummoned the chief-prieſts, and enquired of them where he ſhould be born; and alſo of the ſhepherds, who teſtified to the appearance of angels, who told them, that there was then born a ſaviour, which is Chriſt the Lord, and who alſo related, that they themſelves ſaw the infant at *Bethlehem*; and eſpecially of *John* the *Baptiſt*, whoſe teſtimony was true, and could not be objected to by the *Jews* themſelves, who ſent to him, before whom he bore a plain and faithful witneſs. Now if an human teſtimony may be, and is received, *the teſtimony of God is greater*; more valuable, ſurer, and to be more firmly depended on, ſince it muſt be infallible; for God can neither deceive, nor be deceived: *for this is the witneſs of God, which he hath teſtified of his Son*; even the witneſs of the Spirit, the water, and the blood, is the teſtimony, not of men, but of God; the Goſpel, attended with the Spirit of God, is the teſtimony of God; and ſo the ordinances of baptiſm, and the Lord's ſupper, which bear witneſs of Chriſt, are not of men, but of God; and eſpecially the witneſs of the Father, the Word, and the Spirit, muſt be the teſtimony of God, ſince, tho' three perſons, they are one God; particularly the witneſs which God the Father teſtified of his Son Jeſus Chriſt at his baptiſm and transfiguration, muſt be allowed to be the teſtimony of God, and far greater than any human teſtimony, and therefore to be received.

Ver. 10. *He that believeth on the Son of God,* &c.] As a divine perſon who came in the fleſh, and obeyed the law, and brought in everlaſting righteouſneſs, and obtained life and ſalvation for men: he that with the heart believes in him for righteouſneſs, and eternal life, he being the Son of God, truly and properly God, and ſo able to ſave all that believe in him, *hath the witneſs in himſelf*; of the need he ſtands in of Chriſt, and of the ſuitableneſs, fulneſs, and excellency of him; the Spirit of God enlightning him into the impurity of his nature, his impotence to do any thing ſpiritually good, his incapacity to atone for ſin, and the inſufficiency of his righteouſneſs to juſtify him before God; and convincing him, that nothing but the blood of the Son of God can cleanſe him from ſin, and only his ſacrifice can expiate it, and his righteouſneſs juſtify him from it, and that without him he can do nothing; teſtifying alſo to the efficacy of his blood, the compleatneſs of his ſacrifice and ſatisfaction, the excellency of his righteouſneſs, and the energy of his grace and ſtrength: ſo he comes to have ſuch a witneſs in himſelf, that if ten thouſand arguments were ever ſo artfully formed, in favour of the purity of human nature, the power of man's free-will, and the ſufficiency of his righteouſneſs, and againſt the ſacrifice and righteouſneſs of Chriſt, the dignity of his perſon, as the Son of God, which gives virtue to his blood, ſacrifice, and righteouſneſs, they would all ſignify nothing to him, he would be proof againſt them. And ſuch an one very readily receives into him the teſtimony God gives of his Son, of the glory and excellency of his perſon, and retains it in him. The *Alexandrian* copy, and the *Vulgate Latin* verſion read, *hath the witneſs of God in him*; to which the *Ethiopic* verſion agrees, and confirm the laſt obſervation: *he that believeth not God*; does not receive his teſtimony concerning his Son: the *Alexandrian* copy, and two of *Stephens*'s, and the *Vulgate Latin* verſion read, *he that believeth not the Son*; and the *Ethiopic* verſion, *his Son*; and the *Arabic* verſion *the Son of God*; and ſo is a direct antitheſis to the phraſe in the former clauſe of the verſe: *hath made him a liar*; not the Son, but God, as the *Arabic* verſion renders it, *hath made God himſelf a liar*; who is the God of truth, and cannot lie; it is impoſſible he ſhould; and as nothing can be more contumelious and reproachful to the being and nature of God, ſo nothing can more fully expoſe and aggravate the ſin of unbelief, with reſpect to Chriſt, as the Son of God: *becauſe he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son*; at the times and places before obſerved.

Ver. 11. *And this is the record,* &c.] The ſum and ſubſtance of it, with reſpect to the perſon of Chriſt, and the ſecurity of ſalvation in him, who is the true God, and eternal life: *that God hath given to us eternal life*; which is a life of glory and happineſs hereafter; in the preſent ſtate is unſeen, but will in the world to come be a life of viſion, free from all the ſorrows and imperfections of this; and will be of the utmoſt perfection and pleaſure, and for ever. This is a pure free-grace gift of God the Father, proceeding from his ſovereign good-will and pleaſure, and which he gives to all his choſen ones, for they are ordained unto eternal life; to as many as he has given to his Son; to all that are redeemed by his blood, and are brought to believe in him: to theſe he gave it in his Son before the world began; and to the ſame in time, he gives the right unto it, the meetneſs for it, and the pledge and earneſt of it; and will hereafter give them the thing itſelf, the whole of it, to be poſſeſſed and enjoyed by them in perſon, to all eternity. *And this life is in his Son*; not only the purpoſe and promiſe of it, but that itſelf; Chriſt aſked it of his Father in the covenant of peace, and he gave it to him, that he might have it in himſelf for all his people; and here it is ſafe and ſecure, it is hid with Chriſt in God, it is bound up in the bundle of life with him; and becauſe he lives, this life will never be loſt, or they come ſhort of it.

Ver. 12. *He that hath the Son*, &c.] Has a ſpiritual and experimental knowledge of him, true faith in him; who has him dwelling in his heart, and living in him: *hath life*; not only ſpiritual life, being quickned by him, and living by faith on him, but eternal life; the knowledge he has of him is eternal life; he has it in faith and hope, and has a right unto it, and the earneſt of it, as well as has it in Chriſt his repreſentative, whom he has, and in whom this life is: and *he that hath not the Son of God*; no knowledge of him, nor faith in him, nor enjoyment of him: *hath not life*; he is dead in ſin, he is alienated from the life of God, has no title to eternal life, nor meetneſs for it, nor ſhall enjoy it, but ſhall die the ſecond death.

Ver. 13. *Theſe things have I written unto you*, &c.] Which are contained in the Epiſtle in general, and particularly what is written in the context, concerning the victory of the world, being aſcribed to him who believes that Chriſt is the Son of God; and concerning the ſix witneſſes of his Sonſhip, and the record bore by God, that the gift of eternal life is in him: and which are eſpecially written to them, *that believe on the name of the Son of God*; who not only believed that Chriſt is the Son of God, which this ſix-fold teſtimony would confirm them in, but alſo believed in his name, for righteouſneſs, life, and ſalvation; in which name there is all this, and in no other; and who alſo profeſſed their faith in him, and were baptized in his name, and continued believing in him, and holding faſt their profeſſion of him. The end of writing theſe things to them was, *that ye may know that ye have eternal life*; that there is ſuch a thing as eternal life; that this is in Chriſt; that believers have it in him, and the beginning of it in themſelves; and that they have a right unto it, and meetneſs for it, and ſhall certainly enjoy it; the knowledge of which is had by faith, under the teſtimony of the Spirit of God, and particularly what is above written concerning eternal life, being a free-grace gift of God; and this being in Chriſt, and the aſſurance of it, that ſuch who have him, or believe in him, have that which might ſerve to communicate, cultivate, and increaſe ſuch knowledge: *and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God*; which they had done already, and ſtill did; the ſenſe is, the above things were written to them concerning the Son of Chriſt, that they might be encouraged to continue believing in him, as ſuch; to hold faſt the faith of him, and go on believing in him to the end; and that their faith in him might be increaſed; for faith is imperfect, and is capable of increaſing, and growing exceedingly; and nothing more tends unto, or is a more proper means of it, than the ſacred writings, the reading and hearing them explained, and eſpecially that part of them, which reſpects the perſon, office, and grace of Chriſt. The *Alexandrian* copy, and one of *Beza*'s manuſcripts, the *Vulgate Latin*, *Syriac*, and *Ethiopic* verſions read, *theſe things have I written unto you, that ye may know that ye have eternal life, who believe in the name of the Son of God.*

Ver 14. *And this is the confidence that we have in him*, &c.] Either in God, to whom prayer is made; or in the Son of God, thro' whoſe blood and righteouſneſs believers in him have confidence with God at the throne of grace; they can come with boldneſs and intrepidity, and uſe freedom and liberty of ſpeech, as the word here uſed ſignifies; eſpecially when they have the ſpirit of Chriſt with them, and are under the ſprinklings of the blood of Chriſt, and have a comfortable aſſurance of being heard and anſwered; and this is what the *Jews* call עיון תפלה, *the conſideration*, or *attention of prayer* [a], which they explain thus; "after a man has prayed, "he judges in his heart that the holy bleſſed God "will give him his reward, and will do every thing "needful for him, and will hear his prayer, be"cauſe he has prayed with intention;" but this is much better expreſſed, and upon a much better foundation, by our Apoſtle here: *that if we aſk any thing according to his will, he heareth us*; to aſk any thing according to the will of God, is to aſk as to matter what, and in a manner which is agreeable to it; by which is meant, not his ſecret will, or his purpoſes and decrees, which are unknown, tho', ſo far as theſe are made known, they are not to be prayed againſt, for they can never be made void; and therefore, when God had declared it as his purpoſing will, that the *Iſraelites* in the wilderneſs ſhould not enter into *Canaan*'s land, and that he had rejected *Saul* from the kingdom, in theſe caſes it would have been wrong for *Moſes* to have prayed for the one, or *Samuel* for the other; 1 *Sam.* xvi. 1. and though no one perſon is to be excluded from our prayers on the account of the decree of reprobation, ſince no man can certainly be known to be a reprobate; yet it does not become us to pray for the converſion and ſalvation of reprobates in general, ſince this would be contrary to the decree of God: and ſuch purpoſes which God has declared by prophecy he has purpoſed in himſelf, as the converſion of the *Jews*, the bringing in the fullneſs of the *Gentiles*, the deſtruction of antichriſt, and the glory of the Goſpel church, for theſe we ſhould pray that God would haſten them in his own time, and we are ſure of being heard; but the revealed will of God is here intended, by which it appears that all grace is laid up in Chriſt, and all ſpiritual bleſſings are with him, and that the covenant of grace is ordered in all things, and full of the ſure mercies of *David*, and of exceeding great and precious promiſes; all which are treaſured up for the benefit and uſe of the people of God; and if, therefore, they aſk for any grace, or ſupply of grace, for any ſpiritual bleſſing, or mercy, laid up in Chriſt, in the covenant, or in any of the promiſes, they aſk that for matter which is according to the will of God, and which they may be aſſured they ſhall have, ſooner or later: and to aſk in a manner agreeable to his will, is to come in the name of Chriſt, and make mention of his righteouſneſs, and aſk for his ſake; to put up all petitions in faith, with fervency, in ſincerity, and uprightneſs; with reverence, humility, and ſubmiſſion to the divine will, and with importunity; and ſuch aſkers God hears, even ſo as to anſwer, and grant their requeſts in his own time, though not always in theirs; in ſome caſes ſooner, in others later, according to his infinite wiſdom, and in his own way, which is always the beſt, tho' not in theirs, as in the caſe of the Apoſtle *Paul*, 2 *Cor.* xii. 7, 8, 9. The *Alexandrian* copy, and the *Ethiopic* verſion read, *if we aſk any thing according to, or in his name*; that is of Chriſt, and which agrees with *John* xiv. 13, 14. and xvi. 23, 24.

Ver. 15. *And if we know that he hear us*, &c.] As it may be aſſured he does hear and anſwer all ſuch perſons that aſk according to his will: *whatſoever we aſk we know*, or are aſſured, *that we have the petitions that we deſired of him*; for as it is the nature of that holy confidence which believers have in God, to believe whatever they aſk according to his will, in general, ſhall be granted, ſo every requeſt in particular; yea, before the mercy deſired, or the favour aſked for is conferred, they are as ſure of having it in God's own time and way, as if they now had it in hand and fact.

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[a] T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 164. 2.

Ver. 16. *If any one ſee his brother ſin*, &c.] Thoſe who have ſuch an intereſt at the throne of grace, and ſuch boldneſs and freedom there, ſhould make uſe of it for others, as well as themſelves, and particularly for fallen believers; for a *brother*; not in a natural or civil ſenſe, but in a ſpiritual ſenſe, one that is judged to be born again, and belongs to the family and houſhold of God, and is a member of a Goſpel-church; and ſo is under the watch, inſpection, and care of the ſaints; and is obſerved to ſin, as the beſt of men are not without it, nor the commiſſion of it, in thought, word, or deed: and this ſin of his is *a ſin* which is *not unto death*; every ſin, even the leaſt ſin, is in its own nature mortal, or deſerving of death; the proper wages of ſin is death, yea death eternal; yet none of the ſins of God's elect are unto death, or iſſue in death, in fact; which is owing not to any different nature there is in their ſins, or to their good works which counterbalance them; but to the grace of God, and to the blood and righteouſneſs of Chriſt, by which they are pardoned and juſtified, and freed from obligation to puniſhment, or eternal death, the juſt demerits of them: but how ſhould another man know that a brother's ſin is not unto death, when it is of the ſame nature and kind with another man's? it is known by this, that he does not continue in it; he does not live in the conſtant commiſſion of it; his life is not a courſe of iniquity; that ſin he ſins is not a governing one in him; tho' he falls into it, he riſes up out of it thro' divine grace, and abides not in it; and he has a ſenſe of it, and is ſorry for it, after a godly ſort, loathes it, and himſelf for it; is aſhamed of it, ingenuouſly confeſſes it, and mourns over it and forſakes it: now when any ſtrong believer or ſpiritual man ſees or knows that a brother has ſinned, and this is his caſe, *he ſhall aſk*; he ſhall pray to God for him; that he would adminiſter comfort to him, diſcover his love, and apply his pardoning grace to him, and indulge him with his preſence and the light of his countenance: *and he ſhall give him life*; that is, God ſhall give the ſinning brother *life*; by which may be meant comfort, that which will revive his drooping ſpirits, and cauſe him to live chearfully and comfortably, that ſo he may not be ſwallowed up with over-much ſorrow; or he ſhall grant a diſcovery of the pardon of his ſin unto him, which will be as life from the dead, and will give him a comfortable hope of eternal life, of his right unto it, and meetneſs for it: *for them*, or *to them that ſin not unto death*, as the *Syriac* and *Arabic* verſions render it; for this phraſe is only deſcriptive of the perſons to whom life is given by God, upon the prayers of ſaints for them, and not that this life is given to him that prays, and by him to be given to the ſinning perſon. The *Vulgate Latin* verſion renders the whole thus, *and life ſhall be given to him that ſins not unto death*; which leaves the words without any difficulty: the *Ethiopic* verſion indeed renders it, *and he that prays ſhall quicken him that ſins* a ſin *not unto death*; and this ſenſe ſome interpreters incline to, and would have with this text compared 1 *Tim.* iv. 16. *James* v. 20. *There is a ſin unto death*; which is not only deſerving of death, as every other ſin is, but which certainly and inevitably iſſues in death in all that commit it, without exception; and that is the ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt, which is neither forgiven in this world nor in that to come, and therefore muſt be unto death; it is a ſinning wilfully, not in a practical, but doctrinal way, after a man has received the knowledge of the truth; it is a wilful denial of the truth of the Goſpel, particularly that peace, pardon, righteouſneſs, eternal life and ſalvation are by Jeſus Chriſt, contrary to the light of his mind, and this joined with malice and obſtinacy; ſo that there is no more or other ſacrifice for ſuch a ſin; there is nothing but a fearful looking for of wrath and fury to fall on ſuch oppoſers of the way of life; and as the preſumptuous ſinners under *Moſes*'s law died without mercy, ſo muſt theſe deſpightful ones under the Goſpel; ſee *Matt.* xii. 31, 32. *Heb.* x. 26—29. Some think there is an alluſion to one of the kinds of excommunication among the *Jews*, called *Shammatha*, the etymology of which, according to ſome *Jewiſh* writers, is שם מיתה; *there is death*[t]. *I do not ſay that he ſhall pray for it*; the Apoſtle does not expreſsly forbid to pray for the forgiveneſs of this ſin, yet what he ſays amounts unto it; he gives no encouragement to it, or any hopes of ſucceeding, but rather the reverſe; and indeed where this ſin is known, or can be known, it is not to be prayed for, becauſe it is irremiſſible; but as it is a moſt difficult point, to know when a man has ſinned it, the Apoſtle expreſſes himſelf with great caution.

Ver. 17. *All unrighteouſneſs is ſin*, &c.] All unrighteouſneſs againſt God or man is a ſin againſt the law of God, and the wrath of God is revealed againſt it, and it is deſerving of death; yet all unrighteouſneſs is not unto death, as the ſins of *David*, which were unrighteouſneſs both to God and man, and yet they were put away, and he died not; *Peter* ſinned very foully, and did great injuſtice to his dear Lord, and yet his ſin was not unto death; he had repentance unto life given him, and a freſh application of pardoning grace: *and there is a ſin not unto death*; this is added for the relief of weak believers, who hearing of a ſin unto death, not to be prayed for, might fear that theirs were of that kind, whereas none of them are; for tho' they are guilty of many unrighteouſneſſes, yet God is merciful to them, and forgives, *Heb.* viii. 12. and ſo they are not unto death.

Ver. 18. *We know that whoſoever is born of God*, &c.] Who is regenerated by his Spirit and grace, and quickened by his power; who has Chriſt formed in him, and is made a partaker of the divine nature, and has every grace implanted in him: *ſinneth not*; the ſin unto death; nor does he live in ſin, or is under the power and dominion of it, tho' he does not live without it; ſee the note on ch. iii. 9. *but he that is begotten of God*; the *Vulgate Latin* verſion reads, *the generation of God keeps or preſerves him*; that is, that which is born in him, the new man, the principle of grace, or ſeed of God in him, keeps him from notorious crimes, particularly from ſinning the ſin unto death, and from the governing power of all other ſins; but all other verſions, as well as copies, read as we do, and as follows: *keepeth himſelf*; not that any man can keep himſelf by his own power and ſtrength; otherwiſe what mean the petitions of the ſaints to God that he would keep them, and even of Chriſt himſelf to God for them on the ſame account? God only is the keeper of his people, and they are only kept in ſafety whom he keeps, and it is by his power they are kept; but the ſenſe is, that a believer defends himſelf by taking to him the whole armour of God, and eſpecially the ſhield of faith, againſt the corruptions of his own heart, the ſnares of the world, and particularly the temptations of ſatan: *and that wicked one toucheth him not*; he can't come at him ſo as to wound him to the heart, or deſtroy that principle of life that is in him, or ſo as to overcome and devour him; he may tempt him and ſift him, and buffet him, and greatly afflict and grieve him, but he can't touch his life, or hurt him with the ſecond death; nay, ſometimes the believer is ſo enabled to weild the ſhield of faith, or to hold up Chriſt the ſhield by faith, and turn it every way in ſuch a manner, that ſatan, who is here meant by the wicked one, becauſe he is notoriouſly ſo, can't come near him, nor in with him; can't work upon him at all with his temptations, nor in the leaſt hurt his peace, joy, and comfort: the ſaints know their perſeverance from the promiſes of God and declarations of Chriſt; *Pſ.* cxxv. 1, 2. *Jer.* xxxii. 40. *Matt.* xvi. 18. *John* x. 28.

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[t] T. Bab. Moed Katon, fol. 17. 1.

Ver. 19. *And we know that we are of God*, &c.] The ſons of God, and regenerated by him; this is known by the Spirit of God, which witneſſes to the ſpirits of the ſaints, that they are the children of God; and by the fruits and effects of regenerating grace, as love to the brethren, and the like: *and the whole world lies in wickedneſs*; that is, the men of the world, the greater part of the inhabitants of it, who are as they were when they came into it, not being born of God; theſe are addicted to ſin and wickedneſs; the biaſs of their minds is to it, they are ſet upon it, and give themſelves up to it, are immerſed in it, and are under the power of it: or *in the wicked one*; ſatan, the god of this world; they are under his influence, and led according to his will, and they are governed by him, and are at his beck and command; and this is known by ſad experience, it is eaſy of obſervation; ſee 2 *Eſdras*, iv. 27.

Ver. 20. *And we know that the Son of God is come*, &c.] That the ſecond perſon in the Godhead, who is equal to the Father, and of the ſame nature with him, is come from the Father, from heaven into this world, not by local motion, but by aſſumption of nature; that he is come in the fleſh, or is become incarnate, in order to work out ſalvation for his people, by his obedience, ſufferings, and death; and this *John* and others knew, for they had perſonal knowledge of him, and converſe with him; they ſaw him with their eyes, heard him, and handled him; he dwelt among them, preached to them, wrought miracles before them, which proved him to be what he was; and it may be known that the Meſſiah muſt be come, ſince *Daniel*'s weeks, which fixes the time of his coming, are long ago up; the ſcepter is departed from *Judah*, and the ſecond temple is deſtroyed, neither of which were to be till the Meſſiah came; and that Jeſus of *Nazareth* is he, who is come, may be known by the characters of him, and the works done by him: *and hath given us an underſtanding*; not a new faculty of the underſtanding, but new light into it; a knowledge of ſpiritual things; of himſelf, and of God in him, and of the truths of the Goſpel, and of all divine and heavenly things; for he, the Son of God, is come a light into the world, and gives ſpiritual light to men: *that we may know him that is true*; or *the true God*, as the *Alexandrian* copy, and ſome others, and the *Vulgate Latin*, *Arabic*, and *Ethiopic* verſions read; that is God the Father, who is the true God, in oppoſition to the falſe gods of the heathens, tho' not to the excluſion of the Son and Spirit; and the ſpiritual knowledge of him as the Father of Chriſt, and as a covenant-God and father in him, is only given to men by Chriſt, and this is life eternal; ſee *Matt.* xi. 27. *John* xvii. 3. *and we are in him that is true*, even *in his Son*, *Jeſus Chriſt*; the words *Jeſus Chriſt*, are left out in the *Alexandrian* copy, and in the *Vulgate Latin* verſion; however, certain it is, that Jeſus Chriſt is meant by his Son, who is the Son of the true and living God, and is himſelf *true*; not only true God, as hereafter aſſerted, but true man, having a true body and a reaſonable ſoul, and was true and faithful in the diſcharge of his offices, as prophet, prieſt, and king; he faithfully declared the whole will of God, and taught the way of God in truth; he was faithful to him that appointed him, by ſecuring his glory when he made reconciliation for the ſins of the people; and all the adminiſtrations of his kingly office are juſt and true; yea he is truth itſelf, the ſubſtance of all the types, in whom all the promiſes are yea and amen, and who has all the truths of the Goſpel and treaſures of wiſdom in him: now his people are in him; they were ſecretly in him before the world was, being loved by him, choſen in him, put into his hands, preſerved in him, and repreſented by him; and openly, at converſion, when they are anew created in him, brought to believe in him, and live upon him, and he lives in them, and they are in him as branches in the vine; and this is known by his Spirit being given them, by the commnnication of his grace unto them, and by the communion they have with him. *This is the true God and eternal life*; that is, the Son of God, who is the immediate antecedent to the relative *this*; he is the true God, with his Father and the Spirit, in diſtinction from all falſe, fictitious, or nominal deities; and ſuch as are only by office, or in an improper and figurative ſenſe: Chriſt is truly and really God, as appears from all the perfections of deity, the fulneſs of the Godhead being in him; from the divine works of creation and providence being aſcribed to him; and from the divine worſhip that is given him; as well as from the names and titles he goes by, and particularly that of Jehovah, which is incommunicable to a creature: and he is called *eternal life*, becauſe it is in him; and he is the giver of it to his people; and that itſelf will chiefly conſiſt in the enjoyment and viſion of him, and in conformity to him.

Ver. 21. *Little children, keep yourſelves from idols. Amen.*] From heathen idols and idolatry, into which the ſaints in thoſe times might be liable to be drawn, by reaſon of their dwelling among heathen idolaters, and being related to them, and by the too great freedom uſed in eating things ſacrificed to idols in their temples; and from all other idols that might be introduced by ſome who went by the name of chriſtians, as the *Gnoſticks*, who worſhipped the images of *Simon* and *Helena*; and the paſſage may be an antidote againſt the worſhipping of images, afterwards introduced by the *Papiſts*. Moreover, errors and falſe doctrines, which are the figments of mens minds, and what they are fond of, may be called idols, and ſhould be guarded againſt, and abſtained from; as alſo the luſts of mens hearts, and all the evil things that are in the world, which are adored by the men of it; and even every creature that is loved too much, is an idol; hence covetouſneſs is called idolatry; nor ſhould any creature or thing be loved more than God or Chriſt; the one only living and true God, Father, Son, and Spirit, he is only to be worſhipped, feared, and loved.

The Second Epiſtle of JOHN.

THOUGH this Epiſtle was called in queſtion and gainſaid by ſome as authentic, as *Euſebius* ſays [a], yet there is no room to doubt of the authority of it; it was very early received into the canon of the ſcripture, and is cited as ſuch, and alſo as the Apoſtle *John*'s, by *Irenæus* [b], who was a diſciple of *Polycarp*, and an hearer of *Papias*, who were both diſciples of the Apoſtle *John*; nor need there be any queſtion as to his being the author of it. *Euſebius* indeed does ſay [c], it was a doubt whether it was the Apoſtle *John*'s, or another of the ſame name; and ſome have ſince aſſerted, that it was written not by *John* the Evangeliſt, but by *John* the preſbyter of *Epheſus*, after the Apoſtle; and this is thought to have ſome confirmation from the author of it being called an elder, or preſbyter, which is judged not ſo agreeable to the Apoſtle *John*; tho' it ſhould be obſerved, that *Peter* an Apoſtle ſtiles himſelf an elder, as *John* here does, 1 *Pet.* v. 1. moreover, the above antient writer *Irenæus*, expreſly aſcribes this Epiſtle to *John*, the diſciple of the Lord; and whoever compares ſome paſſages in this Epiſtle with the former, particularly ver. 5, 6, 7, 9. with 1 *John* ii. 7, 8. and iii. 23. and v. 3. and iv. 1, 2, 3. will eaſily conclude, from the likeneſs of ſtile and matter, that it is a genuine Epiſtle of the Apoſtle *John*: the deſign of which is to exhort and encourage the lady he writes to, to continue in the truth and faith of the Goſpel, and in love to God and his people, and to avoid falſe teachers and their doctrines.

THE writer of this Epiſtle deſcribes himſelf by his office, an *elder*, and inſcribes it to a certain matron, whom he ſtiles, on account of her honour and riches, a *lady*; and by reaſon of her grace, *elect*; and to her children, who, as well as herſelf, were the objects of the Apoſtle's love, and of all that knew the truth, and that for the ſake of it, which was common to them all, ver. 1, 2. the ſalutation follows, ver. 3. and then a congratulation of the lady, that ſome of her children walked in the ſame path of truth with herſelf, ver. 4. and next an exhortation to brotherly love, which is the commandment from the beginning; the evidence of which love is walking according to that, and every other command of God, ver. 5, 6. and the rather this ſhould be cloſely attended to, ſince many deceivers, who were no other than antichriſt, had got into the world, who did not own that Chriſt was come in the fleſh; wherefore it became thoſe that were concerned for his name and glory, as well as their own intereſt, to take heed leſt what was wrought ſhould be loſt, and ſo a full reward be not received, ver. 7, 8. and then a deſcription of theſe deceivers and falſe teachers is given; that they are tranſgreſſors of the rule of God's word, abide not in the doctrine of Chriſt, and ſo have not God, any intereſt in him; whereas he that abides in the doctrine of Chriſt, has an intereſt both in the Father and in the Son, ver. 9. wherefore the Apoſtle gives advice to the lady how to behave towards ſuch; not to receive them into her houſe, nor wiſh them ſucceſs, ſince ſo to do, would be to join with them in their evil deeds, ver. 10, 11. and then he excuſes the ſhortneſs of his letter, tho' he had many things to write unto her, yet would not, becauſe he hoped ſhortly to viſit her, and then would perſonally relate what he had to communicate to their mutual joy, ver. 12. and cloſes the Epiſtle with the ſalutation of her ſiſter's children to her, ver. 13.

Ver. 1. ***The elder unto the elect lady and her children***, &c.] By the *elder* is meant the writer of this Epiſtle, the Apoſtle *John*, who ſo calls himſelf either on account of his age, he being now near an hundred years of age, having out-lived all the Apoſtles; or on account of his office, being a biſhop or overſeer, not only of the church at *Epheſus*, but of all the *Aſiatic* churches, which is the ſame with an elder; nor is this incompatible with his being an Apoſtle; ſee 1 *Pet.* v. 1. *the elect lady* is the perſon he writes unto; by whom is deſigned not the church of Chriſt, ſince ſuch a way of ſpeaking is unuſual; and beſides, he ſpeaks of coming to ſee her face to face, and of the children of her elect ſiſter; but ſome particular perſon, ſome rich, as well as gracious woman of *John*'s acquaintance; and theſe words, *elect lady*, are neither of them proper names of the perſon: ſome think that the word *Kyria*, rendered *lady*, was the name of the perſon, as *Domina* with the *Romans*, and anſwers to the *Hebrew* word *Martha*; for as מר, *Mar*, ſignifies *lord*, ſo מרתא, *Martha*, *lady*; and then the inſcription runs, *to the choice* or *excellent Martha*; and the *Syriac* and *Arabic* verſions read, *to the elect Kyria*: and others think that the word rendered elect is a proper name, and that this perſon's name was *Electa*, as *Electus* [d] is a man's name; and then it muſt read thus, *to the lady Electa*; but her ſiſter alſo is ſo called, and it can hardly be thought that two ſiſters ſhould be both of a name; neither of them are proper names, but characters and titles of reſpect and honour: ſhe is called a *lady*, becauſe ſhe was a perſon of diſtinction and ſubſtance, which ſhows that God ſometimes calls by his grace ſome that are rich and noble; and alſo that titles of reſpect and honour, where flattery is avoided, may be lawfully given to perſons of dignity and wealth; ſo *Nazianzen* [e] calls his own mother by the ſame title; and it was uſual to call women by this name from fourteen years of age [f]: and this perſon alſo is ſaid to be *elect*; either becauſe ſhe was a choice, famous, and excellent perſon, not only for her birth, nobility, and riches, but for her virtue, grace, and good works; or becauſe ſhe was choſen unto eternal life and ſalvation; and which the Apoſtle might know without a ſpecial and divine revelation, by the Goſpel coming with power to her; by the grace that was wrought in her; by the faith of God's elect, which ſhe appeared to have, ſeeing it worked by love; and which may be, and ought to be concluded in a judgment of charity, of every one that profeſſes faith in Chriſt, and walks according to it; and this alſo makes it appear that election is of particular perſons, and not of nations, communities, and churches, as ſuch; nor is it unuſual to ſalute ſingle perſons under this character; ſee *Rom.* xvi. 13. this Epiſtle is inſcribed not only to this lady, but alſo to *her children*; who were not infants, but grown up, and had made a profeſſion of the truth, and walked in it, ver. 4. and both the mother and the children the Apoſtle repreſents as the objects of his love: *whom I love in the truth*; either as being in the truth and faith of the Goſpel; for tho' all men are to be loved as men, and to be done well to, yet they that are of the houſhold of faith, or are in the faith, are in an eſpecial manner to be loved and reſpected; ſee *Gal.* vi. 10. *Tit.* iii. 15. or the ſenſe is, that the Apoſtle loved this lady and her children ſincerely and heartily, without diſſimulation; not in word and in tongue, but in deed and in truth: *and not I only, but alſo all they that have known the truth*; either the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who is the truth; not with a notional knowledge, but with the knowledge of approbation and affection; with a fiducial and appropriating one: or the Goſpel, the word of truth; not with a ſpeculative, but with a ſpiritual and experimental knowledge of it: and this is not to be underſtood of every individual perſon then living, which had ſuch a knowledge of the truth; for it can't be reaſonably thought that every individual perſon ſhould know this lady and her children; but of all ſuch perſons who had any knowledge of them; for ſuch who are born again by the word of truth, love not only him that begat them, but all thoſe who are begotten of him; this ſhews in what ſenſe the word *all* is ſometimes taken.

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[a] Eccleſ. Hiſt. l. 3. c. 24

[b] Adv. Hæreſ. l. 1. c. 13. & l. 3. c. 18.

[c] Ib c 25.

[d] Herodian. Hiſt. l. 1. c. 51, 52, 53, 54.

[e] Epiſt. ad Baſil. 4. p. 769. vol. 1.

[f] Epictet. Enchirid. c. 62.

Ver. 2. *For the truth's ſake which dwelleth in us,* &c.] Not for her high birth, nobility, or riches; but either for Chriſt's ſake, who is the truth, and who dwells in the hearts of believers by faith, and who is the ſame that dwells in one as in another; and on his account it is that ſaints love one another, becauſe they belong to him, he is formed in them, and his image is enſtamped upon them; and every like loves its like: or for the Goſpel's ſake, which has a place, and dwells in every ſaint, and is the ſame for matter and ſubſtance in one as in another; and unity of mind and judgment produces unity of affection: or for the ſake of the truth of grace, the inward principle of grace, which dwells in every regenerate perſon; a communication of the experience of which, knits the ſaints one to another: *and ſhall be with us for ever*; where Chriſt enters and takes up his abode, from thence he never finally and totally departs, though he may ſometimes hide his face with reſpect to communion, or withdraw his gracious preſence; and where the Goſpel has once took place in the heart, and is become the engrafted word, it can never be rooted out, or be removed; and where the truth of grace is, it will remain; it is an incorruptible ſeed, a well of living water, ſpringing up unto eternal life.

Ver. 3. *Grace be with you, mercy and peace,* &c.] This form of ſalutation, or wiſh and prayer for the bleſſings mentioned, *from God the Father, and from the Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, is the ſame uſed by other Apoſtles; ſee 1 *Tim.* i. 2. *Jude* 2. and the note on *Rom.* i. 7. Only 'tis added here with reſpect to Chriſt, that he is *the Son of the Father in truth and love*; which is mentioned by the Apoſtle to confirm the deity of Chriſt, which is plainly implied in wiſhing for the above things equally from him, as from the Father; and to oppoſe and confront ſome hereticks of thoſe times, who denied the true and proper Sonſhip of Chriſt; and therefore he calls him, *the Son of the Father*, the only-begotten of the Father; and that *in truth*, or truly and properly, and not in a figurative and metaphorical ſenſe, as magiſtrates are called the Sons of God, and children of the moſt high, by reaſon of their office; but ſo is not Chriſt, he is God's own Son, in a true, proper, and natural ſenſe: and he is ſo *in love*; he is his well-beloved Son, his dear Son, the Son of his love, as he cannot otherwiſe be; ſince he is not only the image of him, but of the ſame nature, and has the ſame perfections with him.

Ver. 4. *I rejoiced greatly that I found of thy children,* &c.] Not all, but ſome of them; for good parents have not always good children, or at leaſt not all of them; *Adam* had a *Cain*, *Abraham* an *Iſhmael*, and *Iſaac* an *Eſau*: God is pleaſed to ſhew his diſcriminating grace in tribes and families, by taking ſome, and leaving others: it is a great mercy when any are called by grace, and inſtead of the fathers are the children: and this was the caſe of ſome of the children of this elect lady, they were *walking in the truth*; in Chriſt, the truth, by faith, as they had received him; and in the truth of the Goſpel, as they had embraced and profeſſed it; they abode in it, and by it, and made a proficiency in the knowledge of it, which may be ſignified by walking, that being a progreſſive action; as alſo they walked according to it, and as became it; and likewiſe they walked in the truth of Goſpel-worſhip, diſcipline, and ordinances: *as we have received a commandment from the Father*; and which has been made known by Jeſus Chriſt, as his mind and will. Now as it is matter of joy and gladneſs to godly parents, when their children walk in the paths of faith, truth, and holineſs, ſo it is alſo to miniſters of the Goſpel, as well as to the angels in heaven; it gives them an inward pleaſure and joy, and which is not only expreſſed by them, to ſuch children and their parents, but is alſo abundant by many thankſgivings unto God.

Ver. 5. *And now I beſeech thee, lady,* &c.] Or *Kyria*, which word the *Syriac* and *Arabic* verſions retain, as if it was a proper name: the Apoſtle having finiſhed the inſcription, ſalutation, and congratulation in the preceding verſes, paſſes to an exhortation and entreaty to obſerve the commandment of love to one another, which is not a new commandment, but what was from the beginning: *not as tho' I wrote a new commandment,* &c. ſee the note on 1 *John* ii. 7, 8.

Ver. 6. *And this is love, that we walk after his commandments,* &c.] By obſerving them as a rule of converſation, in ſo doing love is ſhown to God; and ſuch may expect the freſh diſcoveries of the love of God to them; ſee the note on 1 *John* v. 3. *this is the commandment, that as ye have heard from the beginning, ye ſhould walk in it*; that is, this is the will of God, that his people ſhould walk in the truth of the Goſpel, and abide by it, as they heard and received it at their firſt converſion, from the mouths of the Apoſtles, or other faithful miniſters of the word; a reaſon for which is given in the next verſe.

Ver. 7. *For many deceivers are entred into the world,* &c.] By whom are meant falſe teachers, who are deſcribed by their quality, *deceivers*, deceitful workers, pretending to be miniſters of Chriſt, to have a value for truth, a love for ſouls, and a view to the glory of God, but lie in wait to deceive, and handle the word of God deceitfully; and by their quantity or number *many*, and ſo likely to do much miſchief; and by the place where they were, they were *entred into the world*; or *gone out into the world*, as the *Alexandrian* copy and ſome others, and the *Vulgate Latin* and *Syriac* verſions, read, as in 1 *John* iv. 1. ſee the note there; and by their tenet, *who confeſs not that Jeſus Chriſt is come in the fleſh*; theſe were not the *Jews* who denied that Jeſus was the Chriſt, tho' they would not allow that Chriſt was come in the fleſh; but theſe were ſome who bore the chriſtian name, and profeſſed to believe in Jeſus Chriſt, but would not own, that he was really incarnate, or aſſumed a true human nature, only in appearance; and denied that he took true and real fleſh of the virgin, but only ſeemed to do ſo; and theſe are confuted by the Apoſtle, 1 *John* i. 1. and upon every one of theſe he juſtly fixes the following character. *This is a deceiver and an antichriſt*; one of the deceivers that were come into the world, and one of the antichriſts that were already in it; and who were the fore-runners of the man of ſin, and in whom the myſtery of iniquity already began to work; for antichriſt does not deſign any one particular individual perſon, but a ſett of men, that are contrary to Chriſt and oppoſers of him.

Ver. 8. *Look to yourſelves*, &c.] This is an exhortation to the elect lady, and her children, to look about them, and take care of themſelves, and beware of theſe deceivers, and their doctrines: *that we loſe not thoſe things which we have wrought*; or as the *Alexandrian* copy, and many other copies, and the *Vulgate Latin*, *Syriac*, and *Ethiopic* verſions read, *that ye loſe not thoſe things which ye have wrought*; in embracing the Goſpel, making a profeſſion of it, walking in it, ſhewing a zeal, and contending for it, expreſſing a love both by words and actions to the miniſters of it, and ſuffering much reproach on the account of it; all which would be loſt, and in vain, ſhould they at laſt drop the Goſpel, and embrace the errors of the wicked; ſee *Gal.* iii. 4. Moreover, ſuch who don't go ſuch lengths, as to let go the head, Chriſt, but retain him as the foundation, and the fundamental doctrines of the Goſpel, yet, among many precious things, may lay much rubbiſh on this foundation; and therefore ſhould take heed, what they build upon it, ſince, tho' they themſelves may be ſaved, their works may be deſtroyed, and ſo they ſuffer loſs; ſee 1 *Cor.* iii. 11—15. and if we read the words, *that we loſe not — which we have wrought*; the ſenſe is the ſame, it being only a figure which *Rhetoricians* call communion, and it is frequently uſed when a common duty is exhorted to; ſee 1 *John* ii. 28. 2 *John* 5. unleſs it ſhould be thought, that this has a peculiar reference to the miniſters of the Goſpel, as it may: for tho' the Goſpel preached by them can never be loſt, being the everlaſting Goſpel, and the word which abides for ever; yet it may be received in vain, and perſons may fall from it, and imbibe error, and ſo the labour of Chriſt's faithful miniſters may be ſo far in vain, and loſt; and likewiſe, many ſouls whom they have thought they have gained to Chriſt, and that they have been inſtruments of working upon them for good, and have hoped they would be their joy and crown of rejoicing another day; when ſuch are carried away by deceivers, fall off from the truth, miniſters of the word loſe what they thought they had wrought, which muſt give them great concern; and this is improved by the Apoſtle into a reaſon and argument, why the perſons he wrote to, ſhould beware of ſeducers and their errors: *but that we receive a full reward*; in heaven, and which itſelf is called the recompence of reward, and the reward of the inheritance; not that this is a reward of debt due to the works of men, which are not rewardable in themſelves; for they are ſuch as are due to God before they are performed; and when they are done, they are not profitable to him, nothing is given to him, or received by him; when all is done, that can be done, men are unprofitable ſervants; but this is a reward of grace, God has of his own grace, promiſed it to thoſe who love and ſerve him; and becauſe it will be given them of his grace, after their work is over, as wages are given to a ſervant when he has done his work, it goes by this name: and whereas it is ſaid to be a *full* one, the meaning is not as if it was different to different perſons, for there is but one recompence of reward, or reward of the inheritance common to all the ſaints; or, as if it might be incompleat in ſome; it only ſignifies a large and exceeding great reward; ſee *Gen.* xv. 1. and *Ruth* ii. 12. in which laſt place the ſame phraſe is uſed, as here; and where the *Septuagint* interpreters uſe the ſame words as here; and which is thus paraphraſed by the *Targumiſt*, "the Lord give thee a good recompence "in this world for thy good work, and let thy re-"ward be, שלימא, *full*, or *perfect*, in the world "to come." And the *Jews*[g] often ſpeak of a full reward, and an equal one, to be received hereafter. Perhaps regard is here had particularly to the miniſters of the Goſpel, who have their reward in part here, for the workman is worthy of his reward, and they will have it in full hereafter. Moreover, the Apoſtle might here be concerned, that he, and every faithful miniſter, might have their full number, they expected, that none may be miſſing, and which he may call a full reward: tho' the above copies and verſions read here, as before, *ye*, and not *we*.

Ver. 9. *Whoſoever tranſgreſſeth*, &c.] Not the law of God, of which every one is a tranſgreſſor, and that daily, in thought, word, or deed; but who paſſes over the rule and ſtandard of doctrine, the word of God, and will not adhere to that, nor walk according to it, but rejects and deſpiſes that rule: *and abideth not in the doctrine of Chriſt*; which he received from his Father, and delivered to his Apoſtles, and of which he is the ſum and ſubſtance; the doctrine which is concerning his perſon as the Son of God, and as truly God, and the union of the two natures, divine and human, in his one perſon; and concerning his offices, as the mediator, ſurety, and meſſenger of the covenant, and as the prophet, prieſt, and king of his church; and concerning his incarnation, obedience, ſufferings, death, reſurrection from the dead, aſcenſion to heaven, ſeſſion at God's right hand, interceſſion for his people, and ſecond coming to judgment; concerning peace and pardon by his blood, atonement by his ſacrifice, juſtification by his righteouſneſs, and compleat ſalvation by him: this is, תלמודו של מלך המשיח, *the doctrine of the king Meſſiah*, or the *Meſſiah's Talmud*[h], to uſe the *Jewiſh* phraſe, and which agrees with *John's*. Now, whoever has embraced and profeſſed this doctrine, but errs concerning it, and rejects it, and abides not in it, as ſatan abode not in the truth, appears to be of him: *hath not God*; for his father, but the devil, the father of lyes; he has no true knowledge of God, for there is none but in Chriſt, whoſe doctrine ſuch an one has denied; nor has he, nor can he, have communion with him, nor any intereſt in him. *He that abideth in the doctrine of Chriſt*; as he hath received and profeſſed it; neither can any thing remove him from it, not the arguments of falſe teachers, nor the reproaches and perſecutions of men, or the ſnares and allurements of the world: *he hath both the Father and the Son*; he has an intereſt in them both, and has knowledge of each of them, and fellowſhip with them, The *Alexandrian* copy, and the *Vulgate Latin* verſion, leave out the phraſe, *of Chriſt*, in the preceding clauſe, and only read, *in the doctrine*; and the *Syriac* verſion, *in his doctrine*; the ſenſe is the ſame.

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[g] Targum on Eccl. i. 3. & ii. 11. & Midraſh Kohelet, fol. 72. 4.

[h] Bereſhit Rabba, §. 98. fol. 85. 3.

Ver. 10. *If there come any unto you*, &c.] Under the character of a preacher: *and bring not this doctrine*; or does not preach the doctrine of Chriſt, as before explained, but deſpiſes it, and preaches a contrary one: *receive him not into* your *houſe*; neither into the houſe of God, ſuffer him not to preach there; nor into your own houſe, give him no entertainment there: falſe teachers always tried to creep into houſes, where they ſerved their own turn every way, both by feeding their bellies, and ſpreading their pernicious doctrines; and therefore ſuch ſhould be avoided, both publickly and privately; their miniſtry ſhould not be attended on in the church, or houſe of God; and they ſhould not be entertained in private houſes, and much leſs careſſed: *neither bid him God ſpeed*; or give him the uſual civil form of ſalutation, as a good day to you, all hail, all health, and proſperity attend you, the Lord be with you, and the like. The word uſed by the *Jews* was, אישר, which ſignifies *happineſs*; ſo it is ſaid [1], what do they ſalute with? אישר, *God ſpeed*; which was forbidden to ſay to one that was plowing in the ſeventh year. The meaning is, that with ſuch no familiar converſation ſhould be had, leſt any encouragement ſhould be given them; or it ſhould induce a ſuſpicion in the minds of other ſaints, that they are in the ſame ſentiments; or it ſhould tend to make others think favourably of them, and be a ſnare, and a ſtumbling-block to weak chriſtians.

Ver. 11. *For he that biddeth him God ſpeed*, &c.] Wiſhes him well, and ſucceſs in his miniſtry, or in a friendly and familiar way, converſes with him: *is partaker of his evil deeds*; he has fellowſhip with him, inſtead of reproving or ſhunning him, as he ought; he is an abettor of him in his principles, and ſo far joins in the propagation of them, and helps to ſpread them, and gives too much reaſon to think he is one with him in them.

Ver. 12. *Having many things to write unto you*, &c.] Either on a civil, or on a religious account, concerning the ſtate of the churches of *Aſia*, and particularly *Epheſus*, and of private families and perſons, and concerning the truths and doctrines of the Goſpel; not that he had any new one, or any other than what they had heard from the beginning, to communicate to them, by word of mouth, for this he denies, ver. 5, 6. wherefore this makes nothing for the unwritten traditions of the *Papiſts*, and as if the ſcriptures did not contain the whole of doctrine and of the will of God. *I would not write with paper and ink*; any more than what was written: *but I truſt to come unto you*; where they were, but where that was is not known; very likely in ſome parts of *Aſia*, and it may be, not far from *Epheſus*, ſince any long journey would not have been fit for the Apoſtle to have taken in this his old age: *and ſpeak face to face*; that is, freely and familiarly converſe together about things omitted in this Epiſtle: *that our joy may be full*; in ſeeing one another's faces, and thro' hearing the things that may be talked of; and ſince the converſation would doubtleſs turn on divine and evangelic things, ſo fulneſs, or a large meaſure of ſpiritual joy, may be here intended. Inſtead of *our joy*, the *Alexandrian* copy, and ſome others, and the *Vulgate Latin*, and the *Ethiopic* verſions, read, *your joy*.

Ver. 13. *The children of thy elect ſiſter greet thee. Amen.*] Not the members of a ſiſter-church, as ſome think; but the children of one who was the ſiſter of this lady, according to the fleſh; and who, as ſhe, was either a very famous and excellent perſon, or rather one choſen of God likewiſe unto eternal life, and ſalvation; and whoſe children alſo were walking in the truth, and here ſend their chriſtian ſalutation to their aunt; very likely thoſe ſiſters children lived at *Epheſus*, where *John* reſided.

The Third Epiſtle of JOHN.

THIS Epiſtle was written by the Apoſtle *John*, who calls himſelf an *elder*, as in the preceding, and is inſcribed to a friend of his, whom he mentions by name, and expreſſes a very great affection for, on account of his ſteady adherence to the truths of the Goſpel, ver. 1. he wiſhes him bodily health equal to that proſperity of ſoul he was indulged with, ver. 2. congratulates him upon the teſtimony the brethren that came from him gave him of the truth being in him, and of his walking in it, and upon hearing that his children alſo trod in the ſame path, ver. 3, 4. commends him for his hoſpitality and charity, of which teſtimonies were given before the church; and encourages him to go on doing the ſame acts of beneficence, ſince it was to ſuch perſons that went forth for the ſake of Chriſt, and preaching in his name, and had nothing of the *Gentiles* for ſo doing; wherefore they ought to be received, and entertained by thoſe of ability, that they might be fellow-helpers to the truth with them, ver. 5, 6, 7, 8. He complains of *Diotrephes* as a proud, haughty, and over-bearing man in the church, where *Gaius* was a member, who would neither receive the letters the Apoſtle ſent, nor the brethren that came with them; nay, forbid them that would, and caſt them out of the church for it, and prated againſt them with malicious words, whom he threatens to remember when he himſelf ſhould come thither, ver. 9, 10. wherefore he exhorts *Gaius* not to follow ſuch an ill example, but that which is good in any perſon; ſince he that does good appears to be of God, and he that does evil, it looks as if he had never known him, ver. 11. And particularly he recommends *Demetrius*, who had a good report of all men, and of the truth itſelf, and had a teſtimony from the Apoſtle, and thoſe that were with him, which was known to be a true one, ver. 12. But though he had many things to ſay, both of one, and of the other, he determines to write no more at preſent, hoping he ſhould ſhortly ſee him, and perſonally converſe together; and cloſes the Epiſtle with his own good wiſh, and with mutual ſalutations of friends, ver. 13, 14.

Ver. 1. *The elder unto the well-beloved Gaius*, &c.] *The elder* is the writer of the Epiſtle, the Apoſtle *John*, who ſo ſtiles himſelf on account of his age, and office, as in the preceding Epiſtle. The perſon to whom he writes, is *the well-beloved Gaius*; not that *Gaius*, who was the Apoſtle *Paul*'s hoſt, *Rom.* xvi. 23. for tho' their characters agree, being both hoſpitable men, yet neither the place nor time in which they lived. The Apoſtle *Paul*'s *Gaius* lived at *Corinth*, this is ſome place near to *Epheſus*, for the Apoſtle in his old age purpoſed to come and ſee him ſhortly; the other was cotemporary with *Paul*, this with *John*; there were thirty or forty years difference between them: beſides, the *Corinthian Gaius* was baptized by *Paul*, and was doubtleſs one of his ſpiritual children, or converts, whereas this *Gaius* was one of the Apoſtle *John*'s ſpiritual children, ver. 4. nor does he ſeem to be the ſame with *Gaius* of *Macedonia*, *Acts* xix. 29. or with *Gaius* of *Derbe*, *Acts* xx. 4. who ſeem to be two different perſons by their country, tho' both companions in travel of the Apoſtle *Paul*; for which reaſon, as well as the time of their living, neither of them can be this *Gaius*, who was a ſettled houſe-keeper, and reſided at ſome certain place. His name is a *Roman* name, and the ſame with *Caius*, tho' he ſeems to have been a *Jew*, as he might, it being uſual with the *Jews* in other countries to take *Gentile* names. His character is, that he was *well-beloved*; that is, of God, as it appears he was from the grace beſtowed on him, from the proſperous eſtate of his ſoul, and from the truth that was in him, and his walking in it; and of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, for the ſame reaſons; and alſo of all the brethren and ſaints that knew him; he being a perſon not only truly gracious, and of faithfulneſs and integrity, but of great liberality and beneficence, which muſt gain him much love and eſteem among them; and he was well beloved by the Apoſtle *John*; and ſo the *Syriac* verſion renders it, *to my beloved Gaius*; tho' his love to him is expreſſed in the following clauſe, *whom I love in the truth*; as being in it, or for the ſake of it, or truly and ſincerely; ſee the note on 2 *John* 1.

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[1] T. Hieroſ. Sheviith, fol. 35. 2. Vid. Taanith, fol. 64. 2.

Ver. 2. *Beloved, I wiſh above all things, that thou mayeſt proſper*, &c.] Or ſucceed in all temporal affairs, in the buſineſs of life, in which he was; and as ſucceſs of this ſort depends upon the bleſſing of God, which maketh rich, it is to be wiſhed and prayed for from him: *and be in health*; that is, of body, which above all things, above all outward mercies, is the moſt deſirable; for without this, what are the richeſt dainties, the largeſt poſſeſſions, or the beſt of friends? without this there can be no comfortable enjoyment of either of them; and therefore of this ſort of mercies, it is, in the firſt place, and above all others, to be wiſhed for, and deſired by one friend for another. The rule and meaſure of this wiſh, is according to the proſperity of his ſoul, *even as thy ſoul proſpereth*: the ſoul is diſeaſed with ſin, and may be ſaid to be in good health, when all its iniquities are forgiven; and may be ſaid to proſper, when having a ſpiritual appetite for the Goſpel, the ſincere milk of the word, it feeds upon it, is nouriſhed by it, and grows thereby; when it is in the lively exerciſe of faith, hope, and love; when ſpiritual knowledge is increaſed, or it grows in grace, and in the knowledge of Chriſt Jeſus; when the inward man is renewed day by day with freſh ſtrength; and when it enjoys communion with God, has the light of his countenance, and the joys of his ſalvation; and when it is fruitful in every good work.

Ver. 3. *For I rejoiced greatly when the brethren came*, &c.] From the place where *Gaius* lived, to that where *John* now reſided; theſe brethren ſeem to be preachers of the word, who travelled from place to place to ſpread the Goſpel: *and teſtified of the truth that is in thee*; either of Chriſt, who was formed in him; or of the Goſpel, which had a place in his heart; or of the truth of grace that were in him, as well as of that faithfulneſs, integrity, and ſincerity he appeared to be poſſeſſed of, being an *Iſraelite* indeed, and without guile: *even as thou walkeſt in the truth*; in Chriſt, and in the Goſpel, and as became it, and with all uprightneſs; ſee 2 *John* 4. and this occaſioned great joy in the Apoſtle; as it is matter of joy to every one that truly loves Chriſt, and his Goſpel, or has the true grace of charity in him, which envies not the gifts and graces of others, but rejoiceth in the truth, where-ever it is found; and eſpecially to the faithful miniſters of the word, when they hear of the truth of grace in any ſouls, and that ſuch continue walking in the truth of the Goſpel, and particularly thoſe who have been wrought upon under their miniſtry, as follows.

Ver. 4. *I have no greater joy*, &c.] Nothing that cauſes greater joy. The *Vulgate Latin* verſion reads *grace* or *thanks*; and then the ſenſe is, that he had nothing to be more thankful for: *than to hear that my children walk in truth*; meaning his ſpiritual children, thoſe whoſe converſion he had been the inſtrument of; and among theſe it ſeems *Gaius* was one.

Ver. 5. *Beloved, thou doſt faithfully*, &c.] Or a faithful thing, and as became a faithful man, a believer in Chriſt; in all his beneficence and charity he acted the upright part; he did not do it in an hypocritical way, to be ſeen of men, and gain applauſe from them, but from a principle of love, and with a view to the glory of God: *whatſoever thou doſt to the brethren, and to ſtrangers*; which may deſign either different perſons; and by *brethren* may be meant the poor brethren of the church that *Gaius* belonged to, and others that were well known to him; and by *the ſtrangers*, not unconverted perſons, but ſuch of the ſaints as came from foreign parts, and travelled about to ſpread the Goſpel, and enlarge the intereſt of Chriſt: or elſe the ſame perſons may be intended, for the words may be read, as they are in the *Alexandrian* copy, and ſome others, and in the *Vulgate Latin* verſion, *what thou doſt to the brethren, and this to ſtrangers*; that is, as the *Arabic* verſion renders it, *to ſtrange brethren*; or, as the *Syriac* verſion, *to the brethren, and eſpecially* them *that are ſtrangers*; ſo that *Gaius* was a very hoſpitable man, one that entertained and lodged ſtrangers, and uſed them very civilly and courteouſly, with great liberality, and with much integrity and ſincerity.

Ver. 6. *Which have born witneſs of thy charity before the church*, &c.] At *Epheſus*, where *John* was; theſe brethren and ſtrangers coming thither, and being greatly affected with *Gaius*'s kindneſs and liberality to them, could not forbear ſpeaking of it to his praiſe, in the preſence of the members of the church, as well as acquainted the Apoſtle *John* with it; the *Syriac* verſion reads, *before the whole church*; they bore teſtimony of his liberality in a very public manner. And this the Apoſtle mentions to encourage *Gaius* to go on, and continue in his kindneſs to the ſame perſons, ſince they retained ſuch a grateful ſenſe of paſt favours; and whereas they were now returning back, he deſires that he would give them ſome further aſſiſtance: *whom if thou bring forward on their journey*; the word here uſed ſignifies, *to ſend on before*, as in *Acts* xv. 3. and xx. 38. and xxi. 5. *Rom.* xv. 24. 1 *Cor.* xvi. 6, 11. 2 *Cor.* i. 16. *Tit.* iii. 13. and is uſed by the *Septuagint* in the ſame ſenſe as here, and in the above places, in *Gen.* xviii. 16. where 'tis ſaid, that *Abraham went with them* (the angels) *to bring them on in the way*, לשלחם, *to ſend them on*, or *ſend them away*; diſmiſs them, take his leave of them in a friendly and honourable way. The *Targums* of *Onkelos* and *Jonathan* render it, לאלוואיהון, *to accompany them*; and ſo this *Greek* word, which ſeems to anſwer to the *Hebrew* phraſe, ſignifies an honourable accompanying, leading forth, and taking leave of friends; and ſo the Apoſtle encourages *Gaius* to behave in like manner to the brethren and ſtrangers; meaning, either by accompanying them in perſon, or by ſending his ſervants along with them, both to direct them the way, and to ſecure them from danger, and chiefly by furniſhing them with every thing neceſſary for them; ſee *Tit.* iii. 13. And this he would have him do, *after a godly ſort*; or *worthy of God*; in imitation of God, who is merciful, kind, and beneficent; or as it became him whom God had called by his grace to his kingdom and glory; or as it was fit and proper ſuch ſervants of God, as thoſe brethren were, ſhould be uſed; and this would be doing well: *thou ſhalt do well*; what is grateful and well-pleaſing to God, and beautiful and lovely in the eyes of his people.

Ver. 7. *Becauſe that for his name ſake they went forth*, &c.] From *Judea*; either of their own accord to preach the Goſpel, or being drove out by the unbelieving *Jews*, for profeſſing the name of Chriſt; and be it which it will, there was good reaſon why they ſhould be regarded, and eſpecially ſince they did as follows, *taking nothing of the Gentiles*; even of thoſe who were converted, through their preaching the Goſpel, to whom they miniſtred, for of others, the unconverted *Gentiles*, they could not expect to receive; and this they did, as the Apoſtles before them, becauſe they would not be chargeable to them, and leſt it ſhould be thought they ſought their own worldly intereſt, and not the good of ſouls, and glory of Chriſt, and ſo a ſtumbling-block be laid in the way of the Goſpel, to hinder the progreſs of it. The *Ethiopic* verſion reads this in the ſingular number, *and I went forth for his name's ſake, taking nothing of the Gentiles.*

Ver. 8. *We therefore ought to receive ſuch*, &c.] We who are *Jews*, that have believed in Chriſt, for ſuch an one *Gaius*, it ſeems, as well as the Apoſtle, were, ought to receive ſuch preachers of the word into our houſes, and entertain them chearfully, whilſt they continue, and ſupply them with all neceſſaries when they depart: *that we might be fellow-helpers to the truth*; that is, to the Goſpel, and the propagation of it in the world: ſome are helpers to it, in preaching of it, by making uſe of the miniſterial gifts beſtowed upon them; and others are fellow-helpers with them, to the ſame good work, by their purſes, communicating freely to the ſupport of thoſe, who labour in the word and doctrine; and theſe latter have the honour to be co-workers, or fellow-labourers with the former, as the word here uſed ſignifies. The *Alexandrian* copy reads, *fellow-helpers to the church*, that ſo the whole burden, of taking care of theſe miniſters, might not lie upon them. The *Vulgate Latin*, *Arabic*, and *Ethiopic* verſions read, *fellow-helpers of the truth.*

Ver. 9. *I wrote unto the church*, &c.] Where *Gaius* was a member: thoſe who take *Gaius* to be the ſame with *Paul*'s hoſt, and whom he baptized at *Corinth*, think the church at *Corinth* is here meant; but it ſeems rather to be meant of ſome church in *Aſia* nearer *Epheſus*; nor is it likely that *John*'s firſt Epiſtle ſhould be here intended, which makes no mention of relieving the brethren, the miniſters of the Goſpel, that came from *Judea*: and that this Epiſtle ſhould not be preſerved, need not ſeem ſtrange; for it cannot be thought that every thing that was written by him to particular perſons, or churches, ſhould be continued. The *Alexandrian* copy, and one of *Stephens*'s read, *I wrote ſomething to the church*; upon this head, concerning receiving and ſupporting miniſters of the Goſpel, and ſo prevents an objection, that *Gaius* might make, why did he not write to the church about it? The *Vulgate Latin* verſion reads, *I ſhould*, or *would have wrote*; and the *Syriac* verſion, *I deſired*, or *wiſhed to have wrote*; ſuggeſting, that tho' he had not wrote, yet it was much upon his mind, he had a great deſire to it: *but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the pre-eminence among them, receiveth us not*; which hindered him from writing, or was the reaſon why he wrote now to *Gaius*, ſince *Diotrephes* gave no heed to what he had wrote, ſuppreſſed his letter, and would not ſuffer it to be read to the brethren. This *Diotrephes*, by his name, which ſignifies one *nouriſhed*, or *brought up by Jupiter*, was a *Gentile*; there was one of this name, who was one of the kings of *Athens*[a]; and what may confirm this is, his ſlighting and rejecting the brethren that came from *Judea*: it is very likely he was more than a private member in the church, and that he was an officer, and it may be the paſtor; and tho' there is a pre-eminence, which of right belongs to ſuch an officer, as to preſide over the church, to govern, guide, and direct, according to the laws of Chriſt, he being ſet over the church, as a ruler, governour, and guide; yet this may be carried too far, as it was by this man, who coveted more than was his due, and lorded it over God's heritage, ruled the flock with force and cruelty, and uſurped a tyrannical power over them; whereas every thing in a church ought to be done, by paſtor and people, in love, meekneſs, and with mutual conſent. And it may be alſo, that he ſought to have the pre-eminence over the reſt of the elders of the church, for in thoſe large churches there were oftentimes more elders and paſtors than one; ſee *Acts* xx. 17, 28. *Phil.* i. 1. This ambitious ſpirit prevailed and obtained among the falſe teachers, who ſet up themſelves at the head of parties, and above the Apoſtles of Chriſt, and paved the way for antichriſt, who aſſumed the title of univerſal biſhop, which has introduced all the errors and impieties of the *Romiſh* church. Now this man being of ſuch an ambitious, lordly, and governing ſpirit, received not the Apoſtle *John*, and thoſe that were with him; meaning not their perſons, for as yet he, and they, were not in perſon where he was; but his letter, his orders, and inſtructions; theſe he paid no regard to, concealed them from the church, and would not admit them to be read: or elſe the Apoſtle's ſenſe is, that he received not the brethren that came from him, and were recommended by him, and whom he affectionately loved, and who were near and dear to him as himſelf; and therefore not receiving them, is interpreted by him, as not receiving himſelf.

Ver. 10. *Wherefore if I come*, &c.] Where both *Gaius* and *Diotrephes* lived, as he truſted he ſhould ſhortly, ver. 14. *I will remember his deeds which he doth*; meaning, not only that he would tell him of them to his face, but make mention of them, and expoſe them to the whole church, and reprove him

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[a] Vid. Fabricii Bibliograph. antiq. p. 211.

for them: and which are as follow, *prating againſt us with malicious words*; it is a common thing for miniſters of the Goſpel to be prated againſt, not only by the men of the world, but by profeſſors of religion, and by ſuch who call themſelves preachers alſo; nor need it be wondered at, ſince *John*, an Apoſtle of Chriſt, the beloved diſciple, who was ſo harmleſs and inoffenſive in his converſation, ſo kind and loving in his diſpoſition and temper, ſo meek and humble in his deportment, and now in ſuch an advanced age, was prated againſt by a *Diotrephes*: and what is ſaid againſt Chriſt's miniſters, is no other than prating; ſilly, idle, trifling, and empty ſtuff, as the word uſed ſignifies; for want of greater things, they take up any little matter, and improve it againſt them; and this is often done with a malicious intent, to hurt their characters, ſpoil their uſefulneſs, and render their miniſtry unprofitable. *And not content herewith*; with prating againſt the Apoſtle *John*, and the miniſters with him, in this wicked way: *neither doth he himſelf receive the brethren*; the meaning is not, that he did not receive them into the church, for they were there, ſince afterwards mention is made of his caſting them out from thence; but he did not receive them into his houſe, and entertain them as he ought to have done; for a miniſter of the Goſpel, and a paſtor of a church, ought to be hoſpitable, and given to hoſpitality, and entertain ſtrangers, eſpecially thoſe who are brethren in Chriſt, and fellow-miniſters of the word; and the rather theſe were to be received, ſince they travelled about to ſpread the Goſpel among the *Gentiles*, and took nothing of them. And this was not all, he not only did not receive them himſelf, and reject them, but was not willing that others ſhould receive them: *and forbiddeth them that would*; on ſuch who had a heart, as well as ability, to receive and entertain theſe poor brethren, he laid his injunctions, and gave them ſtrict orders, in his lordly and tyrannical way, not to ſhew any reſpect unto them: *and caſteth them out of the church*; that is, he excommunicated them, either thoſe that entertained them, or rather the brethren themſelves; which was an abuſe of the ordinance of excommunication, as that ordinance is abuſed, when any ſingle perſon, a paſtor, or any other, as here, aſſumes the power of doing it himſelf, and does it without the church; whereas it is a puniſhment or cenſure to be inflicted by many, or to be done by the joint-ſuffrage of the church; and when it is done in a wrong cauſe, for ſome ſmall trifling matter, or none at all, and not in a caſe of hereſy or immorality, obſtinately perſiſted in; and when it is done from wrong principles, and with wrong ends, as to gratify the pride and paſſion of ſome; and not for the good of the perſon caſt out, or to prevent others from falling into the ſame ſnare, or for the honour of religion, and the glory of God. The phraſe ſeems to be taken from the *Jews*, who expreſſed their excommunication, or putting out of the ſynagogue, by a caſting out; ſee *John* ix. 34, 35.

Ver. 11. *Beloved, follow not that which is evil*, &c.] Follow not evil in general, it being hateful to God, contrary to his nature and will, and bad in itſelf, as well as pernicious in its conſequences; and particularly follow not, or do not imitate the particular evil or evils in *Diotrephes*; as his pride, ambition, love of pre-eminence, and tyrannical government in the church, and eſpecially his hard-heartedneſs, cruelty, and inhoſpitality to the poor ſaints; and ſo the *Arabic* verſion reads, *do not imitate him in evil*; the examples of perſons in office and authority have great influence, eſpecially in caſes of charity, when men can be excuſed thereby, and ſave their money, or be freed from an expence: *but that which is good*; follow and imitate that, be a follower of God, imitate him in acts of kindneſs and beneficence, be merciful as he is; copy after Jeſus Chriſt, who went about doing good, and declared it to be more bleſſed to give than to receive; and tread in the ſteps of thoſe good men, who have ſhown love to the name of Chriſt, by miniſtring to his ſaints; for tho' the Apoſtle may mean every thing that is good, which is to be followed and imitated in any, yet he chiefly deſigns acts of kindneſs and beneficence to poor ſaints and miniſters: to which he encourages by the following, *he that doth good is of God*; he is a child of God, he appears to be ſo, in that he is like to his heavenly Father, who is kind and merciful; he is born of God, he is paſſed from death to life, which his love to the brethren ſhows; he has the grace of God, and ſtrength from Chriſt, and the aſſiſtance of the Spirit, without either of which, he could not do that which is good: *but he that doth evil, hath not ſeen God*; has had no ſpiritual ſaving ſight of God in Chriſt; for if he had, he would abhor that which is evil, and, with *Job*, abhor himſelf for it, and reckon himſelf, with *Iſaiah*, as undone, *Job* xlii. 6. *Iſ.* vi. 5. for ſuch effects has the ſight of God on the ſouls of men; ſuch an one knows not God, nor what it is to have communion with him: for thoſe who live in ſin, in whom it is a governing principle, cannot have fellowſhip with God; nor has ſuch an one ever felt the love of God in his ſoul, or been made a partaker of his grace, which would teach and conſtrain him to act otherwiſe. Compare this text with 1 *John* iii. 10. which ſhews the Apoſtle *John* to be the writer of this Epiſtle. The *Ethiopic* verſion reads, *ſhall not ſee God*; that is, hereafter, in the world to come.

Ver. 12. *Demetrius hath good report of all men*, &c.] This man was of a quite different caſt from *Diotrephes*, and therefore the Apoſtle makes mention of him to *Gaius*, to be followed by him, and not the other; he was either the ſame with *Demas*, which is a contraction of this name, or the perſon, that *John* ſent from *Epheſus* with this letter: we read of an *Epheſian* of this name, *Acts* xix. 24. tho' not the ſame perſon; or elſe one that alſo was a member of the ſame church with *Gaius* and *Diotrephes*; and he being kind and beneficent, obtained a good report of the generality of men, not only of the brethren, but of thoſe that were without; for a liberal man is univerſally reſpected. The *Syriac* verſion adds, *and of the church itſelf*; as diſtinct from all men, or the generality of the men of the world: *and of the truth itſelf*; that is, whoever ſpeaks truth muſt give him a good character, for this cannot be underſtood with any propriety of the Goſpel, nor of Jeſus Chriſt: *yea, and we alſo bear record*; or a teſtimony to the character of *Demetrius*; that is, I *John*, the Apoſtle, and the ſaints at *Epheſus*: *and ye know that our record is true*; faithful, and to be depended upon. The *Alexandrian* copy, and ſeveral others, read, *thou knoweſt*, as does alſo the *Vulgate Latin* verſion, which ſeems moſt agreeable, ſince this Epiſtle is directed to a ſingle perſon; compare this with *John* xix. 35. and it will give a further proof of this Epiſtle, being the Apoſtle *John*'s.

Ver. 13. *I have many things to write*, &c.] With regard to churches, and particular perſons, and concerning hoſpitality to the poor brethren: *but I will not with ink and pen write unto thee*; ſuggeſting, he ſhould take another method of communicating his mind to him, which he next mentions.

Ver. 14. *But I truſt I ſhall ſhortly ſee thee*, &c.] Either at *Epheſus*, where *John* was, or rather at the place where *Gaius* lived, ſee ver. 10. *and we ſhall ſpeak face to face*; freely and familiarly converſe together about theſe things, which were not thought proper to be committed to writing: *peace be to thee*; which was the uſual form of ſalutation with the *Jews*, and *John* was one; ſee the note on *John* xx. 19. *our friends ſalute thee*; or ſend their chriſtian ſalutation to thee, wiſhing all health and proſperity in ſoul and body; meaning the members of the church at *Epheſus*: the *Arabic* verſion reads, *thy friends*; ſuch at *Epheſus* as had a particular knowledge of him, and affection for him. The *Vulgate Latin* verſion reads, *the friends*; the members in general; and the *Alexandrian* copy reads, *the brethren*; and the *Syriac* verſion *our brethren*: and then the Epiſtle is cloſed thus, *greet the friends by name*; meaning thoſe that were where *Gaius* lived, to whom the Apoſtle ſends his ſalutation, and deſires it might be delivered to each of them, as if they had been mentioned by name. This, and the Epiſtle of *James*, are the only Epiſtles which are concluded without the word *Amen*.

The General Epiſtle of JUDE.

THAT this Epiſtle was written by *Jude*, one of the twelve Apoſtles of Chriſt, and not by *Jude* the fifteenth biſhop of *Jeruſalem*, who lived in the time of *Trajan*, a little before *Bar Cocab*, the falſe Meſſiah, as *Grotius* thought, is evident, from his being called in the Epiſtle itſelf, the brother of *James*, and which is confirmed by all copies; and its agreement with the ſecond Epiſtle of *Peter* ſhows it to have been written about the ſame time, and upon the ſame occaſion. As to *Jude*'s not calling himſelf an Apoſtle, but a ſervant of *Jeſus Chriſt*, it may be obſerved, that the latter is much the ſame with the former, and the Apoſtle *Paul* ſometimes uſes them both, as in *Rom.* i. 1. *Tit.* i. 1. and ſometimes neither, as in 1 *Theſſ.* i. 1. 2 *Theſſ.* i. 1. *Philem.* 1. and ſometimes only ſervant, as *Jude* does here, *Phil.* i. 1. tho' in ſome copies of the title of this Epiſtle, he is called *Jude the Apoſtle*; and as to *Jude*'s making mention of the Apoſtles as if he was later than they, and not of their number, ver. 17. it may be returned for anſwer to it, that the Apoſtle *Peter* expreſſes himſelf much in the ſame manner, 2 *Pet.* iii. 2. where ſome copies, inſtead of *us the Apoſtles*, read *your Apoſtles*; ſee the note there; moreover, *Jude* ſeems to cite a paſſage out of *Peter*, as *Peter* in the ſame chapter cites the Apoſtle *Paul*, which only ſhows agreement in their doctrine and writing; and at moſt it only follows from hence, that *Jude* wrote after ſome of the Apoſtles, as *Paul* and *Peter*, who had foretold there would be mockers in the laſt time; and that *Jude* had lived to be a witneſs of the truth of what they had ſaid; nor does he exclude himſelf from their number. And that this Epiſtle is a genuine one, appears from the majeſty of its ſtile, the truth of doctrine contained in it, and its agreement with the ſecond Epiſtle of *Peter*, and from the early reception of it in the churches. *Euſebius* [a] ſays, it was reckoned among the ſeven catholic Epiſtles, and was publiſhed in moſt churches; tho' he obſerves, that many of the antients make no mention of it: but certain it is, that ſeveral of the antient writers before him do make mention of it, and cite it as genuine, as *Clemens Alexandrinus* [b], *Tertullian* [c], and *Origen* [d]: and as for the prophecy of *Enoch*, cited in this Epiſtle, it is not taken out of an apochrypal book, that bears that name, for the Apoſtle makes no mention of any writing of his, but of a prophecy; and had he cited it out of that book, as it was truth, it can no more prejudice the authority of this Epiſtle, than the citations made by the Apoſtle *Paul* out of the heathen poets, can affect his Epiſtles: and whereas there is an account alſo given in this Epiſtle of a diſpute about the body of *Moſes*, no where elſe to be met with, ſuppoſing it to be underſtood of his real body, of which ſee the note on the place; this can be no more an objection to the genuineneſs of this Epiſtle, than the mention of *Jannes* and *Jambres*, who withſtood *Moſes*, by the Apoſtle *Paul*, is an objection to an Epiſtle of his, whoſe names are not to be met with in other parts of ſcripture; but were what were known by tradition, as might be the caſe here. The Epiſtle is called *catholic*, or *general*, becauſe it is not written to any particular perſon or church, but to the ſaints in general, and it may be to the ſame perſons that *Peter* wrote his; ſee 1 *Pet.* i. 1. 2 *Pet.* i. 1. and who ſeem to be chiefly the believing *Jews*; ſee ver. 5, 17. tho' the *Syriac* verſion of ver. 1. reads, *Jude, a ſervant of Jeſus Chriſt*—לעממא, *to the nations* or *Gentiles, called*, &c. the deſign of the Epiſtle to both, is to exhort them to continue in the faith, and contend for it; and to deſcribe falſe teachers, to point out their principles, practices, and dreadful end, that ſo they might ſhun and avoid them.

THE writer of this Epiſtle deſcribes himſelf by his name, *Jude*; by his ſpiritual condition, *a ſervant of Chriſt*; and by his natural relation, *a brother of James*; and inſcribes it to perſons choſen of God, ſecured in Chriſt, and called by grace, ver. 1. whom he ſalutes, and wiſhes a multiplication of mercy, peace, and love unto, ver. 2. and then points at the ſubject matter of his Epiſtle, *the common ſalvation*; and his view in writing it, which was to exhort them to contend earneſtly for the Goſpel; which exhortation was neceſſary, ſince ſome reprobate and wicked men, abuſers of the grace of God, and blaſphemers of the perſon of Chriſt, had got in among them, ver. 3, 4. and in order to deter them from following their pernicious ways, he lays before them various inſtances of divine vengeance on ſinners; as the *Iſraelites*, whom God delivered out of *Egypt*, and yet deſtroyed them for their unbelief; the angels, who not content with their firſt eſtate, forſook their habitation, and are reſerved in chains of darkneſs to the day of judgment; and the inhabitants of *Sodom* and *Gomorrha*, and the adjacent cities, who for their uncleanneſs ſuffer the vengeance of eternal fire, as an example to others, ver. 5, 6, 7. in like manner the Apoſtle obſerves, theſe falſe teachers, who were filthy dreamers, defiled themſelves with ſuch ſins, and alſo deſpiſed and ſpoke evil of civil magiſtrates, ver. 8. which ſin of theirs is aggravated by *Michael* the archangel not railing at the devil, in a contention with him about the body of *Moſes*, but gently reproving him; by ſpeaking evil of what they were ignorant of, and by their brutiſh ſenſuality, in corrupting themſelves in things they had natural knowledge of, ver. 9, 10. and both their ſin and puniſhment are exemplified in the caſes of *Cain*, *Balaam*, and *Core*; being guilty of hatred of the brethren, of covetouſneſs, and of contradiction, ver. 11. and by various metaphors are ſet forth their intemperance, hypocriſy, inſtability, unfruitfulneſs, pride, wrath, and luſt, for whom the blackeſt darkneſs is reſerved for ever, ver. 12, 13. the certainty of which is proved from an antient prophecy of *Enoch*, concerning the coming of Chriſt to judgment, when vengeance will be taken on thoſe men for their ungodly deeds and hard ſpeeches, ver. 14, 15. who are further deſcribed by their murmurs and complaints; by their pride, reſpect of perſons, and covetouſneſs; by their ſcoffs, and walking after their own luſts, as had been foretold by the Apoſtles of Chriſt; by ſeparating themſelves from the ſaints, and by their ſenſuality, and not having the Spirit of God, ver. 16, 17, 18, 19. and the Apoſtle having thus at large deſcribed theſe falſe teachers, by reaſon of whom the ſaints were in danger, directs them to the uſe of means by which they might be ſecured from them; ſuch as building themſelves up in their moſt holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghoſt, keeping themſelves in the love of God, and looking for the mercy of Chriſt unto eternal life, ver. 20, 21. and he teaches them not only to be concerned for themſelves, but for others alſo, who were in danger from theſe deceivers; to deal with ſome in a tender and compaſſionate way, with others more roughly, expreſſing an hatred to a filthy converſation, ver. 22, 23. and then the Epiſtle is concluded with a doxology, or an aſcription of glory to the only wiſe God our Saviour, who is able to keep his people from falling into ſuch pernicious principles and practices, and to preſent them faultleſs before his glorious preſence with exceeding joy, ver. 24, 25.

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[a] Hiſt. Eccleſ. l. 2. c. 23.

[b] Pædagog. l. 3. c. 8. p. 239. & Stromat. l. 3. p. 431.

[c] De Cultu Fœmin. l. 1. c. 3.

[d] In Joſh. Homil. 7. fol. 156. E. & Comment. in Matth. p. 223. Ed. Huet.

Ver. 1. *Jude the ſervant of Jeſus Chriſt*, &c.] The author of this Epiſtle is the ſame who is elſewhere called *Judas*, *Luke* vi. 16. and *John* xiv. 22. who was one of the twelve Apoſtles of Chriſt, whoſe name was alſo *Lebbeus*, and whoſe ſurname was *Thaddeus*, *Matt*. x. 3. the name is the ſame with *Jehudah*, *Gen*. xxix. 35. and xlix. 8. which comes from a word that ſignifies to *praiſe* or *confeſs*; and in the *Rabbinical* dialect is called יודא, *Juda*[e], as here. He ſtiles himſelf *the ſervant of Jeſus Chriſt*; ſee the note on *Rom*. i. 1. tho' this is a title common to all believers, yet here, and in ſome other places, it is peculiar to an Apoſtle, or miniſter of the Goſpel; and therefore is uſed not merely in humility, and to acknowledge obedience to Chriſt, but as a title of dignity and honour: and the Apoſtle goes on to deſcribe himſelf by his natural relation, *and brother of James*; not the ſon of *Zebedee*, but of *Alpheus*, *Matt*. x. 2, 3. and this he mentions partly to diſtinguiſh himſelf from others of that name, as *Judas Iſcariot*, and *Judas* called *Barſabas*; and partly for the ſake of honour and credit, *James* being a very great man, a man of great note and eſteem, and who ſeemed to be a pillar in the church, and was called the brother of our Lord, *Gal*. ii. 9. and i. 19. an account of the perſons to whom this Epiſtle is inſcribed next follows, *to them that are ſanctified by God the Father*; which is to be underſtood not of internal ſanctification, which is uſually aſcribed to the Spirit of God, but of the act of eternal election, which is peculiar to God the Father; in which ſenſe Chriſt is ſaid to be ſanctified by the Father, and men ordained and appointed to an office, and veſſels are ſet apart for the owners uſe; *John* x. 36. *Jer*. i. 5. 2 *Tim*. ii. 21. the language is taken from the ceremonial law, by which perſons and things were ſanctified, or ſet apart for ſacred uſe and ſervice; ſee *Exod*. xiii. 2, 12. *Lev*. xxvii. 14, 16. and ſo the elect of God are by God the Father ſanctified and ſet apart in the act of election, which is expreſſed by this word; partly becauſe of its ſeparating nature, men being by it ſeparated from the reſt of the world, to the uſe and ſervice of God, and for his glory, ſo that they are a diſtinct and peculiar people; and partly becauſe ſuch are choſen through ſanctification of the Spirit, and unto holineſs both in this world and that which is to come; ſo that the doctrine of election is no licentious doctrine; for tho' holineſs is not the cauſe of it, yet is a means fixed in it, and is certain by it, and an evidence of it: the *Alexandrian* copy, and ſome others, and the *Vulgate Latin* and *Syriac* verſions read, *to them that are loved by God the Father*; election is the fruit and effect of love; thoſe that are ſanctified or ſet apart by the Father in election, are loved by him. The *Ethiopic* verſion renders it quite otherwiſe, *to them that love God the Father*; which flows from the Father's love to them: *and preſerved in Jeſus Chriſt*; thoſe who are ſanctified, or ſet apart by God the Father in election, are in Chriſt, for they are choſen in him; they have a place in his heart, and they are put into his hands, and are in him, and united to him as members to an head, and were repreſented by him in the covenant of grace; and being in him, they are preſerved by him, and that before they are called, as well as after; wherefore this character is put before that of being called, tho' the *Syriac* verſion puts that in the firſt place: there is a ſecret preſervation of them in Chriſt before calling, from condemnation and the ſecond death; they were not preſerved from falling in *Adam*, with the reſt of mankind, nor from the corruption of human nature, nor from actual ſins and tranſgreſſions; yet, notwithſtanding theſe, were ſo preſerved that the law could not execute the ſentence of condemnation on them, nor ſin damn them, nor ſatan, who led them captive, hale them to priſon; and after calling, they are preſerved not from indwelling ſin, nor from the temptations of ſatan, nor from doubts and fears and unbelief, nor from ſlips and falls into ſin; but from the tyranny and dominion of ſin, from being devoured by ſatan, and from a total and final falling away: they are preſerved in the love of God, and of Chriſt; in the covenant of grace; in a ſtate of juſtification and adoption; and in the paths of truth, faith, and holineſs;

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[e] Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 50. 2.

and are preſerved ſafe to the heavenly kingdom and glory: their other character follows, *and called*; not merely externally by the miniſtry of the word, but internally by the ſpirit and grace of God; ſo that this is to be underſtood of a ſpecial and effectual call, whereby ſouls are called out of darkneſs into light, and from bondage to liberty; and from a dependance on themſelves to the grace and righteouſneſs of Chriſt; and from ſociety with the men of the world to fellowſhip with him; and to eternal glory, ſo as to have faith and hope concerning it.

Ver. 2. *Mercy unto you, and peace and love be multiplied.*] In this ſalutation the Apoſtle wiſhes for a multiplication of *mercy*, from God the Father, by whom theſe perſons were ſanctified: mercy is a perfection in God; and ſhows itſelf in a ſpecial manner towards the elect, in the covenant of grace, in the proviſion of Chriſt as a ſaviour, in the miſſion of him into this world, in redemption by him, in the forgiveneſs of ſin, in regeneration, and in their whole ſalvation; and the multiplication of it intends an enlarged view and freſh application of it, which they ſometimes ſtand in need of, as under deſertions, when they want the ſenſe and manifeſtation of it to them; and under temptations and afflictions, when they need ſympathy and compaſſion; and when they fall into ſin they ſtand in need of the freſh diſcoveries and application of pardoning mercy to them. Moreover, herein is wiſhed for a multiplication of *peace* from Chriſt, in whom theſe choſen ones were preſerved; and may deſign a freſh and enlarged view of peace being made for them by his blood, and an increaſe of conſcience-peace in their own hearts, as the effect of it; and may include peace, and an abundance of it, among themſelves, as well as all proſperity, both external, internal, and eternal: likewiſe in the ſalutation, *love*, and a multiplication of it is wiſhed for from the Spirit of God, by whom they were called; and may be underſtood of the love with which God loved them; and which may be ſaid to be multiplied, when it is gradually ſhed abroad in their hearts by the Spirit, and they are by degrees led into it more and more, and the acts of it are drawn out and ſet before them one after another, and freſh manifeſtations of it are made unto them; as in afflictive providences, after the hidings of God's face, and under temptations: and it may deſign the love with which they love God, which may be increaſed and made to abound more and more.

Ver. 3. *Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you*, &c.] The Apoſtle calls the perſons he writes unto *beloved*; as they were of God, and by him and other ſaints; and he ſignifies his diligence in writing to them: and the ſubject of his writing was, *of the common ſalvation*; which deſigns either the Goſpel, ſometimes called ſalvation, in oppoſition to the law, which is a miniſtration of condemnation; and becauſe it is a declaration of ſalvation, and a means of it; and may be ſaid to be *common*, becauſe preached to all, *Jews* and *Gentiles*: or Jeſus Chriſt the Saviour himſelf, who is alſo ſometimes called *ſalvation*, becauſe he was called and appointed to it, and undertook it, and is become the author of it; and may be ſaid to be a *common* ſaviour, not of all men, but of all his people; of his whole body, the church, and every member of it, and of all ſorts of men, in all nations: or elſe that ſpiritual and eternal ſalvation wrought out by him, which is common, not to all men, for all are not ſaved with it, but to all the elect of God, and true believers in Chriſt; the love of God is common to them all alike; the choice of them to eternal ſalvation is the ſame; the covenant of grace, the bleſſings and promiſes of it, are equally ſhared by them; and they are bought with the ſame price of Chriſt's blood, and are juſtified by the ſame righteouſneſs, and are regenerated, ſanctified, and called by the ſame grace, and ſhall poſſeſs the ſame glory: there is but one way of ſalvation, and that is not confined to any nation, family, community, or ſect among men. The *Alexandrian* copy, and two of *Beza*'s, and the *Syriac* verſion read, *our common ſalvation*; and two other of *Beza*'s copies, and the *Vulgate Latin* verſion read, *your common ſalvation*; the ſenſe is the ſame: *it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you, that ye ſhould earneſtly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the ſaints*; by the *faith* is meant the doctrine of faith, in which ſenſe it is uſed whenever faith is ſaid to be preached, obeyed, departed, or erred from, or denied, or made ſhipwrack of, or when exhortations are made to ſtand faſt, and continue in it, or to ſtrive and contend for it, as here; and which is ſometimes called the word of faith, the faith of the Goſpel, the myſtery of faith, or moſt holy faith, the common faith, and as here, faith only; and deſigns the whole ſcheme of evangelical truths to be believed; ſuch as the doctrine of the Trinity, the deity and Sonſhip of Chriſt, the divinity and perſonality of the Spirit; what regards the ſtate and condition of man by nature, as the doctrines of the imputation of *Adam*'s ſin to his poſterity, the corruption of nature, and the impotence of men to that which is good; what concerns the acts of grace in the Father, Son, and Spirit, towards, and upon the ſons of men; as the doctrines of everlaſting love, eternal election, the covenant of grace, particular redemption, juſtification by the imputed righteouſneſs of Chriſt, pardon and reconciliation by his blood, regeneration and ſanctification by the grace of the Spirit, final perſeverance, the reſurrection of the dead, and the future glory of the ſaints with Chriſt. This is ſaid to be *delivered to the ſaints*; it was delivered by God the Father to Chriſt as mediator, and by him to his Apoſtles, who may more eſpecially be meant by *the ſaints*, or holy men; who were choſen to be holy, and to whom Chriſt was made ſanctification, and who were ſanctified by the Spirit of God; and this faith being a moſt holy faith, is fit for holy men, and only proper to be delivered to them, and preached by them; and by them it was delivered to the churches, both by word and writing; and this delivery of it ſuppoſes that it is not an invention of men, that it is of God, and a gift of his, and given in truſt in order to be kept, held forth, and held faſt; and it was but *once* delivered, in oppoſition to the ſundry times and divers manners in which the mind of God was formerly made known; and deſigns the uniformity, perfection, and continuance of the doctrine of faith; there is no alteration to be made in it, or addition to it; no new revelations are to be expected, it has been delivered all at once: and therefore ſhould be *earneſtly contended for*; for could it be loſt, another could not be had; and the whole of it is to be contended for; not only the fundamentals, but the leſſer matters of faith; and not things eſſential only, but alſo what are circumſtantial to faith and religion; every truth, ordinance, and duty, and particularly the purity of faith, and its conſiſtency: and this contention includes a care and ſolicitude for it, to have it, own it, and hold it faſt, and adorn it; and for the preſervation of it, and for the ſpread of it, and that it might be tranſmitted to poſterity: and it denotes a conflict, a combat, or a fighting for it, a ſtriving even to an agony: the perſons to be contended with on account of it, are ſuch who deny, or depreciate any of the perſons in the Godhead, the aſſerters of the purity and power of human nature, and the deniers of ſovereign, efficacious, and perſevering grace: the perſons who are to contend with them are all the ſaints in general, to whom it is delivered; which they may do by bearing an experimental teſtimony to it, by praying for the continuance and ſucceſs of it, by ſtanding faſt in one ſpirit in it, and by dying for it; and particularly the miniſters of the Goſpel, by preaching it boldly, openly, fully, and faithfully, by diſputing for it, and writing in the defence of it, and by laying down their lives, when called for: the manner in which this is to be done, is *earneſtly*, heartily, in good earneſt, and without deceit, zealouſly, and conſtantly.

Ver. 4. *For there are certain men crept in unawares,* &c.] Theſe words contain a reaſon, why the doctrine of faith ſhould be contended for, becauſe of falſe teachers, who are deſcribed as being then upon the ſpot; the Apoſtles, *Peter* and *Paul*, had foretold, that they would come, but *Jude* here ſpeaks of them as in being; wherefore preſent vigour and vigilance were neceſſary to be uſed: their names are not mentioned nor their number, only that there were *certain*, or *ſome men*; which is done to ſtir up the ſaints to ſelf-examination, whether they were in the faith; to diligence, in finding out theſe men; to vigour, in oppoſing them; and to care, to nip error and hereſy in the bud: and they are ſaid to have *crept in unawares*; either into private houſes, as was the cuſtom of thoſe men; or into the churches, and become members of them, being the tares the enemy ſows among the wheat; or into the miniſtry, aſſuming that office to themſelves, without being called and ſent of God; and ſo into the public aſſemblies of the ſaints, ſpreading their poiſonous doctrines among them; and alſo into their affections, until diſcovered; and ſo the *Ethiopic* verſion reads here, *becauſe ungodly men have entred into your hearts*; and all this was at an unawares, privily, ſecretly, without any thought about them, or ſuſpicion of them: *who were before of old ordained to this condemnation*; or *judgment*; meaning either judicial blindneſs of heart, they were given up to, in embracing and ſpreading errors and hereſies; ſo that theſe are not caſual things, but fall under the ordination and decree of God, which does not make God the author of them, nor excuſe the men that hold them; and they are ordained and ordered for many valuable ends; on the part of God, to ſhew his power and wiſdom; and on the part of truth, that it might be tried and appear the brighter, and to manifeſt his people and their graces: or elſe puniſhment is deſigned, even everlaſting condemnation, to which ſome are pre-ordained of God; for this act of pre-ordination reſpects perſons, and not mere actions and events; and is not a naked preſcience, but a real decree, and which is ſure, certain and irrevocable; is God's act, and ſprings from his ſovereignty, is agreeable to his juſtice and holineſs; nor is it contrary to his goodneſs, and is for his glory: the date of this act is *of old*; or as the *Syriac* verſion renders it, מן שוריא, *from the beginning*; that is, from eternity; ſee 2 *Theſſ*. ii. 13. *Prov*. viii. 22. for reprobation is of the ſame date with election; if the one is from eternity, the other muſt be ſo too, ſince there cannot be one without the other: if ſome were choſen before the foundation of the world, others muſt be left or paſſed by as early; and if ſome were appointed unto ſalvation from the beginning, others muſt be fore-ordained to condemnation from the beginning alſo; for theſe words cannot be underſtood of any prophecy of old, in which it was fore-written, or propheſied of theſe men, that they ſhould be condemned for their ungodlineſs; not in *Matt*. xxiv. in which no ſuch perſons are deſcribed, as here, nor any mention made of their puniſhment or condemnation; nor in 2 *Pet*. ii. 1, 2, 3. for then the Apoſtle would never have ſaid that they were *of old*, a long while ago, before written, or propheſied of, ſince according to the common calculation, that Epiſtle of *Peter*'s, and this of *Jude*'s, were written in the ſame year; nor in the prophecy of *Enoch*, ver. 14. for *Enoch*'s prophecy was not written, as we know of; and therefore theſe men could not be ſaid to be before written in it; beſides, that prophecy is ſpoken of as ſomething diſtinct from theſe perſons being before written, to condemnation; and after all, was a prophecy referred to, the ſenſe would be the ſame, ſince ſuch a prophecy concerning them muſt be founded upon an antecedent ordination and appointment of God; the word here uſed does not intend their being fore-written in any book of the ſcriptures, but in the book of God's eternal purpoſes and decrees; and the juſtice of ſuch a pre-ordination, appears by the following characters of them, *ungodly men*: all men are by nature ungodly, ſome are notoriouſly ſo, and falſe teachers are generally ſuch; here it ſignifies ſuch who are deſtitute of the fear of God, and of all internal devotion, and powerful godlineſs; and who did not worſhip God externally, according to his inſtitutions and appointments, and much leſs ſincerely, and in a ſpiritual manner; and who even ſeparated themſelves from the true worſhippers of God, and gave themſelves up to ſenſuality, and therefore their condemnation was juſt: *turning the grace of our God into laſciviouſneſs*; not the love and favour of God, as in his own heart, or as ſhed abroad in the hearts of others; for that can never be turned to ſuch a purpoſe, it always working in a contrary way; nor the principle of grace wrought in the ſoul, which being of a ſpiritual nature, luſteth againſt the fleſh, and cannot be turned into it; more likely the goodneſs of God in his providential diſpenſations, which is deſpiſed by ſome, and abuſed by others; but rather the doctrine of grace, which tho' laſciviouſneſs is not in its nature, nor has it any natural tendency to it, yet wicked men turn or transfer it from its original nature, deſign and uſe, to a foreign one: and they may be ſaid to turn it into laſciviouſneſs, either by aſſerting it to be a licentious doctrine, when it is not; or by treating it in a wanton and ludicrous manner, ſcoffing at it, and lampooning it; or by making the doctrine of grace univerſal, extending it equally alike to all mankind, and thereby harden and encourage men in ſin. *And denying the only Lord God*; God the Father, who is the only ſovereign Lord, both in providence and grace; and the only God, not to the excluſion of the Son and Spirit, but in oppoſition to nominal and fictitious deities, or heathen gods; and he was denied by theſe men, if not in words, yet in works: the word, *God*, is left out in the *Alexandrian* copy and in the *Vulgate Latin* verſion. *And our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*; as his deity, or Sonſhip, or humanity, or that he was the Meſſiah, or the alone ſaviour, or his ſacrifice, ſatisfaction, and righteouſneſs; with reſpect to either of which he may be ſaid to be denied doctrinally, as he is alſo practically, when men don't walk worthy of their profeſſion of him; and both might be true of theſe men, and therefore their condemnation was righteous. The copulative *and* is omitted in the *Syriac* verſion, which ſeems to make this clauſe explanative of the former.

Ver. 5. *I will therefore put you in remembrance, tho' ye once knew this*, &c.] The *Alexandrian* copy, and ſome others, and the *Vulgate Latin* verſion read, *knew all things*; but rather it is to be reſtrained by the following inſtance of God's vengeance on unbelievers; which with others is produced, to vindicate the divine conduct in the condemnation of the above perſons, and to ſhew that that is certain, and may be expected, ſince God has always dealt thus with ſuch perſons; and this they knew by reading of the ſcriptures; at leaſt they had known it once, tho' it might now be forgotten by them; and they had known it once, for all; they had been perfectly accquainted with it; which is ſaid, leſt the Apoſtle ſhould be thought to write to perſons ignorant, and rude in knowledge, and to ſhow that he wrote nothing new and unheard-of, and ſo ſhould have the more weight and influence upon them; and he thought fit to remind them of it, tho' they had known it: it is one part of the work of the miniſters of the word, to put people in mind of what they have known; which is neceſſary, becauſe of the inattentiveneſs of hearers, their forgetfulneſs, and loſs of knowledge, and the weakneſs of ſome capacities to take in, and retain things; and if the judgment is not more informed hereby, yet the affections may be afreſh raiſed, and grace be drawn out into exerciſe, and the mind be eſtabliſhed and confirmed. The inſtance follows, *how that the Lord having ſaved the people out of the land of Egypt*; that is, the people of *Iſrael*, who were the choſen people of God, a ſpecial people, above all others, and had peculiar privileges; theſe the Lord brought out of the land of *Egypt*, with an high hand, and a mighty arm, and ſaved them out of their bondage, and delivered out of their oppreſſions and afflictions: the *Alexandrian* copy, and ſome others, the *Vulgate Latin*, and *Ethiopic* verſions, inſtead of, *the Lord*, read, *Jeſus*: and yet, tho' they were a ſpecial people, and notwithſtanding this wonderful deliverance, and great ſalvation, he *afterward deſtroyed them that believed not*; their carcaſſes fell in the wilderneſs, by one judgment, or another, upon them; ſo that of all that came out of *Egypt*, but two entred into the land of *Canaan*: this ſhows the evil nature of unbelief; and that God will not ſuffer ſin to go unobſerved in any; no outward privileges and profeſſion will ſkreen any from divine vengeance; God ſometimes makes ſevere examples of mere nominal profeſſors; nor muſt falſe teachers, deniers of Chriſt, and perverters of his Goſpel, expect to go free: moreover, it may be obſerved that God may do great things for perſons, and yet after all deſtroy them; great riches and honours may be conferred on ſome, great natural gifts on others; ſome may ſeem as if they had the grace of God, and were brought out of ſpiritual *Egypt*, and enjoy great mercies and favours, and have many deliverances wrought for them, and yet at laſt periſh.

Ver. 6. *And the angels which kept not their firſt eſtate*, &c.] Or *principality*; that holy, honourable, and happy condition, in which they were created; for they were created in perfect holineſs and righteouſneſs, ſtood in the relation of ſons to God, and were, for the luſtre of their nature, comparable to the morning ſtars; they were among the thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers; were a ſuperior rank of creatures to men, and who beheld the face, and enjoyed the preſence of God; but this eſtate they kept not, for being mutable creatures, one of them firſt ſinning, the reſt were were drawn into it, by him, and ſo were not what they were before, nor in the ſame eſtate, or place: *but left their own habitation*; by attempting to riſe higher; or by quitting their ſtation and poſts of honour, being unwilling to be ſubject to God, and eſpecially to the Son of God, who was to aſſume human nature, and in it be above them, which they could not bear; and by gathering together in a body, in another place, with ſatan at the head of them; tho' this may be conſidered as a part of their puniſhment, and they may be ſaid to do, what they were forced to; for they were drove out of their native habitation, heaven; they were turned out of it, and caſt down to hell; ſee 2 *Pet.* ii. 4. And this their habitation, which they left, or fell from, or they were caſt out of, is by the *Jews* frequently called the place of their holineſs, or their holy place[g]. *He hath reſerved in everlaſting chains, under darkneſs*; by theſe *everlaſting chains* may be meant, the power and providence of God over them, which always abide upon them; or their ſins, and the guilt of them upon their conſciences, under which they are continually held; or the decrees and purpoſes of God concerning their final puniſhment and deſtruction, which are immutable and irreverſible, and from which there is no freeing themſelves: the phraſe, *under darkneſs*, may refer to the chains, as in 2 *Pet.* ii. 4. where they are called *chains of darkneſs*; either becauſe the power, providence, and purpoſes of God are inviſible; ſo the *Syriac* verſion reads, *in unknown chains*; or becauſe horror and black deſpair are the effects of ſin, and its guilt, with which their conſciences are continually filled: or it may denote the place and ſtate where they are, either in the darkneſs of the air, or in the dark parts of the earth, or in hell, where is utter darkneſs, even blackneſs of darkneſs; or that they are under the power of ſin, which is darkneſs, and without the light of God's countenance, or any ſpiritual knowledge, or comfort: and they are *reſerved* in theſe chains, and under this darkneſs; or *in priſon*, as the *Arabic* verſion renders it; which denotes the cuſtody of them, and their continuance in it, in which they are kept by Jeſus Chriſt, who can bind and looſe ſatan at his pleaſure; and it ſhows, that they are not as yet in full torment, but are like malefactors that are kept in priſon, until the aſſize comes: ſo theſe are laid in chains, and kept in cuſtody *unto the judgment of the great day*; that is, the future and laſt *judgment* of men and devils, which is certain, and will be univerſal, and executed with the ſtricteſt juſtice: this is called a *day*, which is fixed by God, tho' unknown to men and angels; and becauſe of the evidence, and quick diſpatch of things, the matters judged will be as clear as the day, and finiſhed at once; and a *great* one, for the judge will appear in great glory; great things will be done, the dead will be raiſed, and all nations will be gathered together, and the proceſs will be with great ſolemnity; the thrones will be ſet, the books opened, the ſeveral ſentences pronounced, and all punctually executed; the judgment of the great day, is the ſame the *Jews* call, יום דינא רבא, *the day of the great judgment*[h]. This account ſhews the impriſoned ſtate of the devils, that they are not their own lords, and can't do as they would; they are under reſtraints, and in chains, and not to be feared; which muſt be a great mortification to their proud and malicious ſpirits: and ſince this is the caſe of fallen angels, what ſeverity may be expected from God againſt the oppoſers of the truths of the Goſpel?

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[g] Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 73. 1. Pirke Eliezer, c. 14, 22, 27. Zohar in Gen. fol. 28. 1. & Sepher Bahir in ib. fol. 27. 3.

[h] Targum in Pſ. l. 3.

Ver. 7. *Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them,* &c.] *Admah* and *Zeboim,* for *Zoar* was ſpared. This is a third inſtance of God's vengeance on ſinners; and which, like that of the *Iſraelites,* and of the angels, was after great favours had been enjoyed: theſe places were delightfully ſituated, and very fruitful as the garden of God; they were under a form of government, had kings over them, and had lately had a very great deliverance from the kings, that carried them captive, being reſcued by *Abraham*; they had a righteous *Lot* among them, who was a reprover in the gate, and *Abraham* made interceſſion for them with God. But they *in like manner giving themſelves over to fornication*; not as the angels, who are not capable of ſinning in ſuch a manner; tho' the *Jews* make this to be a ſin of theirs, and ſo interpret *Gen.* vi. 2, 4[i]. but rather the *Iſraelites,* among whom this ſin prevailed, 1 *Cor.* x. 8. tho' it ſeems beſt of all to refer it to the falſe teachers that turned the grace of God into laſciviouſneſs, and were very criminal this way; and then the ſenſe is, that in like manner as they, the inhabitants of *Sodom* and *Gomorrha,* gave themſelves over to the ſin of fornication; wherefore theſe men might expect the ſame judgments that fell upon them, ſince their ſin was alike; which ſin is a work of the fleſh, contrary to the law of God, is againſt the body, and attended with many evils; expoſes to judgment here and hereafter, and unfits for the communion of the ſaints, and for the kingdom of heaven: *and going after ſtrange fleſh*; or *other fleſh*; meaning not other women beſides their own wives, but men; and deſigns that deteſtable and unnatural ſin, which, from theſe people, is called *Sodomy* to this day; and which is an exceeding great ſin, contrary to the light of nature, and law of God, diſhonourable to human nature, and ſcandalous to a nation and people, and commonly prevails where idolatry and infidelity do, as among the *Papiſts* and *Mahometans*; and aroſe from idleneſs and fullneſs of bread in *Sodom,* and was committed in the ſight of God, with great impudence: their puniſhment follows, *are ſet forth for an example*; being deſtroyed by fire from heaven, and their cities turned into a ſulphurous lake, which continues to this day, as a monument of God's vengeance, and an example to all ſuch who commit the ſame ſins, and who may expect the ſame equitable puniſhment; and to all who live ungodly lives, tho' they may not be guilty of the ſame crimes; and to all that ſlight and reject the Goſpel revelation, with whom it will be more intolerable than for *Sodom* and *Gomorrha*; and to antichriſt, who bears the ſame name, and ſpiritually is called *Sodom* and *Egypt*; and particularly to all falſe teachers, who beſides their ſtrange doctrines, go after ſtrange fleſh: *ſuffering the vengeance of eternal fire*; which may be underſtood of that fire, with which thoſe cities, and the inhabitants of it, were conſumed; which *Philo* the [k] *Jew* ſays, burnt till his time, and muſt be burning when *Jude* wrote this Epiſtle. The effects of which ſtill continues, the land being now brimſtone, ſalt, and burning; and is an emblem and repreſentation of hell-fire, between which there is a great likeneſs; as in the matter of them, both being fire; in the efficient cauſe of them, both from the Lord; and in the inſtruments thereof, the angels, who, as then, will hereafter be employed in the delivery of the righteous, and in the burning of the wicked; and in the circumſtance attending both, ſuddenly, at an unawares, when not thought of, and expected; and in the nature of them, being a deſtruction total, irreparable, and everlaſting: and this agrees with the ſentiments of the *Jews,* who ſay[l], that "the men of *Sodom* have no part or portion in the "world to come, and ſhall not ſee the world to "come." And ſays *R. Iſaac,* "*Sodom* is judged, "בדינא דגיהנם, *with the judgment of hell*[m]."

Ver. 8. *Likewiſe alſo theſe filthy dreamers defile the fleſh,* &c.] Which may be literally underſtood, either of the *Jewiſh* doctors, who pretended to be interpreters of dreams, as *R. Akiba, R. Lazar,* and others[n]; or of the falſe teachers in the Apoſtle's time, and of their filthy dreams, and nocturnal pollutions in them; which ſenſe the *Arabic* and *Ethiopic* verſions confirm; the former rendering the words thus, *ſo theſe retiring in the time of ſleep, defile their own fleſh*; and the latter thus, *and likewiſe theſe, who in their own ſleep, pollute their own fleſh*; as alſo of their pretenſions to divine aſſiſtance and intelligence by dreams; and likewiſe may be figuratively underſtood of them; for falſe doctrines are dreams, and the teachers of them dreamers, *Jer.* xxiii. 25, 27, 28, 32. as are all thoſe doctrines of men that oppoſe the Trinity of perſons in the Godhead; that contradict the deity and Sonſhip of Chriſt; that depreciate any of his offices; that leſſen the glory of the perſon and grace of the Spirit; that cry up the purity, power, and righteouſneſs of human nature, and are contrary to the free grace of God. Theſe ariſe from the darkneſs of the underſtanding, and a ſpirit of ſlumber upon them; are the fictions of their own brain, and of their roving imagination; are illuſory and deceitful, and are in themſelves vanities, and like dreams paſs away. And the dreamers of theſe dreams may be ſaid to *defile the fleſh*; ſince they appear to follow and walk after the dictates of corrupt nature; and becauſe by their unclean practices, mentioned in the preceding verſe, they defile the fleſh, that is, the body: all ſin is of a defiling nature, and all men are defiled with it; but theſe were notoriouſly ſo; and often ſo it is, that unclean practices follow upon erroneous principles. *Deſpiſe dominion*; either the government of the world by God, denying or ſpeaking evil of his providence; the *Ethiopic* verſion renders it, *they deny their own God,* either his being, or rather his providence; or the dominion and kingly power of Chriſt, to which they cared not to be ſubject; or rather civil magiſtracy, which they deſpiſed, as ſuppoſing it to be inconſiſtent with their chriſtian liberty, and rejected it as being a reſtraint on their luſts; chuſing rather anarchy and confuſion, that they might do as they pleaſed, though magiſtracy is God's ordinance, and magiſtrates are God's repreſentatives: *and ſpeak evil of dignities*; or *glories*; the *Arabic* verſion reads, *the God of glory*: this is to be underſtood either of angels, thoſe glorious creatures, called thrones, dominions, *&c.* or eccleſiaſtical governours, who are ſet in the firſt and higheſt place in the church, and are the glory of the churches; or elſe civil magiſtrates, as before, who are the higher powers, and ſit in high places of honour and grandeur. Falſe teachers are injurious to themſelves, diſturbers of churches, and pernicious to civil government.

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[i] Pirke Eliezer, c. 22. Joſeph. Antiq. l. 1. c. 3. §. 1.

[k] De Abrahamo, p. 370.

[l] T. Hieroſ. Sanhedrin, fol. 29. 3.

[m] Zohar in Gen. fol. 71. 3.

[n] T. Hieroſ. Maaſer Sheni, fol. 55. 2, 3.

Ver. 9. *Yet Michael the archangel*, &c.] By whom is meant, not a created angel, but an increated one, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, as appears from his name *Michael*, which ſignifies, *who is as God*; and who is as God, or like unto him, but the Son of God, who is equal with God? and from his character as the archangel, or prince of angels, for Chriſt is the head of all principality and power; and from what is elſewhere ſaid of *Michael*, as that he is the great prince, and on the ſide of the people of God, and to have angels under him, and at his command, *Dan*. x. 21. and xii. 1. *Rev*. xii. 7. So *Philo* the *Jew* [o] calls the moſt ancient Word, firſt-born of God, the archangel; in 2 *Eſdras* iv. 36. *Uriel* is called the archangel: *when contending with the devil he diſputed about the body of Moſes*; which ſome underſtand literally of the fleſhly and natural body of *Moſes*, buried by the Lord himſelf, partly out of reſpect to him; and partly, as ſome think, leſt the *Iſraelites* ſhould be tempted to an idolatrous worſhip of him; but rather it was to ſhow that the law of *Moſes* was to be aboliſhed and buried by Chriſt, never to riſe more: and they think, that this diſpute was either about the burying of his body, or the taking of it up again; ſatan on the one hand inſiſting upon the taking of it up, in order to induce the *Iſraelites* to worſhip him, and *Michael*, on the other hand, oppoſing it, to prevent this idolatry; but then the difficulty is, where *Jude* ſhould have this account, ſince the ſcriptures are ſilent about it. Some have thought, that he took it out of an *Apocryphal* book, called *the Aſcenſion of Moſes*, as *Origen* [p], which is not likely; others, that he had it by tradition, by which means the Apoſtle *Paul* came by the names of the *Egyptian* magicians, *Jannes* and *Jambres*; and ſome paſſages are referred to in ſome of their writings [q], as having ſome traces of this diſpute; but in them the diſcourſe is not concerning the body, but the ſoul of *Moſes*; not concerning burying or taking up of his body, when buried, but concerning the taking away of his ſoul, when he was alive; which none of the angels caring to undertake, at length *Samael*, the chief of devils, did, but without ſucceſs, whereſore God took it away with a kiſs himſelf: beſides, the Apoſtle produces this hiſtory as a thing well known; nor is it reaſonable to ſuppoſe that ſuch an altercation ſhould be between *Michael*, and the devil, on ſuch an account; or that it was in order to draw *Iſrael* into idolatry on the one hand, and on the other hand to prevent it; ſince it never was the cuſtom of the *Iſraelites* to worſhip their progenitors or heroes; nor did they ſeem ſo well-diſpoſed to *Moſes* in his life-time; nor was there any neceſſity of taking up his body, were they inclined to give him honour and worſhip; yea, the ſight of his dead body would rather have prevented than have encouraged it: but this is to be underſtood figuratively; and reference is had to the hiſtory in *Zech*. iii. 1, 2. as appears from the latter part of this verſe: ſome think the prieſthood of Chriſt is intended, which was the end, the ſum and ſubſtance of the law of *Moſes*; and ſeeing that *Joſhua*, the high-prieſt, was a type of Chriſt, and the angel of the Lord contended with ſatan about him, he might be ſaid to diſpute with him about the body of *Moſes*; but this ſenſe makes a type of a type, and Chriſt to contend about himſelf; beſides, this ſhould rather be called the body of Chriſt, than of *Moſes*. Others think that the temple of the *Jews* is meant, about the rebuilding of which the contention is thought to be; and which may be called the body of *Moſes*, as the church is called the body of Chriſt; tho' it ſhould be obſerved, that the temple is never ſo called, and that not the place where the church meets, but the church itſelf, is called the body of Chriſt: but it is beſt of all to underſtand it of the law of *Moſes*, which is ſometimes called *Moſes* himſelf, *John* v. 45. *Acts* xv. 21. and xxi. 21. 2 *Cor*. iii. 15. and ſo the body of *Moſes*, or the body of his laws, the ſyſtem of them; juſt as we call a ſyſtem of laws, and of divinity, ſuch an one's body of laws, and ſuch an one's body of divinity: and this agrees with the language of the *Jews*, who ſay [r], of ſtatutes, ſervice, purification, *&c*. that they are, גופי התורה, *the bodies of the law*; and ſo of *Miſnic* treatiſes, as thoſe which concern the offerings of turtle doves, and the purification of menſtruous women, that they are, גופי, *the bodies* of the traditions [s], that is, the ſum and ſubſtance of them: ſo the decalogue is ſaid [t] to be *the body* of the *Shema*, or hear, O *Iſrael*, *Deut*. vi. 4. ſo *Clemens* of *Alexandria* [u] ſays, that there are ſome who conſider the body of the ſcriptures, the words and names, as if they were, το ϲωμα τȣ Μωσεως, *the body of Moſes* [w]. Now the law of *Moſes* was reſtored in the time of *Joſhua* the high-prieſt, by *Ezra* and *Nehemiah*. *Joſhua* breaks ſome of theſe laws, and is charged by ſatan as guilty, who contended and inſiſted upon it, that he ſhould ſuffer for it; ſo that this diſpute or contention might be ſaid to be about the body of *Moſes*, that is, the body of *Moſes*'s law, which *Joſhua* had broken; in which diſpute *Michael*, or the angel of the Lord, even the Lord Jeſus Chriſt himſelf, *durſt not bring againſt him a railing accuſation*; that is, not that he was afraid of the devil, but though he could have given harder words, or ſeverer language, and which the other deſerved, yet he choſe not to do it, he would not do it; in which ſenſe the word *durſt*, or *dare*, is uſed in *Rom*. v. 7. *but ſaid*, *the Lord rebuke thee*; for thy malice and inſolence; ſee *Zech*. iii. 2. and this mild and gentle way of uſing even the devil himſelf, agrees with Chriſt's conduct towards him, when tempted by him in the wilderneſs, and when in his agony with him in the garden, and amidſt all his reproaches and ſufferings on the croſs. And now the argument is from the greater to the leſſer, that if Chriſt, the prince of angels, did not chuſe to give a railing word to the devil, who is ſo much inferior to him, and when there was ſo much reaſon and occaſion for it; then how great is the inſolence of theſe men, that ſpeak evil of civil and eccleſiaſtical rulers, without any juſt cauſe at all?

Ver. 10. *But theſe ſpeak evil of thoſe things which they know not*, &c.] Which may more particularly refer to dignities, ver. 8. either angels, who are little known, and not at all, but by revelation, and yet were blaſphemed, or evil ſpoken of by theſe men; either by aſcribing too much to them, as the creation of the world; or by ſaying ſuch things of them, as were below, and unworthy of them, as their congreſs with women, *&c*. Or civil magiſtrates; theſe men were ignorant of the nature, uſe, and end of magiſtracy, and civil government, and ſo treated it with contempt; or the miniſters of the Goſpel, whoſe uſefulneſs was not known, at leaſt not acknowledged by them, and ſo became the object of their ſcorn and reproach: or it may refer more generally to the ſcriptures, which falſe teachers are ignorant of, and yet ſpeak evil of; either by denying them to be the word of God, or by putting falſe gloſſes on them; and ſo to the ſeveral parts of the ſcriptures, as to the law, the nature, uſe, and end of which they are not acquainted with; and therefore blaſpheme it, by not walking according to it, or by denying it to be of God, and to be good, or by making the obſervance of it neceſſary to juſtification and ſalvation; and alſo to the Goſpel, the doctrines and ordinances of it, which they ſpeak evil of, deſpiſe and reject, not knowing the nature, value, and deſign of them: *but what they know naturally as brute beaſts*; man originally had a large ſhare of natural knowledge, and there is in man ſtill, notwithſtanding the fall, by which his knowledge is impaired, a natural knowledge of God, and of things natural, civil, and moral; and there is a ſenſitive knowledge in man, which he has in common with the brutes, and which is here meant: and ſuch was the brutiſh ſenſuality of theſe men, that *in thoſe things they corrupt themſelves*; and act as brute beaſts without ſhame and fear; yea, worſe than brute beaſts, as in the acts of unnatural luſt, mentioned in ver. 7. whereby they corrupt both their ſouls and bodies, and ſo ſhall be deſtroyed and periſh in their corruption.

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[o] De Confuſ. Ling. p. 341. & quis rer. divin. Hæres, p. 509.

[p] Πεϱι αϱχων, l. 3. c. 2.

[q] Debarim Rabba, fol. 245. 3, 4. Abot R. Nathan, c. 12. fol. 4. 2, 3. Petirath Moſis, fol. 57. 1. &c.

[r] Miſn. Chagiga, c. 1. §. 8.

[s] Pirke Abot, c. 3. §. 18.

[t] T. Hieroſ. Beracot, fol. 6. 2.

[u] Stromat. l. 6. p. 680.

[w] Vid. Chion. Diſput. Theolog. par. 1. & 2. De Corpore Moſis, ſub Præſidio Trigland. Lugd. Batav. 1697.

Ver. 11. *Wo unto them*, &c.] This may be conſidered as a commiſeration of their caſe, or as a denunciation of deſerved puniſhment, or as a prediction of what would befal them. The *Arabic* verſion prefaces theſe words with an addreſs to the ſaints, *O my beloved*; that what was about to be ſaid might be attended to, as a caution and inſtruction to them. *For they have gone in the way of Cain*; which was a way of envy, for *Cain* envied the acceptance of his brother's gift, and that notice which the Lord took of him; ſo theſe men envied the gifts beſtowed on Chriſt's faithful miniſters, and the ſucceſs that attended their labours, and the honour that was put upon them by Chriſt, and that was given them by the churches; which ſhows, that they were deſtitute of grace, and particularly of the grace of charity, or love, which envies not, and that they were in an unregenerate eſtate, and upon the brink of ruin and deſtruction. Moreover, the way of *Cain* was a way of hatred, and murther of his brother, which his envy led him to; ſo theſe men hated the brethren, perſecuted them unto death, as well as were guilty of the murder of the ſouls of men, by their falſe doctrine: to which may be added, as another of *Cain*'s ways, in conſequence of the former, abſence from the preſence of God, or the place of his worſhip; ſo theſe men ſeparated themſelves, and went out from the churches, forſook the aſſembling together with them, and ſo might expect *Cain*'s puniſhment, to be driven from the face of God; yea, to be bid go as curſed into everlaſting burnings: *and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward*; *Balaam*'s error which he himſelf was guilty of, was covetouſneſs, or an immoderate love of money, 2 *Pet.* ii. 15. which, as it is the root of all evil, is the bane of religion, and the ſource of hereſy, and what the falſe teachers were greatly addicted to; and where it prevails, it is inſatiable, and not to be checked, and ſtopped, as in theſe men; and is a damnable ſin, and excludes from the kingdom of heaven, as well as is diſhonourable to religion; hence ſuch particular notice is taken of it, leſt it be found in a miniſter of the word: this character exactly agrees with the followers of *Simon Magus*. The error which *Balaam* led others into, was both idolatry and adultery, *Rev.* ii. 14. which theſe falſe teachers were both guilty of themſelves, and taught others, and indulged them therein; and which, both teachers and people, ran greedily after. *Balaam* is one of the four private perſons, who, according to the *Jews*, ſhall have no part or portion in the world to come [w]. *And periſhed in the gainſaying of Core*; the ſame with *Korah*, *Numb.* xvi. 1. The *Septuagint* there call him *Core*, and ſo does *Philo* the *Jew* [x], as the Apoſtle does here, and by *Joſephus* he is called [y] *Cores*: now the gainſaying or contradiction of theſe men, was like *Korah*'s; as his was againſt *Moſes*, the ruler of the people, ſo theirs was againſt magiſtracy, ver. 8. which was gainſaying God's own ordinance, and a contradiction of that which is for the good of men; the ground of which contradiction was love of liberty, and their own luſts; and generally ſpeaking, men periſh in their factions and rebellions againſt good and lawful magiſtrates: alſo, as *Korah* gainſayed *Aaron*, the prieſt of the Lord, ſo theſe men contradicted and oppoſed the miniſters of Chriſt, whom they would have thruſt out, in order to put in themſelves, and whoſe perſons they reviled, and contradicted their doctrines, which to do is of dangerous conſequence; and they might be ſaid to periſh in his gainſaying, as a type and example of their deſtruction, which would be ſwift and ſudden, as his was; and to denote the certainty of it. So the *Jews* [z] ſay of *Korah*, and his company, that they ſhall never aſcend, or riſe up and ſtand in judgment, and that they ſhall have no part or portion in the world to come [a].

Ver. 12. *Theſe are ſpots in your feaſts of charity*, &c.] Or *love*. The *Jews* ſpeak of, סעודתיה, דמהימנתא, *of a feaſt of faith* [b]. Theſe here ſeem to be the *Agapæ*, or love-feaſts of the primitive chriſtians; the deſign of which was to maintain and promote brotherly love, from whence they took their name; and to refreſh the poor ſaints, that they might have a full and comfortable meal now and then: their manner of keeping them was this; they began and ended them with prayer and ſinging; and they obſerved them with great temperance and frugality; and they were attended with much joy and gladneſs, and ſimplicity of heart: but were quickly abuſed, by *judaizing* chriſtians, as obſerving them in imitation of the paſſover; and by intemperance in eating and drinking; and by excluding the poor, for whoſe benefit they were chiefly deſigned; and by ſetting up ſeparate meetings for them, and by admitting unfit perſons unto them; ſuch as here are ſaid to be *ſpots* in them, blemiſhes, which brought great reproach and ſcandal upon them, being perſons of infamous characters and converſations. The alluſion is either to ſpots in garments, or in faces, or in ſacrifices; or to a ſort of earth that defiles; or elſe to rocks and hollow ſtones on ſhores, lakes, and rivers, which collect filth and ſlime; all which ſerve to expoſe and point out the perſons deſigned. The *Alexandrian* copy, and ſome others, read, *theſe are in their own deceivings*, *ſpots*, απαταις, inſtead of αγαπαις, as in 2 *Pet.* ii. 13. *when they feaſt with you*; which ſhows, that they were among them, continued members with them, and partook with them in their ſolemn feaſts, and were admitted to communion; and carries in it a kind of reproof to the ſaints, that they ſuffered ſuch perſons among them, and allowed them ſuch privilege, intimacy, and familiarity with them: *feeding themſelves without fear*; theſe were like the ſhepherds of *Iſrael*, who fed themſelves, and not the flock, and were very impious, and impudent, open and bare-faced in their iniquities, neither fearing God, nor regarding man. *Clouds they are, without water*; they are compared to *clouds* for their number, being many falſe prophets and antichriſts that were come out into the world; and for their ſudden riſe, having at once, and at an unawares, crept into the churches; and for the general darkneſs they ſpread over the churches, making it, by their doctrines and practices, to be a dark and cloudy day, a day of darkneſs, and gloomineſs, a day of clouds, and of thick darkneſs, a day of trouble, rebuke, and blaſphemy; and for the ſtorms, factions, rents, and diviſions they made; as alſo for their ſituation and height, ſoaring aloft, and being vainly puft up in their fleſhy mind; as well as for their ſudden deſtruction, diſappearing at once. And to clouds *without water*, becauſe deſtitute of the true grace of God, and of true evangelical doctrine; which, like rain, is from above, from heaven; and which, like that, refreſhes, ſoftens, and fructifies. Now theſe falſe teachers looked like clouds, that promiſed rain, boaſted of Goſpel-light, and knowledge, but were deſtitute of it, wherefore their miniſtry was uncomfortable, and unprofitable. *Carried about of winds*; either of falſe doctrines, or of their own luſts, and paſſions, or of ſatan's temptations: *trees whoſe fruit withereth*; or *trees in autumn*; either like to them, which put forth at that ſeaſon of the year, and ſo come to nothing; or like to trees which are bare of leaves, as well as fruit, it being the time when the leaves fall from the trees; and ſo may be expreſſive of theſe perſons caſting off the leaves of an outward profeſſion, of their going out from the churches, ſeparating from them, and forſaking the aſſembling together with them, when, what fruit of holineſs, and good works, they ſeemed to have, came to nothing; and ſo were *without fruit*, either of Goſpel doctrine, or of Goſpel holineſs and righteouſneſs; nor did they make any true converts, but what they made, were like the *Phariſees*, as bad, or worſe than themſelves; and from their unfruitfulneſs in all reſpects, it appeared that they were not in Chriſt the true vine, and were not ſent forth by him, nor with his Goſpel, and that they were deſtitute of the Spirit of God. *Twice dead*; that is, entirely, thoroughly, and really dead in treſpaſſes and ſins, notwithſtanding their pretenſions to religion and godlineſs; or the ſenſe may be, that they were not only liable to a corporal death, common to them with all mankind, but alſo to an eternal one, or to the death both of ſoul and body in hell. *Homer* calls [d] thoſe, διθανεις, *twice dead*, that go to hell alive: or rather the ſenſe is this, that they were dead in ſin by nature, as all men are, and again having made a profeſſion of religion, were now become dead to that profeſſion; and ſo were twice dead, once as they were born, and a ſecond time as they had apoſtatized: *plucked up by the roots*; either by ſeparating themſelves from the churches, where they had been externally planted; or by the act of the church in cutting them off, and caſting them out; or by the judgment of God upon them.

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[w] Miſn. Sanhedrin, c. 11. §. 2.
[x] De Profugis, p. 471.
[y] Antiq. l. 4. c. 2. §. 2.
[z] Miſn. Sanhedrin, ib. §. 2. Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 89. 3. Sanhed. Ib. §. 3.
[a] T. Hieroſ. Sanhedrin, fol. 29. 3.
[b] Zohar in Exod. fol. 36. 3, 4.

Ver. 13. *Raging waves of the ſea*, &c.] Falſe teachers are ſo called, for their ſwelling pride and vanity; which, as it is what prevails in human nature, is a governing vice in ſuch perſons, for knowledge, without grace, puffs up; and this ſhows that they had not received the doctrine of grace in truth, for that humbles; as alſo for their arrogance, boaſting, and oſtentation; and for their noiſineſs, their reſtleſs, uneaſy, and turbulent ſpirits, for their furious and wrathful diſpoſitions; as well as for their levity and inconſtancy, and for their turpitude and filthineſs: *foaming out their own ſhame*; wrathful words, frothy and obſcene language, and filthy doctrines; and which expreſſes the iſſue of their noiſy and bluſtring miniſtry, which ends in uncleanneſs, ſhame, emptineſs, and ruin. *Wandring ſtars*; they are called *ſtars*, becauſe they have the appearance of ſuch, and blaze for a while, in ſeeming light, zeal, and warmth, and in fame and reputation; and *wandring* ones, not comparable to the planets, which go their regular courſe, but to fiery exhalations, gliding, and running ſtars; becauſe they wander about from houſe to houſe, as well as from one nation to another, and being never ſettled in their principles, nor at a point in religion; and wander alſo after their own carnal luſts, and cauſe others to wander likewiſe, and at laſt become falling ſtars; not from real grace and ſanctified knowledge, which they never had; but from truth to error, and from a ſeemingly holy life and converſation, to a vicious one; and from a profeſſion of religion, to open prophaneneſs; and whoſe fall is irrecoverable, as that of ſtars: *to whom is reſerved the blackneſs of darkneſs for ever*; or the blackeſt darkneſs, even utter darkneſs; which phraſe not only expreſſes the dreadful nature of their puniſhment, their moſt miſerable and uncomfortable condition; but alſo the certainty of it, it is *reſerved* for them among the treaſures of divine wrath and vengeance, by the righteous appointment of God, according to the juſt demerit of their ſins; and likewiſe the duration of it, it will be for ever; there will never be any light or comfort, but a continual everlaſting black deſpair, a worm that dieth not, a fire that will not be quenched, the ſmoke and blackneſs of which will aſcend for ever and ever; hell is meant by it, which the *Jews* repreſent as a place of darkneſs: the *Egyptian* darkneſs, they ſay, came from the darkneſs of hell, and in hell the wicked will be covered with darkneſs; the darkneſs which was upon the face of the deep, at the creation, they interpret of hell [e].

Ver. 14. *And Enoch alſo, the ſeventh from Adam*, &c.] This was *Enoch* the ſon of *Jared*; his name ſignifies one *inſtructed*, or *trained up*; as he doubtleſs was by his father, in the true religion, in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and was one that had much communion with God; he walked with him, and was tranſlated by him, body and ſoul to heaven, and did not ſee death; *Gen.* v. 18, 22, 24. he is ſaid to be *the ſeventh from Adam*; not the ſeventh man from him that was born into the world, for there were no doubt thouſands born before him; but he was, as the *Jews* expreſs it [f], דור שביעי, *the ſeventh generation* from him; and they have an obſervation [g] that all ſevenths are always beloved by God; the ſeventh in lands, and the ſeventh in generations; *Adam*, *Seth*, *Enos*, *Cainan*, *Mahaleel*, *Jared*, *Enoch*, as it is written, *Gen.* v. 24. and this is ſaid partly to diſtinguiſh him from others of the

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[d] Odyſſ. l. 12. lin. 22.

[e] Shemot Rabba, §. 14. fol. 99. 3.

[f] Juchaſin, fol. 5. 2. Ganz. Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 5. 1.

[g] Vajikra Rabba, §. 29. fol. 170. 1.

ſame name, and particularly from *Enoch* the ſon of *Cain*, the third from *Adam* in his line, as this was the ſeventh from *Adam* in the line of *Seth*; and partly to obſerve the antiquity of the following prophecy of his: for it is ſaid *he propheſied of theſe*; of theſe falſe teachers, and ſuch as they; what would be their ſad ſtate and condition at the ſecond coming of Chriſt to judgment: that he had a ſpirit of prophecy is evident, from the name he gave to his ſon *Methuſelah*, which ſignifies, *when he dies is the emiſſion*, or the ſending out of the waters of the flood, which came to paſs the very year he did die. The *Arabic* writers[h] call him *Edris* the prophet; and the *Jews* ſay[i], that he was in a higher degree than *Moſes* or *Elias*; they alſo call[k] him *Metatron*, the great ſcribe, a name which they ſometimes give to the angel that went before the children of *Iſrael* in the wilderneſs, and which ſeems to belong to the Meſſiah: that *Enoch* wrote a prophecy, and left it behind him in writing, does not appear from hence, or elſewhere; the *Jews*, in ſome of their writings, do cite and make mention of the book of *Enoch*; and there is a fragment now which bears his name, but is a ſpurious piece, and has nothing like this prophecy in it: wherefore *Jude* took this not from a book called the *Apocalypſe of Enoch*, but from tradition; this prophecy being handed down from age to age; and was in full credit with the *Jews*, and therefore the Apoſtle very appoſitely produces it; or rather he had it by divine inſpiration, and is as follows: *ſaying*, *behold the Lord cometh with ten thouſand of his ſaints*; by the *Lord* is meant the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who is ordained the judge of quick and dead, and for which he is richly qualified, being omniſcient and omnipotent, and faithful and righteous, and who will certainly come again to judge the world in righteouſneſs; for not of his firſt coming, which was not to judge and condemn, but to ſeek and ſave, but of his ſecond coming at the laſt day is this to be underſtood; and this is expreſſed in the preſent tenſe, *cometh*, in the manner of the prophets, who ſpeak of things future as if they already were, as *Iſaiah* does of the incarnation, ſufferings, and death of Chriſt, and to awaken the attention of perſons to it, as if it was near at hand, as alſo to ſignify the certainty of it: and when he comes, he'll be attended *with ten thouſand of his ſaints*; meaning either the ſouls of glorified ſaints, even all of them, 1 *Theſſ.* iii. 13. which will come with Chriſt, and meet the living ones, and be re-united to their own bodies, which will then be raiſed; or elſe the holy angels, as in *Deut.* xxxiii. 2. and ſo ſome copies, and the *Arabic* verſion read; which will be both for the ſhewing forth of his glory and majeſty, and for ſervice in gathering his elect together, as well as for terror to the wicked; and a *behold* is prefixed to all this, to denote the certainty of Chriſt's coming, and the importance and wonderfulneſs of it: the ends of his coming follow.

Ver. 15. *To execute judgment upon all*, &c.] Quick and dead, ſmall and great, high and low, rich and poor, good and bad, righteous and wicked, ſheep and goats; to paſs the definitive ſentence on each, that of abſolution, life, and happineſs on his own people, and that of condemnation, death, and miſery on the wicked; which will be done in the moſt ſtrict and righteous manner: *and to convince all that are ungodly among them*; thoſe who are without God, the fear of him, love to him, or faith in him; who have lived without the worſhip of him, or in a falſe worſhip; and particularly falſe teachers are here meant, the ſame as in ver. 4. who will then be convicted in their own conſciences, by that clear evidence, and full light in which things will be ſet: *of all their ungodly deeds*; both againſt law and Goſpel: *which they have ungodly committed*; which they lived in the commiſſion of, and continually practiſed in a vile manner, publickly, and in defiance of heaven, and with ſeared conſciences: *and of all their hard ſpeeches, which ungodly ſinners have ſpoken againſt him*; either *againſt God*, as the *Vulgate Latin* verſion reads, againſt his being, his perfections, his providence, his purpoſes, his word, and worſhip; or rather againſt Jeſus Chriſt the Lord, who will come to judge them; againſt his perſon and offices, his blood, righteouſneſs, and ſacrifice; his miniſters and people, his truths and ordinances.

Ver. 16. *Theſe are murmurers*, &c.] That is, at others; ſecretly, inwardly, in a muttering way, grunting out their murmurs like ſwine; to which, for their filthineſs and apoſtacy, falſe teachers may be fitly compared: and their murmurs might be both againſt God and men; againſt God, againſt the being of God, denying, or at leaſt wiſhing there was no God, and uneaſy becauſe there is one; againſt the perfections of God, particularly his ſovereignty over all, his ſpecial goodneſs to ſome; his wiſdom, juſtice, truth, and faithfulneſs; againſt his purpoſes and decrees, both with reſpect to things temporal, ſpiritual, and eternal; againſt the providence of God and his government of the world, and the unequal diſtribution of things in it; and eſpecially againſt the doctrines of free grace, and the ordinances of the Goſpel: and not only are they murmurers againſt God, and all divine things and perſons, but alſo againſt men; particularly againſt civil magiſtrates, who reſtrain them, and are a terror to them; and againſt the miniſters of the Goſpel, whoſe gifts and uſefulneſs they envy; and indeed againſt all men, their neighbours, and what they enjoy; and at every thing that goes beſides themſelves: it follows, *complainers*; ſome join the above character and this together, and read, as the *Vulgate Latin* verſion, *complaining murmurers*; others, as the *Syriac* verſion, place not only a comma, but a copulative between them; and as the former may deſign ſecret and inward murmuring, this may intend outward complaining, in words; not of their own ſins and corruptions, nor of the ſins of others, with any concern for the honour of religion; or of the decay of powerful godlineſs in themſelves or others; or of the unſucceſsfulneſs of the Goſpel, and the decreaſe of the intereſt of Chriſt; but either of God, that he has not made them equal to others in the good things of life, as the *Arabic* verſion renders it, *complaining of their own lots*; or that he lays ſo much affliction upon them more than on others; or of men, that their ſalaries are not ſufficient, and that they are not enough reſpected according to their merit; and indeed, as the *Syriac* verſion reads, *they complain of every thing*, and are never ſatisfied and eaſy: *walking after their own luſts*; which are carnal and worldly, ſee the note on 2 *Pet.* iii. 3. *and their mouth ſpeaketh great ſwelling words*; both againſt God and men; and this may point at their boaſt of knowledge, their great oſtentation of learning, their vain and empty doctrines, their high flights, their rhetorical ſtile, and bombaſt language: *having mens perſons in admiration becauſe of advantage*; crying up men of their own ſtamp for the advantage of the party; and giving flattering titles to men of wealth and riches, for the ſake of their money; ſo the *Ethiopic*

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[h] Elmacinus, p. 10. apud Hottinger. Smegma Orient. p. 240.

[i] Shalſhelet Hakabala, fol. 1. 2.

[k] Targum Jon. in Gen. v. 24. Toſephot in T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 16. 2. Juchaſin, fol. 5. 2.

opic verſion, *they ſtudied to pleaſe perſons, to make gain of them*; they were reſpecters of perſons; ſo the phraſe is uſed by the *Septuagint* in *Deut*. x. 17. and xxviii. 50. and in *Job* xxii. 8. and xxxii. 22. and xxxiv. 19. and in *Prov*. xviii. 5. and in *Iſ*. ix. 15.

Ver. 17. *But beloved*, &c.] Or *my beloved*, as the *Syriac and Arabic* verſions read; or *our brethren*, as the *Ethiopic* verſion; the Apoſtle addreſſes the ſaints in this manner, to diſtinguiſh them from the falſe teachers, and to ſhow that he had a different opinion of them from them; and that he would have them beware of them, and not be ſurprized at them, ſince it was no other than what was foretold; and alſo to engage their attention and regard to the following exhortation: *remember ye the words which were ſpoken before of the Apoſtles of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*; theſe words mean not the doctrines of the Apoſtles in general, but particularly the prophecies delivered out by them, as by the Apoſtles *Paul* and *Peter*, concerning the falſe teachers that ſhould ariſe; and theſe being ſpoken of before, and by Apoſtles, even by the Apoſtles of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, were worthy of regard, and deſerved to be remembred; a remembrance of which is a preſervative from error, and a relief in the worſt of times, whether of perſecution, or hereſy. This does not ſuppoſe that *Jude* was not an Apoſtle, only that there were other Apoſtles beſides him; and that theſe, ſome of them at leaſt, had propheſied of theſe men, and that he had lived to ſee their predictions verified; nor does he exclude himſelf from being one of them; yea, the *Ethiopic* verſion reads, *which we the Apoſtles of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt have formerly declared unto you*; ſee 2 *Pet*. iii. 2.

Ver. 18. *How that they told you that there ſhould be mockers in the laſt time*, &c.] See the note on 2 *Pet*. iii. 3.

Ver. 19. *Theſe be they who ſeparate themſelves*, &c.] Not from ſinners openly prophane; ſuch a ſeparation is commendable, being according to the will and word of God, to the mind and practice of Chriſt, and which tends to the good of men, and to the glory of God; but from the ſaints and people of God; it is poſſible that a child of God may for a time leave the fellowſhip of the ſaints, but an entire and total forſaking of them, and of aſſembling with them, looks with an ill aſpect; nor did they ſeparate themſelves from ſuperſtition and will-worſhip, and every falſe way of worſhip, which would have been right, but from the pure worſhip, ordinances, and diſcipline of God's houſe, by a perverſion of them, and as being above them, or unwilling to be under any notice and government; nor from errors and hereſies, and perſons that held them, with theſe they herded; but from the pure doctrines of the Goſpel, and miniſters of the word, and made diviſions and ſeparations among the churches, for worldly ends, and thro' pride and affectation of vain-glory, as if they were more knowing, more holy, and more ſpiritual than other men: when they were *ſenſual*; ſuch as gave themſelves up to ſenſual luſts and pleaſures; and at beſt were but natural men, who had only natural and rational abilities, but without ſpiritual and experimental knowledge: hence it follows, *having not the Spirit*; tho' they might have ſome external gifts of the Spirit, yet not the graces and fruits of the Spirit; or he himſelf dwelling in them, as a ſpirit of conviction and illumination, as a ſpirit of regeneration and ſanctification, as a ſpirit of faith and comfort, as a ſpirit of adoption, and as the earneſt and pledge of the heavenly glory; they were not under his influence, nor did they feel the operations of his grace, nor had they communion with him: hence they appeared to be none of Chriſt's, nor could they claim intereſt in him, and were without life, and ſo could not perſevere.

Ver. 20. *But ye, beloved*, &c.] See the note on ver. 17. *building up yourſelves on your moſt holy faith*; ſome copies, and the *Complutenſian* edition read, *our moſt holy faith*; meaning the doctrine of faith in all its branches, which is holy, a moſt holy doctrine; which diſplays the holineſs of God, and is a means of beginning and increaſing internal holineſs in the ſaints, and of encouraging and exciting them to external holineſs of life and converſation: this phraſe, מהימנותא קדישא, *holy faith*, is in uſe with the *Jews*[k]: and it becomes the ſaints to build up one another upon this; the doctrine of faith is a foundation to build upon, particularly what regards the perſon, offices, and grace of Chriſt, and is itſelf of an edifying nature; and they ſhould not content themſelves with their preſent knowledge of it, but ſeek for an improvement in it; and tho' they were paſſive when firſt built on Chriſt and his doctrines, and tho' miniſters are greatly inſtruments in building of them up more and more, yet they are capable of building up themſelves, and one another, by attending on the miniſtry of the word, and by private converſation with each other, and particularly by *praying in the Holy Ghoſt*; which is a ſpecial means of increaſe and eſtabliſhment in the doctrine of faith: the Holy Ghoſt is the author and enditer of prayer, and an aſſiſter in it; without him ſaints cannot call God their father, nor pray with faith and fervency, or with freedom and liberty.

Ver. 21. *Keep yourſelves in the love of God*, &c.] By which may be meant either the grace and favour of God, that love with which God loves his people; and then the exhortation to the ſaints to keep themſelves in it is, to ſet it always before them, to keep it conſtantly in view, to exerciſe faith on it, firmly believing their intereſt in it; as alſo to meditate on it, give themſelves up wholly to the contemplation of it, and employ their thoughts conſtantly about it, which is the foundation of all grace here, and glory hereafter; or to preſerve themſelves by it, for ſo the words may be rendered, *preſerve yourſelves by the love of God*; againſt ſatan's temptations, the ſnares of the world, and the luſts of the fleſh; whenever ſatan ſollicits to ſin, and any ſnare is laid to draw into it, and the fleſh attempts to be predominant, ſaints ſhould betake themſelves to the love of God, as to a ſtrong hold and preſervative againſt ſin, and reaſon as *Joſeph* did, *Gen*. xxxix. 9. for the love of God, and continuance in it, do not depend on any thing that can be done by men; nor is there any danger of real believers falling from it, or loſing it, ſince it is unchangeable, and is from everlaſting to everlaſting: or elſe by the love of God we are to underſtand that love with which his people love him, and of which he is the object, *Luke* xi. 42. and then the meaning of the exhortation is, that though this grace of love cannot be loſt, yet, inaſmuch as the fervour of it may be abated, and the people of God grow cold and indifferent in their expreſſions of it, it becomes them to make uſe of all proper means to maintain and increaſe it in themſelves and others; ſuch as are mentioned in the context, as converſing together in an edifying way about the doctrines of the Goſpel, and praying either ſeparately or together, under the influences of the Holy Spirit, and looking forward for the grace and mercy of Chriſt unto everlaſting life; all which, with many other things, by the bleſſing of God, may ſerve to maintain and revive the grace of love, and blow it up into a flame: tho' perhaps this phraſe may chiefly deſign that love, peace, and concord, which ought to ſubſiſt among ſaints as brethren, and which they ſhould be careful to preſerve; and may be called the love of God, juſt as the ſame thing is ſtiled the peace of God, *Col.* iii. 15. becauſe it is what God requires, what he calls unto, which is of him, and is taught by him in regeneration, and what his love engages to, and without which there is no true love to him; and he takes love ſhewn to his people as if ſhewn to himſelf; and this ſenſe is favoured by the context, both by the words in the preceding verſe, and in the following ones: *looking for the mercy of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt unto eternal life.* The mercy of Chriſt may be conſidered either as paſt, which was ſhown in eternity, in his covenant-tranſactions with his Father, in engaging in the cauſe of his people, in eſpouſing them to himſelf, and in the care of their perſons, grace and glory; and in time, in aſſuming their nature, in his tender concern for the bodies and ſouls of men, in bearing the ſins and ſorrows of his people, in the redemption of them, and in their regeneration and vocation; and there is the preſent mercy of Chriſt, in interceding for his people, in ſympathizing with them under all their afflictions, in ſuccouring them under all their temptations, in ſuiting himſelf, as the great ſhepherd, to all the circumſtances of his flock; and there is the future mercy of Chriſt, which will be ſhown at death, in the grave, and at the reſurrection, at the day of judgment, and in the merciful ſentence he'll pronounce on his people; and this ſeems to be deſigned here; the conſequent of which, or what is annexed to it, and in which it iſſues, is eternal life; which is not owing to the works of men, but to the grace of God, and mercy of Chriſt; eternal life is in him, and is given thro' him, and to his mercy ſhould men look for it. Chriſt himſelf is to be looked for, who will certainly come a ſecond time; and eternal life is to be looked for by him; and this is only to be expected thro' his grace and mercy; and this is to be looked for by faith, in the love of it, with delight and pleaſure, and chearfulneſs, with eagerneſs, and yet with patience.

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[k] Zohar in Gen. fol. 47. 4.

Ver. 22. *And of ſome have compaſſion,* &c.] That is, of ſuch who have gone aſtray, being drawn aſide; who are ſimple and ignorant, and out of the way; who ſin thro' infirmity, and the force of temptation; and who are tractable and open to conviction, and whoſe miſtakes are in leſſer matters of religion; as alſo ſuch who are convicted and wounded in their conſciences for their ſins and miſtakes: and to theſe compaſſion is to be ſhewn, by praying with them, and for them, with ardency and affection; inſtructing them in meekneſs; giving friendly and brotherly reproofs to them; expreſſing on all occaſions a tender concern for their good; doing them all the good that can be done, both for their ſouls and bodies: and good reaſon there is why compaſſion ſhould be ſhown them, becauſe God is a God of compaſſion; Chriſt is a merciful high-prieſt; a contrary ſpirit is grieving to the Holy Ghoſt; ſaints ſhould conſider what they themſelves were, and what they now are, and that compaſſion has been ſhewn to them, and they may want it again. The *Alexandrian* copy, and ſome others, and the *Vulgate Latin* and *Ethiopic* verſions read, *reprove. Making a difference;* between one and another; uſing ſome more tenderly, others more ſeverely, as the nature and circumſtances of their caſe appear to be. The *Syriac* verſion renders the whole, *when they repent, have compaſſion on them.*

Ver. 23. *And others ſave with fear,* &c.] Meaning falſe teachers, who lead others into errors, and ſuch as give themſelves over unto ſin, whether teachers or hearers, and who are obſtinate and irreclaimable; even ſuch as theſe, means ſhould be uſed to ſave, if poſſible, by ſharp admonitions and ſevere language; by denouncing the awful judgments of God, which threaten them; by inflicting on them church cenſures in a terrible manner; by declaring the terrors of the Lord, and of hell, and of everlaſting damnation: *pulling* them *out of the fire;* of their ſoul-deſtroying doctrines, and of their filthy and unnatural luſts, and as it were out of the fire of hell, of which they are in great danger: *hating even the garment ſpotted by the fleſh;* by which may be meant the converſation of thoſe men, even their filthy converſation, which is to be hated, tho' their perſons are not; but all ways and means ſhould be uſed to ſave them; and this is one way, by ſhowing a diſlike unto, and a reſentment at their wicked way of living, excluding them from church communion for it, and ſhunning all converſation with them. The alluſion is not to garments defiled by profluvious perſons, or menſtruous women, as ſome think, but to garments ſpotted with nocturnal pollutions, or thro' unnatural luſts, which theſe perſons were addicted to [l]. It was reckoned very diſhonourable for religious perſons, in the time of divine ſervice, or on a ſabbath-day, to have on a garment ſpotted with any thing; if a prieſt's garments were ſpotted, and he performed ſervice in them, that ſervice was not right [m]; and if a diſciple of a wiſe man had any greaſe on his garments (on a ſabbath-day) he was guilty of death [n].

Ver. 24. *Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling,* &c.] The people of God are liable to falling, into temptation, into ſin, into errors and miſtakes, from an exerciſe of grace, or from a degree of ſtedfaſtneſs in Goſpel truths, and even into a final and total apoſtacy, were it not for divine power; and they are not able to keep themſelves. *Adam,* in his ſtate of innocence, could not keep himſelf from falling; nor could the angels, many of whom fell, and the reſt are preſerved by the grace of God; wherefore, much leſs can imperfect ſinful men keep themſelves, they want both ſkill and power to do it; nor can any, ſhort of Chriſt, keep them, and it is his work and office to preſerve them; they were given to him with this view, and he undertook to do it; and ſenſible ſinners commit themſelves to him, as being appointed for that purpoſe; and this is a work Chriſt has been, and is employed in, and he is every way qualified for it: he is *able* to do it, for he is the mighty God, the creator and upholder of all things; and as mediator, he has all power in heaven and in earth; inſtances of perſons kept by him prove it; and there is ſuch evidence of it, that believers may be, and are perſuaded of it: and he is as willing as he is able; it is his Father's will he ſhould keep them, and in that he delights; and as he has undertook to keep them, he is accountable for them; beſides, he has an intereſt in them, and the greateſt love and affection for them; to which may be added, that the glory of the Father, Son, and Spirit, in man's ſalvation, depends on the keeping

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[l] Vid. Sueton. in Vita Neronis, c. 28.

[m] T. Bab. Peſachim, fol. 65. 2. & Zebachim, fol. 18. 2. & Piſke Toſephot in Yoma, art. 9. & Maimon. Cele Hamikdaſh, c. 8. §. 4.

[n] T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 114. 1.

ing of them: and what he keeps them from is, from falling by temptations, not from being tempted by ſatan, but from ſinking under his temptations, and from being devoured by him; and from falling by ſin, not from the being or commiſſion of ſin, but from the dominion of it, and from falling into it, ſo as to periſh by it; and from falling into damnable hereſies; and from the true grace of God, and into final impenitence, unbelief, and total apoſtacy. Inſtead of *you*, the *Alexandrian* copy reads, *us*, and ſome copies *them*: *and to preſent* you *faultleſs before the preſence of his glory with exceeding joy*; to himſelf, in this preſent ſtate of things, as waſhed in his blood, and juſtified by his righteouſneſs, and hereafter in the millennium ſtate, and in the ultimate glory; and alſo to his Father, and this he died to do, and in ſome ſenſe did it at his death, even in the body of his fleſh thro' death, and now as the repreſentative of his people in heaven; and will at the laſt day when he'll deliver them up compleat and perfect; all which is in conſequence of his ſuretyſhip-engagements: and this preſentation is made *before the preſence of his glory*; either before the glorious preſence of Chriſt, or Chriſt himſelf, who is glorious and will appear in glory, in his own, and in his Father's, and in his holy angels; or elſe before the glorious preſence of God the Father, and who is glory itſelf: and the condition in which the ſaints are, and will be preſented, is *faultleſs*; tho' they have ſinned in *Adam*, and were ſo wretchedly guilty and filthy in their nature-ſtate, ſo prone to backſlidings, and guilty of ſo many after converſion, and tho' a body of ſin and death is carried by them to the grave; yet they will at laſt be preſented by Chriſt in perfect holineſs, in compleat righteouſneſs, and in the ſhining robes of immortality and glory. The manner in which they will be preſented, is *with exceeding joy*; in themſelves, for what they ſhall be delivered from, from ſin and ſorrow, and every enemy, and for the glory and happineſs they ſhall then enjoy; and alſo in the miniſters of the Goſpel, who will then bring their ſheaves with joy, and then will their converts be their joy and crown of rejoicing; and likewiſe this preſentation will be with the joy of angels, for if they rejoice at the converſion of men, much more at their glorification; and even with the joy of Father, Son, and Spirit.

Ver. 25. *To the only wiſe God our ſaviour*, &c.] By whom is meant, not the Trinity of perſons in general, nor the Father in particular; but the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who is truly God, tho' not to the excluſion of the Father and Spirit; and is the wiſdom of God, and the author of all wiſdom, natural and ſpiritual; and is the only ſaviour of his people; and to him may be, as is aſcribed the *glory* of his deity, and divine Sonſhip, of his mediatorial works, and of ſalvation: *and majeſty*; which belongs to him as God, and which he has in his human nature, being crowned with glory, and honour, and enthroned and ſet down at the right hand of God: *dominion*; both natural, the kingdom of nature and providence belonging to him, and mediatorial, which is above all, reaches far and wide, and will laſt for ever: *and power*; in making and upholding all things; in redeeming his people; in protecting and defending them, and in deſtroying his and their enemies; in raiſing the dead, and judging the world. Tho' the *Alexandrian* copy, and ſome others, and the *Vulgate Latin* verſion read, *to the only God our ſaviour, by Jeſus Chriſt our Lord*, and leave out the word *wiſe*; and ſo they are to be underſtood of God the Father; but the *Ethiopic* verſion reads, *this is the only God our ſaviour Jeſus Chriſt, to whom*, &c. And all this is to be attributed to him, *both now, and ever*; in the preſent life, and to all eternity. *Amen*; which is an aſſent unto it, that ſo it ſhould be; and a wiſh, that ſo it may be; and an expreſſion of faith, and ſtrong aſſeveration, that ſo it ſhall be.

AN
EXPOSITION, &c.

The Revelation of St. JOHN the Divine.

THAT this book was written by the Apoſtle and Evangeliſt *John*, is clear, not only from the expreſs mention of his name, and from his office, a ſervant of Jeſus Chriſt, ver. 1. but alſo from the character this writer gives of himſelf, ver. 2. as being an eye-witneſs of the eſſential Logos, or Word of God, and who bore a faithful record of him as ſuch, as *John* did in his Goſpel, in a very peculiar and remarkable manner, and from this writer's being in the iſle of *Patmos* when he wrote, ver. 9. for of what other *John* can this be ſaid? to which may be added the teſtimonies of the ancient writers, as *Juſtin Martyr* [a], who lived within fifty years of the Apoſtle, and *Irenæus* [b], who was the diſciple of *Polycarp* an hearer of this Apoſtle, and *Clemens Alexandrinus* [c], *Tertullian* [d], *Origen* [e], and others, who aſcribe it to him. It was a moſt monſtrouſly ſtupid notion of *Caius*, *Dionyſius* of *Alexandria* mentions [f], that it was written by *Cerinthus* the heretick, when his hereſies concerning the divinity and humanity of Chriſt, are moſt ſtrongly refuted in it. What ſeems to have led to ſuch a thought is, that the account of the thouſand years reign, and the deſcent of the new *Jeruſalem* from heaven, ſeemed to favour the *judaiſm* of this man, and his carnal notions of an earthly paradiſe, whereas they have no ſuch tendency. And as for its being written by another *John*, who is ſaid to be preſbyter at *Epheſus*, after the Apoſtle, it is not certain there ever was ſuch a man; and if there was, he muſt be too late to be the writer of this book; nor to him can the above characters agree. What is obſerved in favour of him, that the penman of this book is called in the title, *John* the Divine, and not the Evangeliſt, or Apoſtle, will do him no ſervice; for to whom does this character ſo well agree, as to the Evangeliſt *John*, who wrote of divine things in ſo divine a manner, and particularly concerning the divinity of Chriſt? hence this book was ſometimes called Θεολογία, *Divinity* [g]: beſides, the title of the book is not original, but is what has been affixed to it by others, and varies; for in the *Complutenſian* edition it runs thus, "the Revelation of the holy "Apoſtle and Evangeliſt *John* the Divine." In the *Vulgate Latin* verſion it is called, the Apocalypſe of the bleſſed *John* the Apoſtle; and in the *Syriac* verſion, the Revelation which was made to *John* the Evangeliſt; and in the *Arabic* verſion, the Viſion of *John*, the Apoſtle and Evangeliſt, to wit, the Apocalypſe. All which acknowledge the Apoſtle *John* to be the writer of it, and ſhew the ſenſe of the ancients concerning it. Nor is it of any moment what is alledged, that this writer makes mention of his name ſeveral times, whereas it was uſual with *John*, both in his Goſpel and Epiſtles, to conceal his name; ſince there is a wide difference between writing an hiſtory and epiſtles to friends, and prophecy, which requires the author's name, on whom the authority and truth of the prophecy greatly depend: and ſo likewiſe the diſagreement of ſtile obſerved in this book, with the other writings of *John*, has no force in it; ſince the prophetic ſtile is always different from an hiſtorical and epiſtolary one; and yet, after all, in many things, there is an agreement; *John* in this, as in his other writings, ſpeaks of Chriſt as the Word and Son of God, and under the character of the Lamb; and likewiſe the following paſſages may be compared together, as ch. i. 2. with *John* xix. 35. and 1 *John* i. 1, 2. and ch. i. 5. with 1 *John* i. 7. All which being obſerved, there is no room to doubt, neither of the writer, nor of the authority of this book; eſpecially, when the agreement of the doctrine contained in it, with other parts of the ſcripture; the majeſty of its ſtile, and above all, the many prophecies of things to come to paſs in it, ſeveral of which have been already fulfilled, are conſidered; and tho' it was called in queſtion, and rejected by ſome heretical men, becauſe ſome things in it did not ſuit with their tenets, yet we have not the leaſt reaſon to doubt of its being authentic, who have lived to ſee ſo much of it already accompliſhed, and which could come from no other but God. As for the time of its writing, this is not agreed upon on all hands; the place where, ſeems to be the iſle of *Patmos*, which yet ſome queſtion. Some think it was written in the times of *Claudius Cæſar* [h], before the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*. In the title of the *Syriac* verſion, this revelation is ſaid to be made to *John* in the iſle of *Patmos*, into which he was caſt by *Nero Cæſar*. But the more commonly received opinion is, that he had this viſion there, at the latter end of *Domitian's* reign[1], by whom he was there baniſhed, about the year 95, or 96. But be this as it will, the book is certainly of divine authority, and exceeding uſeful and inſtructive; and contains in it the moſt momentous and important doctrines of the Goſpel, concerning a Trinity of perſons in the Godhead, the deity and Sonſhip of Chriſt, the divinity and perſonality of the Spirit, the offices of Chriſt, the ſtate and condition of man by nature, juſtification, pardon, and reconciliation by the blood of Chriſt; and it recommends the ſeveral duties of religion, and encourages to the exerciſe of every grace; and gives a very particular account of the riſe, power, and fall of antichriſt, and of the ſtate of the church of Chriſt in all the periods of time to the end of the world. And tho' it is written in an uncommon ſtile, yet may be underſtood, by the uſe of proper means, as by prayer and meditation, by comparing it with other prophetic writings, and the hiſtory of paſt times, by which many things in it will appear to have had their accompliſhment; and it ought to be obſerved, that it is a revelation, and not a hidden thing; that it is now not a ſealed book, but an open one; and that ſuch are pronounced bleſſed, that read and hear it, and obſerve the things in it, ch. i. 3. and which is no ſmall encouragement to attempt an explanation of it.

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[a] Dialog. cum Tryph. p. 308.
[b] Adv. Hæreſ. l. 4. c. 37, 50. & l. 5. c. 30.
[c] Pædagog. l. 2. c. 12.
[d] Adv. Marcion. l. 4. c. 5.
[e] Comment. in Matt. p. 417. Ed. Huet.
[f] Apud Euſeb. Hiſt. Eccl. l. 3. c. 28. & l. 7. c. 25.
[g] Suidas in voce Ἰωάννης.
[h] Vid. Epiphan. Hæreſ. 51.

CHAP. I.

THIS chapter contains the preface and introduction to the book, and the firſt viſion in it. The preface begins with the title of the book, in which the ſubject-matter of it is pointed at, a *Revelation*; the author of it, Jeſus Chriſt, who had it from his Father; the miniſter of it, *an angel*; the perſon to whom it was made known, deſcribed by his name, office, and the teſtimony he bore to Chriſt, his Goſpel, and to whatever he ſaw; and for encouragement to perſons to read, hear, and obſerve it, happineſs is pronounced on them; ver. 1, 2, 3. the inſcription of the book follows, in which are the name of the writer, and the place where, the churches, to whom it is inſcribed, were, with a ſalutation of them; in which grace and peace are wiſhed for them, from God the Father, from the Holy Spirit, and from Jeſus Chriſt; who is deſcribed by characters expreſſing his prophetic, prieſtly, and kingly offices, and by the benefits, favours, and honours beſtowed by him on his people, to whom a doxology or aſcription of glory is made, ver. 4, 5, 6. who is further deſcribed, firſt by his future viſible coming in the clouds, which will greatly affect the inhabitants of the earth, and then by himſelf, as the eternal and almighty God, ver. 7, 8. and in order to introduce the viſion, hereafter related in this chapter, he that ſaw it gives an account of himſelf, by his name, by his relation to the churches, and by his partnerſhip with them in affliction, and of the place he was in; and for what, and of the time when he had the viſion, and the frame he was in, and what awakened his attention to it, ver. 9, 10, 11. and how, that adverting to it he ſaw ſeven golden candleſticks, and in the midſt of them one like the Son of man, who is deſcribed by his clothes and girdle, by his head, hair, and eyes, by his feet and voice, by what he had in his right hand, and by what went out of his mouth, and by his face ſhining like the ſun in its ſtrength, ver. 12, 13, 14, 15, 16. next is related the effect this viſion had on *John*, who upon it fell down as one dead, but was comforted by Chriſt, laying his right hand on him, and telling him who he was, and bidding him write what he had ſeen, or ſhould ſee, ver. 17, 18, 19. and the chapter is concluded with an interpretation of the myſtery of the ſeven ſtars, and the ſeven candleſticks, ver. 20.

Ver. 1. *The Revelation of Jeſus Chriſt*, &c.] Either of which he is the author; for it was he that ſent and ſhewed it by his angel to *John*; it was he, the lion of the tribe of *Judah*, that took the book, and opened the ſeals of it, and which is a very conſiderable proof of his deity; ſince none but God could foreknow and foretel things to come, or declare the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet, as is done in this book: or of which he is the ſubject; for it treats much of his perſon, offices, and grace, and of Chriſt myſtical, of the ſtate of his church, in the ſeveral ages of time; or it is that Revelation which was firſt made unto him, to which ſenſe the following words incline: *which God gave unto him*; not to him as he is God, for as ſuch he is omniſcient, and foreknew whatever would come to paſs, and needed no revelation to be made to him, but as he was man and mediator; and this was given him by God the Father, and put into his hands, to make known, as being a part of the adminiſtration of his prophetic office: the end of its being given him was, *to ſhew unto his ſervant things which muſt ſhortly come to paſs*; the *Arabic* verſion adds, *in future ages*; things that were to be hereafter, the accompliſhment of which was neceſſary, becauſe of the certain and unalterable decree of God, the good of his people, and his own glory; and theſe were to come to paſs quickly, in a very little time; not that they would all be fulfilled in a ſhort ſpace of time, for there are ſome things not fulfilled yet, tho' it is ſixteen hundred years ago, and more, ſince this revelation was made; and we are ſure there are ſome things that will not be accompliſhed till a thouſand years hence, and more, for the millennium is not yet begun; and after that is ended, there's to be a ſecond reſurrection, and a deſtruction of the *Gog* and *Magog* army; but the ſenſe is, that theſe things ſhould very quickly begin to be fulfilled, and from thence forward go on fulfilling till all were accompliſhed. Now to ſhew, to repreſent theſe things, in a clear manner, as the nature of them would admit of, to the ſervants of Chriſt, all true believers, that read and hear and diligently obſerve them, and eſpecially to the miniſters of the Goſpel, whoſe buſineſs it is to ſearch into them, and point them out to others, and particularly to his ſervant *John*, was this revelation made by Chriſt, who immediately anſwered this end: *and he ſent, and ſignified* it *by his angel unto his ſervant John*; he who is the Lord of angels, and to whom they are miniſtring ſpirits, ſometimes ſent one angel and ſometimes another; and by various emblems, ſigns, and viſions, repreſented and ſet before *John*, a faithful ſervant, and a beloved diſciple of his, the whole of this revelation.

Ver. 2. *Who bore record of the word of God*, &c.] Of the eſſential and eternal word of God, his only begotten Son; as *John* the Apoſtle did in his Goſpel, and in his Epiſtles, and alſo in this book; and which is a clear evidence of his being the writer of it. *And of the teſtimony of Jeſus Chriſt*; that is, the Goſpel, which teſtifies of the perſon of Chriſt, of the truth of his divinity, and reality of his human nature; of the union of the two natures, divine and human, in his perſon; of his ſeveral offices, of prophet, prieſt and king; of what he did and ſuffered for his people; and of the bleſſings of grace which they receive by him: *and of all things that he ſaw*; with his bodily eyes, as the human body of Chriſt, the miracles he wrought in it, the transfiguration of it on the mount, the crucifixion of it, and the piercing of it with a ſpear, and the reſurrection of it from the dead; and alſo all the viſions recorded in this book; and ſuch a faithful witneſs ſerves greatly to confirm the authority of this book, and to recommend the peruſal of it. The *Complutenſian* edition, and the *Arabic* verſion read, *which are, and which ſhall*, or *muſt be hereafter*, as in ver. 19.

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[1] Irenæus adv. Hæreſ. l. 5. c. 30. Euſeb. Eccleſ. Hiſt. l. 3. c. 18.

Ver. 3. *Bleſſed is he that readeth*, &c.] This book of the revelation, privately, in his cloſet or family, carefully and diligently, with a deſire of underſtanding it; or publickly in the church of God, and endeavours to open and explain it to others; and may allude to the reading of the law and the prophets in the ſynagogues, which were not barely read, but expounded; ſee *Acts* xiii. 15. and xv. 21. and the rather this may be thought to be the ſenſe of the words, ſince there is a change of number in the next clauſe, *and they that hear the words of this prophecy*; that liſten attentively to the reading and expoſition of this book, and have ears to hear, ſo as to underſtand the prophecies contained in it; for the whole, when delivered to *John*, was a prophecy of things to come: but ſome verſions read the number alike in both clauſes; as either, *bleſſed is he that readeth, and he that heareth*, as the *Vulgate Latin* and *Ethiopic* verſions; or *bleſſed are they that read, and they that hear*, as the *Arabic* verſion: *and keep thoſe things which are written therein*; the laſt verſion adds, *concerning this frail world*; who not only read, and hear, but put in practice what they read and hear; for there are ſome things in this book which are of a practical nature, eſpecially in the Epiſtles to the ſeven churches; or the ſenſe is, happy are thoſe perſons that obſerve, and take notice of what is written herein, and meditate upon them, and well weigh them in their minds, and retain them in their memories. Now, tho' eternal happineſs does not depend upon, nor is procured by any of theſe means, as reading, hearing, and obſerving; yet there is a real happineſs, a true pleaſure, that does attend theſe things, which may ſtir up to a regard unto them; and for which purpoſe, the following words are added: *for the time is at hand*; when theſe things ſhould begin to be fulfilled.

Ver. 4. *John to the ſeven churches which are in Aſia*, &c.] In leſſer *Aſia*; their names are mentioned in ver. 11. *grace be unto you, and peace*; which is the common ſalutation of the Apoſtles in all their Epiſtles, and includes all bleſſings of grace, and all proſperity, inward and outward; ſee the note on *Rom.* i. 7. The perſons from whom they are wiſhed, are very particularly deſcribed, *from him which is, and which was, and which is to come*; which ſome underſtand of the whole Trinity; the Father by him, *which is*, being the *I am that I am*; the Son by him, *which was*, which was with God the Father, and was God; and the Spirit by him, *which is to come*, who was promiſed to come from the Father and the Son, as a comforter, and the Spirit of truth: others think Chriſt is here only intended, as he is in ver. 8. by the ſame expreſſions; and is he *which is*, ſince before *Abraham* he was the *I am*; and he *which was*, the eternal Logos or Word; and *is to come*, as the judge of quick and dead. But rather this is to be underſtood of the firſt perſon, of God the Father; and the phraſes are expreſſive both of his eternity, he being God from everlaſting to everlaſting; and of his immutability, he being now what he always was, and will be what he now is, and ever was, without any variableneſs, or ſhadow of turning: they are a periphraſis, and an explanation of the word *Jehovah*; which includes all tenſes, paſt, preſent, and to come. So the *Jews* explain this name in *Exod.* iii. 14. "Says *R. Iſaac*[k], the holy bleſſed God ſaid to *Moſes*, ſay unto them, I am he that was, and I am he that now is, and I am he that is to come, wherefore, אהיה, is written three times." And ſuch a periphraſis of God is frequent in their writings[l]. *And from the ſeven ſpirits which are before his throne*; either before the throne of God the Father; or as the *Ethiopic* verſion reads, *before the throne of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt*; by whom are meant not angels, tho' theſe are ſpirits, and ſtand before the throne of God, and are ready to do his will: this is the ſenſe of ſome interpreters, who think ſuch a number of them is mentioned with reference to the ſeven angels of the churches; or to the ſeven laſt *Sephirot*, or numbers in the *Cabaliſtic* tree of the *Jews*; the three firſt they ſuppoſe deſign the three perſons in the Godhead, expreſſed in the preceding clauſe, and the ſeven laſt the whole company of angels: or to the ſeven principal angels the *Jews* ſpeak of. Indeed, in *Tobit* xii. 15. *Raphael* is ſaid to be one of the ſeven angels; but it does not appear to be a generally received notion of theirs, that there were ſeven principal angels. The *Chaldee* paraphraſe on *Gen.* xi. 7. is miſunderſtood by Mr. *Mede*, for not *ſeven*, but *ſeventy* angels are there addreſſed. It was uſual with the *Jews* only to ſpeak of four principal angels, who ſtand round about the throne of God; and their names are *Michael*, *Uriel*, *Gabriel*, and *Raphael*; according to them, *Michael* ſtands at his right hand, *Uriel* at his left, *Gabriel* before him, and *Raphael* behind him[m]. However, it does not ſeem likely that angels ſhould be placed in ſuch a ſituation between the divine perſons, the Father and the Son; and ſtill leſs, that grace and peace ſhould be wiſhed for from them, as from God the Father, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt; and that any countenance ſhould be given to angel-worſhip, in a book in which angels are ſo often repreſented as worſhippers, and in which worſhip is more than once forbidden them, and that by themſelves: but by theſe ſeven ſpirits are intended the Holy Spirit of God, who is one in his perſon, but his gifts and graces are various; and therefore he is ſignified by this number, becauſe of the fullneſs and perfection of them, and with reſpect to the ſeven churches, over whom he preſided, whom he influenced, and ſanctified, and filled, and enriched with his gifts and graces.

Ver. 5. *And from Jeſus Chriſt*, &c.] Who, tho' the ſecond perſon in the Trinity, is mentioned laſt, becauſe many things were to be ſaid of him; and who is deſcribed in all his offices: in his prophetic office, *the faithful witneſs*; as he is of his Father, of his mind and will, with reſpect to doctrine and worſhip; of his truth and faithfulneſs in his promiſes; and of his love, grace, and mercy to his choſen; and of himſelf, of his true deity, proper Sonſhip, and perfect equality with the Father; of his Meſſiahſhip, and of ſalvation through his obedience, ſufferings, and death; and of all truth in general, to which he has bore a faithful teſtimony ſeveral ways, in his miniſtry, by his miracles, at his death, and by the ſhedding of his blood to ſeal it; by his Spirit ſince, and by the miniſters of his word: he is deſcribed in his prieſtly office by *the firſt-begotten of the dead*; being the firſt that roſe from the dead by his own power, and to an immortal life; for tho' ſome few were raiſed before him, yet not by themſelves, nor to live for ever, but to die again. Moreover, he is the firſt-fruits of the reſurrection, the pledge and earneſt of it, as well as the efficient cauſe and exemplar of it. This character ſuppoſes that he died, as he did, for the ſins of his people; and that he roſe again from the dead, as he did, for their juſtification; and that he roſe firſt as their head and repreſentative, and opened the way of life for them. And he is deſcribed in his kingly office, for it follows, *and the prince of the kings of the earth*; which is not to be underſtood figuratively of the ſaints, who have power over ſin, ſatan, and the world, thro' the efficacious grace of Chriſt, and of whom he is prince or king; but literally of the kings and princes of this world, over whom Chriſt is king and Lord, who receive their crowns and kingdoms from him, and rule by him, and are accountable to him, as they one day muſt be. Next follows a doxology, or an aſcription of glory to him, *unto him that hath loved us*; his own, his people, his church, his choſen, and who are given him by his Father; theſe he has loved with an everlaſting and unchangeable love, with a love of complacency and delight, which paſſes knowledge, and will never end: and which he has ſhown in eſpouſing their perſons, undertaking their cauſe, aſſuming their nature, and in nothing more than in giving himſelf for them as a propitiatory ſacrifice, or in dying and ſhedding his precious blood for them, as is next expreſſed: *and waſhed us from our ſins in his own blood*; which ſhows, that theſe perſons were loved before waſhed; they were not firſt waſhed, and then loved, but firſt loved, and then waſhed. Love was the cauſe of waſhing, and not waſhing the cauſe of love: hence it appears, that they were in themſelves filthy, and unclean thro' ſin; and that they could not cleanſe themſelves by any thing they could do; and that ſuch was the love of Chriſt to them, that he ſhed his precious blood for them, which is a fountain opened, to waſh in for ſin, and which cleanſes from all ſin. This is to be underſtood, not of the ſanctification of their natures, which is the work of the Spirit, but of atonement for their ſins, and juſtification from them by the blood of Chriſt, whereby they are ſo removed, that they are all fair, and without ſpot. It is afterwards ſaid, that theſe ſame perſons are made prieſts; and it may be obſerved, that the prieſts were always waſhed, before they performed their ſervice, as ſuch [n]. The *Alexandrian* copy, and the *Syriac* and *Arabic* verſions read, *and hath looſed us from our ſins in*, or *by his blood*; that is, from the guilt of them, which was bound upon them.

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[k] Shemot Rabba, §. 3. fol. 73. 3.

[l] Targum Jon. in Deut. xxxii. 39. Zohar in Exod. fol. 59. 3. & in Num. fol. 97. 4. & 106. 2. Seder Tephillot, fol. 205. 1. Ed. Baſil. fol. 2. 2. Ed. Amſterd.

[m] Bemidbar Rabba, §. 2. fol. 179. 1.

Ver. 6. *And hath made us kings and prieſts*, &c.] The *Alexandrian* copy, and *Complutenſian* edition read, *a kingdom, prieſts*; and the *Vulgate Latin* verſion, *a kingdom and prieſts*; and the *Arabic* verſion, *a kingdom of prieſthood*; reference ſeems to be had to *Exod.* xix. 6. *and ye ſhall be unto me a kingdom of prieſts*; which the *Jeruſalem Targum* renders, *ye ſhall be unto me*, מלכין וכהנין, *kings and prieſts*; and ſo the *Targum* of *Jonathan ben Uzziel* paraphraſes it thus, *and ye ſhall be before me*, מלכין, *kings*, crowned with a crown, וכהנין, *and prieſts* miniſtring. Hence it is a common ſaying with the *Jews*, that all *Iſraelites* are the ſons of kings [o]; and ſometimes their doctors are called, מלכי תורה, *kings of the law* [p]: and they aſcribe the ſame thing to the word of the Lord, as is here attributed to Jeſus Chriſt: ſo the *Targum* of *Jonathan* on *Deut.* xxviii. 13. paraphraſes the words; "the word of "the Lord ſhall appoint or conſtitute you kings, "and not private perſons." Likewiſe they ſay [q], "that even a *Gentile*, if he ſtudies in the law, is, "ככהן גדול, *as an high-prieſt*." All which may ſerve to ſhow to what the reference is had in the text, and from whence the language is taken. But the words are uſed in a higher and greater ſenſe. The ſaints are made *kings* by Chriſt; they are ſo now; they have received a kingdom of grace, which can't be taken away; and they have the power of kings over ſin, ſatan, and the world, and all their enemies; and they live and fare like kings, and are clothed like them, in rich apparel, the righteouſneſs of Chriſt; and are attended as kings, angels being their life-guards; and they will appear much more ſo hereafter, when they ſhall reign on earth with Chriſt a thouſand years, ſhall ſit upon the ſame throne, and have a crown of life and righteouſneſs given them, and at laſt be introduced into the kingdom of glory. And they become ſuch by being the ſons of God, which power and privilege they receive from Chriſt, and ſo are heirs of God, and joint-heirs with him, and by being united to him. And he alſo makes them *prieſts* to offer up the ſpiritual ſacrifices of prayer and praiſe, and thoſe of a broken heart, and of a contrite ſpirit, and even their ſouls and bodies, as a holy, living, and acceptable ſacrifice unto God, by anointing and ſanctifying them by his Spirit: and they are made ſuch by him *to God, and his Father*; not to men, nor to angels. Now to him that has ſhown ſo much love, and beſtowed ſuch high favours and honours is the following aſcription made, *to him* be *glory and dominion for ever and ever, Amen*. The *glory* of his deity, and of all his offices; of his being the faithful witneſs, the firſt-begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth; and of all the benefits and bleſſings, favours and honours received from him by his people: and *dominion*; over all creatures, and over all his ſaints, and eſpecially in his kingdom, in the laſt days, which will be an everlaſting one; and which is continually to be wiſhed and prayed for, that it would come, and come quickly. *Amen*; ſo let it be, and ſo it ſhall be.

Ver. 7. *Behold he cometh with clouds*, &c.] *John* carries on the account of Chriſt in his kingly office, one branch of which is to execute judgment; and deſcribes him by a future coming of his, which cannot be underſtood of his coming to take vengeance on the *Jews*, at the time of *Jeruſalem*'s deſtruction, tho' that is ſometimes expreſſed in ſuch language, and with ſuch circumſtances, as here; ſee *Matt.* xxiv. 30. and xxvi. 64. becauſe if this revelation was made to *John*, in the latter end of *Domitian*'s reign, as is commonly reported by the ancients, and in the year 95 or 96, as chronologers generally place it, it muſt be upwards of twenty years after the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, and therefore cannot relate to that; nor to his coming in a ſpiritual ſenſe to convert the *Jews* in the latter day; for this coming is perſonal, and with clouds, when he will be ſeen by every eye; all which circumſtances do not ſo well agree with that; beſides, all the kindreds of the earth will not lament on that account; the wicked will take little notice of it, the tribes of the *Jews* will rejoice at it, and ſo will all the converted *Gentiles*: it is better therefore to underſtand this of Chriſt's ſecond coming to judge the quick and dead, which is repreſented as juſt at hand, to denote the certainty of it; and a *behold* is prefixed to it, to excite attention, and to denote the importance of it: things of great moment, and very ſurprizing, will then be done; Chriſt will appear in great glory and majeſty, the dead in Chriſt will be raiſed, Chriſt's perſonal kingdom will take place, and the general judgment come on. The manner of his coming will be *with clouds*; either figuratively, with angels, who will attend him both for grandeur and ſervice, or literally, in the clouds of heaven; he ſhall deſcend in like manner, as he aſcended, and as *Daniel* propheſied he ſhould, *Dan.* vii. 13. Hence, one of the names of the Meſſiah, with the *Jews*, is, ענני, *Anani* [r], which ſignifies *clouds*; and his coming is ſo deſcribed, both to denote the grand and magnificent manner, in which he will come, making the clouds his chariots; and to ſtrike terror into his enemies, clouds and darkneſs being about him, thunder and lightening breaking out of them, as tokens of that vengeance, he comes to take upon them; as alſo the viſibility of his coming, he ſhall deſcend from the third heaven, where he now is, into the airy heaven, and ſit upon the clouds, as on his throne, and be viſible to all: hence it follows, *and every eye ſhall ſee him*; that is, every one that has eyes ſhall ſee him, or all men ſhall ſee him; the righteous ſhall ſee him, and be glad; they ſhall ſee him in his glory, as he is, and for themſelves, and be ſatisfied; they ſhall rejoice at the ſight of him; they will be filled with joy unſpeakable, and full of glory: but the wicked will ſee him and tremble; they will be filled with the utmoſt conſternation and aſtoniſhment; they will not be able to bear the ſight of him; they will flee from him, and call to the rocks and mountains to fall on them, and hide them from his face. *And they alſo which pierced him*; his hands, feet, and ſide, when they crucified him; both the *Roman* ſoldiers, who actually did it, and the body of the *Jewiſh* nation, the rulers and common people, who conſented to it, and at whoſe inſtigation it was done; theſe being raiſed from the dead, ſhall ſee him with their bodily eyes, whom they ſo uſed. *And all kindreds of the earth ſhall wail becauſe of him*; all the wicked, in the ſeveral parts of the world, will lament, and wring their hands, and expreſs the inward terror and horror of their minds, at his appearing; they will fear his reſentment of all their wicked words and actions; will dread his wrath, and tremble at his righteous judgment: *even ſo, Amen*; ſays *John*, and ſo ſay all true believers; what the wicked lament, they rejoice at; they deſire the coming of Chriſt, they love it, look and long for it; they believe it ſhall be, and wiſh it may be quickly, as in ch. xxii. 20. This expreſſion of faith in, and deſire after the coming of Chriſt, is ſignified by two words, the one *Greek*, and the other *Hebrew*; ſuggeſting, that this is an article of faith among all the ſaints of all nations, *Jews* and *Gentiles*, and is what they are wiſhing and waiting for.

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[n] Miſn. Yoma, c. 3. §. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.

[o] Miſn. Sabbat, c. 14. §. 9. T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 67. 1. & 111. 1. & 128. 1. Raya Mehimna in Zohar in Lev. xii. 1.

[p] Shirhaſhirim Rabba, fol. 1. 2. Vid. Jarchium in Pſ. lxviii. 14.

[q] T. Bab. Bava Kama, fol. 38. 1.

Ver. 8. *I am Alpha and Omega*, &c.] Theſe are the words of Chriſt himſelf, appearing at once, and confirming what *John* had ſaid of him, concerning his perſon, offices, and future coming: *Alpha* is the firſt letter, and *Omega* the laſt in the *Greek* alphabet, and ſignifies that Chriſt is the firſt and the laſt, as it is interpreted in ver. 11, 17. and is a character often given to the divine being in prophetic writings; ſee *Iſ.* xli. 4. and xliv. 6. and xlviii. 12. and is no ſmall proof of the proper deity of Chriſt. *Alpha* is uſed by the *Jews* for the chief of perſons or things; "*Macmas* and *Mezonicha* (names of places) are "אלפא לסלת, *Alpha for fine flour*;" that is, the beſt fine flour is there, they are the chief places for it: and again, "*Tekoah* is אלפא לשמן, *Alpha for* "*oil*," or the chief place for oil; the beſt oil was to be had there [s]: ſo Chriſt, he is the *Alpha*, the chief as to his divine nature, being God over all, bleſſed for ever; and in his divine Sonſhip, none, angels or men, are in ſuch ſenſe the Son of God as he is; and in all his offices, of prophet, prieſt, and king; he is the prophet, the great prophet of the church, never man ſpake like him, or taught as he did; he is the moſt excellent prieſt, that exceeds *Aaron* and all his ſons, having an unchangeable prieſthood; and he is the king of kings, and lord of lords; he has the chief place in the church, he is the head of it, and has in all things the pre-eminence; he is the chief in honour and dignity, is at the right-hand of God, and has a name above every name: he alſo in ſome ſenſe may be ſaid to be the *Omega*, the laſt and the loweſt; as in his ſtate of humiliation, he was not only made lower than the angels, but than man; he was deſpiſed and rejected of men, and ſcarcely reckoned a man, a worm, and no man; and he humbled himſelf, and became obedient to death, even the death of the croſs. Moreover, theſe letters, *Alpha* and *Omega*, being the firſt and the laſt in the alphabet, may ſtand for the whole; and it ſeems to be a proverbial expreſſion taken from the *Jews*, who uſe the phraſe from *Aleph* to *Tau* for the whole of any thing, which two letters in the *Hebrew* alphabet ſtand in the ſame place as theſe; accordingly the *Syriac* verſion renders it *Olaph* and *Tau*; and the *Arabic* verſion *Aleph* and *Ye*. It is ſaid in *Ezek.* ix. 6. *begin at my ſanctuary*; "*R.* "*Joſeph* taught, do not read *my ſanctuary*, but "*ſanctified ones*; theſe are the children of men who "confirm *the whole law*, מאלף ועד תיו, *from Aleph* "*to Tau*;" the ſame as from *Alpha* to *Omega*, or from one end to the other: and a little after "ſays "*R. Levi*, *Tau* is the end of the ſeal of the holy "bleſſed God, for ſays *R. Chanina*, the ſeal of the "holy bleſſed God is אמת, *truth*; ſays *R. Samuel* "*bar Nachmani*, theſe are the children of men who "confirm the whole law *from Aleph to Tau* [t]." So Chriſt, he is the *Alpha* and *Omega*, the firſt and laſt, the chief, the whole of things; as of the covenant of grace, he is the firſt and laſt of it, he is the mediator, ſurety, and meſſenger of it, and the ratifier and confirmer of it, he is the covenant itſelf, all its bleſſings and promiſes are in him; he is the ſum and ſubſtance of the ſcriptures, both of the law and of the Goſpel; he is the fulfilling end of the law, and he is the ſubject-matter of the Goſpel; he ſtands in the firſt verſe in *Geneſis*, and in the laſt of the *Revelation*; he is the Alpha and Omega, the firſt and laſt, the whole and all in the buſineſs of ſalvation, in the affair of juſtification before God, in the ſanctification of his people, in their adoption, and eternal glorification; he ſtands firſt and laſt in the book of God's purpoſes and decrees, in the book of the covenant, in the book of the creatures, or creation, being the firſt cauſe, and laſt end of all things, in the book of providence, and in the book of the ſcriptures: likewiſe, as theſe two letters include all the reſt, this phraſe may be expreſſive of the perfection of Chriſt, who as God has the fulneſs of the Godhead, all the perfections of the divine nature in him; and as man, is in all things made like unto his brethren; and as mediator, has all fullneſs of power, wiſdom, grace, and righteouſneſs in him, in whom all the ſaints are compleat; and this may alſo denote his eternity, he having none before him, nor any after him; and which alſo is ſignified by ſome other following expreſſions: *the beginning and the ending*; the *Alexandrian* copy, the *Complutenſian* edition, the *Syriac* and *Ethiopic* verſions, leave out this; which ſeems to be explanative of the former clauſe, *Alpha* being the beginning of the alphabet, and *Omega* the ending of it; and properly belongs to Chriſt, who knows no beginning, nor will he have any end with reſpect to time, being from everlaſting to everlaſting; and agrees with him as the firſt cauſe of all things, both of the old and new creation, and the laſt end to which they are all referred, being made for his pleaſure, honour, and glory: theſe things now *ſaith the Lord*; that is, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt; the *Alexandrian* copy, the *Complutenſian* edition, and the *Vulgate Latin*, *Syriac*, and *Arabic* verſions read, *the Lord God*; and the *Ethiopic* verſion only *God*: *which is, and which was, and which is to come*; who *is* God over all, *was* God from all eternity, and *is to come* as ſuch; which he will ſhow by his omniſcience and omnipotence, diſplayed in the judgment of the world: who *is* now a ſaviour of all that come to God by him; *was* ſo under the Old Teſtament diſpenſation, being the Lamb ſlain from the foundation of the world; and *is to come*, as ſuch, and ſhall appear a ſecond time unto ſalvation to them that look for him: particularly this phraſe is expreſſive of the eternity of Chriſt, who is, was, and ever will be; and of his immutability, who is the ſame he was, and will be for ever the ſame he is, and was, unchangeable in his perſon, in his love, and in the virtue of his blood, righteouſneſs, and ſacrifice; he is the ſame to-day, yeſterday, and for ever. This ſame phraſe is uſed of God the Father in ver. 4. and is a further proof of the deity of Chriſt; and which is ſtill more confirmed by the following character, *the Almighty*; as he appears to be, by creating all things out of nothing; by upholding all creatures in their beings; by the miracles he wrought on earth; by the reſurrection of himſelf from the dead; by obtaining eternal redemption for his people; and by his having the care and government of them upon him, whom he keeps, upholds, bears, and carries to the end, thro' all their infirmities, afflictions, temptations, and trials.

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[r] Targum in 1 Chron. iii. 24. vid. Beckii Not. in ib. Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 85. 2.

[s] Miſn. Menachot, c. 8. §. 1. 3. & Bartenora in ib. So Alpha penulatorum, *the chief of beggars*, in Martial, l. 2. Ep. 57.

[t] T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 55. 1. & Avoda Zara, fol. 4. 1. Echa Rabbati, fol. 52. 1. Baal Hatturim in Deut. xxxiii. 21. & Raziel, fol. 9. & 12. & Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 70. 1, 2.

Ver. 9. *I John, who alſo am your brother*, &c.] Here begins the narrative of the viſions and propheſies of this book, the former verſes containing a general preface to the whole; and this, and the two following verſes are the introduction to the firſt viſion, which *John* ſaw; who deſcribes himſelf by his name, *I John*, the Evangeliſt and Apoſtle, a ſervant of Chriſt, and a beloved diſciple of his; one that was well known to the ſeven churches to whom he writes, and who had no reaſon to doubt of his fidelity in the account he gives them; and alſo by his relation to them as a *brother*, not in a natural, but in a ſpiritual ſenſe, they and he belonging to that family that is named of Chriſt, to the houſhold of God, and of faith, and having one and the ſame Father, even God: thus, tho' he was an elder, an Evangeliſt, yea, an Apoſtle by office, yet he puts himſelf on a level with the ſeveral members of theſe churches, as he was a believer in Chriſt: *and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jeſus Chriſt*; many are the afflictions and tribulations of the ſaints; theſe lie in the way to the kingdom; and they are companions and partners with one another in them, both by enduring the ſame, and by their ſympathy and compaſſion with each other; and as they go ſharers in the troubles of this life, ſo they do, and ſhall in the kingdom; in the kingdom of grace now, being all of them made kings and prieſts unto God, and in the kingdom of Chriſt on earth, where they will all reign with him a thouſand years, and in the kingdom of glory, where they ſhall reign together to all eternity; and in the mean while, they join in the exerciſe of the grace of patience, of which Chriſt is the author, exemplar, and object; they are directed by the Spirit of God into a patient waiting for Chriſt, or a patient expectation of his coming, kingdom, and glory: the *Alexandrian* copy reads, *patience in Chriſt*; and the *Complutenſian* edition *patience in Chriſt Jeſus*: this ſame perſon *John*, who gives this account of himſelf, *was in the iſle that is called Patmos*; but now *Palmoſa*; it is one of the iſlands of the *Cyclades*, in the *Archipelago*, or *Icarian* Sea, and ſometimes called the *Ægean* Sea, and had its name from the turpentine-trees in it; it is, as *Pliny* [v] ſays, about thirty miles in circumference; and it lay next to the churches on the continent, and is ſaid to be about forty miles ſouth-weſt of *Epheſus*, from whence *John* came thither, and to which church he writes firſt: how he came here he does not ſay, concealing, thro' modeſty, his ſufferings; he did not come here of his own accord; *Ignatius* ſays [w], *John* εφυγαδευετο, *was baniſhed to Patmos*; by *Domitian* emperor of *Rome*, as *Irenæus* ſays [x], at the latter end of his reign, about the year 95 or 96. and as *Tertullian* [y], after he had been caſt into a veſſel of flaming oil, where he got no hurt: and this baniſhment was not for any immorality, any capital ſin he had committed, but *for the word of God*; for believing in Chriſt the eſſential Word of God, and for profeſſing and bearing record of him, both in preaching and writing: *and for the teſtimony of Jeſus*; for the Goſpel of Chriſt, ſee ver. 2. for embracing it, adhering to it, and publiſhing it: it is generally thought that *John* wrote his *Revelation* in this iſle, tho' ſome think it is not to be concluded from theſe words, but the contrary; that he had been here, but now was not, but at *Epheſus*, where he wrote what he had a viſion of here.

Ver. 10. *I was in the Spirit on the Lord's-day*, &c.] Not on the *Jewiſh* ſabbath, which was now aboliſhed, nor was that ever called the Lord's-day, and had *John* meant that, he would have ſaid on the ſabbath-day; much leſs the *Jewiſh* paſſover, but the firſt day of the week is deſigned; ſo the *Ethiopic* verſion renders it *on the firſt day*; and is ſo called juſt as the ordinance of the ſupper is called the Lord's-ſupper, being inſtituted by the Lord, and the Lord's-table, 1 *Cor.* x. 21. and xi. 20. and that becauſe it was the day in which our Lord roſe from the dead, *Mark* xvi. 9. and in which he appeared at different times to his diſciples, *John* xx. 19, 26. and which the primitive churches ſet apart for his worſhip and ſervice, and on which they met together to hear the word, and attend on ordinances, *Acts* xx. 7. 1 *Cor.* xvi. 1. and *Juſtin Martyr* [z] tells us, who lived within about fifty years after this time, that on the day called τη τȣ ηλιȣ ημεϱα, *Sunday* (by the *Greeks*) the Chriſtians met together in one place, and read the ſcriptures, and prayed together, and adminiſtred the ordinance of the ſupper; and this, he adds, was the firſt day in which God created the world, and our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt roſe from the dead; yea *Barnabas* [a], the companion of the Apoſtle *Paul*, calls this day the eighth day, in diſtinction from the ſeventh-day-ſabbath of the *Jews*, and which he ſays is the beginning of another world; and therefore we keep the eighth day, adds he, joyfully, in which Jeſus roſe from the dead, and being manifeſted, aſcended unto heaven: and this day was known by the ancients by the name of *the Lord's-day*; as by *Ignatius* [b], *Irenæus* [c], *Tertullian* [d], *Origen* [e], and others; for it muſt be ſome day that was known by this name, otherwiſe it is mentioned to no purpoſe, becauſe it would not be diſtinctive from others; for which reaſon it cannot merely deſign the day in which *John* ſaw this viſion, becauſe the Lord appeared on it to him, for this would not diſtinguiſh it from any other day. Some have conjectured that this was not the weekly Lord's-day obſerved by the Chriſtians, but the anniverſary of Chriſt's reſurrection; and ſo the *Ethiopians* ſtill call *Eaſter*, *Schambatah Croſtos*, the Sabbath of Chriſt: to underſtand it of the former is beſt. Now, tho' *John* was driven from the houſe and worſhip of God, and could not join with the ſaints in the public worſhip of that day; yet he was employed in ſpiritual contemplations and exerciſes, and was under a more than ordinary influence of the Spirit of God; and his ſpirit or ſoul was wholly intent upon, and taken up with divine and ſpiritual things, with viſions and repreſentations that were made unto his mind, which he perceived in his ſpirit, and not with the organs of his body; he was in an extaſy of ſpirit, and knew not ſcarcely whether he was in the body or out of it: *and heard behind me a great voice as of a trumpet*; which was the voice of the Son of God, as appears by what it uttered, ver. 11. and is afterwards ſaid to be as the ſound of many waters; and it was *behind* him, as in *Iſ.* xxx. 21. it came to him at an unawares, and ſurprized him, while he was in deep meditation on ſpiritual things: and it was a very *great* one; it was the voice of a great perſon, of the Son of God, and expreſſed great things, and was very ſonorous and loud, it was like the ſound of a trumpet; and this was partly to awaken the attention of *John* to it, and partly to expreſs the certainty of the relation he gives of what it ſaid; had it been a low, muttering voice, it might be queſtioned whether *John* rightly underſtood it, and whether he might not be miſtaken in the account of what he heard; but it being ſo loud and clear, there is no room for ſuch a doubt.

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[v] Nat. Hiſt. l. 4. c. 12.

[w] Epiſt. ad Tarſenſes, p. 76.

[x] Irenæus adv. Hæreſ. l. 5. c. 30.

[y] De Præſcript. Hæret. c. 36.

Ver. 11. *Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the firſt and the laſt*, &c.] Theſe characters, which are repeated here, ſee the note on ver. 8. are left out in the *Alexandrian* copy, the *Complutenſian* edition, the *Vulgate Latin*, *Syriac* and *Ethiopic* verſions; but are very fitly retained, to point out the perſon that ſpeaks; to expreſs his dignity, deity, and eternity; to excite the attention of *John*, and to give weight to what he ſaid: *and what thou ſeeſt write in a book*; that it might remain, and be read of all men, and be profitable to the churches in the then preſent age, and in all future ones: *and ſend it unto the ſeven churches which are in Aſia*; from whence it appears, that not only the ſeven following Epiſtles were ſent to the churches, but that after *John* had written in a book the account of all the viſions that he ſaw, the whole was ſent unto them, for their uſe and benefit; and who are particularly named: *unto Epheſus*; which was a city of *Ionia*, and which *Pliny* calls [f] the work of the *Amazons*, and the light of *Aſia*; it was famous for the temple of *Diana*, but more ſo for having a church of Chriſt in it: hither the Apoſtle *Paul* came and preached, and continued for the ſpace of two years; where a very famous church was planted by him, and proper officers appointed, to whom he wrote a very excellent Epiſtle: this is now a miſerable deſolate place, not a city, but a village; and is called by the *Turks*, *Aiaſalik*: of this place and church ſee the notes on *Acts* xviii. 19. and xx. 17. *and unto Smyrna*; another city of *Ionia*, ſo called from *Smyrna*, the wife of *Theſeus* [g], the builder of it; or from *Smyrna* an *Amazon* [h], the reliques of whoſe marble buſt are to be ſeen there to this day: it lies about forty-ſix miles from *Epheſus*, and is by the *Turks* now called *Eſmir*, and is ſtill a place famous, not for pompous buildings, but for number of inhabitants, riches, and commerce: *and unto Pergamos*; this was a city of *Myſia*, ſituated by the river *Caicus*, formerly the ſeat of the kings of *Attalia*, and was bequeathed by *Attalus* their laſt king, to the *Romans*: it is famous for being the native place of *Galen* the phyſician, and of *Apollodorus* the rhetorician, maſter to *Auguſtus Cæſar*, and for the invention of parchment in it, from whence it ſeems to have its name: it is now called by the *Turks*, *Bergamo*, and is almoſt ſixty-four miles from *Smyrna*: *and unto Thyatira*; a city of *Lydia*, near the river *Lycus*, formerly called *Pelopia*, and *Euhippia*, and now by the *Turks*, *Ak Hiſſar*, or *the white camp*, and is diſtant from *Pergamos* about forty-eight miles; ſee the note on *Acts* xvi. 14. *and unto Sardis*; this was another city of *Lydia*, ſituated at the ſide of mount *Tmolus*; it was the metropolis of *Lydia*, and the ſeat of king *Crœſus*, and is now called by the *Turks*, *Sart*; and inſtead of a famous city, it is now an obſcure little village, of mean houſes, and ſcarce any other inhabitants in it than ſhepherds and cowkeepers, and is thirty-three miles from *Thyatira*: *and unto Philadelphia*; another city of *Lydia*, ſituated at the foot of mount *Tmolus*; it had its name from *Attalus Philadelphus*, the builder of it; it is now called by the *Turks*, *Alah Shahr*, or *The Fair City*, tho' there is nothing beautiful or magnificent in it; it is diſtant from *Thyatira* about twenty-ſeven miles: *and unto Laodicea*; another city of *Lydia*, near the river *Lycus*, firſt named *Dioſpolis*, afterwards *Rhoas*, and is now, by the *Turks*, called *Eſki Hiſſar*, or *The Old Camp*; and is inhabited by none, unleſs it be in the night, by wolves, foxes, and jackals, as our countryman Dr. *Smith* affirms, in his *Notitia* of the ſeven churches of *Aſia*; from whom I have taken the account of theſe cities as they now are, and the reſt from *Pliny* and *Ptolomy* chiefly.

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[z] Apolog. 2. p. 98, 99.

[a] Epiſt. c. 11. p. 244. Ed. Voſſ.

[b] Epiſt. ad Magneſ. c. 9.

[c] Apud Script. Quæſt. & Reſponſ. ad Orthodox. inter Juſtin. Opera, p. 468.

[d] De Corona, c. 3.

[e] Homil. in Exod fol. 41. 7.

[f] Nat. Hiſt. l. 5. c. 29.

[g] Herodot. de vita Homeri. c. 2.

[h] Vid. Hiller. Onomaſtic. p. 938.

Ver. 12. *And I turned to ſee the voice that ſpake with me*, &c.] The *Complutenſian* edition reads, *and there I turned*; and ſo the *Arabic* verſion; that is, to ſee who it was that ſpoke, from whom the voice came, and by whom it was uttered; ſee *Exod.* xx. 18. *and being turned, I ſaw ſeven golden candleſticks*; which repreſented the ſeven churches, ver. 20. in alluſion to the ſeven lamps in the candleſtick of the ſanctuary, *Exod.* xxv. 37. *Zech.* iv. 2. compared to *candleſticks*, for the uſe of them, which is to hold forth light; theſe have none of themſelves, but what is put into them, and being put into them, they hold it forth; ſo the churches of Chriſt have no light of themſelves, but what is put into them; and the light which is put into them, is not the mere light of nature, nor the law of *Moſes*, but the Goſpel of Chriſt; which diſpels darkneſs, and is the means of enlightning ſinners, and gives light to ſaints, by which they walk and work; and this light is put into the churches by Chriſt, whoſe the Goſpel is, and who is himſelf come a light into the world; and being put here by him, it is held forth by them, eſpecially by the miniſters of it, who are the lights of the world, both by their miniſtry, and in their lives and converſations: and they are compared to *golden* candleſticks, becauſe of their excellency, preciouſneſs, and value, in the eſteem of Chriſt; and for their brightneſs and purity in doctrine, diſcipline, and life; and for their ſplendor, glory, and beauty; and for their ſtability and duration; and tho' they are liable to corruption and taint, yet may be melted, refined, and purified as gold.

Ver. 13. *And in the midſt of the ſeven candleſticks, one like unto the Son of man*, &c.] By whom is meant not an angel, for he ſpeaks of himſelf as a divine perſon, as the Alpha and Omega, the firſt and the laſt, phraſes not applicable to any created beings; and of himſelf alſo as having been dead, which angels are not capable of, and of living again, and of living for evermore, and having power over death and the grave, which no creature has; yea, he calls himſelf expreſly the Son of God, ver. 11, 17, 18. and ch. ii. 18. ſo that Chriſt is manifeſtly deſigned, who as a divine perſon, appeared in a form like that individual human nature which was at his Father's right-hand; for that human nature of his, or he as the Son of man, was not in the midſt of theſe candleſticks, or churches, but he the Son of God was in a form like to his human nature in heaven; ſo before his incarnation, he is ſaid to be like unto the Son of man, in *Dan.* vii. 13. to which there is a reference here, and not only in this, but in ſome other parts of the deſcription; ſo after his aſcenſion, he in a viſionary way appears, not in that real human nature he aſſumed, but in a form like unto it, that being in heaven; but when he was here on earth he is called the Son of man, and not like to one; tho' even ſuch a phraſe may expreſs the truth and reality of his humanity, for who more like to the Son of man than he who is ſo? ſee *John* i. 14. *Phil.* ii. 7. now Chriſt was ſeen by *John* in the midſt of the candleſticks or churches, and among whom he walked, as in ch. ii. 1. which is expreſſive of his preſence in his churches, and which he has promiſed unto the end of the world; and of the gracious viſits he makes them, and the ſweet communion and converſation he indulges them with, to their joy and comfort; as well as the walks he takes among them for his own delight and pleaſure; and where he is, abides and takes his turns, particularly as a prieſt, in which form he now appeared, as the antitype of Aaron the high-prieſt, to trim the lamps or candles in the candleſticks, to cauſe them to burn more brightly and clearly: *cloathed with a garment down to the foot*; which ſome underſtand of the righteouſneſs of Chriſt; this is called a garment, a wedding-garment, the beſt or firſt robe, the robe of righteouſneſs; and is fitly compared to one, it being unto, and upon believers, put upon them, and which covers their perſons, keeps them warm and comfortable, and beautifies and adorns them; and is a very beautiful, pure, and ſpotleſs robe; and reaches to the feet, covers all the members of Chriſt's myſtical body, the meaneſt and loweſt, as well as the more excellent; the weakeſt believer as well, and as much, as the ſtrongeſt: but not Chriſt myſtical, but perſonal is here repreſented; others therefore think, that this long garment is a ſign of gravity and wiſdom, it being uſual for men of power and authority, and learning, as the *Jewiſh Sanhedrim*, Scribes and *Phariſees*, to wear long garments; but it ſeems rather to deſign a prieſtly robe; the robe of the ephod wore by the high-prieſt is called by this name in the *Septuagint* verſion of *Exod.* xxviii. 4, 31. and ſo it is by *Joſephus* [i], who ſpeaking of the hyacinthine tunic, or robe of blue, ſays, this is ποδηρης, *a garment down to the foot*, which in our language is called *Meeir*; rather it ſhould be מעיל, *Meil*, which is its *Hebrew* name; and ſo this robe is expreſſed by the ſame word here, uſed by *Philo* the *Jew* [k], and by *Jerom* [l]; ſo *Maimonides* [m] ſays, the length of his garment was to the top of his heel: and in the habit of a prieſt did Chriſt now appear; and ſo he is deſcribed in his prieſtly office, in the midſt of his churches, having made atonement for their ſins by the ſacrifice of himſelf; and now as their high-prieſt, had entered into the holieſt of all with his own blood and righteouſneſs; bore their names on his breaſt-plate, appeared in the preſence of God on their account, and ever lived to make interceſſion for them: *and girt about the paps with a golden girdle*; as the high-prieſt was with the girdle of the ephod, which was made of gold, of blue, purple, ſcarlet, and fine-twined linen, *Exod.* xxviii. 8. and with which the prieſts were girt about the paps, or breaſt, as Chriſt is here deſcribed: it is ſaid of the prieſts in *Ezek.* xliv. 18. *they ſhall not gird themſelves with any thing that cauſeth ſweat*; which ſome render *in ſweating-places*; and ſo ſome *Jewiſh* writers interpret it, which will ſerve to illuſtrate the preſent place; "ſays *R. Abai* [n], (upon citing *Ezek.* xliv. 18.) they don't gird themſelves in the place in which they ſweat; according to the tradition, when they gird themſelves they don't gird neither below their loins, nor above their arm-holes, but over-againſt their arm-holes;" the Gloſs ſays, upon their ribs, againſt their arm-pit, that is, about their breaſt, or paps; and which is ſtill more plainly expreſſed by the *Targum* on the above place, which paraphraſes it thus, "they ſhall not gird about their loins, but they ſhall gird על לבבהון, *about their heart*;" ſo *Joſephus* [o] ſays, the high-prieſt's garment was girt about the breaſt,

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[i] Antiq. l. 3. c. 7. §. 4.

[k] De Vita Moſis, l. 3. p. 671.

[l] Ad Fabiolam. fol. 19. H.

[m] Cele Hamikdaſh, c. 8. §. 17.

[n] T. Bab. Zebachim, fol. 18. 2. & 19. 1. Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 74. 2. Vid. Jarchi & Kimchi in Ezek. xliv. 18.

[o] Antiq. l. 3. c. 7. §. 2.

a little below the arm-holes. Chriſt's girdle, as a king, is the girdle of faithfulneſs and righteouſneſs, which is about his loins; and his girdle as a prophet, is the girdle of truth; but as a prieſt, it is the girdle of love; it is that which has conſtrained him to put himſelf in the room and ſtead of his people, to aſſume their nature, give himſelf a ſacrifice for them, and intercede on their behalf: this is like a girdle, round, from everlaſting to everlaſting; is ſaid to be *golden*, becauſe of the excellency, purity, glory, and duration of it; and becauſe it is very ſtrong, affectionate, and hearty, it is ſaid to be a girdle about the paps, near where is the heart, the ſeat of love; and this may alſo denote the power, ſtrength, and readineſs of Chriſt to aſſiſt and help his churches in every time of need.

Ver. 14. *His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as ſnow*, &c.] In alluſion to the white head and hairs of old men, ſaid to be hoary, or like the hoar froſt, and compared to an almond-tree in bloom, *Eccl.* xii. 5. and here to wool and ſnow for whiteneſs; ſee *Ezek.* xxvii. 18. and according to the *Jews* [p], צמר לבן, *white wool*, is the wool of a lamb juſt yeaned, about which a cloth is bound that it may not be defiled; now theſe metaphors are expreſſive of the antiquity of Chriſt, who is the everlaſting Father, and whoſe goings forth were of old, even from everlaſting; and of his ſenile gravity and prudence, for with the antient is wiſdom; he is the wiſdom of God, in whom all the treaſures of wiſdom and knowledge are hid; and alſo of his glory and majeſty, being the brightneſs of his Father's glory; and likewiſe of his true and proper deity, ſince this deſcription is the ſame with that of the antient of days in *Dan.* vii. 9. for by his head is not here meant either God the Father, who is ſometimes called the head of Chriſt, 1 *Cor.* xi. 3. nor his divine nature, which is the chief and principal in him; nor his headſhip over the church; nor do his hairs intend his elect, which grow upon him, and are nouriſhed by him, and are ſo called for their number, weakneſs, and purity: *and his eyes were as a flame of fire*; ſee *Dan.* x. 6. which may deſign the omniſcience of Chriſt, which reaches to all perſons, and things, and is very ſearching and penetrating, and diſcovers and brings to light things the moſt dark and obſcure; and alſo Chriſt's eyes of love upon his own people, which have both heat and light; Chriſt's love never waxes cold, and being ſhed abroad in the hearts of his people, warms theirs; and in the light of his gracious countenance do they ſee light; and his love like flames of fire melts their ſouls into a true and genuine repentance for ſin: or elſe, rather his eyes of wrath and vengeance, as ſet upon his enemies, are here meant; which will be fierce and furious, bring ſwift and ſudden deſtruction on them, before which there is no ſtanding, and from which there is no fleeing. It is ſaid of *Auguſtus Cæſar*, that he had fiery eyes [q].

Ver. 15. *And his feet like unto fine braſs, as if they burned in a furnace*, &c.] By which is meant, not his human nature in a ſuffering ſtate; or his people, the meaner and lower parts of his myſtical body, in a like ſtate; or his Apoſtles and miniſters, who are ſupporters of his church, and run to and fro with ſpiritual knowledge, for which, tho' they ſuffer much, are permanent and glorious; but either the power of Chriſt in bearing up and ſupporting his people, in the care and government and defence of them; or his ways, works, and walks in his churches, and all his providential adminiſtrations towards them, which are holy, juſt, and righteous, and will be manifeſt; or his wrath and vengeance in treading down and trampling upon his enemies: *and his voice as the ſound of many waters*; meaning his Goſpel, as preached by his Apoſtles and miniſters, which was heard far and near; ſee *Rom.* x. 18. and which made a great noiſe in the world; or his voice of vengeance on his enemies, which will be very terrible, and irreſiſtible.

Ver. 16. *And he had in his right-hand ſeven ſtars*, &c.] The angels or paſtors of the ſeven churches, ver. 20. The miniſters of the Goſpel are compared to ſtars, becauſe of their efficient cauſe, God, who has made them, and fixed them in their proper place, and for his glory; and becauſe of the matter of them, being the ſame with the heavens, ſo miniſters are of the ſame nature with the churches; and becauſe of their form, light, which they receive from the ſun, ſo preachers of the Goſpel receive their light from Chriſt; and becauſe of their multitude and variety, ſo the miniſters of the Goſpel are many, and their gifts different; and chiefly for their uſefulneſs, to give light to others, to direct to Chriſt, and point out the way of ſalvation, and to rule over the churches: nor was it unuſual with the *Jews* to compare good men to ſtars, and to the ſeven ſtars. The *Targumiſt* [r] ſays, the ſeven lamps in the candleſtick anſwer to the ſeven ſtars to which the righteous are like. Theſe are led and held in Chriſt's right-hand; which ſhows that they are dear unto him, and highly valued by him; that they are his, in his poſſeſſion, at his diſpoſe, whom he uſes as his inſtruments to do his work; and whom he upholds and ſuſtains that they ſhall not ſink under their burdens; and whom he preſerves from falling, and ſo holds them that they ſhall ſtand faſt in the faith, and not be carried away with the error of the wicked: *and out of his mouth went a ſharp two-edged ſword*; which deſigns the word of God; ſee *Eph.* vi. 17. *Heb.* iv. 12. This comes out of the mouth of Chriſt, it is the word of God, and not of man; and is a ſharp ſword, contains ſharp reproofs for ſin, ſevere threatnings againſt it, and gives cutting convictions of it, and is a two-edged one; and by its two edges may be meant law and Goſpel; the law lays open the ſins of men, fills with grief and anguiſh for them, yea, not only wounds, but kills; and the Goſpel cuts down the beſt in man, his wiſdom, holineſs, righteouſneſs, and carnal privileges, in which he truſts; and the worſt in man, teaching him to deny ungodlineſs and worldly luſts: or the word of God may be ſo called, becauſe it is a means both of ſaving and of deſtroying; it is the ſavour of life unto life to ſome, and the ſavour of death unto death to others; and is both an offenſive and defenſive weapon; it is for the defence of the ſaints, againſt ſatan, falſe teachers, and every other enemy; and an offenſive one to them, which cuts them down, and deſtroys them and their principles: or this may mean the judiciary ſentence of Chriſt upon the wicked, which will be a fighting againſt them, and a ſmiting of the nations of the world; ſee ch. ii. 16. and xix. 15. and *Pſ.* cxlix. 6. which the *Jews* interpret of the law [s]: *and his countenance was as the ſun ſhineth in his ſtrength*; at noon-day; ſuch was the countenance of Chriſt at his transfiguration, *Matt.* xvii. 2. and deſigns here, the manifeſtation of himſelf in the glories of his perſon, and in the riches of his grace; who is the ſun of righteouneſs that ariſes upon his people with light, heat, joy, and comfort; ſee the phraſe in *Judges* v. 31. which the *Jewiſh* writers underſtand of the ſtrength of the ſun both in the ſummer ſolſtice, and in the middle of the day, or at noon, at which time its heat is ſtrongeſt, and it uſually ſhines brighteſt; the deſign of the metaphor is to ſet forth the glory and majeſty of Chriſt.

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[p] T. Bab. Sabbath, fol. 54. 1. Maimon. & Bartenora in Miſn. Sabbat, c. 5. §. 2.

[q] Servius in Virgil. Æneid. l. 8. p. 13, 55.

[r] Jonathan ben Uzziel in Exod. xl. 4.

[s] Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 95. 4. & 131. 1.

Ver. 17. *And when I ſaw him*, &c.] The glorious perſon here deſcribed, who was juſt behind him, and of whom he had a full view, being ſo near him: *I fell at his feet as dead*; thro' conſternation and fear, the ſight was ſo amazing and terrible; the appearance of a divine perſon in any degree of majeſty and glory, has had ſome conſiderable effect upon men, even upon the beſt of men; but *John* ſeems to be more affected with it than any, as the viſion was the more grand and illuſtrious: *Manoah* was afraid he ſhould die, but did not fall down as dead; *Ezekiel* fell upon his face, but had his ſenſes; *Daniel*'s comelineſs turned into corruption, and he retained no ſtrength, he fainted, and fell into a deep ſleep; ſee *Judges* xiii. 22. *Ezek*. i. 28. *Dan*. x. 8, 9. but *John* fell down at once, as dead. This pannic which good men were ſeized with, at any more than ordinary appearance of God, or apprehenſion of his preſence, aroſe from a notion that preſent death enſues a ſight of him; hence *Jacob* wonders, and is thankful, that he had ſeen God face to face, and yet his life was preſerved, *Gen*. xxxii. 30. and ſuch an effect as here, upon the body, any uncommon diſcovery of the divine being has, partly through the weakneſs of human nature, which in its preſent circumſtances is not able to bear the rays and glories of a divine perſon; hence the reſurrection of the body in power, glory, and immortality, incorruption and ſpirituality, is neceſſary to the enjoyment of God and Chriſt in a ſtate of bliſs and happineſs to all eternity; and partly thro' a conſciouſneſs of ſin, which ever ſince the fall of *Adam* has occaſioned fear and perturbation of mind, even in the beſt of ſaints, when they have had any ſenſe of the divine majeſty being near, in an unuſual form of glory: *and he laid his right hand upon me*; even the ſame in which he had, and held the ſeven ſtars; and which ſhowed what an affection he had for him, in what eſteem he had him, what care he took of him, and what power he would exert in lifting up, ſtrengthening, and ſupporting him; for he laid not his hand on him in wrath and anger, but in love; and in order to raiſe him up and revive his ſpirits, and remove his fears; hence the *Ethiopic* verſion renders it, *and he took hold on me with his right-hand, and lifted me up*; as he does all who in a ſpiritual ſenſe fall at his feet; it is always ſafe and comfortable falling there: *ſaying unto me, fear not*; language which *John* had heard from him in the days of his fleſh, and might therefore be choſe now on purpoſe that he might the ſooner know who he was, and be comforted; ſee *Matt*. xiv. 27. *Luke* xii. 32. *I am the firſt and the laſt*; a way of ſpeaking uſed by God when he is about to comfort his people, and remove their fears; ſee *Iſ*. xli. 4. and xliv. 6. and xlviii. 12. and is uſed by Chriſt for the ſame purpoſe here; and ſo is a proof of his true and proper deity, and is expreſſive of his eternity, and alſo of his dignity and excellency; he is the firſt and laſt in divine predeſtination, in the covenant of grace, in creation, in the buſineſs of ſalvation, and in his church, by whom, and for whom, are all things in it; he is the head of the body, the ſon over his own houſe, and the firſt-born among many brethren; and ſo the *Alexandrian* copy reads here, *the firſt-born and the laſt*. ראשן, *the firſt*, is a name of the Meſſiah with the *Jews*[t]; ſee the note on ver. 8.

Ver. 18. *I am he that liveth*, &c.] As the eternal God, who has life in himſelf, originally, eſſentially, and inderivatively, and is the fountain and author of life to others; and who ever lived as the mediator and redeemer, and ſtill does, and ever will, yea, even when he was dead as man: *and was dead*; he died the death of the croſs, for the ſins of his people, in due time, and but once; and it was but a ſhort time he was held under the power of death, and will never die more: *and behold I am alive for evermore, Amen*; he was always alive as God, or he was always the living God, and ever will be; and he is now alive as man, and will for ever continue ſo; and he is alive to God, he lives by him, with him, and to his glory; and he is alive to the benefit and advantage of his redeemed ones, for whom he died; he ever lives to make interceſſion for them; he roſe again from the dead for their juſtification; their being quickened together with him, and their being begotten again to a lively hope, are owing to his being alive; and as their reconciliation is by his death, ſo their ſalvation, or the application of it to them, is by his interceding life; and his reſurrection is the cauſe of theirs: this is very fitly ſaid to *John*, who was fallen as dead at the feet of Chriſt, and might be to animate him againſt the fears of death, or whatever he was to meet with on account of Chriſt; as well as to make himſelf known unto him, who had before known him, living, dying, and riſen again. The word *Amen* is left out in the *Alexandrian* copy, the *Vulgate Latin*, *Syriac*, and *Ethiopic* verſions; but is in others, and is rightly retained, either as an aſſeveration of Chriſt to the truth of what is before ſaid, or as an aſſent of *John*'s unto it, who was a proper witneſs both of the death and reſurrection of Chriſt: *and have the keys of hell and death*; or *of death and hell*, as the words are tranſpoſed in the *Alexandrian* copy and *Complutenſian* edition, in the *Vulgate Latin*, and in all the *Oriental* verſions, agreeable to ch. vi. 8. and xx. 13, 14. by which phraſe is expreſſed the power of Chriſt over both: his power over death is ſeen in taking away perſons by death when he pleaſes, the inſtances of *Ananias* and *Sapphira* are proofs of this; and in delivering perſons from death when near it, as the centurion's ſervant, *Peter*'s wife's mother, and the nobleman's ſon of *Capernaum*; and in raiſing perſons from the dead, as *Jairus*'s daughter, the widow of *Naim*'s ſon, and *Lazarus*, when he was here on earth; and in his raiſing up his own body when dead, and which will alſo appear in raiſing all the dead at the laſt day: and his power over *hell*, by which may be meant the grave, or the place of the departed, and ſeparate ſouls, or the place of the damned and of the devils, which are there, will be ſeen in opening the graves at the time of the reſurrection, when death and hell, or the grave, will deliver up the dead in them, at his command; and in retaining or ſending out the ſeparate ſouls in *hades*; and in opening the doors of hell, and caſting in the wicked, and deſtroying them ſoul and body there; and in ſhutting them up, that they cannot come out from thence who are once in; and in binding ſatan, and caſting him into the bottomleſs pit, and ſhutting him up there, the key of which he has in his hand; and in preſerving his church and people from his power and malice, ſo that the gates of hell cannot prevail againſt them. This is an expreſſion of the ſovereignty,

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[t] T. Bab. Peſachim, fol. 5. 1. Bereſhit Rabba, §. 63. fol. 55. 3. Vajikra Rabba, §. 30. fol. 171. 2. & Tzeror Hammor, fol. 71. 4.

reignty, power, and authority of Chriſt; and is deſigned to encourage and ſupport *John* under his preſent concern and anxiety of mind about the perſon he ſaw in this viſion: מפתח של קבורה, *the key of the grave*, and of the reſurrection of the dead, is frequently ſaid by the *Jews* to be one of the keys which are in the hands of the holy bleſſed God, and his only; not in the hands of an angel or a ſeraph, or any other [u].

Ver. 19. *Write the things which thou haſt ſeen*, &c.] The *Alexandrian* copy, and ſome others, and the *Complutenſian* edition read, *write therefore the things*, &c. meaning what he had now ſeen, the viſion of one like to the Son of man, amidſt the golden candleſticks, with ſeven ſtars in his right-hand, and as above deſcribed; this was what he had ſeen ver. 12, 13, 16. for it does not refer to what he had ſeen of Chriſt in the days of his fleſh, but to what he had now ſeen in this repreſentation of him: *and the things which are*; the ſtate of the churches of Chriſt in the Apoſtolic age, and at that time ſignified by the *Epheſian* church, and that part of the *Smyrnæan* which *John* lived to ſee: *and the things which ſhall be hereafter*; from hence unto the end of the world, in ſucceſſive generations, ſignified by the reſt of the churches, and in the viſions of the ſeals, trumpets, and vials.

Ver. 20. *The myſtery of the ſeven ſtars which thou ſaweſt in my right-hand*, &c.] The ſenſe is, that *John* was to write the myſtery of theſe ſtars, or the myſtical ſenſe of them: *and the ſeven golden candleſticks*; the myſtery, or myſterious ſenſe of them alſo; for the words are in a continued connexion with the preceding verſe, and have reſpect to the following interpretation of them, and to the Epiſtles in the following chapter, which are myſtical, and prophetical of the ſtate of the churches in all ſucceeding ages: *the ſeven ſtars are the angels of the ſeven churches*; that is, the ſeven ſtars which *John* ſaw in Chriſt's right-hand, repreſent the angels, or paſtors of the ſeven churches of *Aſia*, and in them all the paſtors and miniſters of the churches in all the periods of time until Chriſt's ſecond coming. Here it may be obſerved, that the miniſters of the Goſpel are not only compared to *ſtars*, for which ſee the note on ver. 16. but likewiſe to *angels*, which ſignifies *meſſengers*, as miniſters are ſent forth by Chriſt with the meſſage of the Goſpel, to publiſh to the ſons of men; and as the angels are Chriſt's miniſtring ſpirits, ſo are the preachers of the Goſpel the miniſters of Chriſt, that wait upon him, and ſerve him in the miniſtry of the word, and in the adminiſtration of ordinances; and there is ſome agreement between them in holineſs, knowledge, zeal, diligence, and watchfulneſs, in their work; as alſo they may be ſo called for the honour and eſteem in which they are, both with Chriſt and his churches; and who like the angels rejoice at the converſion of ſinners, and the enlargement of the intereſt of Chriſt: *and the ſeven candleſticks which thou ſaweſt, are the ſeven churches*; repreſent the ſeven churches of *Aſia*, and in them all the churches of Chriſt, in ſucceſſive ages, to the end of time; the reaſons why theſe are ſignified by *candleſticks*, ſee the note on ver. 12. and that they are prophetical of the churches of Chriſt in the ſeveral periods of time, until he comes again, will appear from the following conſiderations: the whole book is called a prophecy, and a revelation of things that were ſhortly to come to paſs, and it would be very ſtrange, and very unſuitable to its title ſhould the three firſt chapters contain nothing prophetical in them; the characters of the divine perſon under which theſe ſeven churches are ſaluted, as he which is, and was, and is to come, the Alpha and Omega, the firſt and the laſt, ſhow that the things written to them belong to the Goſpel-church-ſtate, from the beginning to the end of it, for what other reaſon can be given for ſuch a peculiar uſe of them? the very grand and illuſtrious appearance of Chriſt, antecedent to theſe Epiſtles, when compared with the appearance of God, previous to the opening of the ſealed book, and the ſeven ſeals of it, may induce one to conclude, that as the latter introduces the book-prophecy in this revelation, ſo the former introduces the church-prophecy; nor does it ſeem that ſuch a magnificent appearance is neceſſary to the bare ſending of ſome letters of advice to ſome particular churches: moreover, as there are ſome things in theſe Epiſtles too common to all the churches and miniſters to be reſtrained to ſome particular ones, ſuch as Chriſt's affording his preſence among them, ſignified by his walking amidſt the candleſticks, and his care of, and reſpect unto the miniſters of the Goſpel, expreſſed by holding ſeven ſtars in his right-hand; for can it be thought that Chriſt only granted his preſence to the ſeven churches in *Aſia?* or that the paſtors of thoſe churches were the only ones Chriſt holds in his right-hand? ſo there are others too particular to certain periods to belong to thoſe churches, as that *Smyrna* ſhould have a crown of life, *Pergamos* hidden manna, and a white ſtone, *Thyatira* the morning ſtar, and *Philadelphia* be delivered from a temptation that would reach all the world, and is not yet come; for which no reaſon can be given in the literal ſenſe of theſe Epiſtles; and it is ſtrange that only ſeven churches ſhould be ſent to, and theſe only in *Aſia*; why not to the churches in *Africa* and *Europe?* and theſe churches alſo, all but *Epheſus*, very obſcure ones; why not to the churches at *Antioch*, *Corinth*, *Rome*, &c. and it is ſtranger ſtill, if, as *Epiphanius* ſays [w], there was no church at *Thyatira* till after the writing of theſe letters: nothing can account for all this, but their being prophetical, there being ſomething in the number, names, ſituation and caſe of theſe churches, which were emblematical of the ſtate of the church in ſucceſſive periods of time; to which may be added, that the *Epiphonema* at the cloſe of every Epiſtle, *he that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit ſaith unto the churches*, ſhows, that each Epiſtle to every church is not deſigned for that church only, but for churches; and for what churches but for thoſe who are repreſented in that period of time, ſince they muſt be unſuitable to one another? and beſides, this concluding ſentence ſhows, that what is contained in each Epiſtle is ſomething intricate, abſtruſe, and parabolical, it being only uſed when ſome ſuch thing is delivered; ſee *Matt.* xi. 15. and xiii. 9, 43. There is one obſervation more to be made, and which runs through all the Epiſtles, and that is, that the names of the ſeveral churches, and the titles which Chriſt aſſumes in writing to each, as well as the ſubject-matter of the Epiſtles, have reſpect to the ſeveral diſtinct periods of the church; all which will more clearly appear in the following notes upon them.

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[u] Bereſhit Rabba, §. 73. fol. 64. 3. Targum Jeruſ. in Gen. xxx. 21. & Jon. in Deut. xxviii. 12. Zohar in Gen. fol. 67. 3. Pirke Eliezer, c. 34. T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 2. 1. & Sanhedrin, fol. 113. 1.

[w] Contra Hæreſ. l. 2. Hæreſ. 51.

CHAP. II.

THIS chapter contains the Epiſtles to the churches at *Epheſus*, *Smyrna*, *Pergamos*, and *Thyatira*. It begins with that to *Epheſus*, in which the ſender of it deſcribes himſelf by ſome of his characters mentioned in the preceding chapter; takes notice of ſome things commendable in this church, ver. 1, 2, 3. reproves her for leaving her firſt love; gives ſome advice upon it; threatens her in caſe of nonrepentance; yet notwithſtanding commends her for her deteſtation of ſome bad practices; and concludes the Epiſtle with a phraſe exciting to attention to what is written, and with a promiſe to them that are conſtant and conquering, ver. 4, 5, 6, 7. next follows the Epiſtle to the church at *Smyrna*, in which the ſender aſſumes ſome of his former titles; takes notice of her works in general, and of her afflictions in particular, and of the blaſphemy of others, ver. 8, 9. fortifies her againſt a great affliction to be endured, deſcribed by its author, kind, uſe, and duration; and exhorts to faithfulneſs and conſtancy, with a promiſe of a crown of life, ver. 10. and cloſes the Epiſtle in the ſame form as the preceding, promiſing ſecurity from the ſecond death, to the perſevering and conquering chriſtian, ver. 11. and next in order is the Epiſtle to the church at *Pergamos*, in which the ſender takes to him one of the above characters in the deſcription of him; obſerves her works and place of abode, and commends her faithfulneſs to him in the worſt of times and places, ver. 12, 13. yet exhibits a complaint againſt her for having, and conniving at perſons of bad principles and practices, called *Balaamites* and *Nicolaitans*, ver. 14, 15. exhorts to repentance, and in failure of it threatens to come and fight againſt them; and cloſes the Epiſtle in the ſame manner as the two former, with a promiſe of hidden manna, a white ſtone, and a new name to him that overcomes, ver. 16, 17. and the laſt Epiſtle in this chapter is that to the church at *Thyatira*, in which the ſender makes uſe of ſome other titles and characters of his, before-mentioned; takes notice of her good works, and yet ſignifies he had a controverſy with her, for permitting a falſe propheteſs to teach in her, who ſeduced men to fornication and idolatry, ver. 18, 19, 20. whoſe impenitence is complained of, and which was aggravated by having ſpace for repentance given her, ver. 21. wherefore, in caſe of continuance in impenitence, he threatens both her and her followers with tribulation and death, whereby the omniſcience and juſtice of Chriſt would be manifeſt to all the churches, ver. 22, 23. and then another and better ſort of men in this church are addreſſed, who are deſcribed as not having imbibed the doctrine of the falſe propheteſs, and as not approving the depths of ſatan, or her doctrines of devils; and theſe are told that no other burden ſhould be laid on them than was, and are exhorted to hold faſt what they had, until the coming of Chriſt, ver. 24, 25. and for their encouragement to hold on to the end, many promiſes are made unto them reſpecting their power and rule over their enemies, and the happy days that they ſhould enjoy, ver. 26, 27, 28. and the Epiſtle is concluded with the uſual epiphonema, ver. 29.

Ver. 1. *Unto the angel of the church of Epheſus write*, &c.] Of the city of *Epheſus*, ſee the notes on ch. i. 11. and on *Acts* xviii. 19. The church here ſeems to have been founded by the Apoſtle *Paul*, who continued here two years, by which means all *Aſia* heard the word of the Lord Jeſus, *Acts* xix. 10. of this church, ſee the note on *Acts* xx. 17. it is named firſt, becauſe it was the largeſt, moſt populous, and famous, and was neareſt to *Patmos*, where *John* now was, and moſt known to him, it being the place where he had reſided; and it was the place from whence the Goſpel came to others, and ſpread itſelf in *Leſſer Aſia*; but eſpecially it is firſt written to, becauſe it repreſented the church in the Apoſtolic age; ſo that this letter contains the things which are, ch. i. 19. and in its very name, to the ſtate of this church in *Epheſus*, there may be an alluſion; either to εφεσις, *epheſis*, which ſignifies *deſire*, and may be expreſſive of the fervent love of that pure and apoſtolical church to Jeſus Chriſt at the beginning of it; their eager deſire after more knowledge of him, and communion with him; after his word and ordinances, and the maintaining of the purity of them; after the ſpread of his Goſpel, and the enlargement of his kingdom in the world; as well as after fellowſhip with the ſaints, and the ſpiritual welfare of each other: the alluſion may be alſo to αφεσις, *apheſis*, which ſignifies *remiſſion*, or an abatement; and ſo may point out the remiſſneſs and decay of the firſt love of theſe primitive chriſtians, towards the cloſe of this ſtate; of the abatement of the fervency of it, of which complaint is made in this Epiſtle, and not without cauſe. This Epiſtle is inſcribed to the angel of this church, or the paſtor of it; why miniſters are called angels, ſee the note on ch. i. 20. ſome think this was *Timothy*, whom the Apoſtle *Paul* ſent thither, and deſired him to continue there, 1 *Tim.* i. 3. there was one *Oneſimus* biſhop of *Epheſus*, when *Polycarp* was biſhop of *Smyrna*, of whom he makes mention in his Epiſtle [x] to the *Epheſians*, and bids fair to be this angel; tho' if any credit could be given to the *Apoſtolical Conſtitutions* [y], the biſhop of this place was one *John*, who is ſaid to be ordained by the Apoſtle *John*, and is thought to be the ſame with *John* the elder [z], the maſter of *Papias*; but though only one is mentioned, yet all the elders of this church, for there were more than one, ſee *Acts* xx. 17. are included; and not they only, but the whole church over whom they preſided; for what was written was ordered to be ſent to the church, and was ſent by *John*, ſee ch. i. 4. 11. the letter was ſent to the paſtor, or paſtors, to the whole body of miniſters, by them to be communicated to the church; and not only to this particular church, did this letter, and the contents of it belong, but to all the churches of Chriſt within the period of the apoſtolic age, as may be concluded from ver. 7. *Theſe things ſaith he that holdeth the ſeven ſtars in his right-hand*; the *Syriac* verſion reads, *that holds all things, and theſe ſeven ſtars in his right-hand*; for the explanation of this character of Chriſt, ſee the note on ch. i. 16. only let it be obſerved how ſuitably this is prefixed to the church at *Epheſus*, and which repreſents the ſtate of the churches in the times of the Apoſtles; in which place, and during which interval, our Lord remarkably held his miniſtring ſervants as ſtars in his right-hand; he held and protected the Apoſtle *Paul* for two years in this place, and preſerved him and his companions ſafe amidſt the uproar raiſed by *Demetrius* the ſilverſmith about them; here alſo he protected *Timothy* at a time when there were many

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[x] Euſeb. Eccl. Hiſt, l. 3. c. 36.

[y] L. vii. c. 46.

[z] Euſeb. ib. c. 39.

adverſaries, and kept the elders of this church pure, notwithſtanding the erroneous perſons that roſe up among them; and laſt of all the Apoſtle *John*, who here reſided, and died in peace, notwithſtanding the rage and fury of his perſecutors: likewiſe Chriſt in a very viſible manner held all his faithful miniſters during this period in his right-hand, ſafe and ſecure, until they had done the work they were ſent about; and preſerved them in purity of doctrine and converſation; ſo that their light in both reſpects ſhone brightly before men. Moreover, as this title of Chriſt is prefixed to the Epiſtle to the firſt of the churches, and its paſtor or paſtors, it may be conſidered as relating to, and holding good of all the miniſters of the Goſpel and paſtors of the other churches; and likewiſe of all the churches in ſucceſſive ages to the end of the world, as the following one alſo refers to all the churches themſelves: *who walketh in the midſt of the ſeven golden candleſticks*; ſee the notes on ch. i. 12, 13. Chriſt was not only preſent with, and took his walks in this church at *Epheſus*, but in all the churches of that period, comparable to candleſticks, which held forth the light of the Goſpel, and that in order as the antitype of *Aaron*, to trim theſe lamps, and likewiſe in all his churches to the end of the world; ſee *Matt.* xxviii. 20.

Ver. 2. *I know thy works*, &c.] The good works, both of miniſters and churches; no evil works are mentioned, nor any thing complained of in this church, but an abatement of the fervour of her firſt love. Chriſt, as the omniſcient God, knows all the works of his people, and the ſprings, and principles, and ends, and views of them, whether they are done in obedience to him, and ſpring from love to him, and are performed in his ſtrength, and by his grace, and are directed to his glory; and ſuch he takes notice of, approves of, and is well-pleaſed with, not as the ground of his delight in their perſons, but as the fruits of his own grace; and during the apoſtolic age, churches and miniſters were very diligent in working; yea, they were laborious, as follows: *and thy labour*; particularly the labour of miniſters of the Goſpel, in theſe times, in the frequent preaching of it, in ſeaſon, and out of ſeaſon; and in the conſtant adminiſtration of the ordinances; and in the diligent exerciſe of church-diſcipline. The work of the miniſtry is a laborious work, to the mind in ſtudying, and to the body in the outward diſcharge of it; and it becomes more ſo, thro' the malice and oppoſition of enemies, and the weakneſs of friends; and ſuch as are diligent and laborious deſerve reſpect, even double honour; and though they may not have it from men, yet Chriſt takes notice of them, and their labours, and commends them for them, and will reward them. *And thy patience*; as this may refer to the miniſters of the word, it may denote their patience in ſuffering reproaches and perſecutions for the ſake of the Goſpel, which they bore patiently, chearfully, and conſtantly; and in bearing the infirmities of weak ſaints, in their ſeveral communities; and in reclaiming and reſtoring perſons out of the way; and in waiting for the ſucceſs of their miniſtry, and their continuance and perſeverance in it. And as this may reſpect members of churches, it may point at their patience under afflictions from the hand of God, and under reproach and perſecution from men, for their embracing and profeſſing the Goſpel; and their patient waiting for the heavenly glory, and their firm expectation of it, and their perſeverance unto it. *And how thou canſt not bear them that are evil*; that were ſo either in their principles, or in their practices, or both; men that lived immoral lives, and held erroneous doctrines, theſe the primitive miniſters and churches could not bear; they had an inward abhorrence and deteſtation of them in their minds; they could not bear them in communion with them; they admoniſhed them according to the nature of their offence, and caſt out ſuch as were obſtinate and incorrigible; they withdrew from ſuch as were diſorderly, and rejected hereticks after the firſt and ſecond admonition; their zeal for church diſcipline is here taken notice of to their commendation. *And thou haſt tried them which ſay they are apoſtles, and are not, and haſt found them liars*; this doubtleſs was done in the church at *Epheſus*, where, after the Apoſtle *Paul*'s departure, grievous wolves, in ſheeps clothing, entred, and men aroſe from among themſelves, ſpeaking perverſe things, *Acts* xx. 29, 30. yet it was not peculiar to that church, tho' it was to the apoſtolic age; for in no other could men, with any face, pretend to be the Apoſtles of Chriſt; and ſuch there were, who ſprung up in the ſeveral churches at *Jeruſalem*, *Corinth*, *Galatia*, and elſewhere, who called themſelves the Apoſtles of Chriſt, but were falſe Apoſtles, deceitful workers; they pretended to have their doctrine, call, miſſion, and commiſſion immediately from Chriſt, as the true Apoſtles had, and a power to work miracles, and talked of inſpirations and revelations by the Spirit of God. Now the Apoſtles, miniſters, and churches of thoſe times tried their pretenſions and doctrines by the word of God, and by the fruits, which they produced in themſelves, and others; and thro' that diſcerning of ſpirits, which they had, they found them to be liars; that they were not, nor had they what they pretended to be, and have, and expoſed them as ſuch.

Ver. 3. *And haſt born*, &c.] Not evil men, nor falſe Apoſtles, but *burdens*, as the *Ethiopic* verſion reads, and as the word ſignifies; meaning afflictions, reproaches, and perſecutions, which preſſed ſore, and lay heavy on theſe miniſters and churches; and yet they bore them with conſtancy and chearfulneſs, and were not moved by them. The *Arabic* verſion reads, *and thou haſt born me*; my name and Goſpel, among the *Gentiles*, and carried it from place to place; ſee *Acts* ix. 15. *and haſt patience*; which they had from God, as his gift, and which they had in their hearts, and in exerciſe, and found it uſeful to them. It was in exerciſe in a ſuitable time, and it continued with them; it was not worn out thro' the length and greatneſs of their trials. *And for my name ſake haſt laboured*; which may refer either to enduring ſufferings for Chriſt's name's ſake, for his Goſpel's ſake, for righteouſneſs ſake, for the ſake of the elect, and for the ſake of the honour, glory, and intereſt of Chriſt; or to labouring in the miniſtry, not for filthy lucre ſake, nor for party ſake, but for the honour of Chriſt, and the good of ſouls; and there never was an interval, in which this was more true: *and haſt not fainted*; ſo as to ſink under the burden born; to have patience quite tired out; to be weary of labouring for Chriſt's name ſake; and ſo as to give out, and quit the ſervice of Chriſt.

Ver. 4. *Nevertheleſs I have ſomewhat againſt thee*, &c.] So the *Jews* repreſent God ſaying, concerning their fathers, *Abraham*, &c. יש לי עליהם, *I have ſomething againſt them*[a]. Chriſt has nothing againſt his people, his faithful miniſters, and true churches, in a judicial way, or to their condemnation, for there is none to them that are in him; but he has often many things to complain of in them, and to rebuke and chaſtize them for, in a way of providence: and what he had againſt the church at *Epheſus*, and againſt the churches in the period which that repreſents, follows, *becauſe thou haſt left thy firſt love*; by which is meant, not hoſpitality to ſtrangers, or an affectionate care of the poor of the church, or a zealous concern to feed the flock, and maintain church-diſcipline; but the love of the ſaints to God, and Chriſt, and one another, which appeared at the beginning of this church-ſtate, when they were all of one heart, and one ſoul, as generally at firſt converſion love is the warmeſt; and ſo it was at the firſt planting of Goſpel-churches, and therefore here called firſt love. Now this, though it was not loſt, for the true grace of love can never be loſt, yet it was left; it abated in its heat and fervour; there was a remiſſneſs in the exerciſe of it; what our Lord had foretold ſhould be before the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, was fulfilled in this period of time, *the love of many waxed cold*, *Matt.* xxiv. 12. thro' the prevalence of corruption in ſome; and thro' an overlove to the world, as in *Demas*, and others; and thro' a deſire of eaſe and freedom from reproach and perſecution; and thro' the introduction of errors, which damp the heat of love, and ſpirit of religion; and through the contentions and diviſions among themſelves, as at *Corinth*, *Galatia*, and elſewhere, which greatly weakened their love to one another, and to divine things; and which was very diſpleaſing to Chriſt, who, for the reſtoring of them, gives the following advice. Compare with this 2 *Tim.* i. 15.

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[a] Peſikta Rabbati apud Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 60. 4.

Ver. 5. *Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen*, &c.] Believers cannot totally and finally fall away from the grace which they have received; but they may fall into ſin, and from a degree of grace, and the exerciſe of it, as theſe firſt and pure churches did, from ſome degree of their love to God, and Chriſt, and one another; and therefore are called upon to remember, mind, and obſerve from what degree of it they were fallen; in order to bring them under a conviction, and acknowledgment of their evil, and a ſenſe of their preſent ſtate, and to quicken their deſires after a reſtoration to their former one: *and repent*; of their coldneſs and lukewarmneſs, of the remiſſneſs of their love, and of thoſe evils which brought it upon them: *and do the firſt works*; of faith and love, with the like zeal and fervour, which will ſhow the repentance to be ſincere and genuine; ſo the *Arabic* verſion reads, *and exerciſe the former works, to wit, charity* or *love.* The *Jews* have a ſaying [b], "if a man repents, don't ſay to him, *remember*, מעשיך הראשונים, *thy firſt works*;" which they ſeem to underſtand of evil works; but former good works are to be remembered and done, to ſhew the truth of repentance for evil ones. *Or elſe I will come unto thee quickly*; not in a ſpiritual way, to pay a love-viſit, nor in a judicial way, to take vengeance, or inflict puniſhment, but in a providential way, to rebuke and chaſtize: *and will remove thy candleſtick out of his place, except thou repent*; or thee out of the candleſtick, the paſtor from the church, either by perſecution, or by death; or elſe the church, and church-ſtate itſelf, ſignified by a candleſtick; ſee the note on ch. i. 12. and may deſign a ſhaking and an unſettling of it, which is ſometimes done by violent perſecutions, and by falſe teachers, and their doctrines, and by the diviſions and contentions of ſaints among themſelves; and by the former particularly was there a change made in the ſtate of this apoſtolic church, when it paſſed into the *Smyrnæan* one, which was a period of great perſecution and diſtreſs; for this cannot be underſtood of the total removing of the church-ſtate itſelf quickly, no not of *Epheſus* itſelf; for tho' there is not now indeed, nor has there been for many hundred years, a church of Chriſt in that place, yet there was one till the times of *Conſtantine*, when there was none in any of the other ſeven cities, and a long time after; ſee the note on *Acts* xx. 17. which ſhows, that this was not a commination to that church literally, but to the ſtate of the church, which that repreſented; nor does it intend the utter abolition of that church, for the apoſtolical church ſtill continued, tho' it ceaſed to be in the circumſtances it was before.

Ver. 6. *But this thou haſt, that thou hateſt the deeds of the Nicolaitans*, &c.] Tho' theſe chriſtians had left their firſt love, yet they bore an hatred to the filthy and impure practices of ſome men, who were called *Nicolaitans*; who committed fornication, adultery, and all uncleanneſs, and had their wives in common, and alſo eat things offered to idols; who were ſo called, as ſome think [c], from *Nicolas* of *Antioch*, one of the ſeven deacons in *Acts* vi. 5. tho' as to *Nicolas* himſelf, it is ſaid [d], that he lived with his own lawful married wife, and no other, and that his daughters continued virgins all their days, and his ſon incorrupt; and that theſe men, ſo called, only ſhrouded themſelves under his name, and abuſed a ſaying or action of his, or both, to patronize their wicked deeds: he had uſed to adviſe, ϖαραχρησθαι τη σαρκι, by which he meant a reſtraining of all carnal and unlawful luſts; but theſe men interpreted it of an indulgence in them, and ſo gave themſelves up to all uncleanneſs; and whereas, he having a beautiful wife, and being charged with jealouſy, in order to clear himſelf of it, he brought her forth, and gave free liberty to any perſon to marry her as would; which indiſcreet action of his theſe men choſe to underſtand, as allowing of community of wives. Dr. *Lightfoot* conjectures, that theſe *Nicolaitans* were not called ſo from any man, but from the word, נכולה, *Nicolah, let us eat*, which they often uſed, to encourage each other to eat things offered to idols. However this be, it is certain that there were ſuch a ſett of men, whoſe deeds were hateful; but neither their principles nor their practices obtained much in this period of time, tho' they afterwards did; ſee ver. 15. Profeſſors of the chriſtian religion in general abhorred ſuch impure notions and deeds, as they were by Chriſt: *which alſo I hate*; all ſin is hateful to Chriſt, being contrary to his nature, to his will, and to his Goſpel; and whatever is hateful to him, ſhould be to his people; and where grace is, ſin will be hateful, both in themſelves, and others; and mens deeds may be hated, when their perſons are not; and hatred of ſin is taken notice of by Chriſt, with a commendation.

Ver. 7. *He that hath an ear*, &c.] Such who have new ears given them, as all have, who are made new creatures; ſuch who have their ears circumciſed, and opened by the Spirit of God; who hear with underſtanding, affection, and faith; who try what they hear, and approve, embrace, and retain that which is good. *Let him hear what the*

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[b] Miſn. Bava Metzia, c. 4. §. 10.

[c] Vid. Irenæum adv. Hæreſ. l. 1. c. 27. & Tertull. de Præſcript. Hæret. c. 46, 47.

[d] Clement. Alex. Strom. l. 3. p. 436. & Euſeb. Hiſt. Eccl. l. 3. c. 29.

Spirit ſaith unto the churches; let ſuch hearken, and liſten with attention to what is ſaid by the Spirit, in what goes before, and follows after, in this Epiſtle, deſigned for the uſe of all the churches; from whence it appears, that this Epiſtle was endited by the Spirit of God, and is of divine inſpiration; that it was not intended for the ſingle uſe of the church at *Epheſus*, but of all the churches; and not of the ſeven churches only, tho' the *Alexandrian* copy reads, *to the ſeven churches*; but of all the churches in that period of time, which the *Epheſine* church repreſents; and which may alſo be uſeful to the churches of Chriſt in all other ages and periods of time. And moreover, it may be concluded from hence, that there are in this Epiſtle, and ſo in all the reſt, for the ſame words are ſubjoined to them all, ſome things which are parabolical and prophetical, and not obvious to every one's underſtanding and view; for a like expreſſion is uſed by our Lord, when he had delivered any thing in a parabolical way, or was obſcure; ſee *Matt.* xi. 15. and xiii. 9. *To him that overcometh*; the falſe Apoſtles, falſe teachers, and their doctrines; coldneſs, lukewarmneſs, and remiſſneſs in love; the impure tenets and practices of the *Nicolaitans*: *will I give to eat of the tree of life*; by which is meant Jeſus Chriſt himſelf, in alluſion to the tree of life in the garden of *Eden*; and is ſo called, becauſe he is the author of life, natural, ſpiritual, and eternal; and becauſe of his fruit, the bleſſings of life and grace, that are in him, of which believers may eat by faith, and which they find to be ſoul-quickening, comforting, ſtrengthening, and ſatiſfying; and which are Chriſt's gift to them, even both the food they eat, and the faith by which they eat, are his gifts. So Chriſt, under the name of wiſdom, is called the tree of life, in *Prov.* iii. 18. and this is a name which is ſometimes given by the *Jews* to the *Meſſiah*[e]: *which is in the midſt of the paradiſe of God*; as the tree of life was in the garden of *Eden*, *Gen.* ii. 9. The *Vulgate Latin*, *Syriac*, and *Ethiopic* verſions read, *the paradiſe of my God*; the God of Chriſt, as well as of his people; and by which may be meant, either the church on earth, which is as a paradiſe, *Cant.* iv. 12. in the midſt of which Chriſt is, affording his gracious preſence, and reaching forth his grace, and the benefits of it, to his people; or heaven, ſee the note on 2 *Cor.* xii. 4. ſaid to be of God, becauſe it is of his preparing, and where he dwells, and in the midſt of which Chriſt, the tree of life, is; and this ſhows, that he is to be come at by faith, and his fruit to be eaten, and lived upon; and he is to be beheld and enjoyed by all his ſaints, as he is now, and will be more perfectly hereafter.

Ver. 8. *And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write*, &c.] Of the city of *Smyrna*, ſee the note on ch. i. 11. That there was a church of Chriſt here is not to be doubted, tho' by whom it was founded is not certain; very likely by the Apoſtle *Paul*, who was in thoſe parts, and by whoſe means all *Aſia* heard the Goſpel of Chriſt, *Acts* xix. 10. Some think the preſent angel, or paſtor of this church, was *Polycarp*, the diſciple of *John*. *Irenæus*[f], who knew him, ſays he was appointed biſhop of *Smyrna* by the Apoſtles. Here he ſuffered martyrdom, and was buried: the large amphitheatre, in which he was put to death, is ſtill to be ſeen, and his ſepulchre is yet preſerved in this place[g]: a very famous epiſtle, ſent by this church at *Smyrna* to the churches at *Pontus*, giving an account of the martyrdom of *Polycarp*, and others, is extant in *Euſebius*[h]. According to the *Apoſtolical Conſtitutions*[i], the firſt biſhops of *Smyrna* were *Ariſto Stratæas* and *Ariſto* the ſecond, and *Apelles*, of whom mention is made in *Rom.* xvi. 10. and who is reckoned among the ſeventy diſciples; ſee the note on *Luke* x. 1. and is ſaid to be biſhop of *Smyrna* before *Polycarp*; who ſucceeded *Polycarp*, I do not find; but it is ſaid there was a church at *Smyrna* in the *third* century; and ſo there was in the beginning of the *fourth*, ſince there was a biſhop from hence in the council at *Nice*: and in the *fifth* century, mention is made of ſeveral biſhops of this place; as of *Cyrus* a native of *Conſtantinople*; and *Protherius*, who, 'tis thought, ſucceeded him, and was preſent in the ſynod at *Chalcedon*; and *Æthericus*, who aſſiſted at three ſynods in this century, at *Conſtantinople*, *Epheſus*, and *Chalcedon*: and in the *ſixth* century there was a biſhop of *Smyrna*, in the fifth ſynod held at *Rome* and *Conſtantinople*: and even in the *eighth* century, one *Antony*, a monk, ſupplied the place of the biſhop of *Smyrna* in the *Nicene* ſynod[k]. The *Turks* have in this place now thirteen moſques, the *Jews* two ſynagogues, and of the chriſtians there are two churches belonging to the *Greeks*, and one to the *Armenians*[l]. This church, and its paſtor, repreſent the ſtate of the church under the perſecutions of the *Roman* emperors. *Smyrna* ſignifies *myrrhe*, which being bitter of taſte, is expreſſive of the bitter afflictions, and perſecutions, and deaths, the people of God in this interval endured; and yet, as myrrhe is of a ſweet ſmell, ſo were thoſe ſaints in their ſufferings for Chriſt, exceeding grateful and well-pleaſing to him; wherefore nothing is ſaid by way of complaint to this church; not that ſhe was without fault, but it was proper to uſe her tenderly in her afflicted ſtate: and, as Dr. *More* obſerves, as myrrhe was uſed in the embalming of dead bodies, it may point to the many deaths and martyrdoms of the ſaints in this period, whereby their names and memories are perpetuated and eternized. *Theſe things ſaith the firſt and the laſt, which was dead, and is alive.* Of theſe characters of Chriſt, ſee the notes on ch. i. 8, 11, 17, 18. and they are very appoſitely mentioned, to encourage the ſaints under their ſufferings of death; ſince Chriſt, who is the eternal God, had in human nature taſted of the bitterneſs of death for them, and was riſen again; ſuggeſting, that tho' they were called to undergo the bittereſt deaths for his ſake, they ſhould be raiſed again as he was, and live with him for ever. The *Ethiopic* verſion reads, *thus ſaith the Holy Spirit*; but it can't be ſaid of him that he *was dead*.

Ver. 9. *I know thy works*, &c.] Good works, as before in ver. 2. *and tribulation*; this is Chriſt's legacy to his people, and which lies in their way to heaven; and never was the way of any to heaven more ſtrowed with it than was the way of the ſaints in this period. But Chriſt took notice of it, and of them in it; he knew their ſouls in adverſity, and remarked their patience under it, and their conſtancy, and cloſe adherence to him: *and poverty*; which was true in a literal ſenſe, thro' the ſpoiling of their goods, to which they were expoſed for the profeſſion of Chriſt: nothing is more contemptible among men than poverty, yet Chriſt takes notice of it, and owns his people in it; for this poverty came not by ſin, but by ſufferings for his ſake: *but thou art rich*; they were rich in faith, and heirs of a kingdom, tho' poor in this world; they were rich with the riches of Chriſt, with the bleſſings of the covenant, with the graces of the Spirit, and in good works; they were kings and prieſts unto God, had a kingdom of grace here, and a right to the kingdom of glory hereafter; and were heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Chriſt. *And* I know *the blaſphemy of them which ſay they are Jews, and are not*; who aſſerted themſelves to be the true *Iſrael* of God, *Jews* that were ſo inwardly, regenerate perſons, or truly chriſtians; for the chriſtians, baptized perſons [m], were by the heathens called *Jews*; but theſe were not, they profeſſed chriſtianity in words, but in works denied it; they were men of bad principles and practices, and both blaſphemed the ways and doctrines of Chriſt themſelves, and cauſed them to be blaſphemed by others alſo; they were falſe chriſtians, nominal profeſſors, and ſhunned perſecution for the Goſpel; who were not what they would be thought to be: theſe were the broachers of hereſies in this period of time, in which there was a multitude of them, and which chiefly reſpected the doctrine of the Trinity, and the perſon of Chriſt; and they were introducers of *Pagan* and *Jewiſh* rites into the church, and were men of flagitious lives and converſations, and paved the way for the man of ſin: *but are the ſynagogue of ſatan*; were the children of the devil, imitated him, and were influenced by him, and were the fore-runners of antichriſt, whoſe coming was after the working of ſatan.

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[e] Zohar in Gen. fol. 33. 3.

[f] Adv. Hæreſ. l. 3. c. 3.

[g] Vid. Smith. Notitia ſeptem Eccleſ. Aſiæ, p. 164, 165.

[h] Hiſt. Eccleſ. l. 4. c. 15.

[i] L. 7. c. 46.

[k] Hiſt. Eccleſ. Magdeburg. cent. 3. c. 2. p. 2. cent. 4. c. 2. p. 3. cent. 5. c. 2. p. 3. c. 10. p. 595, 596. cent. 6. c. 2. p. 4. cent. 8. c. 2. p. 4.

[l] Smith. Notitia, p. 167.

Ver. 10. *Fear none of thoſe things which thou ſhalt ſuffer*, &c.] God's people undergo ſufferings of various ſorts, as the chriſtians of thoſe times did, ſcourgings, impriſonment, confiſcation of goods, and death itſelf in various ſhapes; and theſe are certain, they ſhall ſuffer them; they are all known before hand to Chriſt, and he ſometimes gives his people previous notice of them, nor ſhould they indulge a ſlaviſh fear about them. It is reported of *Polycarp*, biſhop of this church at *Smyrna*, in a letter written by the church itſelf [n], that three days before he ſuffered, he dreamed his pillow, on which he laid his head, was on fire; upon which awaking, he ſaid to thoſe that were by him, that he ſhould be burnt for Chriſt; and when he came to ſuffer, as he was led along, a voice was heard by the by-ſtanders, *Polycarp*, be ſtrong, and play the man. *Behold, the devil ſhall caſt ſome of you into priſon*; which has been the lot of many of the ſaints, and was of ſome, even of the faithful miniſters of the word in this interval; in which ſatan had an hand, inſtigating their enemies to prevent and ſtop the progreſs of the Goſpel, and deter others both from preaching and profeſſing it: the end was in the permiſſion of it, *that ye may be tried*; that their graces might be tried, their faith, love, zeal, courage, faithfulneſs, and conſtancy. Suffering times are trying times, whether men are real chriſtians or no; whether they have the true grace of God or not; and whether the principles they hold are right and true, and are worth, and will bear ſuffering for: *and ye ſhall have tribulation ten days*; meaning it may be the ten perſecutions under the *Roman* emperors; the *firſt* was under *Nero*, in the year 64 or 66; the *ſecond* was under *Domitian*, about the year 93; the *third* was under *Trajan*, in the year 104; the *fourth* was under *Hadrian*, in the year 125; the *fifth* was under *Marcus Antoninus*, in the year 151; the *ſixth* was under *Septimius Severus*, in the year 197; the *ſeventh* was under *Maximinus*, in the years 235, 236, 237; the *eighth* was under *Decius*, in the year 250; the *ninth* was under *Valerianus*, in the year 257; and the *tenth* was under *Diocleſian*, in the year 303. *Auſtin* [o] reckons the ten perſecutions thus: the firſt by *Nero*, the ſecond by *Domitian*, the third by *Trajan*, the fourth by *Antoninus*, the fifth by *Severus*, the ſixth by *Maximus*, the ſeventh by *Decius*, the eighth by *Valerianus*, the ninth by *Aurelianus*, the tenth by *Diocleſian* and *Maximianus*. Others, inaſmuch as *Nero*'s perſecution was before this viſion, reckon the ten perſecutions thus: *Domitian*, *Trajan*, *M. Antoninus*, *Verus* and *Lucius Severus*, *Maximinus*, *Decius*, *Valerianus*, *Aurelianus*, *Diocleſianus*, *Licinius*: the *Diocleſian* perſecution, laſted ten years almoſt throughout; and ſome think, that this laſt perſecution, which held ten years, is here particularly meant, and not without ſome good reaſon; ſince it is uſual in prophetic writings, and in this book of the *Revelation*, to put days for years; ſo that theſe ten days may be the ten years, the laſt perſecution held, and at which time the period of this church-ſtate ended, and that of *Pergamos* took place. *Be thou faithful unto death*; which is an addreſs to the miniſters in this interval, to be faithful in preaching the pure and unmixed Goſpel of Chriſt; in a conſtant adminiſtration of the ordinances, as they were delivered; in watching over the ſouls of men under their care, reproving, exhorting, &c. with all long-ſuffering; continuing in the diſcharge of duty, tho' in continual danger of death, and though it iſſued in it. And alſo to the churches, and the members of them, to continue believing in Chriſt, profeſſing his name, ſtriving for his Goſpel, attending on his ordinances, and following him whitherſoever he went; though this ſhould expoſe them to ſufferings, even unto death, which it became them chearfully to undergo: and to which they are encouraged by what follows, *and I will give thee a crown of life*; which may refer not only to eternal life, which is ſo called, *James* i. 12. becauſe of the glory of that ſtate, and its everlaſting continuance, and is in the poſſeſſion and gift of Chriſt; but to the deliverance of the chriſtians from perſecution, by *Conſtantine*; who coming to the imperial crown, that became not only a crown of glory to him, but of life to the church, and was as life from the dead unto the ſaints: to dead men is promiſed a crown of life, in alluſion to the *Gentiles*, who crowned their dead [p].

Ver. 11. *He that hath an ear, let him hear*, &c.] See the note on ver. 7. *he that overcometh*; and is not intimidated by poverty, confiſcation of goods, tribulation, perſecution, and death itſelf, but thro' Chriſt is a conqueror, and more than a conqueror over all theſe things: *ſhall not be hurt of the ſecond death*; by which is meant eternal death, in diſtinction from a corporal and temporal one; and lies in a deſtruction of both body and ſoul in hell, and in an everlaſting ſeparation from God, and a continual ſenſe of divine wrath; but of this the ſaints ſhall never be hurt, they are ordained to eternal life; this is ſecured for them in Chriſt, and he has it in his hands for them, and will give it to them. The phraſe is *Jewiſh*, and is oppoſed to the firſt death, or the death of the body; which is the effect of ſin, and is appointed of God, and which the people of God die as well as others; but the ſecond death is peculiar to wicked men.——So the *Jeruſalem Targum* on *Deut*. xxxiii. 6. paraphraſes thoſe words, *let Reuben live, and not die*, thus; "let *Reuben*

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[m] Vid. Arrian. Epictet. l. 2. c. 9.

[n] Apud Euſeb. Eccl. Hiſt. l. 4. c. 15.

[o] De Civitate Dei, l. 18. c. 52.

[p] Vid. Minut. Felix, p. 42.

"live in this world, and not die, במותנא תניינא "*by the ſecond death*, with which the wicked die "in the world to come." Of which ſenſe of the text and phraſe *Epiphanius* makes mention [q]. See the ſame phraſe in the *Targum* of *Jonathan ben Uzziel* in *Iſ.* xxii. 14. and lxv. 6, 15. and in *Jer.* li. 39, 57. and in *Philo* the *Jew* [r].

Ver. 12. *And to the angel of the church in Pergamos, write*, &c.] Of the city of *Pergamos*, ſee the note on ch. i. 11. In it was a church of Chriſt, but when it begun, and how long it laſted, is not certain. *Antipas*, who is mentioned, ver. 13. is thought, by ſome, to have been the paſtor of it. Though according to the *Apoſtolical Conſtitutions* [s], *Caius* was the firſt biſhop of it; and it appears, that in the *ſecond century* there were ſeveral in this place that ſuffered martyrdom for Chriſt, as *Carpus, Papulus*, and a woman whoſe name was *Agathonice* [t]. *Attalus*, the martyr, who ſuffered in the ſame century, was alſo a native of this place [u]. In the *fifth* century there was a biſhop of *Pergamus* in the council at *Epheſus*; and in the *ſixth* century, there was one in the fifth ſynod at *Conſtantinople*; and in the *ſeventh* century, *Theodorus*, biſhop of the church here, was in the ſixth ſynod held at the ſame place; and in the *eighth* century one *Paſtilas* was biſhop of *Pergamus*; and in the ſame age, *Baſil*, biſhop of this place, was in the *Nicene* ſynod [w]; and the chriſtian name now is not wholly, tho' almoſt, extinct; for when our countryman, Dr. *Smith* [x], was there, there was a little church called *St. Theodore*'s, whither a prieſt was frequently ſent from *Smyrna*, to perform divine ſervice, there being but a very few chriſtian families in it. This church repreſents the church from the time of *Conſtantine*, and onward, riſing up to, and enjoying great power, riches, and honour. *Pergamos* ſignifies high and lofty; things that were ſublime and lofty, were, by the *Greeks*, called, τα ϖεργαμα, and alſo all high and lofty towers [y]. It was built under a very high and ſteep mountain, upon the top of which a tower was erected, by the lords of the leſſer *Aſia*, which ſtill continues [z]. The church it repreſents had its principal ſeat at *Rome*, where ſatan dwelt, ver. 13. which ſignifies *exalted* likewiſe; and it introduces the man of ſin, antichriſt, the popes of *Rome*, who exalted themſelves above all that is called God, princes, kings, and emperors; whom they excommunicated, dethroned, trod upon their necks, kicked off their crowns, and obliged them to hold their ſtirrups whilſt they mounted their horſes, with other haughty actions too many to name. *Theſe things, ſaith he, which hath the ſharp ſword with two edges*; of which ſee the note on ch. i. 16. This title is uſed partly to ſhow, that the only weapon this church, and the true miniſters and members of it had, to defend themſelves againſt the growing corruptions of antichriſt, who in this interval roſe up by degrees, and was revealed, and came to the heighth of his power, was the word of God, the ſcriptures of truth; and partly to ſhow, that in proceſs of time, tho' not in this period, the man of ſin ſhould be deſtroyed, with the breath of Chriſt's mouth, and the brightneſs of his coming; of which his fighting againſt the *Nicolaitans*, with the ſword of his mouth, ver. 16. is an emblem.

Ver. 13. *I know thy works*, &c.] Both good and bad, and which in that pure part of this church, which oppoſed the growing corruptions of antichriſt, were for the moſt part good. *And where thou dwelleſt*, even *where ſatan's ſeat* is. *Pergamus* was a city very much given to idolatry, here ſatan reigned while it was pagan, and ſo was a fit emblem of the idolatrous church of *Rome*. *Pauſanias* ſays [a], the country the *Pergamenes* inhabited was ſacred to the *Cabiri*, the chief gods of the heathens. And the ſame writer [b] obſerves, that *Æſculapius* particularly was worſhipped at *Pergamus*; and hence he is called by *Martial* [c], the *Pergamean* god; to his temple here, men uſed to go from different parts of the world for cure of diſeaſes; hither *Antoninus* the emperor went for ſuch a purpoſe, as *Herodian* [d] relates; and this being a common thing, hence *Lucian* [e] ſcoffingly ſays, that *Æſculapius* had an apothecary's ſhop at *Pergamus*. As *Rome*, and its dominions, were the principal ſeat of the church in this period of time, it may well be called ſatan's ſeat or throne; not only becauſe it had been the ſeat of the *Roman* emperors, the ten horned, and ſeven headed beaſt, ch. xiii. 2. but becauſe it was the ſeat of antichriſt, which the great dragon ſatan gave him, whoſe coming was after the working of ſatan, and he was influenced by him; and who, like ſatan, exalted himſelf above all that is called God; yea, placed himſelf in the temple of God, the church, as God, ſhewing himſelf to be God, aſſuming that power to himſelf which only belonged to God. Moreover, he may be called ſo for his enmity and malice againſt the ſaints, and for his art and ſubtlety, and inſidious methods to enſnare and deſtroy them. Now to dwell where ſuch an one has his ſeat, his throne, has a kingdom, power, and authority, muſt be very uncomfortable, as well as dangerous; and required great care, circumſpection, and prudence how to behave: and yet to the commendation of this church it is ſaid, *and thou holdeſt faſt my name, and haſt not denied my faith*; the pure members of this church are the two witneſſes, which roſe up at the beginning of the apoſtaſy of *Rome*, and bore their teſtimony againſt it, and for the truth; and continued to do ſo amidſt all the corruptions and perſecutions of that ſtate: theſe are the two olive trees, that thro' the golden pipes of the word and ordinances, emptied the golden oil of Goſpel-truths out of themſelves, pure and incorrupt, and the two candleſticks that held forth the light of the Goſpel in the darkeſt times of *Popery*; theſe held faſt the name of Chriſt, or the Goſpel, and denied not, but confeſſed the doctrine of faith in the worſt of times. They had the truths of the Goſpel in their poſſeſſion, which were dear and valuable to them; and whereas there was danger of loſing them, they held them faſt, with great courage, magnanimity, and ſtrength, tho' the greater number was againſt them, and they were attended with reproach and perſecution: *even in thoſe days wherein Antipas* was *my faithful martyr, who was ſlain among you where ſatan dwelleth*. *Antipas* is the proper name of a man; ſo a ſon of *Herod* was called [f], even he that beheaded *John*, and mocked Chriſt: and there might be a man of this name at *Pergamus*, that might ſuffer martyrdom for the Goſpel of Chriſt; and who was an emblem of the confeſſors, witneſſes, and martyrs, that ſuffered for Chriſt, in this period of time, thro' their oppoſition to the popes of *Rome*; for *Antipas* is the contraction of *Antipater*, and is the ſame with *Antipapas*, or *Antipappas*, which ſignifies one that is againſt the pope, an oppoſer of that holy father; and ſo intends all thoſe that made head againſt him, upon his riſing and revelation, and when he aſſumed the power he did to himſelf; ſuch as the *Waldenſes* and *Albigenſes* particularly, who ſet themſelves againſt him, openly declared that the pope was antichriſt, and that his government was tyrannical, and his doctrines the doctrines of devils, abominable and fabulous. They bore a faithful teſtimony againſt all his corruptions and innovations, and became martyrs in the cauſe of Chriſt, many thouſands of them being ſlain for his ſake within the dominions of this firſt-born of ſatan. The *Alexandrian* copy reads *Anteipas*; and his name is left out in the *Syriac* and *Arabic* verſions.

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[q] Contr. Hæreſ. Hæreſ. 9.
[r] De Prœmiis & Pœnis, p. 921.
[s] L. 7. c. 46.
[t] Euſeb. Eccl. Hiſt. l. 4. c. 15.
[u] Ib. l. 5. c. 1.
[w] Hiſt Eccl. Magdeburg. cent. 5. c. 2. p. 3. cent. 6. c. 2. p. 4 cent. 7. c. 2. p. 3. c. 10. p. 254. cent. 8. c. 2. p. 4.
[x] Notitia, p. 120.
[y] Servius in Virgil. Æneid. l. 1. p. 403. & l. 2. p. 633. Ed. Baſil. 1586.
[z] Smith. Notitia, p. 112.
[a] L. 1. ſive Attica, p. 8.
[b] L. 3. ſive Laconica, p. 215.
[c] L. 9. Epig. 14.
[d] Hiſt. l. 4. c. 14.
[e] In Icaro Menippo.
[f] Joſeph. Antiq. l. 17. c. 1. §. 3. De Bello Jud. l. 1. c. 28. §. 4.

Ver. 14. *But I have a few things againſt thee,* &c.] The members of this church before their open ſeparation from the apoſtacy; who ſtill continued in the communion of the corrupt church of *Rome*, tho' they remonſtrated againſt the errors and evil practices that crept in; and ſo were a ſtumbling-block, and a ſnare to others to join in their idolatry and ſuperſtition: *becauſe thou haſt there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to caſt a ſtumbling-block before the children of Iſrael, to eat things ſacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication*; which latter was in order to the former: the inſtruction *Balaam* gave to *Balak*, which is here called his doctrine, was, that *Balak* ſhould get ſome of the moſt beautiful women in his kingdom, to ply the men of *Iſrael*, and draw them into uncleanneſs, and ſo to idolatry; by which means, God being angry with them, he might get an advantage over them: that the *Iſraelites* did commit whoredom with the daughters of *Moab*, and eat things ſacrificed to idols, and bowed down to *Baal Peor*, is certain, *Numb.* xxv. 1, 2, 3. but that this was brought about thro' the counſel of *Balaam*, is not ſo plainly expreſſed, tho' it is hinted at in *Numb.* xxxi. 15, 16. but the *Jewiſh* writers are very expreſs about this matter. *Jonathan ben Uzziel*, one of their *Targumiſts* on *Numb.* xxiv. 14. has theſe words of *Balaam*; "Come, and I will counſel "thee, (ſpeaking to *Balak*) go and ſet up inns, "and place in them whoriſh women, to ſell food "and drink at a low price; and this people will "come and eat and drink, and be drunken, and "will lie with them, and deny their God; and "they will be quickly delivered into thine hands, "and many of them ſhall fall." This now was the ſtumbling-block he taught *Balak* to lay before them. And elſewhere [g] it is ſaid, "that *Balaam*, the wicked, gave counſel to *Balak*, the "ſon of *Zippor*, to cauſe the *Iſraelites* to fall by "the ſword; he ſaid to him, the God of this people "hates whoredom, cauſe thy daughters to "commit whoredom with them, and ye ſhall rule "over them." And then they go on to relate how they built ſhops, and placed an old woman without, and a young woman within; and when the *Iſraelites* came to buy, how well they uſed them, and what familiarity they admitted them to; how they made them drink of *Ammonitiſh* wine, which inclined to luſt; and when they ſignified their deſire, obliged them to worſhip *Baal Peor*, and renounce the law of *Moſes*. Both *Philo* [h] and *Joſephus* [i] ſpeak of this counſel of *Balaam*, much to the ſame purpoſe. The *Samaritan* chronicle ſays [k], that this counſel pleaſed the king, and he ſent into the camp of *Iſrael*, on a ſabbath-day, twenty-four thouſand young women, by whom the *Iſraelites* were ſo ſeduced, that they did every thing they deſired them, which was juſt the number of thoſe that were ſlain, *Numb.* xxv. 9. By *Balaam* may be meant the pope of *Rome*, for that name ſignifies, *the lord of the people*; and is very appoſite to him, who in this interval took upon him to be univerſal biſhop, and lorded it over both church and ſtate, in a moſt haughty and tyrannical manner; and the *Balaamites* were thoſe who ſubmitted to his power and authority, and received his doctrines; and by *Balak*, king of *Moab*, may be intended the ſecular powers, the emperors, kings, and princes of the earth, who were inſtructed by the popes of *Rome*, to draw their ſubjects into idolatry, which is ſpiritual fornication, to eat the breaden God, to worſhip the hoſt, images, and ſaints departed; and which proved a ſnare, and a ſtumbling to ſome of this church, as to the *Iſraelites* of old, to do the ſame things.

Ver. 15. *So haſt thou alſo them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans,* &c.] Theſe impure hereticks ſprung up in the time of the apoſtolic church, but their doctrines were not received, and their deeds were hated; ſee ver. 6. This ſeems to deſign the doctrines of the church of *Rome*, which in this period took place; which forbid marriage to the prieſts, and recommended celibacy and virginity to others alſo; which were the ſource of all uncleanneſs and abominable luſts; for which pardons and indulgences were given, and, in proceſs of time, brothel-houſes were ſet up, and licenſed and encouraged by authority. *Which thing I hate*; the doctrine of theſe men, as well as their deeds.

Ver. 16. *Repent,* &c.] This is ſaid to thoſe who were truly godly in thoſe times, but ſtill retained their communion with theſe corrupt men, and had not, as yet, ſeparated from them; nor had they proteſted againſt theſe evil doctrines and practices, at leaſt but very coldly, and had too much connived at them; and therefore are called upon to repent of their lukewarmneſs, negligence, and ſinful compliances: *or elſe I will come unto thee quickly*; in a providential way, to rebuke and chaſtize for ſuch remiſſneſs, indifference, and evil communication: *and will fight againſt them with the ſword of my mouth*; of this ſword ſee the note on ch. i. 16. And it is obſervable, that Chriſt does not ſay, *I will fight againſt thee*, the true members of his myſtical body, tho' lax and ſupine, for Chriſt does not fight againſt his people, but for them; but he ſays, *and will fight againſt them*, the *Balaamites* and *Nicolaitans*, for their idolatry and uncleanneſs.

Ver. 17. *He that hath an ear let him hear,* &c.] See the note on ver. 7. *To him that overcometh*; the *Balaamites* and *Nicolaitans*, and don't give in to the doctrines and practices of the one, or of the other, whatever perſecution and trouble he meets with, and endures on that account: *will I give to eat of the hidden manna*; in oppoſition to eating things ſacrificed to idols, refuſed by him. The alluſion is to the manna which the *Iſraelites* eat of in the wilderneſs, which may be called *hidden*; either becauſe they knew not what it was, when they firſt ſaw it; or becauſe it was laid up in a golden pot, and put in the moſt holy place, where it was ſecret, and none but the high-prieſt could ſee it, and who entered there but once a year: or rather, becauſe it was at firſt hidden under the dew; for according to the account the *Jews* give of it, a dew firſt fell upon the ground, then the manna upon that, and then another dew upon the manna; ſo that there was a dew under it, and a dew over it; inſomuch that it was as if it was laid up, they ſay, in a box or cheſt [l]; and they ſuppoſed the manna had reſpect to things future [m], and do expect it in the times of the Meſſiah. They ſay [n], as the firſt, ſo the laſt redeemer will cauſe manna to deſcend from heaven; and the clouds are, by them, reckoned the mills which will grind manna for the righteous in the world to come [o]: yea, they ſpeak [p] of, מנא סתמא, *hidden manna*, as the food of the righteous, the very phraſe here uſed. Now this being the food of the children of *Iſrael* in the wilderneſs, is very fitly mentioned here; ſince the church, in this period of time, in which antichriſt aroſe, was obliged to flee into the wilderneſs, and there abide during his reign, and where ſhe is nouriſhed with this hidden manna; by which may be meant the Goſpel, which is ſoul-quickening, comforting, ſtrengthening, and ſatisfying food, by which the ſaints are nouriſhed up unto everlaſting life, and which is hid to the world, which the men of it know nothing of; and eſpecially Jeſus Chriſt, the ſum and ſubſtance of it, may be meant, and that ſecret ſpiritual conſolation enjoyed in communion with him, and by eating him, or feeding by faith upon him; in what reſpects Chriſt may be compared to manna, ſee the note on *John* vi. 32. And he may be ſaid to be *hidden*, becauſe he is unknown to men, until revealed; and is wholly hidden from carnal and unregenerate men, and is enjoyed only by believers; and it may denote the private way, in which the true church of Chriſt had communion with him in his word and ordinances in the wilderneſs, and during the dark times of *Popery*. *Philo* the *Jew* [q] often interprets the manna by the *Logos*, the Word of God, the moſt ancient Word of God. *And will give him a white ſtone.* The phraſe, *to add a white ſtone*, with the *Latins*, is uſed to give ones approbation of any thing; and could it be applied here, might ſignify the approbation Chriſt gives of his church and people here, amidſt the teſtimonies they bear, and the perſecutions they endure for his name ſake, and that which he will give of them before his Father, angels, and men, at the laſt day: white ſtones were uſed on various accounts. The *Grecians* uſed them to mark good or lucky days with them, as they called them; and could the alluſion be thought to be to this cuſtom, the ſenſe would be, that Chriſt promiſes to his people that overcome, happy days after the times of *Popiſh* darkneſs and perſecution were over: white ſtones were alſo given to the conquerors in the *Olympic* games, with their names upon them, and the value of the prize they won; and here applied, may reſpect the crown of life and glory given to them who are more than conquerors thro' Chriſt, with their right and title to it, and the excellency of it. The *Romans* in judgment uſed to give their ſuffrages for condemnation by caſting black ſtones into the urn, and for abſolution white ſtones; to which *Ovid* has reſpect, when he ſays [r],

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[g] T. Hieroſ. Sanhedrin, fol. 28. 4. & Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 106. 1. Bemidbar Rabba, § 20. fol. 229. 1. Yalkut, par 1. fol. 244. 3, 4. & par. 2. fol. 76. 4.

[h] De Vita Moſis, l. 1. p. 647, 648.

[i] Antiq. l. 4. c. 6. § 6, 7, 8, 9.

[k] Apud Hottinger. Exercit. Antimorin. p. 109.

> *Mos erat antiquis, niveis atriſque lapillis,*
> *His damnare reos, illis abſolvere culpa.*

And this is thought by many to be referred to here, and may denote, that tho' the pure members of Chriſt, and who abhorred and proteſted againſt the abominations of the church of *Rome*, were charged with hereſy and ſchiſm, and what not, yet Chriſt would abſolve them, and juſtify them from all thoſe charges. But rather the alluſion is to a cuſtom among the *Jews*, who uſed to examine the prieſts and levites before they went to their ſervice, or to the *Sanhedrim*, to judge and paſs ſentence, whether their ways and works were right; and if they were as they ſhould be, they gave them, חומרא דמקדשא, *the ſtone of the ſanctuary*; if not, they might not enter on buſineſs, as it is ſaid; *and of Levi he ſaid, thy Urim and thy Thummim be with thy holy one, Deut.* xxxiii. 8. [s] Now on the *Urim* and *Thummim*, the ſtones in the high-prieſt's breaſt-plate, were engraven the names of the children of *Iſrael*; and, as the *Jews* ſay, the name Jehovah, to which reference may be had in the following clauſe; and may denote that the church, tho' in the wilderneſs, is regarded by Chriſt, is bore upon his heart, and cared for by him; and alſo its ſpotleſs purity in him, and juſtification by him. *And in the ſtone a new name written, which no man knoweth, ſaving he that receiveth it*; by this name may be meant, either the name of *Jehovah* our righteouſneſs, which is the name both of Chriſt, and of his church, *Jer.* xxiii. 6. and xxxiii. 16. or the name of a child of God, ſometimes called a new name; ſee *Iſ.* lvi. 5. and lxii. 2. and ſo deſigns the bleſſing of adoption: this may be ſaid to be a *new* name, becauſe renewed, manifeſted to, and put upon the people of God, when they are made new creatures, tho' provided in predeſtination, and in the covenant of grace from eternity; and becauſe a renowned and excellent one, better than that of the ſons and daughters of the greateſt prince on earth; and becauſe a wonderful one, being an inſtance of amazing love and grace; and is what *no man knoweth*, but the receiver of it: the Father of theſe adopted ones is unknown to natural men; and ſo is Chriſt, thro' whom this bleſſing is beſtowed; and the Spirit of God alſo, who witneſſes to it; and the perſons that enjoy it, and the bleſſing itſelf, and the inheritance to which they are adopted: and this new name being on the white ſtone, may ſhew that the bleſſings of juſtification and adoption, tho' they are two diſtinct ones, yet they are inſeparable; they go together, and both give a right to the heavenly inheritance; and they are alſo, as well as the hidden manna, gifts of free grace, and not owing to the works and merit of men, and are given by Chriſt, and in and thro' him. At *Rome*, ſome white ſtones have been dug up, ſome leſſer, ſome greater, with names and letters, and other engravings upon them, which *Pignorius* [t] has given the figures of; and to ſuch ſome have thought the alluſion here is, and may ſerve to illuſtrate this paſſage. The *Ethiopic* verſion, inſtead of a *white ſtone*, reads, a *famous book*.

Ver. 18. *And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write*, &c.] Of the city of *Thyatira*, ſee the note on ch. i. 11. a church was formed here very likely by the Apoſtle *Paul*; *Lydia* was a native of this place, who, and her houſhold, were converted and baptized by him at *Philippi*, *Acts* xvi. 14. tho' *Epiphanius* [u] ſeems to grant, what ſome hereticks objected to the authority of this book, that there was no church at *Thyatira* when this letter was written; however it is certain, there was one in the *ſecond* century, as the ſame writer obſerves, ſince, as he relates, it was over-run with the *Cataphrygian* hereſy; and in the *fourth* century there was a biſhop from *Thyatira* in the council of *Nice*; and even in the *eighth* century there was one *Eſaias* a preſbyter, who ſupplied the place of the biſhop of *Thyatira* in another council at *Nice* [w]: the *Turks* have now eight *moſques* in it, but there is not one chriſtian church or place of worſhip to be found in it [x]. Who was the angel, or paſtor of this church at the writing of this Epiſtle, is not certain; however, it is deſigned for all the miniſters and churches in the interval this church repreſents; and this period takes in the darkeſt and moſt ſuperſtitious times of popery, until the reformation. *Thyatira* is the ſame as *Thygatira*, which ſignifies a *daughter*; and it had its name, as *Stephanus Byzantius* ſays [y], from hence: *Seleucus* the ſon of *Nicanor*, being at war with *Lyſimachus*, and hearing that he had a daughter born, called this city *Thygatira*, which was before called *Pelopia*, and *Semiramis*; which is a very fit name for this church, and expreſſes the effeminacy of it, when the virgin *Mary*, whom the *Romaniſts* call the daughter of God, was more worſhipped than her Son; and was not only made a partner with him in the buſineſs of ſalvation, but even ſet above him; when there were ſuch ſwarms of monks and friars, and religious orders of ſeveral ſorts, as *Franciſcans* and *Dominicans*, who claimed her as their patroneſs; when ſuch numbers of them clad themſelves in cowls and long garments, that they looked more like women in hoods and petticoats, than really men; hence alſo the corrupt part of this church is ſignified by the woman *Jezabel*, the daughter of *Ethbaal* the *Zidonian*; and it ſhould not be forgot that there was once a ſhe pope, a woman that ſat in the papal chair, a whore in a literal ſenſe; wherefore antichriſt, or the popes of *Rome*, are fitly called the great whore, the mother of harlots. Mr. *Daubuz* obſerves, that the firſt chriſtian of *Thyatira* was a woman, and that the falſe prophets which firſt enticed the chriſtians to apoſtacy in this church, were women, as *Maximilla*, *Quintilla*, and *Priſcilla*; to which I would add, that according to *Epiphanius*, that among thoſe hereticks, and which ſwallowed up this church, their biſhops were women, and ſo were their preſbyters, or elders; and Dr. *Smith* [z] is of opinion that the inhabitants of this place, when heathen, were worſhippers of the goddeſs *Diana*; ſo that upon all accounts, the church here was a fit ſymbol of the effeminate church of *Rome*. *Theſe things ſaith the Son of God*; he who is truly, properly, naturally, and eſſentially the Son of God: this character Chriſt makes uſe of to aſſert his proper deity, as being of the ſame nature, and having the ſame perfections with his Father, as well as to command the greater regard to what he ordered to be written to the churches; and chiefly in oppoſition to the effeminate ſtate of this church: it was time for him to take to him his higheſt name, as expreſſive of his higheſt nature, and to aſſert himſelf the Son of God, when *Mary* his mother according to the fleſh, and who was but a mere creature, was called the daughter of God, and ſet upon a level with him, and even preferred unto him: *who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire*; quick and ſharp, and penetrating through the darkneſs of this ſtate; ſeeing into, diſcovering, and expoſing the horrid actions and wickedneſſes of men done in the dark; expreſſing fury, wrath, and vengeance againſt the *Romiſh* antichriſt and his followers; and may alſo deſign the light of Goſpel-doctrine, which broke out in thoſe times at certain ſeaſons, to the diſpelling of *Popiſh* darkneſs in ſome meaſure; ſee the note on ch. i. 14. *and his feet are like fine braſs*; in the deſcription of Chriſt in ch. i. 14. it is added, *as if they burned in a furnace*; ſee the note there; and may denote the ſtrength, ſtability, and ſupport Chriſt gave his people while ſuffering for his ſake, when in the furnace, and burning for him, which kind of death was much uſed in thoſe times: hence Dr. More, to whom I am much obliged for many hints in this expoſition of the Epiſtles to the churches, thinks that *Thyatira* is an alluſion to ϑυητηρια, which ſignify *altars* for the burning of ſweet odours; and ſo may be expreſſive of the burning of the ſaints, thoſe ſweet odours, as they are to God and Chriſt, with fire and faggot; which was now practiſed, as in the other period, killing with the ſword was chiefly uſed; in the midſt of which Chriſt was preſent, ſupporting his people.

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[l] T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 75. 2. Jarchi in Exod. xvi. 13, 14. Mitzvot Tora, pr. affirm. 30.

[m] Tzeror Hammor, fol. 38. 4.

[n] Midraſh Shirhaſhirim, fol. 11. 2. Midraſh Ruth, fol. 33. 2. & Midraſh Kohelet, fol. 63. 2. Peſikta in Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 75. 4.

[o] Raya Mehimna in Zohar in Num. fol. 96. 2. Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 68. 4.

[p] Zohar in Num. fol. 88. 1.

[q] Alleg. l. 2. p. 93. Quod det. potior. p. 176. Quis rer. divin. Hæreſ. p. 491, 492. & Leg. Alleg. l. 3. p. 1103.

[r] Metamorphoſ. l. 15. fol. 1.

[s] Zohar in Lev. fol. 8. 1.

[t] De Servis, p. 342.

[u] Contra Hæreſ. l. 2. Hæreſ. 51.

Ver. 19. *I know thy works*, &c.] Good works, as appears from the particular enumeration of them afterwards, and the commendation of proficiency in them, the laſt being more than the firſt, and the diſtinction from the evil ones in the next verſe; this is ſaid to the faithful followers and profeſſors of Chriſt in this interval: *and charity*; by which is meant not a relieving the wants of the poor; much leſs ſuch a charity as connives at the errors and hereſies of men; but the divine grace of love to God and Chriſt, and the ſaints, without which, a profeſſion of religion is a vain thing; and generally ſpeaking, this grace is moſt in excerciſe in a time of trouble and perſecution: *and ſervice*; or *miniſtry*, meaning either the miniſtry of the word, which was exerciſed by many with great zeal, diligence, and faithfulneſs, as by *Wickliff*, *John Huſs*, *Jerom of Prague*, and others; or the miniſtring to the neceſſities of the poor ſaints, as an evidence of their charity or love; or elſe the ſervice of God is here intended, which is but reaſonable, and is his due, and ought to be performed to him only, and that with fear and fervency, in faith, and with a pure conſcience, with humility, and without mercenary views, and in righteouſneſs and true holineſs; or the ſervice of love which the ſaints perform to one another, as praying for one another, bearing one anothers burdens, admoniſhing and reproving for ſin, reſtoring ſuch as are gone aſtray, comforting the diſtreſſed, building up one another in their moſt holy faith, and exhorting and ſtirring up each other to the duties of religion: *and faith*; not the doctrine of faith, as preached by the miniſters of the word, and held and maintained by the true profeſſors of it; but either the grace of faith, or the profeſſion of both; or rather the faithfulneſs, both of the miniſters and private believers of thoſe times, as the *Waldenſes* and *Albigenſes*, the *Lollards* and *Wickliffites*, who abode by, and were faithful to the light which they had received: *and thy patience*; in ſuffering for the ſake of Chriſt and the Goſpel; and very much it was they did endure, and yet held out to the end: *and thy works*, *and the laſt* to be *more than the firſt*; that is, that their works or acts of love to God and Chriſt and one another, and of ſervice to God and to the ſaints, and of faith and faithfulneſs in the cauſe of God, and of patience in ſuffering for the Goſpel of Chriſt, were more in quantity, and greater in quality, toward the cloſe of this period, which brought on the Reformation, than at the beginning of it; and which were done by the perſons before-mentioned, and by others.

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[w] Eccl. Hiſt. Magdeburg. cent. 4. c. 2. p. 3. cent. 8. c. 2. p. 4.

[x] Smith. Notitia, p. 130.

[y] De Urbibus.

[z] Notitia, p. 126.

Ver. 20. *Notwithſtanding, I have a few things againſt thee,* &c.] By way of complaint; ſo the *Arabic* verſion renders it, *I have a certain complaint againſt thee.* The impartiality of Chriſt may be obſerved in taking notice of the bad deeds, as well as of the good ones of his people, and his tenderneſs in repreſenting them as few; and theſe things he had againſt them not in a judicial way, to their condemnation, but in a providential way, in order to chaſtize them for them, for their good; and they are as follow: *becauſe thou ſuffereſt that woman Jezabel*; or *thy wife Jezabel,* as the *Complutenſian* edition and *Syriac* verſion read; the name of king *Ahab*'s wife, who ſeduced him, in the *Hebrew* language is *Izebel,* but is read by the *Septuagint* in 1 *Kings* xvi. 31. *Jezabel,* as here; and by *Joſephus* [a] *Jezabela*; ſhe had her name from זבל, *Zebel, dung,* to which *Elijah* has reference in 2 *Kings* ix. 37. the *Ethiopic* verſion calls her *Elzabel.* By her is meant the apoſtate church of *Rome,* comparable to *Jezabel,* the wife of *Ahab*; as ſhe was the daughter of an heathen, ſo is *Rome* papal the daughter of *Rome* pagan; and as ſhe was the wife of *Ahab,* and therefore a queen, ſo the whore of *Babylon* calls herſelf; and as *Jezabel* was famous for her paintings, ſo the church of *Rome* for her pretenſions to religion and holineſs, and for the gaudineſs of her worſhip; and as ſhe was remarkable for her idolatry, whoredoms, witchcrafts, and cruel perſecution of the prophets of the Lord, and for murder, and innocent blood ſhe ſhed; ſo the church of *Rome,* for her idolatrous worſhip of images, for her whoredoms, both in a literal and ſpiritual ſenſe, and for the witchcrafts, magic, and deviliſh arts many of her popes have been addicted to, and eſpecially for her barbarities and cruelties exerciſed upon the true profeſſors of Chriſt, and for the blood of the martyrs, with which ſhe has been drunk; and as *Jezabel* ſtirred up *Ahab* againſt good and faithful men, ſo has this church ſtirred up the ſecular powers, emperors, kings, and princes, againſt the true followers of Chriſt: and the end of both of them is much alike; as ſcarce any thing was left of *Jezabel,* ſo *Babylon* the great, the mother of harlots, ſhall be caſt into the ſea, and be found no more at all: compare 2 *Kings* ix. 7, 22, 30, 31, 33, 37. with *Rev.* xvii. 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 17, 18. and xviii. 3, 7, 21, 23. *which calleth herſelf a propheteſs*; as perhaps *Jezabel* might do, ſince ſhe was ſuch a favourer of the prophets of *Baal,* and ſo familiarly converſed with them, and kept them, even a hundred of them at her table; and certain it is, that the antitype of her pretends to an infallible interpretation of the ſcriptures, and to have a bulk of unwritten traditions; and which interpretations and traditions are to be regarded as an infallible rule of faith and practice. Now what is complained of in the true members and followers of Chriſt, is, that they ſuffered this woman *to teach*; when it was inſufferable for a woman to teach, and eſpecially ſuch a ſtrumpet: *and to ſeduce my ſervants to commit fornication*; to deceive ſuch who called themſelves the ſervants of Chriſt, and draw them into the commiſſion of ſpiritual fornication, which is idolatry; as the idolatrous worſhip of the maſs, and of images and ſaints departed: *and to eat things ſacrificed unto idols*; as *Balaam,* or the pope, before had done, ver. 14. This may have reſpect to the latter part of this period, when the eyes of many began to be opened to ſee theſe falſe doctrines and idolatrous practices, and yet had not courage enough to oppoſe them as they ſhould.

Ver. 21. *And I gave her ſpace to repent of her fornication,* &c.] Or idolatry. This may have reſpect to the time of the witneſſes, the *Waldenſes,* and others, who bore a teſtimony againſt the *Romiſh* idolatry, and reproved for it, and denounced the judgment of God in caſe of impenitence; and as theſe things were repeated time after time, this may be called a ſpace given to repent in; juſt as *Jezabel* had a ſpace given her to repent in, from the time that *Elijah* declared the word of the Lord that the dogs ſhould eat her: ſo the *Jews* [b] ſay of the old world, that God *gave them* זמן לשוב, *ſpace to repent,* but they repented not, as here: *and ſhe repented not*; ſee ch. ix. 20, 21. for the time for, and means leading to repentance may be given, yet if the grace of repentance itſelf is not given, men, either particular perſons, or whole bodies of men, will never repent of their ſins. The *Alexandrian* copy, *Complutenſian, Vulgate Latin,* and all the *Oriental* verſions read, *and ſhe would not repent.*

Ver. 22. *Behold I will caſt her into a bed,* &c.] Of ſickneſs and languiſhing; and which denotes the ſickly, pining, and languiſhing ſtate of the church of *Rome,* as a juſt retaliation for her bed of luxury and deliciouſneſs, adultery and idolatry ſhe had indulged herſelf in; this was threatned, and was yet to come, and began at the time of the reformation, ſignified by the next church-ſtate; and ever ſince, the whore of *Rome* has been viſibly ſickening and decaying. The *Alexandrian* copy reads, *into a priſon: and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation*; the kings of the earth, and their ſubjects, who have joined in the idolatries and corruptions of the *Romiſh* church, ch. xvii. 2. and xviii. 3. which may be underſtood either of that diſtreſs and uneaſineſs the reformation in ſome countries gave them; or thoſe outward troubles, wars, and deſolations they have been ſince attended with, particularly the empire of *Germany*; which has been in great tribulation, formerly by the *Turks,* and of late by inteſtine broils among themſelves, and by the armies of other princes entring into it; or it may regard that eternal vengeance that will be recompenced to all ſuch perſons: *except they repent of their deeds*; their ſpiritual fornication or idolatry, and all the abominations the members of that apoſtate church are guilty of. There ſeems to be an alluſion in this verſe to *Ahaziah* and *Joram,* ſons of *Ahab* and *Jezabel,* who followed their mother's idolatrous practices, and were caſt upon a bed of ſickneſs, 2 *Kings* i. 2. and viii. 29.

Ver. 23. *And I will kill her children with death,* &c.] Her popes, cardinals, prieſts, jeſuits, monks, friars, and all that join in the *Romiſh* apoſtacy, they ſhall be killed with death; there ſhall be an utter extirpation of them in God's own time; or they ſhall be killed with the ſecond death: מותנא, when uſed alone, or as diſtinct from any other kind of death, ſignifies the plague; compare with this 2 *Kings* ix. 24. and x. 1, 7. *and all the churches*; that ſhall be in being at the time of *Rome*'s deſtruction: *ſhall know that I am he that ſearcheth the reins and heart*; or am the omniſcient God; which will be known by inflicting puniſhment on the followers of antichriſt; when their hidden things of darkneſs will be brought to light, and expoſed by him; and they ſhall receive the righteous reward of their evil practices, which they have coloured over, and gloſſed with ſpecious pretences of religion and holineſs, and a zeal for

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[a] Antiq. l. 8. c. 13. §. 1. 4, 7.

[b] Juchaſin, fol. 7. 1.

God and his glory, when they only meant themſelves, the gratifying their carnal luſts, and ſecuring their worldly intereſts, and amaſſing riches and honours to themſelves: *and I will give unto every one of you according to your works*; who have connived at, and joined with them in their evil deeds; as many as were ſeduced by the falſe propheteſs to commit ſpiritual fornication with her: as Chriſt is omniſcient, and does not judge according to the outward appearance of things, but knows the principles and ends of all actions, however covert they may be; ſo he is righteous in judging and in puniſhing, which will be according as mens works are; and not one ſhall eſcape his righteous judgment, nor the due deſert of their ſins, tho' the puniſhment of ſome may be greater than that of others.

Ver. 24. *But unto you I ſay, and unto the reſt in Thyatira*, &c.] The copulative *and* is left out in the *Alexandrian* copy and *Complutenſian* edition, and if retained, it may be rendered thus, *even unto the reſt*; the perſons ſpoken to are the ſame, the paſtor of this church, with his collegues, and all the reſt of the faithful in it; which ſhows that this Epiſtle, and ſo the reſt, were not written to the paſtors only, but to the churches; and that the paſtor and his collegues, with others, were free from the abominable errors and corruptions before ſpoken of; and that in the worſt of times, God does, and will reſerve a people for himſelf, who are deſcribed as follows: *as many as have not this doctrine*; who had not given into, and embraced this doctrine of the antichriſtian church of *Rome*, concerning infallibility, the worſhipping of images, tranſubſtantiation, &c. the *Arabic* verſion reads, *this new doctrine*; for notwithſtanding the large pretenſions of the *Romiſh* church to antiquity, her doctrine is but a novel doctrine: *and which have not known the depths of ſatan, as they ſpeak*; that is, had not approved of the doctrines of antichriſt, which though his followers called deep things and myſteries of their holy religion, ſuch as tranſubſtantiation, &c. yet, to ſpeak in the language of the pure and faithful profeſſors of the Goſpel, they are no other than the depths of ſatan, or doctrines of devils; or elſe the ſenſe is, as *Jezabel* and her followers ſay, to the contempt of the faithful, arrogating knowledge to themſelves, and upbraiding them with ſimplicity and ignorance, as not knowing ſatan's devices, nor how to reſcue ſouls out of them, as they did; but the former ſenſe ſeems beſt: *I will put upon you none other burden*; meaning not any affliction or tribulation than the preſent one; nor any other errors and hereſies than what were broached; but no other precept or command than what follows; ſee 2 *Kings* ix. 25.

Ver. 25. *But that which ye have already*, &c.] Which was ſomething good, even the faithful word, the form of ſound words, the myſtery and doctrine of faith; this they had received from Chriſt and his Apoſtles; they had it in their hearts, and a comfortable experience of the truth and power of it, and had made a profeſſion of it, which they now held, and are here exhorted to hold faſt: *hold faſt till I come*; meaning the coming of Chriſt, either at the reformation by *Luther*, *Calvin*, and others, which began at the cloſe of this church-ſtate, when the hands and hearts of thoſe profeſſors would be more ſtrengthened, which ſeems to be the firſt ſenſe of the words; or to judge *Jezabel*, deſtroy antichriſt, which will be by the brightneſs of his coming; till which time the doctrine of the Goſpel is to be held faſt: and ſuch an exhortation will be always neceſſary, ſince till then, there will be always more or leſs an oppoſition to it, and attempts made to wreſt it out of the hands of its profeſſors, to cauſe them to heſitate about it, and to intimidate them in the profeſſion of it, by loading them with reproaches, calumnies, and perſecution.

Ver. 26. *And he that overcometh*, &c.] *Jezabel* and her idolatries, her children, and all that commit adultery with her; ſuch as are not drawn into the ſame evil practices with them, but bravely ſtand their ground againſt the *Romiſh* antichriſt and his followers, and bear their teſtimony againſt his impious doctrines and idolatrous practices: *and keepeth my works unto the end*; either of life, or of this church-ſtate, or of time, when Chriſt will perſonally appear, even at the end of the world; and by his works are meant, not the works which were done by him, as his miracles and works of mercy to the ſouls and bodies of men, and works of righteouſneſs in obedience to the law, and the work of redemption and ſalvation; tho' theſe are works to be obſerved, and kept in view, and to be preſerved in memory, and for the encouragement of faith and hope; but the works which are commanded, and required by Chriſt to be done by his people; as the public work of the miniſtry, by the preachers of the Goſpel; and every private work, both internal and external, as the work of faith, the labour of love, and every act of obedience, which is conſtantly to be diſcharged. The *Arabic* verſion reads, *and keepeth my words and my works*; things both relating to doctrine and practice: *to him will I give power over the nations*; or *Gentiles*, the *Papiſts*; ſo called becauſe of the pagan notions and worſhip introduced by them; and becauſe they conſiſt of many nations, tongues, and people, who are deceived, and drawn into idolatry by them: and this power over them may be underſtood in a ſpiritual ſenſe, thro' the preaching of the Goſpel, which being attended with the power of God, is the means of converting ſinners, and ſo of weakening the kingdom of ſatan, and of antichriſt; and which had its fulfillment, at leaſt in part, at the time of the reformation, and onward, and will have ſtill a greater accompliſhment in the ſpiritual reign of Chriſt and his people, under the *Philadelphian* church-ſtate; and it may alſo deſign the temporal power which the ſaints ſhall have over antichriſt, when they ſhall take away his dominion, and conſume and deſtroy it, and the kingdom and the dominion under the whole heaven ſhall be given to the ſaints of the moſt high; *Dan.* vii. 25, 26, 27.

Ver. 27. *And he ſhall rule them with a rod of iron*, &c.] Either with the Goſpel, which is the rod of Chriſt's ſtrength, and is the power of God unto ſalvation, and by which the kingdom of Chriſt is enlarged, and the power of the church of Chriſt over the antichriſtian party is increaſed; or it may deſign great ſtrictneſs and ſeverity, with which the man of ſin will be uſed by the ſaints of the moſt high, when they ſhall take away his dominion from him: *as the veſſels of a potter ſhall they be broken to ſhivers*; which may be expreſſive either of the breaking of rocky hearts in pieces at converſion, and of making ſouls humble and contrite; or of the irreparable ruin and deſtruction of antichriſt, when the ſaints ſhall conſume and deſtroy him: *even as I received of my Father*; Chriſt as God has an underived power and government; but as mediator, his rule and power over the nations are aſked by him, given to him, and received by him, *Pſ.* ii. 8, 9. This *as* does not intend equality, but ſimilitude; and denotes the participation the ſaints will have with Chriſt in the

the judgment and deſtruction of antichriſt; and in his kingdom and power.

Ver. 28. *And I will give him the morning ſtar.*] So Chriſt is called, ch. xxii. 16. and here it deſigns an illuſtrious appearance of Chriſt at the cloſe of this church-ſtate, and a communication of much light and grace from him, which introduced the *Sardian* church-ſtate, or the reformation by *Luther*, *Calvin*, &c. which is the phoſphorus, or morning-ſtar, to the ſpiritual reign of Chriſt under the *Philadelphian* church-ſtate; which will be the bright, clear day of the Goſpel, when the preſent twilight, which is between the appearance of the morning-ſtar and that glorious day, will be removed: for by this morning-ſtar is not meant the glory that ſhall be put upon the bodies of the ſaints in the reſurrection morn; nor the heavenly glory itſelf, or the hope of it; but the dawning of the latter-day glory, which began at the reformation, and is promiſed the faithful profeſſors in the *Thyatirian* church-ſtate, who lived in the darkneſs of *Popery*.

Ver. 29. *He that hath an ear, let him hear*, &c.] See the note on ver. 7.

CHAP. III.

THIS chapter contains the Epiſtles to the churches at *Sardis*, *Philadelphia*, and *Laodicea*, and begins with that to *Sardis*; in which the ſender deſcribes himſelf by ſome things taken out of a former deſcription of him; and gives an account of the ſtate of this church; that her works were known by him, which were imperfect; and that ſhe had the name of a living church, but was dead; wherefore ſhe is exhorted to watchfulneſs and diligence, to remember how ſhe had heard and received the Goſpel, and to hold it faſt, and repent of her ſins; if not, he threatens to come as a thief unawares upon her, ver. 1, 2, 3. but excepts ſome few perſons from this general account, who were not defiled with the corruptions of the majority, and who therefore ſhould be favoured with communion with him, ver. 4. and then ſome gracious promiſes are made to perſevering ſaints, and the Epiſtle is concluded in the uſual form, ver. 5, 6. Next follows the Epiſtle to the church at *Philadelphia*; in which the ſender aſſumes ſome peculiar titles not before mentioned, taken from his holineſs, truth, and power, ver. 7. ſignifies his approbation of her works; declares he had ſet before her an open door, which could not be ſhut; affirms ſhe had a little ſtrength, and commends her for keeping his word, ver. 8. and for her encouragement, promiſes that ſome perſons formerly of bad characters, ſhould come and worſhip before her, and ſhould know what an intereſt ſhe had in his love; and that ſince ſhe had kept his word, he would keep her from an hour of temptation, which will be a trying time to all the world, ver. 9, 10. and in conſideration of his ſpeedy coming, he exhorts her to hold faſt what ſhe had, that ſhe might not loſe her honour and glory; and promiſes the overcomer a fixed place and name in the houſe of God; and cloſes the Epiſtle as the reſt, ver. 11, 12, 13. and then follows the laſt Epiſtle of all, which is that to the church at *Laodicea*; in which the ſender deſcribes himſelf by ſome characters taken from his truth and faithfulneſs, and from his eternity, power, and dominion, ver. 14. repreſents the members of this church as lukewarm, and very diſagreeable to him, ver. 15, 16. and as having a vain opinion of themſelves, being ignorant of their real ſtate and caſe, ver. 17. wherefore he gives them ſome wholeſome counſel and advice, ſuitable to their condition, ver. 18. and whereas there were ſome among them he loved, he lets them know that his rebukes and chaſtenings were from love, and with a view to ſtimulate them to zeal, and bring them to repentance, which became them, ver. 19. and then he informs them where he was, what he expected from them, and what they might upon a ſuitable behaviour enjoy with him, ver. 20. and next promiſes to the overcomer great honour and glory, ſuch as he had with his Father; and concludes the Epiſtle in his uſual manner, ver. 21, 22.

Ver. 1. *And unto the angel of the church in Sardis, write*, &c.] Of the city of *Sardis* ſee the note on ch. i. 11. when, and by whom this church was founded, and who was the preſent angel or paſtor of it, is not now to be certainly known; however, here was a church in the *ſecond* century, of which *Melito* was then paſtor; and he is thought by ſome to be the angel here intended; this man wrote upon the book of the *Revelation*, and an apology for the chriſtians, ſent to the emperor *Antoninus Verus*, in whoſe time he lived[c]; and in the *third* century a church remained in this place; and alſo in the *fourth*, as appears from the council of *Nice*, which makes mention of it; and likewiſe in the *fifth*, as is evident from the acts of the ſynod at *Chalcedon*, in which age it was the *metropolitan* church of the *Lydians*; and in the *ſixth* century there was a biſhop of this church in the fifth ſynod at *Conſtantinople*; and in the *ſeventh* century, *Marinus* biſhop of *Sardis* aſſiſted at the ſixth ſynod in the ſame place; and in the *eighth* century, *Euthymius* biſhop of it was preſent in the *Nicene* ſynod; and even in the *ninth* century mention is made of an archbiſhop of *Sardis*[d]: but now there are but very few chriſtians to be found here, and who have not a place to worſhip in, nor any to miniſter to them[e]. This church repreſents the ſtate of the church from the time of the reformation by *Luther* and others, until a more glorious ſtate of the church appears, or until the ſpiritual reign of Chriſt in the *Philadelphian* period; under the *Sardian* church-ſtate we now are: that this church is an emblem of the reformed churches from *Popery*, is evident, not only from its following the *Thyatirian* ſtate, which expreſſes the darkneſs of *Popery*, and the depths of ſatan in it; but from its being clear of *Balaam*, and thoſe that held his doctrine; and from the *Nicolaitans* and their tenets, and from *Jezabel*, and thoſe that committed adultery with her; things which the two former churches are charged with; but from theſe the preſent church reformed. This city of *Sardis* was once a very flouriſhing and opulent city; it was the metropolis of *Lydia*, and the royal ſeat of the rich king *Crœſus*, tho' now a very poor and mean village; and may denote the magnificence and ſplendor of this church-ſtate, at leaſt in name and figure, it has appeared in, in the world; tho' now in a very low and mean condition, and may be worſe before the ſpiritual reign of Chriſt begins in the next period: there may be ſome

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[c] Euſeb. Eccl. Hiſt. l. 4. c. 13. 26. & l. 5. c. 24.

[d] Hiſt. Eccl. Magdeburg. cent. 3. c. 2. p. 3. cent. 4. c. 2. p. 3. cent. 5. c. 2. p. 3. c. 7. p. 418. cent. 6. c. 2. p. 4. cent. 7. c. 2. p. 3. c. 10. p. 254. cent. 8. c. 6. p. 4. cent. 9. c. 3. p. 3.

[e] Smith. Notitia, p. 138.

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ſome alluſion in the name of this church to the precious ſtone *ſarda*, which *Pliny* ſays [f], was found about *Sardis*, and had its name from hence; the ſame with the *Sardian* ſtone in *Rev.* iv. 2. and xxi. 20. This ſtone naturaliſts ſay [g], drives away fear, gives boldneſs, chearfulneſs, and ſharpneſs of wit, and frees from witchcrafts and ſorceries; which may be expreſſive of the boldneſs and courage of the firſt reformers; of the chearfulneſs, joy, and pleaſure, which appeared in their countenances, and which they ſpread in others by preaching the doctrines of the Goſpel; and of thoſe excellent gifts and talents both of nature, learning, and grace, by which they were fitted for their ſervice; and of their being a means of delivering men from the witchcrafts of *Jezabel*, and the ſorceries of the whore of *Rome*: and perhaps ſome alluſion may be in this name, as is thought by *Cocceius*, to the *Hebrew* word שריד, *ſarid*, which ſignifies a *remnant*, ſince in this church-ſtate there was a remnant according to the election of grace, a few names, whoſe garments were undefiled; or to the word שרד, *ſered*, which ſignifies a carpenter's rule or line; ſince the firſt reformers were endeavouring to bring every doctrine and practice to the rule and line of God's word: *theſe things ſaith he that hath the ſeven ſpirits of God*; the fullneſs and perfection of the gifts and graces of the Spirit of God, as in ch. i. 4. which Chriſt as mediator has without meaſure, and are at his diſpoſe; and which he having received for men, gives unto them; and at the time of the reformation beſtowed them on many eminent ſervants of his, in a very plenteous manner; for which reaſon he aſſumes this character in writing to this church: *and the ſeven ſtars*; the miniſters of the Goſpel; ſee the notes on ch. i. 16. and ii. 1. theſe were filled by Chriſt at this time with evangelical light and knowledge; and were ſent, and held forth by him as lights in the world; and were inſtruments in his hand for great good; and were wonderfully held, kept, and preſerved by him, notwithſtanding the greatneſs of their work, their weakneſs in themſelves, and the power, rage, and fury of the antichriſtian party; *Luther* is a remarkable inſtance of this: Chriſt's making uſe of the ſame title here as in the Epiſtle to the church at *Epheſus*, which repreſents the apoſtolic church, may ſhow that this church-ſtate bore ſome degree of likeneſs to that, and that it was a ſort of renewing of it: *I know thy works*; good works chiefly; the nature and imperfection of them; and alſo bad works: *that thou haſt a name that thou liveſt*; the reformed churches have had a name for ſpiritual living, by faith on Chriſt's righteouſneſs only for juſtification, that article being the great article of the reformation: there was in them an appearance of livelineſs, by their zeal for Goſpel-doctrine and worſhip, and a form of living according to godlineſs; they were eſteemed, were celebrated, and famous for theſe things, eſpecially for living by faith on Chriſt's righteouſneſs: *and art dead*; or *but art dead*; for, the moſt part, or greater part of the members of theſe churches, are dead in treſpaſſes and ſins; and as for the reſt, they are very dead and liſeleſs in their frames, in the exerciſe of grace, and in the diſcharge of duties; and under great ſpiritual declenſions and decays, juſt as it were ready to die; and but few really alive in a ſpiritual ſenſe, and eſpecially lively, or in the lively exerciſe of grace, and fervent diſcharge of duty; yea, dead as to thoſe things in which they had a name to live: and this ſeems to be our caſe now, who it is to be hoped are at, or towards the cloſe of this period.

Ver. 2. *Be watchful*, &c.] Which may reſpect both miniſters and members: the miniſters of the Goſpel, whoſe buſineſs is to watch over themſelves, their converſation and doctrine, and watch every opportunity to preach it, and the ſucceſs of their miniſtry; and that they do not grow careleſs, or be drawn aſide thro' frowns or flatteries; and over others, as ſhepherds do, to know the ſtate of their flock; as watchmen of cities to give the time of night, and notice of approaching danger; and to ſee that the laws of Chriſt's houſe are put in execution: and this may alſo reſpect the members of theſe churches, who ought to be watchful, and conſtant attenders on the word and ordinances, and in the duty of prayer; and ſhould watch over themſelves, their hearts, thoughts, affections, words, and actions, and againſt ſin, ſatan, the world, and falſe teachers: or *be awake*; which ſhows that both miniſters and churches are aſleep, or much inclined to it; which is the preſent caſe of both in this period of time: *and ſtrengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die*; not good works; tho' theſe may be ſaid to be ready to die when men grow weary of them, are lifeleſs in the performance of them, and want zeal for them; and may be ſaid to be ſtrengthened when men do their firſt works: nor the graces of the Spirit; for the whole work of grace remains, and tho' it is imperfect, yet no part is, or can be taken away from it; yea, there is an increaſe of it, tho' it may not be diſcerned; the work of grace cannot die, or be ready to die; there may be a decline as to the exerciſe of it, and a want of livelineſs in it; and things may be ready to die in appearance, and in the apprehenſion of believers, but not in reality; and beſides it is God's work, and not man's, to ſtrengthen this: therefore they may intend the truths of the Goſpel, which at the beginning of the reformation were revived, and were preached with great life and livelineſs; but towards the cloſe of this ſtate, as now, would be juſt ready to expire, to be almoſt loſt, and dead, and buried, as they are; and which it becomes both miniſters and members of churches to hold, and hold up, eſtabliſh, and confirm: or elſe the reſt of the members of this church may be meant, thoſe of them that remained, that were not wholly ſunk and apoſtatized; and yet were in a very faint and ſickly ſtate, ſcarce any life in them, ready to give up their religion and profeſſion; which ſhould be ſtrengthened, by preaching the pure Goſpel, by faithfully adminiſtring the ordinances of it, and by ſpeaking comfortable and encouraging words to them. The *Complutenſian* edition, and ſome copies read, *which thou art about to loſe*; which ſeems a good reading; and the *Arabic* verſion, and ſome other copies, *which thou art going to reject*: *for I have not found thy works perfect before God*; meaning that the reformers, and reformed churches, ſtuck where they firſt began; and did not carry their works neither with reſpect to doctrine, and eſpecially with reſpect to diſcipline and worſhip, to a greater perfection, as they ought to have done; and however perfect they might appear before men, they were not ſo in the ſight of the omniſcient God, nor found ſo by Chriſt, before whom all things are naked and open: the *Arabic* verſion reads, *before me*; and the *Alexandrian* copy, the *Complutenſian* edition, the *Vulgate Latin*, *Syriac*, and *Ethiopic* verſions read, *before my God*. This church, though ſhe has departed from the corrupt church of *Rome*, and from her evil doctrines and practices; yet did not go on to that perfection which might have been expected and deſired, and which would have rendered her praiſe-worthy, whereas ſhe is now diſcommended. It is an obſervation of a *Jewiſh* writer [h],

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[f] Nat. Hiſt. l. 37. c. 7. Albert. Magn. de Reb. Metall. l. 2. c. 17.

[g] Ruæus de Gemmis, l. 2. c. 6. Albert. Magn. de Rebus Metall. l. 2. c. 17. Schroder. Pharmacopœia, l. 3. c. 5. p. 18.

[h] R. David Kimchi in Pſ. i. 2.

that "if one departs from an evil way, and does not "do that which is good, he does not השלים מעשהו, "*make his work perfect*, and he is not pronounced "bleſſed."

Ver. 3. *Remember, therefore, how thou haſt received and heard*, &c.] That is, haſt received upon hearing; for hearing goes firſt, and then receiving: the deſign of the advice is to put this church in mind of the doctrines of grace ſhe had heard at the beginning of the reformation, from *Luther* and others; ſuch as juſtification by the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, pardon thro' his blood, and atonement by his ſacrifice, doctrines now almoſt loſt and buried in forgetfulneſs; wherefore Chriſt would have her remember theſe things; how that ſhe heard them with attention, reverence, humility, and without prejudice; and with much affection, ſo as to approve and love them, believe them, feel the power of them, and taſte the goodneſs in them; and how ſhe received them, with all meekneſs, readineſs, and joy, when now they are greatly diſliked and rejected by many; very few attend to the doctrines of the reformation. This is exactly our caſe: *and hold faſt*; the above doctrines, tho' the majority is againſt them, and learned men deſpiſe them, and they are charged with enthuſiaſm and licentiouſneſs. It looks as if there was danger, as there is, that they would be entirely wreſted out of her hands: *and repent*; of her deadneſs, coldneſs, and indifference to theſe truths; of her unwatchfulneſs over them, and imperfection in them; not carrying truth to its fullneſs and perfection, reſting in her firſt light and knowledge, and even going back from that: *if therefore thou ſhalt not watch*; and preſerve truth, and hold faſt the form of ſound words, and keep to the order, as well as the faith of the Goſpel, and conſtantly attend divine worſhip, and look for the coming and kingdom of Chriſt. *I will come on thee as a thief*; in the night, and at an unawares, unthought of, and unexpected; which muſt be underſtood of coming to her in a way of rebuke and chaſtiſement, by bringing ſome affliction, or ſuffering ſome ſore diſtreſs to fall upon her: the phraſe, *on thee*, is left out in the *Alexandrian* copy, and in the *Ethiopic* verſion: *and thou ſhalt not know what hour I will come upon thee*; which tho' applicable to the ſpiritual coming of Chriſt in the next church-ſtate, and to his ſecond coming in his kingdom and glory, which will be both ſudden and unexpected, yet theſe will be to the joy and comfort of the church; whereas what is here ſpoken, is by way of threatening, and muſt relate to ſome ſevere diſpenſation on her; and which we might now juſtly expect, were we not in the unwatchful, unthoughtful, and ignorant ſituation here deſcribed.

Ver. 4. *Thou haſt a few names even in Sardis*, &c.] The *Alexandrian* copy, and others, the *Complutenſian* edition, the *Vulgate Latin*, and all the *Oriental* verſions, read, *but thou haſt a few names*, &c. or *a few men*, as the *Ethiopic* verſion renders it; who were called by name, and were men of renown, excellent men, men famous for holding the truth of doctrine, and for powerful and practical godlineſs; men of great light and grace, and who were known by name to God and Chriſt: theſe are ſaid to be but *few*, not in compariſon of the world, in which ſenſe all the elect of God are but few, though a large number conſidered in themſelves; but in compariſon of formal lifeleſs profeſſors of religion, with which this church-ſtate abounds; and which, if we were not as dead as we are, might eaſily be obſerved; there may not only be hypocrites in churches, but a majority of them: yea, theſe few may be underſtood in compariſon of the greater number of true believers; for in this period of the church, there are but few even of them, that are lively, zealous, and careful, and are heartily concerned for the purity of doctrine, diſcipline, worſhip, and converſation; and a few there are, bleſſed be God, even in this our *Sardian* church-ſtate. God will have a few in whom he will be glorified in the moſt declining times; and the Lord knows, and takes notice of theſe few; and for their ſake the church-ſtate is kept up, the Goſpel, and its ordinances, are continued; nor is a church to be judged of by the number of its members, nor is a multitude to be followed to do evil. *Which have not defiled their garments*; the *Ethiopic* verſion adds, *with a woman*, the woman *Jezabel*. They were not guilty either of corporal or ſpiritual fornication, which is idolatry; they kept their outward converſation-garments pure, and maintained a profeſſion of Chriſt, and his truths, incorrupt; they did not defile it by an unbecoming walk, or by a denial of Chriſt, and a departure from him, and by embracing falſe doctrines; they were neither erroneous in their principles, nor immoral in their practices; few there are indeed of this ſort. Defiled garments, in either ſenſe, very ill become members of the reformed churches. Among the *Jews* [i], if a prieſt's garments were ſpotted or defiled, he might not miniſter; if he did, his ſervice was rejected. *And they ſhall walk with me in white*; there is a walking in Chriſt by faith; and a walking before him, as in his ſight; and a walking worthy of him, in all well-pleaſing, in his ways and ordinances; and here a walking with him, in a way of ſpecial and comfortable communion, both here and hereafter: and this is *in white*; in white raiment, meaning either in the robe of his own righteouſneſs, compared to fine linnen, and white; or in the ſhining robes of immortality and glory; and may be expreſſive of that ſpiritual joy, which ſuch ſhall be partakers of, as well as of their ſpotleſs purity and innocence in the other world. White raiment was uſed among the *Romans* as a token of joy, at feſtivals, and on birth-days, and at weddings, and ſuch like times. *For they are worthy*; not of themſelves, or thro' any works of righteouſneſs done by them, which are neither meritorious of grace here, nor of glory hereafter; but thro' the grace of God, and worthineſs of Chriſt. The *Jews* have a ſaying ſomewhat like this [k]; "they that walk with God in their life-time, "זוכים, *are worthy* to walk with him after their "death;" ſee 2 *Eſdras* ii. 40. This clauſe is left out in the *Ethiopic* verſion.

Ver. 5. *He that overcometh*, &c.] The deadneſs, formality, and imperfection of this church-ſtate; gets over theſe things, and is among the few names in it: *the ſame ſhall be clothed in white raiment*; the *Vulgate Latin*, *Syriac*, *Arabic*, and *Ethiopic* verſions read, *thus ſhall he be clothed in white raiment*; he ſhall have abundance of ſpiritual peace and joy, great ſucceſs and proſperity, both inward and outward, in himſelf, and in the church; and triumph over all his enemies, ſin, ſatan, the world, death, and every other enemy; and not only be clothed with change of raiment, the pure and ſpotleſs righteouſneſs of Chriſt, but ſhall enjoy eternal glory and happineſs: the alluſion ſeems to be to the cuſtom of the *Jewiſh Sanhedrim* in judging of prieſts, fit for ſervice [l]; "they examined the prieſts "concerning their genealogies and blemiſhes; "every prieſt in whom was found any thing faulty "in his genealogy, he was clothed in black, and "veiled in black, and went out of the court; but "every one that was found perfect and right, "לובש לבנים, *he was clothed in white*, and went "in and miniſtred with his brethren the prieſts." *And I will not blot out his name out of the book of life*; by which is meant the choice of perſons to everlaſting life and ſalvation; and this being ſignified by a book, and by writing names in it, ſhows the exact knowledge God has of his elect, the value he has for them, his remembrance of them, his love to them, and care for them; and that this election is of particular perſons by name, and is ſure and certain; for thoſe whoſe names are written in it, ſhall never be blotted out, they will always remain in the number of God's elect, and can never become reprobates, or ſhall ever periſh; becauſe of the unchangeableneſs of the nature and love of God, the firmneſs of his purpoſes, the omnipotence of his arm, the death and interceſſion of Chriſt for them, their union to him, and being in him, the impoſſibility of their ſeduction by falſe teachers, and the ſecurity of their perſons, grace, and glory in Chriſt, and in whoſe keeping this book of life is; which reſpects not this temporal life, that belongs to the book of providence, but a ſpiritual and eternal life, from whence it has its name. *But I will confeſs his name before my Father, and before his angels*; which ſhows that Chriſt has an exact and perfect knowledge of all the choſen ones, he knows them by name; and that he has a ſtrong and affectionate love for them, and is not aſhamed of them, of their cauſe, of their perſons, and of their relation to him; and that he does, and will own, acknowledge, and approve of them, both here and hereafter: and the confeſſion he will make of them will be in their praiſe; in praiſe of their perſons, and the comelineſs of them, which he has put upon them; and of their graces, tho' they are his own; and of their good works, as the fruits of grace: and this will be made before his Father, who choſe theſe perſons, and gave them to him, to preſerve and ſave; and before the angels, who rejoice at their ſalvation and happineſs; and this will be at the laſt day; ſee the note on *Matt.* x. 32.

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[i] T. Bab. Zebachim, fol. 35 1.

[k] Tzeror Hammor, fol. 10. 3.

Ver. 6. *He that hath an ear, let him hear*, &c.] See the note on ch. ii. 7.

Ver. 7. *And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia, write*, &c.] Of the city of *Philadelphia*, ſee the note on ch. i. 11. According to the *Apoſtolical Conſtitutions* [m], one *Demetrius* was ordained biſhop of this church, by the Apoſtle *John*; but this is not to be depended on; nor is it known who this angel was; however, certain it is there was a church in this place in the *ſecond* century, in the times of *Ignatius*, who wrote an epiſtle to it, and which then had a biſhop or paſtor over it, whom he mentions [n], tho' not his name. And in the ſame century twelve *Philadelphians* ſuffered martyrdom at the ſame time *Polycarp* did [o]; and in the *third* century a church remained in this place; and alſo in the *fourth*, ſince a biſhop of this church was in the council at *Nice*; and in the *fifth* century, a presbyter of *Philadelphia* was in the ſynod at *Epheſus* under *Celeſtine*; and in the *ſixth* century, a biſhop of this place aſſiſted at the *fifth* ſynod at *Conſtantinople*; and in the *eighth* century, *Stephen*, biſhop of the church here, was in the *Nicene* ſynod [p]; and there are now a pretty many that bear the name of chriſtians, of the *Greek* church, in this place [q]. This church is an emblem of, and repreſents the church in that period of time, in which will be the ſpiritual reign of Chriſt. Its name ſignifies *brotherly love*, which in this interval will be very remarkable; ſaints ſhall not envy, vex and diſtreſs one another any more; they ſhall be one in the hand of the Lord, and among themſelves. Love, which is now ſo cold, and ſo much wanting in our preſent *Sardian* church ſtate, will be exceeding warm, and fervent, and in its higheſt pitch in the *Philadelphian* ſtate. The characters Chriſt here aſſumes, point at the holineſs of life, truth of doctrine, and purity of diſcipline, for which this church-ſtate will be diſtinguiſhed: in this period of time an open door for the Goſpel will be ſet; it will be preached in its power and purity, and will be greatly ſucceeded; the fullneſs of the *Gentiles* will be brought in, and the *Jews* will be converted; hypocrites and formal profeſſors will be diſcerned, and detected; great honour and reſpect will be ſhown the church by all men; and this ſtate will be an emblem and pledge of the new *Jeruſalem* ſtate, of which mention is made in this Epiſtle, or the thouſand years perſonal reign of Chriſt with all his ſaints: *theſe things ſaith he that is holy*; which character not only agrees with Chriſt, as God, who is the holy one of *Iſrael*, and equally glorious in holineſs as his Father, but as man; his nature was free from original ſin; his life from any actual tranſgreſſion; his doctrines were pure and holy, and ſo were all his works, and all his adminiſtrations in each of his offices: and as mediator, he is the cauſe and author of holineſs to his people; they are ſanctified in him, and have their ſanctification from him, and are ſanctified by him: this character he chuſes now to take, becauſe he was ſending an epiſtle to ſuch as were lovers of holineſs, and famous for it, both internal an external; ſo that while he deſcribes himſelf, he points at perſons, the members of churches in this interval: *he that is true*; truly God, and truly man; true and faithful in the diſcharge of his ſeveral offices, and in the truſt repoſed in him, both of the grace and perſons of the ſaints, and in what he undertook to do for them: he is truth itſelf, the truth of types, promiſes, and propheſies; and the ſum and ſubſtance of all the truths of the Goſpel; and is therefore to be depended on in every prediction and promiſe; and this title of Chriſt may have ſome view to the truth of doctrine which ſhall, in this period, prevail, and to the faithfulneſs and integrity of his people to his cauſe and intereſt: *he that hath the key of David*; mention is made of *David*, becauſe he was a type of Chriſt; and becauſe from him Chriſt came according to the fleſh, and whoſe throne he was to ſit upon, in a ſpiritual ſenſe; and becauſe, in this period of time, the *Jews* are to be converted, who will ſeek the Lord their God, and *David* their king: and by *the key of David* is meant, the key of the houſe of *David*; that is, the church of Chriſt, of which *David*'s houſe and family were a type: and this key is either the key of knowledge, or it is expreſſive of power and authority. Chriſt has the key of knowledge, he knows all the perſons of his people, all their affairs, and what they do in his houſe, and how they behave there: he has the key of knowledge in the ſcriptures, and gives it to his miniſters. And it may alſo deſign his authority in his houſe and church, in fixing the ordinances of it, in beſtowing gifts on men, and in diſpenſing the bleſſings of grace and goodneſs; this may have ſome regard to the pure diſcipline of this church, as well as to its light and knowledge in the doctrines of the Goſpel. The *Targum* on *Iſ.* xxii. 22. interprets, *the key of the houſe of David*, of שולטן, *the dominion* or government of the houſe of *David*. *He that openeth, and no man ſhutteth, and ſhutteth, and no man openeth*; he opens the ſcriptures, which are ſhut to a natural man, as he did in his own perſonal miniſtry, when here on earth, and now by his Spirit; and none can ſhut them, either men or devils, or hinder the ſpread of light and knowledge by them: he opens the door of the Goſpel, and gives an opportunity to preach it, and liberty of mind and expreſſion to his miniſters, and a door of utterance to them, and of entrance for it into the hearts of men, which none can ſhut, or hinder: he opens the door of the church, which is himſelf, and lets in his ſheep, into the ſheep-fold, into a Goſpel church-ſtate, and the ordinances of it; and he opens the door of heaven by his blood and righteouſneſs, and gives his people liberty and boldneſs to enter into the holieſt of all, and brings many ſons to glory in ſpight of all the oppoſition of men and devils: on the other hand, when he pleaſes, he ſhuts up the ſcriptures, and the eyes of men from ſeeing what is in them; he ſhuts up the door of the Goſpel, and forbids the preaching of it in this and that place; and the door of heaven will be ſhut by him at the laſt day, when all called to the marriage of the Lamb are entered, and there will be no opening. This ſhows the ſovereignity, power, and authority of Chriſt, and which he will exerciſe in this church-ſtate; ſee *Job* xii. 14. A like phraſe is in the *Talmud*[r], כיון שסוגר שוב אינו פותח, *when he ſhuts again, there is none that opens.*

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[l] Maimon. Biath Hamikdaſh, c. 6. §. 11. Miſn. Middot, c. 5. §. 3. T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 19. 1.

[m] L. 7. c. 46.

[n] Ignat. Epiſt. p. 39. Ed. Voſſ.

[o] Euſeb. Eccl. Hiſt. l. 4. c. 15.

[p] Eccl. Hiſt. Magdeburg. cent. 3. c. 2. p. 2. cent. 4. c. 2. p. 3. cent. 5. c. 2. p. 3. cent. 6. c. 2. p. 4. cent. 8. c. 2. p. 4.

[q] Smith Notitia, p. 143.

Ver. 8. *I know thy works*, &c.] Good works, of faith, love, and patience; and which lay much in preaching, profeſſing, and maintaining the pure Goſpel, and in acts of charity to one another; and which were done to ſome degree of perfection, and with great ſincerity; ſince this church is not complained of, that her works were not perfect before God, as the former church is: *behold, I have ſet before thee an open door, and no man can ſhut it*; or *which no man can ſhut*, as read the *Alexandrian* copy, and others, the *Complutenſian* edition, the *Vulgate Latin*, and all the *Oriental* verſions. This *open door* may deſign an uncommon opportunity of preaching the Goſpel; and a very great freedom of mind in the preachers of it, and great attention in the hearers, whoſe hearts will be opened to obſerve, receive, and embrace it; and a very large gathering in of ſouls to Chriſt, and his churches; much and frequent preaching of the word with great ſucceſs, which it won't be in the power of any creature to ſtop or hinder: now will the abundance of the ſea, the forces of the *Gentiles* flow in, and the nation of the *Jews* ſhall be born at once. *For thou haſt a little ſtrength*; which is not to be underſtood of inward ſpiritual ſtrength, for of this the church in this period will have a great deal, as well as of courage and fortitude of mind, but outward power and authority: ſome great men, and princes of the earth, will come into the churches of Chriſt, even kings will come to the brightneſs of her riſing; for now will all thoſe propheſies have their accompliſhment, which reſpect the ſecular grandeur of the church, with regard to its numbers, power, and riches; ſee *Iſ.* xlix. 18—23. and lx. 3—17. *And haſt kept my word*; both the commands and ordinances of Chriſt in practice, and that in their primitive purity, as they were delivered by Chriſt, and his Apoſtles, particularly baptiſm and the Lord's ſupper; which have been, one or other of them, or both, moſt ſadly corrupted in all the periods of the churches hitherto, excepting the apoſtolical one, but will now be reſtored to their priſtine purity and glory; and alſo the doctrines of the Goſpel, which will be kept, not in memory only, but in the heart and life; they will be publickly and openly preached, profeſſed, and defended: *and haſt not denied my name*; Chriſt himſelf, his doctrine reſpecting his perſon, office, and grace, neither in words, nor in works, but both ways confeſſed and owned it.

Ver. 9. *Behold, I will make them of the ſynagogue of ſatan*, &c.] Which may be underſtood either of the papiſts, the followers of the man of ſin, whoſe coming was after the working of ſatan, and whoſe doctrines are the doctrines of devils, many of whom will now be converted, and brought to the true church; or rather of the *Jews*, who had, and have, and will have till this time, their ſynagogues for religious worſhip in their way; but they are no other than ſynagogues of ſatan; the men that aſſemble in them are of their father the devil, and do his works, and will do them: *which ſay they are Jews, and are not, but do lye*; they are *Jews* by name and nation; they are *Jews* outwardly, but not inwardly and ſpiritually, *Rom.* ii. 28, 29. they are carnal wicked men, under the influence of ſatan, tho' they pretend to be religious men, and worſhippers of God: *behold, I will make them to come and worſhip before thy feet*; the converſion of the *Jews* is here intended. The *worſhip* here ſpoken of, is not either a religious or civil worſhip of the church, for the church is not the object of worſhip; only, before whom, and at whoſe feet this worſhip ſhall be given to God in the moſt humble and hearty manner: the ſenſe is, that the convinced and converted *Jews* ſhall come to the church, and in the moſt lowly and contrite manner, acknowledge their former blindneſs, furious zeal, and violent hatred of the chriſtians, and ſhall profeſs their faith in Chriſt; ſhall join themſelves to the church, and partake of the ordinances of the Goſpel with them; and ſhall worſhip God and Jeſus Chriſt, their Lord and king, in their preſence, and at their feet: *and to know that I have loved thee*; the *Gentile* church, and the members of it, in aſſuming human nature, and dying for, and redeeming them, as well as the *Jews*; in ſending his Goſpel to them, and calling them by his grace, and planting them into Goſpel churches; giving them a place, and a name in his houſe, better than that of ſons and daughters.

Ver. 10. *Becauſe thou haſt kept the word of my patience*, &c.] The Goſpel ſo called, becauſe it gives an account of the patience of Chriſt, in the midſt of all his outward meanneſs and humiliation; and becauſe it is a means of implanting and increaſing the grace of patience, which God is the efficient cauſe of, and Chriſt is the example of; that patience, which bears a reſemblance to his, in enduring afflictions, reproaches, perſecutions, deſertions, and temptations, and in waiting for his kingdom and glory; and becauſe both the preachers and profeſſors of the word have need of patience, and ſhould exerciſe it in like manner, as Chriſt did. This word, the churches, in the *Philadelphian* ſtate, will keep pure and incorrupt, and obſerve the ordinances of it according to the directions given in it; and will believe the promiſe of Chriſt's perſonal coming, and patiently wait for it; wherefore, Chriſt promiſes, as follows, *I alſo will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which ſhall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth*; this hour ſeems to refer not to any of the vials which will be poured out on the antichriſtian ſtates, but to ſome affliction and diſtreſs which will befall the reformed churches, and will light upon the outward court worſhippers among them. It ſeems to be the laſt ſtruggle of the beaſt of *Rome*, and to denote ſome violent and ſharp perſecution, ſuch as what *Daniel* mentions, that never was before, nor ſince; but it will be but ſhort, but one hour, the twenty-fourth part of a prophetical day or year, perhaps, about a fortnight; yet it will be very extenſive; it will reach all the world, the whole *Roman* empire, and all that dwell upon the earth, that are called by the name of chriſtians, and will try them, whether they are ſo or no; Chriſt will now have his fan in his hand, and purge his floor of all his formal profeſſors, and hypocrites; and it will be known who are his true churches, and pure members; and theſe he'll keep cloſe to himſelf, and preſerve ſafe amidſt all the diſtreſs and confuſion the world will be in. This cannot refer to the bloody perſecutions under the *Roman* emperors, for from thoſe the church at *Philadelphia*, was not preſerved. We read [*] of twelve members of it that ſuffered with *Polycarp*.

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[r] T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 44. 2. Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 70. 3.

Ver. 11. *Behold I come quickly*, &c.] To bring on this hour of temptation on the reformed churches, which will be at the beginning of this period; to help and deliver, ſave and preſerve the truly godly among them; to deſtroy antichriſt and introduce the latter day glory: *hold that faſt which thou haſt*; either her grace in the exerciſe of it, as her faith, patience, *&c.* or rather the doctrines of the Goſpel, and the ordinances of it, which ſhe had received, as delivered by Chriſt, and his Apoſtles; and which ſhe had held in the truth and purity of them, and is now exhorted to hold them faſt, ſince this hour of temptation would be a trying time, to her faith, patience, integrity, and conſtancy: *that no man take thy crown*; not eternal happineſs, called a crown of life, glory, and righteouſneſs, and which was prepared for her, and promiſed to her, and would be certainly given her; nor was there any danger of another's taking it from her; not but that exhortations of this kind to the ſaints are neceſſary, with reſpect to that, to excite to diligence, care, and watchfulneſs; and are no ways contrary to their final perſeverance, and certain ſalvation, but are means thereof: but either her honour for her faith, and faithfulneſs, for her integrity, ſincerity, and purity, is here meant; or the glorious things which were ſpoken of this church-ſtate, and to be accompliſhed in it, *Pſ.* lxxxvii. 3. ſee *Iſ.* lx.

Ver. 12. *He that overcometh*, &c.] In the hour of temptation, in this period of time; that ſtands his ground then, ſuſtains the ſhock of the beaſt, with courage and intrepidity, and overcomes him: *will I make a pillar in the temple of my God*; by which is meant not the church triumphant, tho' ſuch will have a place, and an abiding one there; but the church militant, ſo called in alluſion to the temple at *Jeruſalem*, for its author, matter, ſituation, ſtrength, ſolidity, magnificence, and ſtatelineſs, and for its holineſs; and may be ſaid to be the temple of God, becauſe it is of his building, and is the place where he dwells, and is worſhipped; and the temple of Chriſt's God, as he is man and mediator, thro' whom all worſhip is given to God in it; and thoſe who are overcomers by the grace and ſtrength of Chriſt, are made pillars by him here, in alluſion to the two pillars, *Jachin* and *Boaz*, in *Solomon*'s temple; that is, they become very ornamental in the church, they are made hononourable members of it; they come in at the right door into it, and fill up their places, and all relative duties in it, and walk becoming their profeſſion; and like pillars, are a ſupport to it, to the intereſt of the church, the truths of the Goſpel, and to weak and poor ſaints; and as pillars, they are upright in heart and converſation, and are ſteady, firm, and conſtant: *and he ſhall go no more out*; out of the church, the temple of the Lord, but ſhall abide in it unto death: it is a promiſe of perſeverance both in the grace of God, and in a profeſſion of religion; there ſhall not be ſuch inſtances of apoſtacy as now. *And I will write upon him the name of my God*; in alluſion to inſcriptions of names on pillars; the ſenſe is, that it ſhould be manifeſt, that ſuch are intereſted in God, as their covenant God and father, in like manner as he is the God and father of Chriſt; and this ſhould be as plain and as evident, as an inſcription on a pillar, or as if it was written upon their foreheads, as the high-prieſt had on his forehead written, *holineſs to the Lord*; and indeed it will be by their holineſs that it will ſo clearly appear that God is their covenant God; for in this church-ſtate, or ſpiritual reign of Chriſt, holineſs unto the Lord ſhall be upon the bells of the horſes: *and the name of the city of my God*; which is new *Jeruſalem*, in alluſion to *Jehovah Shammah*; meaning the Goſpel church in the latter-day glory; and the ſenſe is, that ſuch ſhall be manifeſtly citizens of this city, in this new and glorious ſtate of the church, and ſhall enjoy all the privileges of it, which at this time eſpecially will be many and great. This will not be the new *Jeruſalem* church-ſtate, or the thouſand years reign of Chriſt in perſon, for in that there will be no temple, as in this; but it will have the name, and ſome appearance of it; it will bear ſome reſemblance to it, and be a pledge of it: *which cometh down out of heaven, from my God*; as it is before called new *Jeruſalem*, in diſtinction from the old, ſo here it is ſaid to come down from heaven, or to be the heavenly *Jeruſalem*, in diſtinction from the earthly one. The inhabitants of it will be born from above, and be called with an heavenly calling, and their converſation will be in heaven, and all the glory of this church will come from God. *And* I will write upon him *my new name*; either the name of *Jehovah* our righteouſneſs; or rather the name of King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, *Rev.* xix. 16. which Chriſt will now acquire, or at leaſt this will now be made more manifeſt upon the deſtruction of antichriſt, in this church-ſtate; in which conqueſt he will make all his people ſharers, and they ſhall now more openly appear to be kings, and to reign with him in his ſpiritual kingdom.

Ver. 13. *He that hath an ear let him hear*, &c.] See the note on ch. ii. 7.

Ver. 14. *And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans, write*, &c.] Of the city of *Laodicea*, ſee the note on ch. i. 11. there was a church here in the times of the Apoſtle *Paul*, by whom it was founded is not known; mention is made of it in *Col.* ii. 1, 2. and iv. 13, 15, 16. who was now the angel, or paſtor of it, whether *Epaphras*, who is there named, or another, is not certain. According to the *Apoſtolical Conſtitutions* [t], *Archippus* was ordained biſhop of it by the Apoſtles; ſee *Col.* iv. 16, 17. There was a church here in the *ſecond* century, for *Sagaris*, biſhop of it, ſuffered martyrdom in the times of *Antoninus Verus* [u]; and in the *fourth* century, this church was famous for two eminent biſhops, *Theodorus* and *Gregory*; and in the *fifth* century, it was the *metropolitan* church of *Phrygia*, as it was in the *ſeventh* century, in which age *Tyberius*, biſhop of this place, was in the ſixth ſynod at *Conſtantinople* [w]; but now it is even without inhabitants [x]. This church repreſents the ſtate of the church, from the end of the ſpiritual reign of Chriſt, till the time of his perſonal appearing and kingdom, to judge the quick and dead; for after the ſpiritual reign is over, profeſſors of religion will ſink into a formality, and into a lukewarm frame of ſpirit, and into great ſpiritual ſloth and ſecurity, ver. 15, 16. which will make thoſe times like the times of *Noah* and of *Lot*; and ſuch will be the days of the coming of the ſon of man to judge the world. Its name ſignifies either *the righteouſneſs of the people*; and ſo may point at that popular and external righteouſneſs, which the majority of the profeſſors of religion in this period of time, will be boaſting of, and truſting in; being ſelf-ſufficient, and ſelf-dependent, when at the ſame time they'll be naked, as well as poor, and blind, ver. 17, 18. or it ſignifies *the judging of the people*; for this church-ſtate, at the end of it, will bring on the general judgment; the judge will now be at the door indeed, ſtanding and knocking; and they that are ready to meet the bridegroom, when he comes, will be admitted into the nuptial chamber, and ſit down with him in his throne, in the thouſand years kingdom, at the cloſe of which will be the ſecond reſurrection, when all the people, ſmall and great, ſhall be judged, ver. 19, 20, 21. *Theſe things ſaith the Amen*; ſee *Iſ.* lxv. 16. The word *Amen* is the name of a divine perſon, with the *Jews*, and it ſeems the ſecond perſon; for ſo on thoſe words in *Prov.* viii. 30. *then was I by him as one brought up with him*, they obſerve [y] don't read *Amon*, the word there uſed, but *Amen*; and a little after *Amen*, they ſay is the *notaricon*, or ſign of, אל מלך נאמן, *God the faithful king*; they make [z] *Amen* to be one of the names of the ſecond *Sephira*, or number in the *Cabaliſtic* tree, by whom the ſecond perſon in the Godhead ſeems to be deſigned: and they ſay [a], that the word *Amen*, by *Gematry* (or numerically) anſwers to the two names *Jehovah*, *Adonai*. Chriſt may be ſo called, becauſe he is the God of truth, and truth itſelf; and it may be expreſſive of his faithfulneſs, both to God his Father, and to his people, in whom all the promiſes he either made, or received, are yea and amen; and alſo of the firmneſs, conſtancy, and immutability of Chriſt, in his nature, perſon and offices, in his love, fullneſs of grace, power, blood, and righteouſneſs; and is very appoſitely aſſumed by him now, when he was about to give the finiſhing ſtroke to all covenant-engagements, and to all promiſes and propheſies; ſee ch. i. 18. *The faithful and true witneſs*; who as he was in the days of his fleſh, ſee the note on ch. i. 5. ſo he will be at the day of judgment, a ſwift witneſs againſt all ungodly men; and he may the rather take up this title, not only on that account, but to ſhow that the deſcription he gives of the ſtate and condition of this church is juſt, ver. 15, 16. and to engage it to take his advice the more readily, ver. 18. and to aſſure it of the nearneſs of his coming, ver. 20. and to ſtrengthen the faith of his people, and quicken their hope and expectation of the happineſs with him promiſed, ver. 21. the ſame character is given to the logos or word of the Lord, by the *Targumiſt* in *Jer.* xlii. 5. *let the word of the Lord be to us*, לסהיד קשוט ומהימן, *for a true and faithful witneſs*; the very phraſe here uſed. *The beginning of the creation of God*; not the firſt creature that God made, but the firſt cauſe of the creation; the firſt parent, producer, and efficient cauſe of every creature; the author of the old creation, who made all things out of nothing in the beginning of time; and of the new creation, the everlaſting Father of every one that is made a new creature; the Father of the world to come, or of the new age, and Goſpel diſpenſation; the maker of the new heaven, and new earth; and ſo a very fit perſon to be the judge of the whole world, to ſummon all nations before him, and paſs the final ſentence on them. The phraſe is *Jewiſh*, and it is a title the *Jews* give to *Metatron*, by whom they ſometimes mean the Meſſiah; ſo thoſe words in *Gen.* xxiv. 2. *and Abraham ſaid unto his eldeſt ſervant of his houſe*, they paraphraſe thus [b]; "*and Abraham ſaid unto* "*his ſervant*, this is *Metatron*, (or the mediator) "the ſervant of God, *the eldeſt of his houſe*; for "he is, תהלת בריותיו של מקום, *the beginning of* "*the creation of God*, who rules over all that he has; "for to him the holy bleſſed God has given the "government of all his hoſts." Chriſt is the αρχη, *the prince*, or governour of all creatures.

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[*] Euſeb. Eccl. Hiſt. l. 4. c. 15.

Ver. 15. *I know thy works*, &c.] Which were far from being perfect, and not ſo good as thoſe of the former church: *that thou art neither cold nor hot*; ſhe was not *cold*, or without ſpiritual life, at leaſt in many of her members, as all men by nature are, and carnal profeſſors be; ſhe was alive, but not lively: nor was ſhe wholly without ſpiritual affections and love, to God, and Chriſt, to his people, ways, truths, and ordinances; ſhe had love, but the fervency of it was abated: nor was ſhe without ſpiritual breathings, and deſires altogether, as dead men are; or without the light and knowledge of the Goſpel, and a profeſſion of it, and yet ſhe was not *hot*; her love to God and Chriſt, and the ſaints, was not ardent and flaming; it was not like coals of fire, that give a moſt vehement flame, which many waters cannot quench. She had not fervency of ſpirit in the ſervice of the Lord; nor was ſhe zealous for the truths of the Goſpel, and for the ordinances of it, and for the houſe of God, and its diſcipline; nor did ſhe warmly oppoſe all ſin, and every error, and falſe way. *I would thou wert cold or hot*; which muſt be underſtood, not abſolutely, but comparatively; and not that it was an indifferent thing to Chriſt, whether ſhe was one or the other; but he alludes to what is natural among men, it being generally more agreeable to have any thing entirely hot, or entirely cold, than to be neither; and ſo uſes this phraſe to ſhew his deteſtation of lukewarmneſs, and that it is better to be ignorant, and not a profeſſor of religion, than to be a vain and carnal one; Chriſt deſires not ſimply, that ſhe might be cold, but that ſhe might be ſenſible of her need of ſpiritual heat and fervency.

Ver.

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[t] L. 7. c. 46.

[u] Euſeb. Hiſt. Eccl. l. 4. c. 26. & l. 5. c. 24.

[w] Eccl. Hiſt. Magdeburg. cent. 4. c. 2. p. 3. cent. 5. c. 7. p. 418. cent. 7. c. 2. p. 3. c. 7. p. 112. c. 10. p. 254.

[x] Smith. Notitia, p. 150.

[y] Zohar in Deut. fol. 121. 4. ſo in T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 119. 2. & Sanhedrin, fol. 111. 1. Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 46. 1.

[z] Cabal. Denud. par. 2. p. 7.

[a] Lex. Cabal. p. 130. & Baal Hatturim in Deut. xxviii. 15.

[b] Zohar in Gen. fol. 77. 1

Ver. 16. *So then becauſe thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot*, &c.] A lukewarm profeſſor is one that ſerves God and mammon; that halts between two opinions, and knows not what religion is beſt, and cares little for any, yet keeps in a round of duty, tho' indifferent to it, and contents himſelf with it; and is unconcerned about the life and power of godlineſs, and takes up with the external form of it; and has no thought about the glory of God, the intereſt of Chriſt and truth; and this was too much the caſe of this church, at leaſt of a great number of its members; wherefore it was very loathſome to Chriſt, hence he threatens: *I will ſpue thee out of my mouth*; this ſhows how nauſeous lukewarmneſs is to Chriſt, inſomuch that on account of it he would not own and acknowledge her as his; but even caſt her out, unchurch her, and have no more any ſuch imperfect church-ſtate upon earth, as he afterwards never will, this is the laſt; nor is there any church-ſtate, or any remains of one in *Laodicea*; it is indeed quite uninhabited.

Ver. 17. *Becauſe thou ſayeſt I am rich*, &c.] In worldly goods, which occaſioned her lukewarmneſs, as riches often do, and her vanity, pride, and arrogance, afterwards expreſſed. *Laodicea* was a very rich city, and ſo will be this church-ſtate, thro' the acceſſion of kings and princes, and great men of the earth unto it, in the former period: riches ſeldom do any good to the churches of Chriſt, they did not in *Conſtantine*'s time; and it ſeems that even at the cloſe of the ſpiritual reign of Chriſt they will be of bad conſequence, ſince they will uſher in the *Laodicean* church-ſtate: or her meaning is, that ſhe was rich in ſpiritual things; not in grace, but in external gifts, which ſtill remained, upon the very great pouring forth of the Spirit in the laſt church-ſtate; and in good works, on which ſhe too much truſted for ſalvation, placing her righteouſneſs in them: ſhe is one whom the *Jews* [c] call עשיר בתורה, *rich in the law*: *and increaſed with goods*; with outward peace and proſperity, with much natural and divine light and knowledge, with the purity of Goſpel ordinances, even beyond the former church-ſtate in her own imagination: *and have need of nothing*; contenting herſelf with theſe external things: true believers, as conſidered in Chriſt, ſtand in need of nothing indeed, they are compleat in him, and have every thing in him; but as conſidered in themſelves, they are daily in need of daily food for their ſouls, as for their bodies, of freſh light and life, ſtrength and comfort, and of new ſupplies of grace; wherefore this church ſhows great ignorance of herſelf, as well as great pride and arrogance, to expreſs herſelf in this manner: *and knoweſt not that thou art wretched*; as all men are in a ſtate of nature and unregeneracy; which may be the caſe of many profeſſors, and they be ignorant of it; as to be under a ſentence of wrath, obnoxious to the curſes of the law, in danger of hell and deſtruction, loſt and undone, and unable to extricate themſelves out of ſuch a ſtate: true believers account themſelves wretched, as the Apoſtle *Paul* did, on account of indwelling ſin, and the plague of their own hearts, which the members of this church, the greater part of them, were ignorant of: *and miſerable*; a miſerable man is one that is attended with outward afflictions, but this was not the caſe of this church; and with ſpiritual poverty, blindneſs, and nakedneſs, and this was her caſe; ſome perſons neither know their miſery, nor their need of mercy: *and poor*; not in purſe, nor in ſpirit, nor with reſpect to outward afflictions, nor as to her church-ſtate, but in a ſpiritual ſenſe; one whom the *Jews* call [d] רש בתורה, *poor in the law*; as ſuch may be ſaid to be who have nothing to eat that is fit to eat; nothing to wear but rags, and have no money to buy either; who are in debt, and not able to pay, nor to help themſelves on any account; and this may be the caſe of profeſſors, and yet not known and conſidered by them: *and blind*; natural men are blind as to a ſaving knowledge of God in Chriſt, as to the way of ſalvation by Chriſt, as to the plague of their own hearts, as to the work of the Spirit of God upon the ſoul, and as to the truths of the Goſpel, in the power of them; but here it regards blindneſs with reſpect to her church-ſtate, and its imperfection: *and naked*; ſin has ſtripped man of his moral cloathing; man's own righteouſneſs will not cover his nakedneſs; and whoever is deſtitute of the righteouſneſs of Chriſt is a naked perſon.

Ver. 18. *I counſel thee*, &c.] Chriſt is a counſellor, and is every way fit to be one, for he is the all-wiſe God, the antient of days, and the father of his people, and as mediator, the wiſdom of God; and he was concerned in the council of peace from everlaſting; and when he was here on earth he gave counſel in perſon, and now he gives it by his Spirit, and by his word and miniſters; and the ſubſtance of it is, to come to him for grace, life, and ſalvation; for pardon, peace, and righteouſneſs; for ſpiritual light and knowledge, and every ſupply of grace; and his advice is always wholeſome, good, and ſuitable, is hearty, ſincere, and faithful, and is freely given, and is wiſe and prudent; and being taken, infallibly ſucceeds; the counſel here given follows: *to buy of me gold tried in the fire*; by which is meant either a more pure and glorious ſtate of the church, ſuch as was in the former period, or greater; or a larger meaſure of light and knowledge in the Goſpel, which is better than fine gold; or ſome particular graces, and a comfortable exerciſe of them, as fervent love, and ſtrong faith, which is much more precious than gold; or rather, all ſpiritual riches in general, which are in Chriſt, and are unſearchable, ſolid, ſubſtantial, and ſatisfying, are laſting and durable, precious, excellent, and incorruptible: and the buying of this gold is not to be underſtood in a proper ſenſe, by giving a valuable conſideration for it, for no ſuch is to be given, but in an improper ſenſe; it is a buying without money and without price; Chriſt and his grace are given freely; Chriſt, of whom it is to be had, and of him only, does not ſell it, but he gives it to thoſe that come to him for it, and deſire to have it, and are willing to part with all ſo they may but enjoy it; for that it is to be underſtood in ſuch a ſenſe, is clear from the character of the perſons who are adviſed to buy, who were poor, or beggars, ver. 17. the end of it is, *that thou mayeſt be rich*; for tho' this church was rich, yet not in ſpirituals; and tho' ſhe was rich in her own conceit, yet not really ſo; perſons are not to be accounted truly rich who have only this world's goods; none are rich but thoſe who have an intereſt in Chriſt and his grace; and they who are poor in this world, and yet have grace, are really rich: the next thing adviſed to is, *and white raiment*; that is, and buy white raiment, by which ſome underſtand the heavenly glory, robes of immortality, a being clothed upon with the houſe which is from heaven; this may be compared to raiment, for it is a glory, an immortality, an incorruption to be put on; and fitly enough to white raiment, for the purity and ſpotleſſneſs of it; and being clothed with this, no nakedneſs, or ſhame of it will appear; and this is to be had from Chriſt, and in the ſame way as gold is to be bought

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[c] Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 106. 2.

[d] Vajikra Rabba, §. 34. fol. 173. 4. vid. Targum in Cant. viii. 9.

of him; the deſign of this advice may be to quicken the deſires of the church after heavenly things; tho' it rather ſeems to reſpect ſomething ſuitable to her in this preſent ſtate: wherefore others think, that by it are meant good works, holineſs of life and converſation; but theſe are never called white raiment, but even rags, yea filthy ones in the beſt; and whatever cover they may be from nakedneſs in the ſight of men, they are no cover from it in the ſight of God, nor do they preſerve from ſhame and bluſhing: rather than by it is meant the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, which may be compared to raiment; it is upon the ſaints, and is put upon them as ſuch; it covers as a garment does, protects from injuries, keeps warm, beautifies and adorns as raiment does; and it may be compared to white raiment, for its purity and perfection; now this to be bought of Chriſt, it is to be had of him, and is to be had of him freely, without money and without price; it is a free gift of grace; and even faith itſelf, which receives it, is the gift of God: the ends of giving this advice are, *that thou mayeſt be clothed, and that the ſhame of thy nakedneſs do not appear*; the ſoul may be naked when the body is well clothed; and notwithſtanding a man's moral righteouſneſs, he may not be clothed; they, and they only are clothed, who have on the righteouſneſs of Chriſt; nakedneſs ariſes from want of righteouſneſs, which is only covered by the righteouſneſs of Chriſt; and from hence alſo ſprings ſhame, which Chriſt's righteouſneſs hides: *and anoint thine eyes with eye-ſalve*; by which may be meant the word of God, particularly the Goſpel; and anointing with it is making uſe of it for the gaining of light and knowledge: all without this divine revelation are in darkneſs, and ſuch who reject the authority of it go aſtray; the ſcriptures are the only directory, and rule of faith and practice; the law is a means of enlightning perſons to ſee their ſin and miſery, and the danger they are in; and the Goſpel is a light, whereby is beheld the glory of Chriſt, of his perſon and office, of his grace and righteouſneſs, and of ſalvation by him; and this is the Goſpel of Chriſt, and is to be had of him freely, even the ſaving knowledge of it. The *Jews* have adopted the very *Greek* word here uſed, into their language, and apply it to the law; ſays *R. Chija*[e], ſpeaking of the law, "קילוריח לעין, *it is a ſalve* "*for the eye*, a plaiſter for a wound, *&c.* it is a "ſalve for the eyes, as is written *Pſ.* xix. 8." or elſe the illumination of the Spirit is meant, by which the eyes of the underſtanding being enlightned, men ſee themſelves, the impurity of their hearts and nature, the imperfection of their righteouſneſs, their impotency to all that is ſpiritually good, and that they are loſt and undone in themſelves; and by which they ſee Chriſt and ſalvation by him, that it is in him, and in no other, and that it is full and ſuitable, and for the chief of ſinners, and that it is all of free grace, and that they have an intereſt in it; by this they have light into the doctrines of the Goſpel, and have ſome glimpſe of the glories of another world; and this is to be had of Chriſt, who gives his Spirit freely, and an underſtanding to know ſpiritual things: and the end of the advice is, *that thou mayeſt ſee*; who, notwithſtanding the conceit ſhe had of herſelf, was blind; perſons may have much human prudence, much knowledge in things moral, yea, in things evangelical, notionally, and yet be blind as to true ſpiritual light and experience; they only ſee ſpiritually and ſavingly who have the Spirit of God.

Ver. 19. *As many as I love I rebuke and chaſten, &c.*] The perſons, the objects of Chriſt's love here intended, are not angels, but the ſons of men; and theſe not all of them, yet many of them, even all who are his own by his Father's gift and his own purchaſe; and who are called his church, and ſometimes repreſented as ſuch who love him and obey his commands: the inſtances of his love to them are many; as his ſuretyſhip-engagements for them, his aſſumption of their nature, dying in their room and ſtead, paying their debts, procuring their peace and pardon, bringing in a righteouſneſs for them, purchaſing their perſons, his interceſſion for them, preparations in heaven, ſupplies of grace, and frequent viſits in a kind and familiar manner; and as for the nature of his love, it is free and ſovereign, everlaſting and immutable, and it is matchleſs and unconceiveable, it is ſtrong and affectionate, and as his Father loved him; and ſuch are rebuked by Chriſt, not in a way of wrath, but in a tender manner, in order to bring them under a conviction of their ſin, and of their duty, and of their folly in truſting in, or loving any creature more than himſelf, and of all their wrong ways; and they are chaſtened by him, not in a vindictive, but in a fatherly way, which is inſtructive and teaching to them, and for their good. This ſeems to refer to ſome afflictions which Chriſt was about to bring upon this church, by ſome means or another, to awaken her out of her ſloth and ſecurity, and which would be in love to her, and the end be to rouſe her zeal, and bring her to repentance. Some think this reſpects the *Gog* and *Magog* army, which will encompaſs the camp of the ſaints, and the beloved city; but that will not be till after the thouſand years reign, and beſides will be no affliction to them; rather it deſigns the unchurching them, ſignified by ſpueing them out of his mouth, ver. 16. *be zealous, therefore, and repent*; zeal was what was wanting in this church; which is nothing elſe than hot, fervent, and ardent love, love in a flame; whereas ſhe was neither cold nor hot, but lukewarm, Chriſt would have her be *zealous* for God; for his cauſe and intereſt, for his Goſpel, ordinances, and the diſcipline of his houſe, and againſt every thing that is evil; againſt all falſe worſhip, all errors in doctrine, all ſin and iniquity; and to be zealous of good works, and in the worſhip of God, both private and public: and *repent*; in an evangelical way, of her lukewarmneſs, remiſſneſs, and ſupineneſs; of her pride, arrogance, and vain boaſtings of herſelf; and of her ſelf-ſufficience, ſelf-dependence, and ſelf-confidence.

Ver. 20. *Behold I ſtand at the door and knock, &c.*] The phraſe of ſtanding at the door, may be expreſſive of the near approach, or ſudden coming of Chriſt to judgment, ſee *James* v. 9. and his knocking may ſignify the notice that will be given of it, by ſome of the immediate forerunners and ſigns of his coming; which yet will be obſerved but by a few, ſuch a general ſleepineſs will have ſeized all profeſſors of religion; and particularly may intend the midnight-cry, which will, in its iſſue, rouſe them all: *if any man hear my voice*; in the appearances of things, and providences in the world: *and open the door*; or ſhew a readineſs for the coming of Chriſt, look and wait for it, and be like ſuch that will receive him with a welcome: *I will come unto him, and ſup with him, and he with me*; to and among theſe will Chriſt appear when he comes in perſon; and theſe being like wiſe virgins, ready, having his grace in their hearts, and his righteouſneſs upon them, he'll take them at once into the marriage-chamber, and ſhut the door upon the reſt; when they ſhall enjoy a thouſand years communion with him in perſon here on earth; when the lamb on the throne will feed them with the fruit of the tree of life, and lead them to fountains of living water, and his tabernacle ſhall be among them.

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[e] Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 96. 3. Debarim Rabba, §. 8. fol. 243. 3. & Vajikra Rabba, §. 12. fol. 155. 3.

Ver. 21. *To him that overcometh*, &c.] The lukewarmneſs, and ſelf-confidence, and ſecurity of this ſtate: *will I grant to ſit with me in my throne*; at the cloſe of this church-ſtate, which will be the laſt of this kind, conſiſting of imperfect ſaints, Chriſt will deſcend from heaven, with the ſouls of all the righteous, and raiſe their bodies, and unite them to them; which, with the living ſaints, will make one general aſſembly and church of the firſt-born, all perfect in ſoul and body; among theſe he'll place his tabernacle, and fix his throne; and they being all made kings, as well as prieſts to him, ſhall now reign on earth with him, and that for the ſpace of a thouſand years: and this is the bleſſing promiſed the overcomers in the *Laodicean* ſtate, that when Chriſt ſhall ſet up his kingdom among men, and reign gloriouſly before his ancients, they ſhall ſit on the ſame throne with him, or ſhare with him in his kingdom and glory; ſee ch. v. 10. and xx. 4. and *Dan.* vii. 27. *even as I alſo overcame*; ſin, ſatan, the world, death, and hell: *and am ſet down with my Father in his throne*; in heaven, at his right hand; which is expreſſive of equality to him, diſtinction from him, communion with him, and of the honour and glory he is poſſeſſed of; but it is not on this throne that the ſaints will ſit, only Chriſt ſits on the ſame throne with the Father in heaven; it is on Chriſt's throne on earth, or in his perſonal reign there, that the ſaints ſhall ſit down with him; and which honour they ſhall all have, all that are more than conquerors thro' him, and are made kings by him. And when this reign is over, then will follow the ſecond reſurrection, or the reſurrection of the wicked, when will come on the judgment of the people, as *Laodicea* ſignifies; and when theſe, with the devils, will form themſelves into the *Gog* and *Magog* army, and attack the beloved city, the church of glorified ſaints on earth, under Chriſt their king, which will iſſue in the everlaſting deſtruction of the former; and thus theſe ſeven churches bring us to the end of all things.

Ver. 22. *He that hath an ear, let him hear*, &c.] See the note on ch. ii. 7.

CHAP. IV.

THIS chapter contains an account of the ſecond viſion *John* ſaw, as preparatory to the ſealed book, and the opening of it, as the firſt viſion was to the Epiſtles to the ſeven churches. The preface to this viſion, or the introduction to it, and preparation of *John* for it, are in ver. 1, 2. which declare the time of it, the poſition *John* was in, what he ſaw and heard, a call to him to come up, and the effect it had upon him; and then follows the viſion itſelf, which is of a throne, deſcribed by the place where it was ſet, in heaven; and by him that ſat upon it, ver. 2. who was like to a jaſper and a ſardine ſtone; and by what was about it, firſt a rainbow of an emerald colour, ver. 3. then four and twenty ſeats, with as many elders upon them, ſitting cloathed and crowned, ver. 4. and by what went out from it, lightenings, thunderings, and voices; and by what were before it, ſeven burning lamps, which are the ſeven ſpirits of God, ver. 5. and a ſea of glaſs like chryſtal; and by what were between it all around, and the elders, four living creatures, deſcribed in general, by their being full of eyes, before and behind, ver. 6. in particular, the firſt by its likeneſs to a lion, the ſecond by its likeneſs to a calf, the third by its likeneſs to a man, and the fourth by its likeneſs to a flying eagle, ver. 7. and by what were common to them, firſt by their wings, of which they had each of them ſix; and by their eyes, they were full of within; and by their conſtant employment in celebrating the perfections of God, and in giving glory, honour, and thanks unto him, ver. 8, 9. at which time alſo the four and twenty elders appear in a worſhipping poſture, and give adoration to God; partly by deeds, caſting their crowns before his throne; and partly by words, aſcribing glory, honour, and power to him; giving a reaſon for it, taken from his creating all things for his pleaſure, ver. 10, 11.

Ver. 1. *After this I looked*, &c.] After *John* had ſeen the viſion of Chriſt, in the midſt of the golden candleſticks, with ſeven ſtars in his right hand; after he was bid to write what he had ſeen, and what were, and ſhould be hereafter; and after he had by order written the ſeven epiſtles to the ſeven churches, he looked about him to ſee what elſe he could, having his deſires and expectations raiſed of ſeeing more, and other things, for the eye is never ſatisfied with ſeeing; tho' this is to be underſtood, not of looking with the eyes of his body, but with the eyes of his mind; of his beholding things in a viſionary way, as the prophets did, whence they are called *ſeers*, and their propheſies *viſions*: how long this was after the firſt viſion is not certain, it may be but a few minutes; and it is to be obſerved, that as the firſt chapter of this book, with the viſion in it, is the preface or introduction to the church prophecy delivered out in the ſeven epiſtles; ſo this, and the following chapter, with the viſion therein, contain the preface or introduction to the book-prophecy exhibited in the opening of the ſeven ſeals of the ſealed book: *and behold a door* was *opened in heaven*; not in a literal ſenſe, as the heavens were opened at Chriſt's baptiſm, and at *Stephen*'s martyrdom, but in a figurative ſenſe; and the phraſe is to be underſtood of a diſcovery of things that were, or were to be in the church of God, which in this book is oftentimes ſignified by *heaven*; and it muſt be conceived as done in a viſionary way, juſt as *Ezekiel*, in the viſions of God, was brought to *Jeruſalem*, and the temple there, and in at a door was ſhown all the abominations committed in the court and temple; ſo *John*, in a viſionary way, thro' an opened door, had a ſcene of things in the church preſented to him, as follows: *and the firſt voice which I heard* was, *as it were, of a trumpet talking with me*; this voice is not called the firſt voice with reſpect to any other voices that were to follow; but it deſigns the former voice, the voice that *John* heard behind him, when he ſaw the firſt viſion; and this, as that, was clear, loud, and ſonorous as a trumpet, ſo that he thoroughly heard, and rightly underſtood what was ſaid; it was the ſame perſon that made the following repreſentations of things as did then, even he who is the Alpha and the Omega, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the author of the whole revelation; the word *firſt* is left out in the *Arabic* verſion: the alluſion is to the blowing of trumpets at the opening of the door of the temple; "every day there "were one and twenty ſoundings of a trumpet in "the temple, three, לפתיחת שערים, *at the open-"ing of the doors*, and nine at the daily morning "ſacrifice, and nine at the daily evening ſacrifice [f]." And one of them was called the great door of the temple; and he that ſlew the daily ſacrifice, did not ſlay till he heard the ſound of that door when it was opened [g]; ſo here at the opening of the door in heaven, in the church, of which the temple was a type, the voice of the Son of God is heard, as the ſound of a trumpet, talking loudly and familiarly to *John*: *which ſaid, come up hither*; from the iſle of *Patmos*, where he was, up to heaven; not into the third heaven, where *Paul* was caught up, but rather up into the Goſpel church, the *Jeruſalem* which is above; tho' this, as before, is to be underſtood in a viſionary way, in like manner as *Ezekiel* was lifted up by the Spirit between the earth and the heavens; and ſo *John*, in a viſion, was called up from *Patmos*, into the air, where he had a repreſentation of the church made unto him: *and I will ſhew thee things which muſt be hereafter*; in the world, in the *Roman* empire, and in the church of God, to the end of the world; not but that there were ſome things ſhown him, as before, in the church-prophecy, which had been, and were, and which was done to give him a complete view of things from firſt to laſt: and theſe things were ſhewn in the following viſions of the ſeals, trumpets, and vials, and by the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who talked with him, and to whom this revelation was given to ſhew unto his ſervants; and it was of things that *muſt* be, becauſe determined and reſolved upon in the unalterable purpoſes and decrees of God.

Ver. 2. *And immediately I was in the Spirit*, &c.] As he had been before, ch. i. 10. it ſeems he had been ſome little time out of his exſtacy, how long cannot be ſaid, and now upon this new ſcene of things, returned to it; upon the opening of the door in heaven, and hearing the former voice, and the things it ſaid, the Spirit of God at once poſſeſſed and filled him, in an extraordinary manner; and his ſoul or ſpirit was immediately taken from the conſideration of all ſenſible objects, and was fixed and intent upon the things preſented to it in the viſion, ſo that it was, as if it was out of the body. The *Arabic* verſion reads, *then therefore I went in the Spirit*; in obedience to the voice that called him up, in which he was aſſiſted by the Spirit of God, who lifted him up as he did *Ezekiel*, when he ſaw what follows: *and behold, a throne was ſet in heaven*; not for the final judgment, on which the ſon of man will ſit, when he comes to judge the quick and dead, for he is not the perſon that fills this throne; but this is a ſymbol of the power, authority, and dominion now exerciſed by God, not over the world in general, who has prepared his throne in the heavens, and governs among the nations, according to his ſovereign will, and pleaſure, but which he exerciſes in his church, ſignified by *heaven*. The alluſion is to the temple, and the throne of God in it, *Iſ*. vi. 1. *Jer*. xvii. 12. The temple was an emblem of the Goſpel church, *Jeruſalem*, or the Goſpel church-ſtate, and was to be called the throne of the Lord, *Jer*. iii. 17. and now his throne is ſet there. Here he exerciſes a juriſdiction and government; he is king and lawgiver in it; he has enacted laws, and he writes them on the hearts of his people, and puts his Spirit within them, and makes them both able and willing to obey them. *And one ſat on the throne*; not the Trinity of perſons in the Godhead, which ſome think are ſignified by the three pretious ſtones in the next verſe, the *Jaſper*, *Sardine*, and *Emerald*; for as diſtinct from him that ſat upon the throne, the Lamb is ſaid to be in the midſt of it, and the ſeven Spirits of God are ſaid to be before it: nor is Jeſus Chriſt intended, and his two natures; his divine nature by the *Jaſper*, and his human nature by the red and blood coloured *Sardine*; ſince he, the Lamb, is repreſented as in the midſt of the throne, and is often diſtinguiſhed from him that ſat upon it; ſee ch. v. 6, 7, 13. and vii. 10. but God the Father is deſigned, who ſits on the throne, tho' not to the excluſion of the Son and Spirit, yet in diſtinction from them. This clauſe is left out in the *Ethiopic* verſion.

Ver. 3. *And he that ſat, was to look upon like a Jaſper*, &c.] For the brightneſs, glory, and majeſty of his countenance, and for his being light itſelf, clothed with it, and dwelling in it; ſee ch. xxi. 11, 18, 19. and for the various perfections of his nature, as eternity, infinity, immutability, omniſcience, omnipotence, omnipreſence, wiſdom power, goodneſs, truth, love, grace, and mercy; for the *Jaſper*, at leaſt one ſort of them, is of various colours, and ſpotted with divers ſpots; that which is moſt valued, is the green, ſpotted with red, or purple [h]: hence, this ſtone, which is the twelfth in the high-prieſt's breaſt-plate, and on which the name of *Benjamin* was written, is called, by the *Chaldee* paraphraſe of *Onkelos* on *Exod*. xxviii. 20. *Pantere*, and of *ben Uzziel*, on the ſame place, *Apanturin*, and on *Cant*. v. 14. *Apantor*, becauſe ſome are variegated and ſpotted like *Panthers*. *And a Sardine ſtone*; the ſame with the *Sardius*; and ſo read here the *Alexandrian* copy, the *Syriac* and *Arabic* verſions, as in ch. xxi. 20. and in *Exod*. xxviii. 17. on which *Reuben*'s name was written; this is of a red, or blood colour, as its name, אדם, in *Hebrew*, ſhews, and the ſame that is called a *Cornelian*; and is expreſſive of the fiery indignation of God, whoſe fury is poured out like fire, and who, nakedly and abſolutely conſidered, is a conſuming fire to the wicked, his enemies, and the enemies of his church and people. Some *Jaſpers* being white and ſky coloured, and the white colour being moſt agreeable to deity, as *Cicero* ſays [i], and the *Sardine* being red, and a gem of the ruby kind, make up the deſcription of the church's beloved; *Cant*. v. 10. and may denote in general his purity, glory, and excellency, and in particular good-will to his people, and wrath to his enemies. And to the comfort of the former 'tis added, *and there was a rainbow round about the throne*; which ſignifies the covenant of grace; ſee *Gen*. ix. 12, 16. *Iſ*. liv. 9, 10. *Ezek*. i. 28. The rainbow is a reverberation, or a reflection of the beams of the ſun upon a thin watry cloud; and the covenant of grace is owing to Jeſus Chriſt, the ſun of righteouſneſs; it is he that has formed it, and filled it with bleſſings and promiſes; he is the mediator, ſurety, and meſſenger of it, and who in ch. x. 1. is repreſented as clothed with a cloud, and a rainbow on his head: the rainbow is of various colours, and fitly expreſſes the various promiſes and bleſſings in the covenant of grace, and the various providences, both proſperous and adverſe,

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[f] Miſn. Succa, c. 5. §. 5.

[g] Miſn. Tamid, c. 3. § 7.

[h] Albert. Magn. de reb. Metall. l. 2. c. 8. Ruæus de Gemmis, l. 2. c. 1.

[i] De Legibus, l. 2.

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verſe, with reſpect to ſoul and body; and as the rainbow was an emblem of mercy, peace, and reconciliation, in God to man, after he had deſtroyed the world by a flood, ſo the covenant is a covenant of grace and mercy; it ſprings from it, and is full of it, and provides for the peace and reconciliation of the people of God, by the blood of Chriſt; whence it is called a covenant of peace: and as the rainbow is a ſecurity to the world, and the inhabitents of it, from a deſtruction by a flood any more, ſo the covenant is a ſecurity to thoſe who are intereſted in it, from eternal deſtruction, and wrath to come; herein lies all their ſalvation, and this is the ſecurity of it: to which may be added, that God calls it, ***my bow***, as he often calls the covenant of grace, ***my covenant***, in diſtinction from man's; ſee *Gen.* ix. 12. *Pſ.* lxxxix. 28, 34. *Ezek.* xvi. 60, 61, 62. and this being round about the throne of God, ſhows, that the covenant of grace does, as it were, include and incloſe God in his perſons, and in his perfections; all the three divine perſons have a concern in it, and all the divine perfections are glorified by it; and it being around it, it is always in his view; he is ever mindful of it, and conſtantly remembers it for the good of his people, and faithfully keeps it; and it being in this form, denotes, that in whatſoever way he comes forth unto his people, it is always in a covenant way, whether it be in things temporal or ſpiritual, in adverſity or proſperity, with regard to the things of time and eternity; nor is there any coming to him with comfort, but as he is encompaſſed with the rainbow of the covenant; ſtript of this, he is like the jaſper and ſardine ſtones, full of ſparkling majeſty, dread and terror, ſo that there is no coming nigh him; but being encircled with the rainbow, he may be approached as a covenant God, as the God of all grace, ſeated on a throne of grace, whither believers may come with boldneſs, freedom, and chearfulneſs: and this rainbow was ***in ſight like unto an emerald***; the ſtone on which ***Judah***'s name was written, in the high-prieſt's breaſt-plate; this is of a green colour, which colour is the prevailing one in the rainbow; it is of an exceeding fine green, very delightful to the eye, and gives pleaſure to the mind to look upon it: and what a lovely and delightful ſight is the covenant of grace to a believer! to ſee God as a covenant-God, Chriſt as the mediator of it, the exceeding great and precious promiſes and bleſſings, both of grace and glory, which are in it, yields an unſpeakable pleaſure to ſuch perſons; the covenant of grace, like the emerald, is ever green, it is always new; its promiſes and bleſſings are always freſh, and like that, it is durable; it is ſure, and can't be broken, and is more immoveable than rocks and mountains: the emerald is very bright, clear, and tranſparent; it is reported of *Nero* [k], that he could ſee in his emerald the combat of the gladiators in the theatre; in the covenant of grace, as in a glaſs, may be ſeen the glory of all the three perſons in the Godhead, for it is ordered in all things for the glory of each perſon; as alſo all the perfections of the divine nature; here God appears abundant in goodneſs and truth; here mercy and truth meet together, and righteouſneſs and peace kiſs each other: to which may be added, that the emerald is ſaid [l] to help and refreſh the memory; now tho' God ſtands in no need of any thing to bring things to his remembrance, yet ſuch is his condeſcenſion to men, that he ſets the rainbow in the cloud, to look at, that he might remember his everlaſting covenant; and ſo he allows his people to put him in remembrance, by making mention of the covenant of his grace, and pleading the promiſes of it. The *Alexandrian* copy, and the *Ethiopic* verſion, inſtead of ιρις, *a rainbow*, read ιερεις, *prieſts*.

Ver. 4. *And round about the throne* were *four and twenty ſeats*, &c.] In a ſemicircular form, as the rainbow alſo was; the throne being at the upper end, theſe ſeats, or thrones in the above form, came to both ends, or ſides of it; juſt as in the *Sanhedrim*, or great court of judicature among the *Jews* ſat [m], the *Naſi*, or prince, ſat in the uppermoſt ſeat, at his right-hand was *Ab beth din*, or the father of the *Sanhedrim*, and at his left-hand a doctor or wiſe man, and all the reſt of the members ſat in a ſemicircular form upon ſeats before them, ſo that they could ſee them all; and to this the alluſion might be thought to be, did their numbers agree, but in the great *Sanhedrim* there were ſeventy-one, and in the leſſer, twenty-three, which laſt comes very near the number here: ***and upon the ſeats I ſaw four and twenty elders ſitting***; by whom are meant not the twenty-four books of the Old Teſtament, as ſome of the antients thought, and alſo ſome of the modern writers, as lord *Napeir*, and others; for the things ſaid of them are ſuch as cannot be applied to inanimate things, ſuch as ſitting on ſeats, being clothed with white raiment, having golden crowns on their heads, falling down before the throne, and worſhipping him that ſat on it; and beſides, in ch. v. 8, 9. they are ſaid to be redeemed by the blood of the lamb, out of every kindred, tongue, people, and nation; for which laſt reaſon, angels alſo cannot be deſigned, and who moreover, in the place referred to, are manifeſtly diſtinguiſhed from theſe elders; nor are they to be underſtood as the repreſentatives of the *Jewiſh* church, or of the *Jewiſh* and chriſtian church together, as triumphant in heaven, and ſo be ſignified by the twelve patriarchs and twelve Apoſtles, which together make up twenty-four; but rather the members of the Goſpel church-ſtate, throughout the whole of it, in every ſucceſſion and period of time, are here meant; and are expreſſed by the number *twenty-four*, in alluſion to the twenty-four courſes of the prieſts, into which they were divided by *David*, 1 *Chron.* xxiv. 1, 4, 18. and to the twenty-four ſtations of the *Levites*, who in turn attended the ſervice of the temple daily, and repreſented the whole body of the people of *Iſrael*, in putting their hands upon the ſacrifices, and praying for them; of which ſee the note on *Luke* i. 5. add to this, that in twenty-four places the prieſts and *Levites* kept watch in the temple [n]; ſo theſe twenty-four elders before the throne of God, in his temple, repreſent the whole *Iſrael* of God, all the members of the Goſpel church-ſtate, from the firſt to the laſt of it: and they are ſtiled ***elders***, not on account of office, as paſtors of the churches are called, but becauſe of their ſenile gravity, prudence, and knowledge; they having a greater degree of ſpiritual knowledge of the manifold wiſdom of God, than the *Jewiſh* church, which was in a ſtate of infancy, and under tutors and governours had; but the Goſpel church is in a ſtate of manhood, and no longer under a ſchool-maſter, and ſo fitly expreſſed by *elders*; and theſe are repreſented as *ſitting* on their ſeats, not only to hear the word of God, but as judging in caſes that come before them, reſpecting the admiſſion or excluſion of members, the laying on, or taking off of cenſures, *&c.* and theſe, their ſeats being around and near unto the throne, denote their nearneſs to God,

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[k] Ruæus de Gemmis, l. 2. c. 4.

[l] Ruæus, ib. & Albert. Magn. de Reb. Metall. l. 2. c. 17.

[m] Miſn. Sanhedrin, c. 4. §. 3. & Maimon. Hilchot Sanhedrin, c. 1. §. 3.

[n] Miſn. Middot, c. 1. §. 1.

and their communion with him, in his houſe and ordinances, and his dwelling in the midſt of them. *Clothed in white raiment*; in the pure and ſpotleſs robe of Chriſt's righteouſneſs, which is comparable to fine linnen, clean and white; and is the righteouſneſs of the ſaints in common, of every true member of Chriſt's body. *And they had on their heads crowns of gold*; being made by Chriſt kings, as well as prieſts, unto God; for ſo theſe four and twenty elders are ſaid to be, in ch. v. 10. and they now reign as kings over ſin, ſatan, and the world, and have a kingdom of grace which ſhall never be removed; and they ſhall reign with Chriſt on earth a thouſand years, and then reign with him to all eternity in heaven. It is a common ſaying with "the *Jews* [o], that there is no eating and drinking in the world to come, but the righteous are *ſitting*, ועטרותיהם בראשיהם, *and their crowns upon their heads*."

Ver. 5. *And out of the throne proceeded lightenings, and thunderings, and voices*, &c.] Which may be underſtood either of the doctrines of the Goſpel, which come out of *Zion*, and out of *Jeruſalem*, the church of God, where he has his throne; and which are comparable to *lightening*, both for the light and knowledge they give, and for the ſwiftneſs with which they were ſpread over the world, by the Apoſtles of Chriſt; and to *thunderings* for the awfulneſs, authority, and majeſty of them, eſpecially as they were delivered out by the *Boanergeſſes*, or ſons of thunder; and as the propheſies of the prophets are called *the voices* of the prophets, *Acts* xiii. 27. ſo may the doctrines of the Goſpel be called *voices*, as they are the voice of God, and of Chriſt, and of his miniſters; and are voices of love, grace, mercy, peace, pardon, righteouſneſs, and eternal life. The alluſion is to the giving of the law on mount *Sinai*, when ſuch things were ſeen and heard, *Exod.* xix. 16. or elſe the judgments of God, and the puniſhments inflicted upon his enemies, and, the enemies of his church and people, and his awful threatnings of them, may be deſigned; ſee *Pſ.* xviii. 13, 14. *Joel* iii. 16. with which compare *Rev.* viii. 5. *And there were ſeven lamps of burning fire before the throne, which are the ſeven ſpirits of God*; in alluſion to the ſeven lamps in the tabernacle and temple, which were trimmed by the prieſts, and always kept burning, and are expreſſive of the Spirit, and his gifts; and theſe being ſignified by the number *ſeven*, denote the fullneſs and perfection of them; and being ſaid to be *before the throne*, ſhew that there is always a ſufficiency of them for the ſupply of the churches in all ages, to fit and qualify proper perſons to miniſter the word, and adminiſter ordinances; and theſe being called *lamps of burning fire*, point at the light, the Spirit of God in his gifts communicates to the churches; and that warmth and heat, comfort and refreſhment, conveyed to them, thro' the preaching of the Goſpel, and the diſpenſation of the ordinances of it, under his illuminating and quickening influences.

Ver. 6. *And before the throne* there was *a ſea of glaſs like unto chryſtal*, &c.] By which is meant, not heaven, nor the ſouls of the bleſſed there, nor the multitude of the holy angels, nor the firſt converts to chriſtianity at *Jeruſalem*; for thoſe that got the victory over the beaſt are ſaid to ſtand upon this ſea, chap. xv. 2. which theſe ſenſes, eſpecially the three laſt, will by no means admit of. Some by it underſtand the world, which may be compared to a *ſea*, for the multitude of people in it, as many waters in this book ſignify people and nations, ch. xvii. 15. and to a ſea of *glaſs*, which is brittle, for the frailty and tranſitorineſs of the world, of the faſhion of it, and of men and things in it; and to the clear *chryſtal*, becauſe all things in it are open and manifeſt to the omniſcient eye of God; but the world, and men of it, uſed not to be compared to a ſtill and quiet ſea, as this is, but to one diſturbed and troubled by winds and tempeſts, whoſe waters caſt up mire and dirt, *Iſ.* lvii. 20. Others think the ordinance of baptiſm is deſigned, of which the red ſea, thro' which the *Iſraelites* paſſed under the cloud, was an emblem; and which may be compared to a *ſea of glaſs*, for its tranſparency, it clearly expreſſing the ſufferings, burial, and reſurrection of Chriſt; and to *chryſtal* for its purity; and to all this for its cleanſing nature, as it leads unto the blood of Chriſt; and its being before the throne, may denote its being the way of entrance into the Goſpel church. Others think the blood of Chriſt is meant, in alluſion to the brazen ſea in the tabernacle, which was made of the looking-glaſſes the women brought, and for the prieſts to waſh in, before they entred on buſineſs, *Exod.* xxx. 18. and xxxviii. 8. and to the molten ſea in the temple, which was for the ſame purpoſe, 1 *Kings* vii. 23. Chriſt's blood is the fountain opened to waſh in for ſin, and may be compared to a ſea for its abundant efficacy in cleanſing from all ſin; and it is this which makes way to the throne, and to him that ſits on it; and is a ſpecial privilege enjoyed by thoſe who come to mount *Zion*, or into a Goſpel church-ſtate; there is always this laver to waſh their garments in, and make them white: tho' this ſea being of glaſs, ſeems not ſo much deſigned to waſh in; and therefore rather I think by it is meant the Goſpel, compared to a *ſea* for the deep things of God, and myſteries of grace which are in it; to a ſea of *glaſs*, becauſe in it is beheld, as in a glaſs, the glory of the Lord, of his perſon, office, and righteouſneſs, as well as many other wondrous things; and to one like *chryſtal*, for the clearneſs, perſpicuity, and evidence of the truths contained in it; and to a fixed, ſtill, and quiet ſea, becauſe it is the Goſpel of peace, love, grace, and mercy, and brings peace, joy, and tranquillity to troubled minds, when the law works wrath: but here are no toſſing, foaming, raging waves of wrath, and fury, but all ſmooth, ſtable, ſolid, tranquil, and quiet. And this is ſaid to be before the throne, where the rainbow of the covenant is, of which the Goſpel is a tranſcript; and where the four and twenty elders, or members of churches be, for their delight and comfort; and where the ſeven ſpirits of God are, to furniſh men with gifts to preach it; and where the four living creatures, or miniſters of the word, have their place, who officiate in it. Agreeable to this figurative way of ſpeaking, the *Jews* call [p] the law, ימא דאוריתא, *the ſea of the law*, and the *ſea of wiſdom*; and frequently give the characters of ſuch and ſuch a doctor, as being very expert and converſant, בים התלמוד, *in the ſea of the Talmud*, or *doctrine* [q]. The *Alexandrian* copy, the *Complutenſian* edition, the *Vulgate Latin*, and *Syriac* verſions read, *there was as a ſea of glaſs*, ſomewhat that looked like one.

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[o] Zohar in Num. fol. 106. 3. & Raya Mehimna in ib. fol. 96. 3. T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 17. 1. Abot R. Nathan, fol. 1. 3. Caphtor, fol. 82. 2. & 86. 2. & 168. 2. & Niſhmat Chayim. fol. 30. 2.

[p] Zohar in Num. fol. 90. 3. & 92. 1. & in Lev. fol. 24. 3. & in Deut. fol. 118. 4. Tikkune Zohar apud Rittangel. not. in Jetzira, p. 133, 134.

[q] Ganz. Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 46. 2. & 47. 1, 2.

The word *glaſs* is left out in the *Ethiopic* verſion, but very aptly is it ſo deſcribed, the colour of the ſea being ſometimes green like that of glaſs. *And in the midſt of the throne, and round about the throne,* were *four beaſts*; or *living creatures*, as the word may be better rendered, agreeable to *Ezek*. i. 5. to which reference is here had; and by whom are meant not the angels, tho' there are many things which agree with them; they are ſaid to be the *four ſpirits* of the heavens, which go forth from ſtanding before the Lord of all the earth, *Zech*. vi. 5. They may be rightly called *living creatures*, ſince they live a moſt happy life in heaven; their ſituation is before the throne, and in the preſence of God; and their being ſo ſedulous, diligent, and watchful in doing the will of God, may be ſignified by their being *full of eyes behind, and before, and within*; their ſtrength may be fitly expreſſed by *the lion*; their indefatigableneſs in the ſervice of God, by *the ox*; their wiſdom, prudence, and knowledge by *the face of a man*; and their ſwiftneſs in obeying the divine commands by *the flying eagle*; their number of wings agrees with that of the *ſeraphim* in *Iſ*. vi. 2. to which the alluſion ſeems to be; and their work in continually aſcribing glory to God, ſuits with them: to which may be added, that the *Jews* often ſpeak of four angels, סיבב לכסאו, *round about his throne*, that is, the throne of God; whoſe names are *Michael*, *Gabriel*, *Uriel*, and *Raphael*; the three firſt they place in this manner, *Michael* at his right hand, *Uriel* at his left, and *Gabriel* before him [r]. Sometimes thus, *Michael* on his right hand, *Gabriel* on his left, *Uriel* before him, and *Raphael* behind him, and the holy bleſſed God in the middle; and they are expreſly called [s] by them the four living creatures, meaning in *Ezekiel*'s viſion; and they make mention of the intellectual living creatures, which are, סחרין לכרסיא, *round about the throne* [t]. Notwithſtanding all this, the angels cannot be intended, becauſe theſe four living creatures, are ſaid to be redeemed by the blood of Chriſt, and are diſtinguiſhed from angels in ch. v. 8, 9, 10, 11. nor are the four Goſpels, with the four Evangeliſts, here meant; for whatever agreement may be fancied there is between theſe, and the likeneſs of the living creatures; as that *Matthew* may be ſignified by the creature that has the face of a man, becauſe he begins his Goſpel with the genealogy of Chriſt, as man; and *Mark* by the lion, becauſe he begins his Goſpel with the voice of one crying in the wilderneſs; and *Luke* by the ox, becauſe he begins his Goſpel with an account of *Zacharias* the prieſt, offering in the temple; and *John* by the eagle, becauſe he begins his Goſpel, the firſt face or leaf of it in a very high ſtile, and with the divinity of Chriſt: and with what truth ſoever it may be ſaid of theſe, that they are full of divine light and knowledge, and ſwiftly ſpread it in the world, and are continually giving glory to God; yet it cannot be ſaid of them, with any propriety, as is ſaid of theſe four living creatures, that they fall down before God, and worſhip him, and are redeemed by the blood of the Lamb: beſides, theſe four are repreſented as calling to *John* at the opening of the firſt four ſeals, to come and ſee what was to be ſeen; and one of them is ſaid to give to the ſeven angels the vials of wrath to pour out, ch. v. 8, 9. and vi. 1, 3, 5, 7. and xv. 7. to which may be added, that this ſenſe is attended with this inconvenience, that it makes *John* to be one of the four creatures which he ſaw: nor are four particular Apoſtles, as *Peter* and *John*, *Paul* and *Barnabas*, pointed at, as others think; nor the pure apoſtolical church, for the church is repreſented by the four and twenty elders, and theſe four living creatures are diſtinguiſhed from the hundred and forty-four thouſand on mount *Zion*, in ch. xiv. 1, 3. Dr. *Goodwin* has a very ingenious thought upon theſe words, could it be ſupported; he thinks, that theſe four living creatures deſign the four officers in the chriſtian church, the ruling elder, the paſtor, the deacon, and the teacher; the ruling elder by the *lion*, who needs courage to deal with men in caſe of ſins; the paſtor by the *ox*, for his labouriouſneſs in treading out the corn; the deacon by that which has the *face of a man*, it being neceſſary that he ſhould be merciful and pitiful to the poor, as is the heart of a man; and the teacher by the *flying eagle*, who is quick to eſpy errors, and ſoars aloft into high myſteries: but then it ſhould be obſerved, that there is no ſuch officer as a ruling elder in the church, diſtinct from the paſtor; and that the paſtor and teacher are one; ſo that there are but two ſorts of officers in the church, paſtor and deacon; ſee *Phil*. i. 1. to which may be added, that the four living creatures are all in the ſame ſituation, and are alike full of eyes, and have the ſame number of wings, and are employed in the ſame work; all which cannot be ſaid equally of church-officers. By theſe four living creatures, I apprehend, we are to underſtand the miniſters of the Goſpel in general, in the ſucceſſive ages of the church, to whom all the characters do well agree. And tho' they may not be all found in every one, at leaſt not in all alike, yet they are in one or another of them, and in them as together conſidered. They are ſaid to be *four*, being fewer in number than the members of the church, which are ſignified by the twenty-four elders, and yet a ſufficient number; and in alluſion to the four ſtandards of the camp of *Iſrael* in the wilderneſs, to which there ſeems to be ſome reference in the whole of this account; as the tabernacle there was placed in the midſt, ſo the throne of God here; as the prieſts and *Levites* were round about that, ſo the four and twenty elders here; as there were ſeven lamps, over-againſt the candleſtick in the tabernacle, continually burning, ſo there are ſeven ſpirits here before the throne; and as there were four princes, who were ſtandard-bearers, placed at the four corners of the camp, ſo here four living creatures, or miniſters of the word, who are ſtandard-bearers: the ſtandard of *Judah*, with *Iſſachar*, and *Zabulon* under him, was at the eaſt of the tabernacle; and *Ephraim*, with *Menaſſeh* and *Benjamin*, at the weſt; *Reuben*, with *Simeon* and *Gad* at the ſouth; and *Dan*, with *Aſher* and *Nephthali* at the north; and the *Jewiſh* writers ſay [u], that on *Judah*'s ſtandard was the figure of a lion, on *Ephraim*'s the figure of an ox, on *Reuben*'s the figure of a man, and on *Dan*'s the figure of an eagle; and to which the four living creatures are likened here. And this number *four* may be the rather mentioned, with reſpect to the four parts of the world, and corners of the earth, whither the miniſters of the Goſpel are ſent to preach, and whither their commiſſion reaches; there being of the elect of God in all parts to be gathered in by their miniſtry: and very properly may they be called *living creatures*, becauſe they are alive in themſelves, being quickened by the Spirit of God, or otherwiſe they would not be fit for their work; and becauſe their work requires livelineſs in the exerciſe of grace, and fervency in the performance of duty; and becauſe they are a means in the hand of God of quickening dead ſinners, and of reviving drooping ſaints by the word of life, which they hold forth: the ſituation of theſe four living creatures agrees with them, who are ſaid to be both in the midſt of, and round about the throne, and ſo were nearer to it than the four and twenty elders, and were between that and them; as the miniſters of the Goſpel are ſet in the firſt place in the church; have nearneſs to God, and much of his preſence, which is particularly promiſed them; and ſtand between God and the people, and receive from the one, and communicate to the other, and lead on the worſhip of God, as theſe four do; ſee ver. 9, 10. And theſe are ſaid to be *full of eyes*; of ſpiritual light, and evangelical knowledge; and they have need of all the eyes they have to look into the ſcriptures of truth, to ſearch and pry into them, and find out the ſenſe and meaning of them; to overlook the flock committed to them, they have taken the overſight of; to look to themſelves, their doctrine, and their converſation; to eſpy enemies and dangers, and give notice of them to the churches; to look to God upon the throne, and to the Lamb in the midſt of it, for freſh ſupplies of gifts and grace; and to ſee to it, that all their miniſtrations tend to the glory of God, the honour of a redeemer, and the good of ſouls. And they had eyes *before and behind*; *before* them, to look to the word of God, and the deep things in it, which continually lies before them, and to the things that are yet to come relating to the kingdom and church of Chriſt; and *behind* them, to obſerve, how all ſacrifices and types, predictions and promiſes have had their accompliſhment in Chriſt; they have eyes before them to watch over the church, they are in the midſt of, and which is the flock that is before them; and eyes behind, to guard againſt ſatan, and his emiſſaries, falſe teachers, who ſometimes ſlyly and ſecretly come upon the back of them; they have eyes before them, to look to him that ſits upon the throne, on whom their dependance, and from whom their expectations are; and they have eyes behind them, to look to the four and twenty elders, the members of churches, to whom they miniſter.

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[r] Bemidbar Rabba, §. 2. fol. 179. 1. Vid. Pirke Eliezer, c. 4.

[s] Zohar in Num. fol. 91. 3.

[t] Raya Mehimna in Zohar in ib. fol. 95. 4.

[u] Aben Ezra in Num. ii. 2.

Ver. 7. *And the firſt beaſt was like a lion*, &c.] And this figure expreſſes the ſtrength of the miniſters of the word, the lion being the ſtrongeſt among beaſts, *Prov.* xxx. 30. to do the work they are called to, to endure hardneſs, as good ſoldiers of Chriſt, and to bear the infirmities of the weak; and alſo it denotes their courage and boldneſs in preaching the Goſpel of Chriſt, without fearing the faces of men, or of being afraid of their revilings: *and the ſecond beaſt like a calf*; or *ox*, for ſo the word here uſed ſignifies in the *Helleniſtic* language, and with the *Septuagint* interpreters, and agrees with *Ezek.* i. 10. and deſigns the laboriousneſs of Chriſt's faithful miniſters in treading out the corn of Goſpel truth, who labour in the word and doctrine, and are labourers with God; as alſo their humility, meekneſs, and patience in bearing inſults, reproaches and ſufferings for Chriſt, and inſtructing thoſe that oppoſe themſelves: *and the third beaſt had a face as a man*; and points at the humanity and tenderheartedneſs, the wiſdom, prudence, knowledge, and underſtanding, and the uſe of the reaſoning faculty, together with a manly ſpirit in abiding by the Goſpel at any rate; all which are ſo neceſſary in the miniſters of the word. *And the fourth beaſt was like a flying eagle*; which ſets forth the ſagacity and penetration of Goſpel-miniſters into the deep things of God, and myſteries of grace, and their readineſs and ſwiftneſs to do the will of God, in publiſhing the everlaſting Goſpel; ſee ch. xiv. 6.

Ver. 8. *And the four beaſts had each of them ſix wings about him*, &c.] As the *ſeraphim* in *Iſ.* vi. 2. with two of which they might cover their faces as they did, teſtifying thereby their reverence of God, when in his preſence; and with the other two cover their feet, ſignifying their ſenſe of their ſinfulneſs, weakneſs, and imperfection, in their converſation, even in their beſt works, and in the miniſtry of the word; and with the other two fly about, as denoting their readineſs to miniſter the word and ordinances, to viſit the members of the church, and do all good offices of love and ſervice to them that lie in their power: and they were *full of eyes within*; to look into the ſin and corruption of their own hearts, which is a means of keeping them humble amidſt all their attainments, gifts, and graces, and of qualifying them to ſpeak aptly of the caſes of others; and they have eyes within, to look into and conſult their own experience; for beſides the word of God, which lies before them, they have a teſtimony in themſelves of the truth of the doctrines of the Goſpel, which they do well to attend unto; and they have theſe inward eyes to look into that treaſure which God has put into their earthen veſſels, in order to bring out of it things new and old. *And they reſt not day and night*; they give up themſelves to the miniſtry of the word, and prayer; are wholly in theſe things, meditate on the word continually, and preach the Goſpel in ſeaſon, and out of ſeaſon: *ſaying, holy, holy, holy Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come*; living under a continual ſenſe of the holineſs of God, Father, Son, and Spirit; and how neceſſary holineſs is in themſelves, who bear the veſſels of the Lord, and in the churches and houſe of God; taking care that all their doctrines are according to godlineſs, and ſerve to promote holineſs of life and converſation; and alſo under a ſenſe of the power of God, and of their need of it, to carry them thro' their work, and make their miniſtry ſucceſsful; and of the eternity and immutability of God, which is a wonderful ſupport unto them amidſt all the difficulties and troubles that attend them. The word *holy* is three times uſed here, as by the *ſeraphim* in *Iſ.* vi. 3. and in ſome copies 'tis repeated ſix times, and in others nine times, as in the *Complutenſian* edition.

Ver. 9. *And when theſe beaſts give glory*, &c.] When they give God the glory of all his perfections, covenant, and promiſes, and of all the gifts and grace beſtowed on them, and of the ſucceſs of their miniſtry; and in it glorify Father, Son, and Spirit, who bear their reſpective parts in the buſineſs of ſalvation; and aſcribe to each their due glory in election, redemption, and ſanctification: *and honour*; in the ſeveral parts of religious worſhip performed by them; and not with their lips only, but with their hearts alſo: *and thanks*; for all bleſſings, temporal and ſpiritual, beſtowed on them, and on the ſaints: even *to him that ſat on the throne*; God the Father, ver. 3. *who liveth for ever and ever*; he who is the living God, and will always continue ſo.

Ver. 10. *The four and twenty elders fall down before him that ſat on the throne*, &c.] The miniſters of the Goſpel begin the worſhip of God, and lead in it, who are the four living creatures; when the members of churches, who are the four and twenty elders follow, and approach the divine being in a moſt humble manner: *and worſhip him that liveth* *for ever and ever*; in Spirit, and in truth, with faith and fervency, in every part of duty they are directed to: *and caſt their crowns before the throne*; ſignifying, that they received them from him that ſits upon it, being by the grace of God what they are; and that they are unworthy to wear them in his preſence, being but unprofitable ſervants in all they do; and hereby alſo acknowledging their ſubjection to him as their king and lawgiver. Something like this the *Jews* relate of the family above; they ſay, "when the holy bleſſed God aſcends the "glorious *throne of judgment*, the whole family "above tremble; and when they ſee the holy "bleſſed God, *they take their crowns from off their* "*heads* —— and pray and ſeek mercy for *Iſrael*; "and immediately he aſcends the *throne of mercy* [w]." And ſuch like actions have been done by kings and princes to one another, in token of ſubjection. Thus *Tigranes*, king of *Armenia*, fell down at the feet of *Pompey*, and caſt his crown from his head, which *Pompey* replaced; and having commanded him certain things, ordered him to enjoy his kingdom [x]: ſo *Herod* meeting *Auguſtus Cæſar* at *Rhode*, when he entered the city took off his crown, and after a ſpeech made to him, with which *Cæſar* was pleaſed, he ſet it on him again [y]. *Saying*; as follows,

Ver. 11. *Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, honour, and power*, &c.] The *Alexandrian* copy, and ſome others, the *Complutenſian* edition, the *Vulgate Latin* verſion, and all the *Oriental* ones read, *thou art worthy, O Lord, and our God, to receive*; that is, to receive the acknowledgment and aſcription of glory, honour, and power; for otherwiſe, God cannot be ſaid to receive theſe from his creatures, than by their confeſſing and declaring that they belong unto him: and that for the reaſons following, *for thou haſt created all things*; the whole univerſe, the heavens, the earth, and ſea, and all that in them are: *and for thy pleaſure they are and were created*; God is the firſt cauſe, and the laſt end of all things; by his power they are made, and according to his will, and for his own glory, and therefore is worthy of ſuch a doxology; ſee *Prov.* xvi. 4. *Rom.* xi. 36. What is here ſaid is contrary to a notion imbibed by the *Jews* [z], that the world was not created but for the ſake of the *Iſraelites*: and elſewhere [a] they ſay, "the world "was not created but for *David*; and one ſays for "*Moſes*; and *Rabbi Jochanan* ſays for the *Meſ*-"*ſiah*;" which laſt is trueſt.

CHAP. V.

THIS chapter contains the viſion of the ſealed book, and the opening of it by Chriſt, which occaſions univerſal joy among all ranks and ſorts of creatures. The book is deſcribed by the place where it was, in the right hand of God; by the uncommon manner in which it was written within and without; and by the ſeven ſeals it was ſealed with, ver. 1. next follows a proclamation made by a mighty angel, with a loud voice, to find out a perſon worthy and able to open this book, and looſe its ſeals, ver. 2. upon which a declaration is made, that none could be found in heaven, earth, or hell, ver. 3. which had ſuch an effect upon *John*, that it ſet him a weeping, ver. 4. but was comforted by one of the elders ſuggeſting, that there was a perſon that could, and would do it, whom he calls the lion of the tribe of *Judah*, and the root of *David*, which are names of Chriſt, ver. 5. of which he was aſſured by what he quickly ſaw, namely, the ſame perſon the elder ſpoke of, deſcribed by his poſition, ſtanding between the throne, and the living creatures, and elders; and by his ſimilitude and likeneſs, as a lamb that had been lately ſlain, with ſeven horns and eyes in him; and by what he did, he went and took the book out of the right hand of God, his Father, ver 6, 7. This occaſioned a general joy among all kind of creatures; firſt among the four living creatures, and four and twenty elders, who are deſcribed by what they had, harps and golden vials, the one for praiſe, the other for prayer; and by what they did, they fell down in a worſhipping poſture before the Lamb, and ſung the new ſong of redeeming love to him; in which they aſcribe worthineſs to him, to take the book and open its ſeals; declare their redemption unto God, by his blood, out of all nations of the earth; take notice of the honour done them by him, in making them kings and prieſts to God; and expreſs their aſſurance, that they ſhall reign with him on earth, ver. 8, 9, 10. and next an innumerable company of angels join the living creatures and elders, in a doxology or aſcription of glory to him, ver. 11, 12. yea, every creature in heaven and earth, upon it, and under it, and in the ſea, are introduced as giving glory both to him that ſat upon the throne, and to the Lamb, ver. 13, and the whole is cloſed by the living creatures ſaying, *Amen*, to all, and by the elders proſtrating themſelves, and worſhipping the living and eternal God, ver. 14.

Ver. 1. *And I ſaw on the right hand of him that ſat on the throne*, &c.] Of this throne, and who it was that ſat upon it, ſee the note on ch. iv. 2. and who had *in* his right hand, or *at*, or *upon* his right hand, as the *Syriac* and *Arabic* verſions render it, lying by, or near his right hand; tho' according to ver. 7. the book appears to have been in his right hand, as our verſion, and others render it: *a book written within, and on the backſide, ſealed with ſeven ſeals*; this book was very much like *Ezekiel*'s roll, *Ezek.* ii. 9, 10. which was written, פנים ואחור, *within* and *without*, before and behind, and indeed it was in the form of a roll: the manner of writings in thoſe times was on ſheets of parchment, which, when finiſhed, were rolled up in the form of a *Cylinder*; hence a book is called a *volume*. This book ſeems to have conſiſted of ſeven rolls, to which was annexed ſeven ſeals; and there being not room enough within, contrary to the common way of writing, ſome things were written upon the backſide of the outermoſt roll; and ſuch writings were by the ancients called *Opiſtographi*; and the word is uſed by them ſometimes for very prolix writings [b]. By this book ſome underſtand the ſcriptures of the Old Teſtament, which were written in rolls; ſee *Heb.* x. 5. *Luke* iv. 17, 20. and which came out of the right hand of God, and were given forth by him; and being written within, and on the backſide, may denote the fullneſs of them, they containing a variety of matter, uſeful and profitable, for different purpoſes; or elſe the literal, and myſtical, or ſpiritual

[w] Raziel, fol. 45. 2.

[x] Cicero, Orat. pro Sextio, p. 904.

[y] Joſeph. Antiq. l. 15. c. 6. §. 6, 7.

[z] Zohar in Exod. fol. 6. 3. & Tzeror Hammor, fol. 109. 1. & 161. 3.

[a] T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 98. 2.

[b] Vid. Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 2. c. 30. & Salmuth in Panciroll. rer. Memorab. par. 1. tit. 42. p. 145.

meaning of ſome parts of them: or, as others think, the more clear explanation of the books of the Old Teſtament, by thoſe of the New, is meant; and its being ſealed may ſignify the authentickneſs of thoſe writings, having the ſeal of God's truth, and the impreſs of his wiſdom, power, and goodneſs on them; and alſo the hidden ſenſe and meaning of them, they being eſpecially in the prophetic and ſpiritual part of them, a ſealed book to natural men, and of which Chriſt is the trueſt and beſt interpreter; but then this book was opened, and looked into, and read, and, in ſome meaſure, underſtood, even by the Old Teſtament ſaints, and had been before this time expounded by Chriſt, concerning himſelf; yea, he had opened the underſtandings of his diſciples to underſtand thoſe ſcriptures, and had counted them, and others worthy, to open and explain this book to others, and had ſent them into all the world for this purpoſe; and for the ſame reaſons it can't be underſtood of the Goſpel publiſhed to *Jews* and *Gentiles*, the one within, and the other without; rather therefore the book of God's decrees is here meant, which reſpects all creatures, and all occurrences, and events in the whole world, from the beginning to the end of time; and ſo *Ezekiel*'s roll, according to the *Targum* on *Ezek.* ii. 10. which was written before and behind, ſignified, that which was, מן שרויא, *from the beginning*, and which, דעתיד למהוי בסופא, *ſhall be in the end*, or hereafter. This book God holds *in* his *right hand*, as the rule and meaſure of all he does, and of the government of the world, and which he conſtantly fulfills and executes; and its being written *within and without*, may denote the perfection and comprehenſiveneſs of it, it reaching to all creatures, and things, even the moſt minute; and its being *ſealed*, ſhews the certainty of its fulfillment, and the ſecrecy and hiddenneſs of it, until accompliſhed; tho' it ſeems beſt of all to underſtand it of that part of God's decrees relating to the church and world, particularly the *Roman* empire, which from henceforward, to the end of time, was to be fulfilled; and ſo is no other than the book of the *Revelation* itſelf, exhibited in the following ſcenes and viſions; and this may be truly ſaid to be in the right hand of God, and from thence taken by the Lamb, it being the revelation of Jeſus Chriſt, which God gave unto him, ch. i. 1. and may be ſaid to be written, both *within and on the backſide*, to ſhew, that it contains a large account of things, a long train of events to be accompliſhed; as alſo to ſignify, that it regards the church, and the members of it, who are thoſe that are within, in the ſeveral ages of time, and the world, or thoſe that are without; for this book-prophecy regards both the ſtate of the *Roman* empire, and of the chriſtian church; and its being *ſealed*, ſhews the authentickneſs, certainty, and alſo the obſcurity of what was contained therein; and with *ſeven* ſeals, with reſpect to the ſeven periods of time, in which the propheſies in it are to be fulfilled.

Ver. 2. *And I ſaw a ſtrong angel proclaiming with a loud voice*, &c.] This was not the increated angel, Jeſus Chriſt; for he is after ſpoken of as the lion of the tribe of *Judah*, and as the lamb in the midſt of the throne, but a created one; tho' who he was, whether *Gabriel*, as ſome ſay, becauſe his name ſignifies the ſtrong or mighty one of God, is not material to be known; angels are ſaid to be mighty, and to excel in ſtrength: this is called ſo here, chiefly with reſpect to his voice, which he, by reaſon of his great ſtrength, exerted ſo loudly, as to be heard by all the creatures in heaven, and in earth, and under the earth; however, this was not *John* the *Baptiſt*, but if a miniſter of the Goſpel, rather ſome one ſince, making the following proclamation: *who is worthy to open the book, and to looſe the ſeals thereof?* ſuggeſting, that if there was any ſuch perſon, that he was deſired to come, and do it; and it ſeems, that he muſt not only be one of power and ability, but of dignity and authority, a perſon of greatneſs and worth, from whence his ability ariſes; as he ought to be that can engage his heart to draw nigh to God, and take a book out of his right hand, this myſterious book of the revelation, as it was indeed whilſt ſealed; and open and explain it to others, unſeal it or exhibit it, as it afterwards was in the following ſcenes and viſions, and give a view of all that is contained in it; and not only ſo, but fulfill and accompliſh all the prophecies in it; and who can, or is worthy to do all this, but he that ſits at the right hand of God? and who is God as well as man: and this proclamation was made to ſtir up an earneſt deſire in *John*, and all the ſaints he repreſents, to know what was in this book; and to ſhow the impotence of all creatures, to make any diſcovery of it; and to illuſtrate, and ſet off with a greater foil, the glory, excellency, ability, and worth of Jeſus Chriſt. There ſeems to be an alluſion to the preſident of the temple calling to the prieſts under him, to attend to the ſeveral parts of ſervice aſſigned them, ſaying unto them, מי שזכה, *whoſoever is worthy, let him* do ſo and ſo[c].

Ver. 3. *And no man in heaven*, &c.] Or *no one in heaven*, whether angels, or the ſouls of departed ſaints; neither the one nor the other know any thing of what is to come, until it is revealed unto them: *nor in earth*; among all the men on earth, even thoſe of the greateſt ſagacity and penetration, the wiſe, the prudent, the ſcribe, the diſputer of this world, ſuch who are moſt converſant with books, and have the greateſt reach into the things of nature, or of grace: *neither under the earth*; the dead buried there, good or bad; which may be ſaid agreeable to the notions of the ancient *Jews*, who believed the immortality of ſouls, and that they were rewarded or puniſhed, υπο χθόνος, *under the earth*, according to their virtue or vice in life[d]: or the devils in hell; or whoever on the earth are influenced by them, as magicians, ſorcerers, ſoothſayers, and necromancers: *was able to open the book, neither to look thereon*; or in it, ſo as to read it, underſtand it, and ſhow to *John* what was in it; for the ſenſe is, there was no creature in heaven, earth or hell, who were maſters of the deepeſt knowledge, and made pretenſions to any, that were able to foreſee and foretel things to come; or to exhibit the prophecies in this book, and repreſent them to *John* in the manner they afterwards were, and much leſs to accompliſh them.

Ver. 4. *And I wept much*, &c.] Not ſo much on his own account, becauſe he feared his curioſity would not be gratified, and that ſtrong deſire anſwered which were raiſed in him upon ſight of the book, and increaſed by the angel's proclamation; but for the ſake of the church of God, whoſe repreſentative he was, and to whom the knowledge of this book, and the things contained in it, he judged muſt be very uſeful and profitable. The *Ethiopic* verſion reads, *and many wept*; many of thoſe that were about the throne, as well as *John*: *becauſe no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon*; becauſe there was no creature in heaven, earth, or under it, that were of dignity and authority, as well as of ability, to open the book by unſealing it; and read and deliver out the prophecies in it upon the taking off of every ſeal; and ſo not to look into it, and foreſee and foretel what was hereafter to come to paſs, in the church and world: the phraſe of being worthy to look on it, ſeems to be *Jewiſh*; of the book of the generation of *Adam*, *Gen.* v. 1. The *Jews* ſay [e], that "it deſcended to the firſt man, and by it he knew the wiſdom which is above; and this book came to the ſons of God, the wiſe men of the age, מאן דזכי לאשגחא ביה, *whoever is worthy to look in it*, knows by it the wiſdom which is from above." This whole verſe is left out in the *Alexandrian* copy; and the phraſe, *to read*, is neither in the *Vulgate Latin*, nor in any of the *Oriental* verſions.

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[c] Miſna Tamid, c. 1. §. 4. & c. 5. §. 4, 5.

[d] Joſeph. Antiq. l. 18. c. 1. §. 3.

Ver. 5. *And one of the elders ſaid unto me*, &c.] The *Ethiopic* verſion reads, *one of theſe elders*; that is, one of the four and twenty elders that were round about the throne; not the firſt of the four and twenty books of the Old Teſtament; nor the patriarch *Jacob*, becauſe of the prophecy concerning *Shiloh*, *Judah*'s ſon, which ſtands in *Gen.* xlix. 10. nor *Moſes*, who ſpoke of the Meſſiah as the great prophet of the church; nor *John* the *Baptiſt*, who pointed out the Lamb of God; theſe are all fancies and conjectures. It was one of the members of the chriſtian church, who was near the throne of God, had communion with him, and knowledge of his will, who in this viſionary way is repreſented as comforting *John* under his ſorrow and concern, and giving him information: and ſometimes perſons of ſuperior abilities may receive inſtruction from meaner perſons, as did *Apollos* from *Aquila* and *Priſcilla*: the ſame ſaid unto *John*, *weep not*; ceaſe ſorrowing, don't be caſt down, nor deſpair: *behold the lion of the tribe of Judah*; by whom is meant Chriſt, who, according to the fleſh, was to come of the tribe of *Judah*; and certain it is, that our Lord ſprang from thence: and he is ſaid to be the lion of that tribe, in alluſion to the prophecy concerning *Judah* in *Gen.* xlix. 9. where he is ſaid to be a lion, an old lion ſtooping down and couching, and on whoſe ſtandard was the figure of a lion. Chriſt may be compared to one, becauſe of his great ſtrength, he being the mighty God, the able ſaviour, and ſtrong redeemer, and protector of his church and people, and the avenger of their enemies; and becauſe of his courage and intrepidity, when he engaged with ſatan, and his principalities and powers, when he bore the ſins of his people, ſuſtained his Father's wrath, and the terrors of death ſet themſelves in array againſt him; and becauſe of the fierceneſs of his wrath, and fury againſt the wicked, and for his generoſity and lenity towards thoſe that ſtoop unto him, and obey him. So the *Jews* ſay [f], that "of Meſſiah, the ſon of *David*, who comes forth from *Judah*, is it ſaid, *Gen.* xlix. 9. *Judah is a lion's whelp*;" and a little after, Meſſiah, the ſon of *David*, who is, אריה, *a lion*, ſhall be on his right hand, and Meſſiah, the ſon of *Joſeph*, who is an ox, on his left hand; ſo the word of the Lord frequently, in the *Chaldee* paraphraſe, is ſaid to be as a lion [g]. *The root of David*; in like manner is Chriſt called the root of *Jeſſe* in *Iſa.* xi. 10. and the meaning either is, that he is a branch that ſprings out of the roots of *Jeſſe* and *David*, is *David*'s ſon and offspring, according to his human nature; ſee ch. xxii. 16. or that he is *David*'s Lord, according to his divine nature: and the metaphor of a root well agrees with him as mediator, he being hidden out of ſight, and unknown to a natural man; and may denote his meanneſs in his ſtate of humiliation, when he was as a root out of a dry ground; and becauſe he is the root from whence all the elect of God ſpring, in whom they have their being, and by whom they are bore and ſupported, and from whom are derived to them all the bleſſings of grace, all their ſpiritual life, holineſs, fruitfulneſs, and perſeverance. Now this illuſtrious perſon, ſo deſcribed, *hath prevailed*; or overcome all difficulties, being one of worth and value, of great authority and ability: *to open the book, and to looſe the ſeven ſeals thereof*; and deliver out all the propheſies in it, and fulfill them; and this thro' the merits of his blood, and in conſequence of his ſufferings and death: hence, in the next verſe, he is repreſented as a lamb as it had been ſlain; and the four living creatures, and the four and twenty elders, put his worthineſs to take the book, and open it, upon his having been ſlain, and having redeemed them by his blood, ver. 9. And as he, upon his reſurrection from the dead, had all power in heaven and in earth given him, as mediator, for the protection of his church, ſo he was deſerving; and it was fit and neceſſary that he, as the great prophet of the church, ſhould have and deliver out the prophecies concerning the ſtate and condition of his redeemed ones in all ages.

Ver. 6. *And I beheld, and lo in the midſt of the throne, and of the four beaſts*, &c.] Theſe words, *in the midſt of the throne, and of the four beaſts*, are left out in the *Syriac* verſion: *and in the midſt of the elders ſtood a lamb*; *John*, upon the intimation given him by the elder, lift up his eyes, and with great earneſtneſs looked about, and ſaw the perſon he pointed at, tho' not in the form of a lion, but in the appearance of a *lamb*, to which Chriſt, both in the Old and New Teſtament, is often compared; and that very aptly, for his innocence and purity of nature; for his harmleſs and inoffenſive converſation; and for his meek and humble deportment throughout the whole of his life; and for his patience at the time of his ſufferings and death; and for his uſefulneſs both for food and cloathing to his people; and chiefly for his ſacrifice for them, typified both by the paſſover-lamb, and by the lambs of the daily ſacrifice: hence it follows, *as it had been ſlain*; or *as having been ſlain*; Chriſt had been really ſlain by the wicked hands of the *Jews*, and not in appearance only; the *as* here, is not a note of mere ſimilitude and likeneſs, but of reality and truth; ſee *John* i. 14. *Phil.* ii. 7. but he was now riſen from the dead, and therefore is ſaid to have been ſlain ſome time before, tho' now alive; and he appeared to have the marks of his ſufferings and death upon him, as he had after his reſurrection the print of the nails and ſpear, in his hands, feet, and ſide; and he was as a lamb that had been newly or lately ſlain: and it may denote the continued efficacy of his blood, to cleanſe from all ſin, and of his ſacrifice to take it away; he was as a lamb ſlain from the foundation of the world, with reſpect to the continual virtue of his blood and ſacrifice; and he will be on the ſame account, the lamb as it had been ſlain, unto the end of the world.

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[e] Zohar in Gen. fol. 28. 2.

[f] Raya Mehimna in Zohar in Exod. fol. 49. 3, 4.

[g] Targum in Hoſ. v. 14. & xi. 10. & xiii. 7.

The poſition and ſituation of this lamb were, he *ſtood in the midſt of the throne, and of the four beaſts, and in the midſt of the elders*; he *ſtood*, being riſen from the dead, and aſcended up into heaven, but was not as yet ſet down upon the throne with his Father, but was very near it; he ſtood before it, ready to be placed upon it, and receive his power and his kingdom; he ſtood between the throne, and between the living creatures, and the elders, being the mediator between God, and his church, and people; he appeared before the throne, for them, as their advocate, and ſtood ready to give them all the aſſiſtance, and do them all the good he could: and this his ſituation may alſo denote, that he is continually in view, is always in the ſight of God, as the lamb that had been ſlain; his blood is carried within the vail, is ſprinkled upon the mercy-ſeat, and is always in ſight, and calls for peace and pardon; and God the Father always looks upon it, and to his righteouſneſs, ſacrifice, and ſatisfaction, on account of his people: moreover, his being in the midſt of the four living creatures, and elders, may ſignify his preſence in his churches, and with his miniſters, which he has promiſed them to the end of the world. This lamb is further repreſented, as *having ſeven horns*; it is very unuſual for a lamb to have horns, and eſpecially ſeven: theſe horns are expreſſive of the power of Chriſt, of his dominion and government, even of his kingly power and authority; ſo kings are ſignified by horns in *Dan.* viii. 20, 21. and vii. 24. and Chriſt himſelf is called the horn of *David*, and the horn of ſalvation, *Pſ.* cxxxii. 17. *Luke* i. 69. and ſignify, that upon his reſurrection from the dead, and aſcenſion to heaven, he was made and declared Lord and Chriſt; and the number *ſeven* expreſſes the fullneſs, and perfection of his power and authority, having, as mediator, all power in heaven and in earth given him; and what is above all power, might, dominion, and every name in this world, and that to come; and may have ſome relation to the ſeven ſtates of his churches in ſo many periods of time; and ſhew not only that he has power ſufficient to protect and defend his people in all times, and to puſh at and deſtroy his and their enemies, but to open the then ſealed book, and unlooſe the ſeals: and as another qualification for this work, it follows, *and ſeven eyes, which are the ſeven ſpirits of God ſent into all the earth*; which ſome underſtand of angels, and of a ſufficient number of them, which belong to Chriſt, and are at his command, and who are ready to do his will, and to be ſent forth by him, into the ſeveral parts of the earth, to execute his pleaſure: but theſe rather deſign the Spirit of God, and his gifts, which Chriſt received without meaſure, both in his human nature, at his incarnation, and after his reſurrection from the dead, and aſcenſion; which he beſtowed on his apoſtles and miniſtring ſervants, whom he ſent forth into all the world, to preach his Goſpel with them; and which he has, more or leſs, ever ſince continued to do. The *Ethiopic* verſion reads in the ſingular number, *and this is the Spirit of God which is ſent into all the earth*; ſee the note on ch. i. 4. theſe *ſeven eyes* may deſign the perfect knowledge of Chriſt, his foreſight of future events, and his all-wiſe providence, which is always, and every where concerned to fulfill and accompliſh them; ſo that he is every way qualified to take the book of future events, as to the church and world, and reveal it, open and explain it, and fulfill the things contained in it; ſee *Zech.* iii. 9. and iv. 10.

Ver. 7. *And he came*, &c.] He drew nigh to the throne of God, he engaged his heart to approach unto him, and came up even to his ſeat, which a mere creature, without a mediator, cannot do: *and took the book out of the right hand of him that ſat upon the throne*; ſee the note on ver. 1. it being given unto him, as in ch. i. 1. and a commiſſion and authority to open it, and make it manifeſt to others, and to accompliſh the ſeveral events, in the ſeveral periods of time, it points unto.

Ver. 8. *And when he had taken the book*, &c.] The *Vulgate Latin* verſion reads, *when he had opened the book*, very wrongly; for the opening of it by unlooſing the ſeals, one after another, is hereafter mentioned, in ch. 6. but when it was obſerved, that the lamb took the book, and his commiſſion to open, unſeal, and fulfill it, *the four beaſts, and four and twenty elders, fell down before the lamb*; by way of religious worſhip and adoration of him; which ſhows, that he was not a mere creature, who aſſumed human nature, ſuffered, and died, and is the mediator between God and men, but is truly God, and is the proper object of worſhip; and ſo he is regarded by all his faithful miniſters, and true churches, which are here ſignified by the four living creatures, and four and twenty elders; who are repreſented as *having every one of them harps*; which were inſtruments of muſic, and with which the ſaints formerly uſed to praiſe God, *Pſ.* xxxiii. 2. and ſo may here intend the praiſes and thankſgivings of the ſaints, of every one of them, greater or leſſer, upon the preſent occaſion; having their hearts in right tune, making melody with them to the Lord, and giving thanks unto him for all their bleſſings, temporal and ſpiritual, and particularly for the Lamb, and his worthineſs to open the book, and unlooſe the ſeals: *and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of ſaints*; this is ſaid in alluſion to the golden cenſers full of incenſe, which aſcended upwards, and was of a ſweet ſmell; the veſſels on the ſhew-bread table, in which incenſe was put, are by *Joſephus*[b] called *golden vials*, as here; his words are, upon the loaves were put two φιαλαι χρυσεαι, *golden vials*, full of incenſe: the prayers of the ſaints are compared to *odours*, or *incenſe*, as the word may be rendered, and as they are called, *Pſ.* cxli. 2. partly becauſe as incenſe goes upwards, ſo do they go up to God, and are received, regarded, and had in remembrance by him; and partly becauſe as incenſe is of a ſweet ſmell, ſo the prayers of the ſaints, put up in the name and faith of Chriſt, are very grateful and acceptable to God: the *golden vials* ſaid to be *full* of them, may deſign the hearts of believers, in which they firſt are, and from whence they proceed; true prayer is that which is inwrought in the ſoul, and comes from the heart, even from a heart pure like gold, purified by faith in the blood of Chriſt, a true heart, that aſks in faith, nothing wavering; ſuch as are really ſaints, true believers in Chriſt, are praying ſouls; they are full of prayers for themſelves, and others; they pray always, and for all ſaints: this makes nothing for praying to angels and ſaints departed; for theſe prayers were their own, and not others; and beſides, theſe four living creatures, and four and twenty elders, were not angels, for they are ſaid to be redeemed by the blood of Chriſt, and are diſtinguiſhed from angels in the following verſes; nor the ſaints in heaven, but miniſters and churches on earth, and who were to reign with Chriſt on earth, ver. 10. it may be obſerved, that the *Jews* ſometimes repreſent prayer in ſuch like figures as here; "prayer, they "ſay, aſcends with thoſe ſpices which are mentioned "in *Cant.* iv. 14. and at the time that prayer aſcends "it is perfumed with myrrh and frankincenſe, and "of this the holy bleſſed God aſks, *who is this that* "*comes up*, &c.[i] *Cant.* iii. 6." and they ſay, prayer is greater than all offerings[k]. See ch. viii. 3.

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[b] Antiq. l. 3. c. 6. §. 6.

Ver. 9. *And they ſung a new ſong*, &c.] Upon a new occaſion and ſubject, redemption by the blood of the lamb, and his worthineſs to open the ſealed book; and in diſtinction from the old ſong of *Moſes* and the children of *Iſrael* at the red ſea; and this was a moſt famous and excellent ſong, an unheard of one, and which none could learn, or ſing, but the redeemed of the Lamb: *ſaying, thou art worthy to take the book, and open the ſeals thereof.* The *Arabic* verſion reads, *thou, O Lamb*; the reaſons why they aſcribe ſuch fitneſs, ability, and dignity to him, are as follow: *for thou waſt ſlain*; by men, and for the ſins of men; whereby, as he became worthy in his prieſtly office to take away the ſins of his people, and to have all the glory of their ſalvation, and in his kingly office, to have all power and authority, and to be exalted above every name, ſo in his prophetic office, to have perfect knowledge as man and mediator, of all the future events that were to befall his church and people, and to make them known, and fulfill them: *and haſt redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred and tongue, and people, and nation*; this ſhows that as the four living creatures, and four and twenty elders were not angels, ſo they were not the repreſentatives of the *Jewiſh* church; or the patriarchs and prophets of the Old Teſtament; nor even the Apoſtles of the New; for they were all *Jews*, and could not be ſaid to be redeemed out of every tongue, nation, and people; and alſo that not the *Jews* only were redeemed by Chriſt, but the *Gentiles* alſo, and not all mankind, or every individual of human nature, but ſome out of all the nations of the earth; for God has choſen ſome, both of *Jews* and *Gentiles*, and theſe Chriſt has redeemed; and therefore the Goſpel is ſent unto all nations, that theſe among them may be called and ſaved. This redemption of them, ſuppoſes them to have been in a ſtate of ſlavery and bondage, as they are by nature, to ſin, ſatan, and the law; and ſignifies a deliverance from ſuch a ſtate, which Chriſt has obtained, not barely by power, but by price, as the word here uſed ſignifies, and may be rendered, *and haſt bought us*; and the price with which he has bought them is his own *blood*, and which is of full and ſufficient value, it being not only the blood of a man, of an innocent man, but of one that is God as well as man: and this price was paid *to God*, and to his juſtice, againſt whom men have ſinned, whoſe law they have broken, and whoſe juſtice they have injured and affronted, that he might reconcile them to God, bring them near to him, and that they might ſerve him in righteouſneſs and true holineſs.

Ver. 10. *And haſt made us unto our God kings and prieſts*, &c.] See the note on ch. i. 6. The *Alexandrian* copy, and *Complutenſian* edition, and the *Syriac*, *Arabic*, and *Ethiopic* verſions read *them*, inſtead of *us*: *and we ſhall reign on the earth*; meaning not merely in a ſpiritual ſenſe, thro' grace reigning over ſin and corruption, thro' ſatan being bruiſed under their feet, and thro' the victory they have in Chriſt over the world, but in the millennium-ſtate, in the thouſand years reign with Chriſt in the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteouſneſs; ſee *Rev.* xx. 4, 5, 6. The *Alexandrian* copy, and *Complutenſian* edition, *Syriac* and *Arabic* verſions read, *they ſhall reign.*

Ver. 11. *And I beheld, and heard the voice of many angels*, &c.] Immaterial ſpirits, made by Chriſt, and worſhippers of him, and miniſtring ſpirits to him and his, the holy and elect angels, who are confirmed in their ſtate by Chriſt; theſe *John* beheld in a viſionary way, and heard the voices and articulate ſounds formed by them; and there were many of them; how many there are, or were here, cannot be ſaid; we read of a multitude of the heavenly hoſt that appeared at the incarnation of Chriſt, and of more than twelve legions of angels, that Chriſt could have had of his father for a word ſpeaking, at the time of his apprehenſion, who would have reſcued him out of the hands of his enemies; yea, that company is innumerable. The *Syriac* verſion reads, *as the voice of many waters*: theſe were *round about the throne*; were near to God, ſtood before him, beheld his face, hearkened to his voice, and obſerved his orders: ſo with the *Jews*, the four angels *Michael*, *Gabriel*, *Uriel*, and *Raphael*, are ſaid[l] to be סיבב לכסאו, *round about his throne*, the throne of God: it follows here, *and the beaſts and the elders*; the ſenſe is not, that *John* heard the voice of the living creatures, and of the elders, as well as, and together with the voice of many angels; for he had heard their voice and ſong before, but that the angels whoſe voice he heard, as they were round about the throne, ſo they were round about the living creatures, and round about the elders: the angels are near unto, and encompaſs the miniſters of the Goſpel; they are about them, and give them intimations and diſcoveries of the mind and will of God, as an angel did to *John*, *Rev.* i. 1. and another to *Paul*, *Acts* xxvii. 23, 24. and ſometimes direct them where to go and preach the Goſpel, as in *Acts* xvi. 9, 10. and ſurround them for their ſafety and protection; ſo horſes and chariots of fire, by whom angels are meant, were round about the prophet *Eliſha*, 2 *Kings* vi. 16, 17. and they were alſo round about the elders, the churches, and particular believers; angels and ſaints are near to one another; the angels are very friendly to the ſaints, and do them many good offices; they all belong to the ſame family, and are ſocial worſhippers of God; the angels are the guards that encamp round about them that fear the Lord, and often protect them from enemies and dangers: and it may be obſerved, that the ſaints are nearer the lamb and the throne than the angels be; according to this account, there was a throne, and one that ſat on it, who is the living God; neareſt to the throne ſtood the Lamb; next to the Lamb ſtood the four living creatures, the miniſters of the Goſpel; next to them the elders, or churches, and members thereof; and in the outermoſt ring, and as encompaſſing all, ſtood the miniſtring angels, they being ſervants; whereas the ſaints are the heirs of ſalvation, and the bride, the Lamb's wife, and therefore nearer him: *and the number of them was ten thouſand times ten thouſand, and thouſands of thouſands*; that is, an innumerable company of them; a like number is mentioned in *Dan.* vii. 10. to which this ſeems to refer; ſee *Pſ.* lxviii. 17. The *Jews* ſpeak of nine hundred and ſix thouſand millions of miniſtring angels, that ſtand continually before the Lord[m].

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[i] Raya Mehimna in Zohar in Exod. fol. 48. 3.

[k] Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 40. 3.

[l] Bemidbar Rabba, §. 2. fol. 179. 1.

[m] Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 69. 1.

Ver. 12. *Saying with a loud voice*, &c.] To ſignify their zeal, fervour, and affection for Chriſt, and to make a free, open, and public acknowledgment of him, and that all might hear of his worthineſs, and of the praiſe and glory that were due unto him: *worthy is the Lamb that was ſlain*; they addreſs him as the Lamb, and not as the Lord of Lords, and their Lord; and ſpeak of him as having been ſlain, and celebrate the virtue and efficacy of his ſufferings and death, and aſcribe his worthineſs to receive glory and honour thereunto; but do not add, as the living creatures and elders do, *and haſt redeemed us to God by thy blood*; becauſe, tho' they were the ſubjects and objects of confirming grace by Chriſt, yet not of redeeming grace: it follows, *to receive power and riches, and wiſdom, and ſtrength, and honour, and glory, and bleſſing*; as the book had ſeven ſeals to be unlooſed, and Chriſt had ſeven horns of power and ability to looſe them, and fulfill the things contained in it, and ſeven eyes to look into it, and diſcover and reveal what is in it, ſo here are *ſeven* words made uſe of, to expreſs the praiſe that was due unto him; a like number is uſed by the angels in ch. vii. 12. and when he is ſaid to be worthy to receive theſe, it is not to be underſtood of his receiving the things themſelves, but of the praiſe of them; and that theſe are to be obſerved in him, and to be aſcribed to him: power belongs to him, as he is the mighty God; and as the Saviour and redeemer of his people; and as riſen from the dead, and as exalted at God's right-hand, and made or declared Lord and Chriſt; having all power in heaven and in earth: *riches* may well be aſcribed to him, who has all the perfections of deity in him; whoſe are the heavens and the earth, and the fullneſs thereof; and who as mediator, is heir of all things, and has both the riches of grace and glory in his hands: *wiſdom* alſo is his; he is wiſdom itſelf, he is the only wiſe God; and he is the author of all wiſdom, natural and ſpiritual; and as mediator, he has the ſpirit of wiſdom and knowledge reſting on him, and the treaſures of both hid in him: and *ſtrength* may be well attributed to him, which he has ſhown in making, and ſupporting all things; in ſaving and redeeming his people with a mighty hand and ſtretched-out arm; and in ſubduing and vanquiſhing all his and their enemies; and in giving ſtrength to them to diſcharge their duty, reſiſt temptations, oppoſe corruptions, and do their generation-work: *honour* is due to him, as the Son of God, he being to be honoured equally as the Father; and who, as man and mediator, is crowned with glory and honour: *glory* is what ought to be aſcribed unto him, even the glory of true and proper deity, and alſo the glory of ſalvation; and who as mediator, had a glory promiſed him, and which was due unto him upon his having finiſhed his work, and which he now enjoys: wherefore *bleſſing* is to be given to him, who is God over all, bleſſed for evermore, in himſelf and the perfections of his nature; in whom all ſpiritual bleſſings are, and in whom all the nations of the earth are bleſſed; and to whom praiſe and thanks are to be rendered, for the bleſſings of pardoning, juſtifying, and redeeming grace, and for all other.

Ver. 13. *And every creature which is in heaven*, &c.] Animate or inanimate, angels, and the ſpirits of juſt men made perfect, ſun, moon, and ſtars, and the fowls of the air: *and on the earth*; men and beaſts, and every creeping thing, mountains, hills, fruitful trees, and all cedars: *and under the earth*; in the bowels of it, metals, minerals, and every thing of that kind: *and ſuch as are in the ſea*; that ſail in ſhips upon the mighty waters, and fiſhes great and ſmall that are therein: *and all that are in them*; in heaven, earth, and ſea: *heard I ſaying, bleſſing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that ſitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever*; all creatures in their way praiſe God, and are ſubſervient to the glory and intereſt of Chriſt, and are the occaſion of glorifying of both; and even the enemies of Chriſt, wicked men and devils, will be obliged to own Chriſt to be Lord, to the glory of God the Father, as well as angels and ſaints; and the ſame glory and honour which are given to the one, are aſcribed to the other, which ſhows the proper deity of Chriſt, and his equality with the Father. The *Syriac* verſion reads, *and I heard him who ſitteth upon the throne, ſaying, to the Lamb be given bleſſing and honour*, &c. with which compare *John* v. 22, 23.

Ver. 14. *And the four beaſts ſaid Amen*, &c.] Giving their aſſent to what the angels and every creature ſaid, and expreſſing their deſires and wiſhes that ſo it might be, and alſo their faith, that ſo it was, and would be: *and the four and twenty elders fell down and worſhipped him that liveth for ever and ever*; either God the Father, who ſat upon the throne, and is ſo deſcribed, ch. iv. 9, 10. or elſe the Lamb who had been ſlain, and was now alive, and lives for evermore; or both of them, for the *Alexandrian* copy, the *Complutenſian* edition, and the *Syriac* and *Arabic* verſions omit the words, *him that liveth for ever and ever*, and leave it to be underſtood of either of them, or both; and the *Ethiopic* verſion reads, *and the elders worſhipped him*; as the four living creatures and four and twenty elders led the chorus, and begun the ſong, ſo they cloſe it, as being the perſons more immediately concerned in the death and ſufferings of the Lamb, and redemption by him, and in the ſealed book, and in the things contained in it; the ſeals of which are next opened, and an account is given of them in ſome following chapters.

CHAP. VI.

THIS chapter contains the viſion of the opening ſix of the ſeals of the ſealed book, by the Lamb, and of the events following thereupon. The preparation to the viſion of the firſt ſeal is in ver. 1. the Lamb opens it, *John* hears a noiſe like thunder, and one of the living creatures bids him come and ſee; upon which he ſaw a horſe, of a white colour, and a rider on it, who is deſcribed by a bow and crown given him, and by the victory he obtained, ver. 2. at the opening of the ſecond ſeal, the ſecond living creature invites him as before; and he ſees a horſe, of a red colour, with a rider on it, deſcribed by his power, to take peace from the earth, and ſuffer men to kill one another, and by a great ſword given him, ver. 3, 4. at the opening of the third ſeal, the third living creature addreſſes him in like manner as the other; and he ſees a horſe, of a black colour, and a rider on it, with a pair of balances in his hands; and hears a voice from among the four living creatures, expreſſing dearneſs of proviſions, and a charge not to hurt the oil and wine, ver. 5, 6. at the opening of the fourth ſeal, the fourth living creature ſpeaks to *John*, as the reſt; and he ſees a horſe, of a pale colour, and a rider on it, deſcribed by his name, *Death*, by his follower, *hell*, or the *grave*, and by his power to deſtroy a fourth part of the earth with the ſword, famine, peſtilence, and wild beaſts, ver. 7, 8. at the opening of the fifth ſeal, *John* ſaw the ſouls of the martyrs, under the altar; hears their cry for vengeance; obſerves that white robes were given them, and that they were bid to be quiet until the ſlaying and ſuffering time of their brethren was over, ver. 9, 10, 11. at the opening of the ſixth ſeal, follow an earthquake, ſtrange changes in the heavens, the ſun becomes black as ſackcloth, the moon becomes as blood, the ſtars fall, and the heaven itſelf departs, and every iſland and mountain are moved out of their places, ver. 12, 13, 14. the kings and great men of the earth, and even all ſorts of men, upon this, fly to the rocks and mountains to hide them from the face of God the Father, that ſits upon the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb, the opener of the ſealed book; giving this as a reaſon for it, that the time of his great wrath was come, and none could ſtand before him, ver. 15, 16, 17.

Ver. 1. *And I ſaw, when the Lamb opened one of the ſeals*, &c.] Of the ſealed book; one of the ſeven ſeals of it, as read the *Alexandrian* copy, the *Vulgate Latin*, and the *Oriental* verſions, and the *Compluten-ſian* edition; that is, the firſt; ſo *one* is uſed for *firſt* in *Gen.* i. 5. *Matt.* xxviii. 1. and as appears from the following ſeals being called ſecond, third, fourth, *&c.* Theſe ſeals expreſs events to be fulfilled; and therefore cannot reſpect the ſteps towards, and the ſigns of *Jeruſalem*'s deſtruction, and that itſelf, which had been accompliſhed ſome years before the viſion of the ſeals; and which viſion would have been needleſs: and theſe are called ſeals, becauſe they were ſealed among God's treaſure, or were reſolved on, and decreed by him; and becauſe they were hidden and unknown until they came to paſs; and when they were come to paſs, they were pledges of what God would do in the deſtruction of *Rome* papal, as here in the deſtruction of *Rome* pagan: for theſe ſeals, at leaſt the firſt ſix of them, concern the pagan empire, and the ſtate of the church in it; and are ſo many gradual ſteps to the ruin of it, and to the advancing and increaſing of the kingdom of Chriſt; and theſe, with the ſeven trumpets, which the laſt ſeal introduces, reach from the times of the Apoſtles to the end of time, as appears from ch. x. 6, 7. Now the opening of theſe ſeals, is the revealing of the events ſignified by them, and expreſſed in the hieroglyphicks here made uſe of, and the fulfillment of them: *and I heard as it were the noiſe of thunder*; a voice very loud and ſonorous, exciting the attention of *John*: *one of the four beaſts ſaying, come and ſee*; this was the firſt of the four living creatures, for the word *one* is uſed in the ſame ſenſe as in the foregoing clauſe; and this creature was like to a lion, ch. iv. 7. wherefore his voice was loud, as when a lion roars, ch. x. 3. and is fitly compared to thunder: there is no need to look out for any particular perſon, as intended by this living creature; or to conclude him to be *Peter*, as *Grotius*, who was dead before this ſeal was opened; or *Quadratus*, *Ariſtides*, and *Juſtin Martyr*, who courageouſly appeared in the chriſtian cauſe, and made very excellent apologies for it, with ſucceſs, ſince theſe lived under the ſecond ſeal; it is enough in general to underſtand the miniſters of the Goſpel, who, as ſons of thunder, loudly and publickly preached the Goſpel, and as lions, boldly and bravely defended, and took notice of the power and providence of God in ſucceeding their miniſtry, and in weakening the kingdom of ſatan in the *Gentile* world, and particularly in the *Roman* empire; and therefore are repreſented as calling to *John* to *come and ſee*; obſerve and take notice of the following hieroglyphick, repreſenting the ſucceſs of the Goſpel miniſtry. תא חזי, *come and ſee*, is a phraſe often uſed by the *Jews*, to ſtir up attention to what is about to be ſaid; ſee the note on *John* i. 46.

Ver. 2. *And I ſaw and behold a white horſe*, &c.] Repreſenting the miniſtration of the Goſpel in the times of the Apoſtles, which were juſt now finiſhing, *John* being the laſt of them, who ſaw this viſion; and the *horſe* being a ſwift, majeſtic, and warlike creature, and fearleſs of oppoſition and war, may deſign the ſwift progreſs of the Goſpel in the world, the majeſty, power, and authority with which it came, and the oppoſition it met with, and which was bore down before it; and its *white* colour may denote the purity of Goſpel truths, the peace it proclaims, the joy it brings, and the triumph that attends it, on account of victories obtained by it, and which is afterwards ſuggeſted: white horſes were uſed in triumphs, in token of victory [n]; a white horſe in a dream, is a good ſign with the *Jews* [o]; and *Aſtrampſychus* ſays [p], a viſion of white horſes is an apparition of angels; and ſo one of thoſe angels which the *Jews* ſuppoſe to have the care of men, and the preſervation of them, is ſaid [q] to ride by him, and at his right-hand, upon a white horſe; but the rider here is not an angel, but the head of all principality and power: *and he that ſat on him had a bow*, with arrows; the bow is the word of the Goſpel, and the arrows the doctrines of it; ſee *Hab.* iii. 9. *Pſ.* xlv. 5. ſo called for their ſwift motion, ſudden and ſecret ſtriking, piercing, and penetrating nature, reaching to the very hearts of men; laying open the ſecret thoughts and iniquity thereof; wounding, and cauſing them to fall, and ſubmit themſelves to the ſceptre of Chriſt's kingdom: *and a crown was given unto him*; by God the Father; expreſſive of Chriſt's regal power and authority, of his honour and dignity, and of his victories and conqueſts: *and he went forth, conquering and to conquer*; in the miniſtration of the Goſpel, which went forth, as did all the firſt miniſters of it, from *Jeruſalem*, to the ſeveral parts of the world; from the eaſt, on which ſide of the throne was the firſt living creature, who called upon *John* to come and ſee this ſight, as the ſtandard of the tribe of *Judah*, which had a lion upon it, was on the eaſt ſide of the camp of *Iſrael*; and out of *Zion*, went forth the word of the Lord, which was very victorious, both among *Jews* and *Gentiles*, to the converſion of thouſands of them, and to the planting of a multitude of churches among them, and to the ſetting up and advancing the kingdom of Chriſt; but inaſmuch as yet all things are not made ſubject to him, he is repreſented as going forth in the Goſpel, ſtill conquering, and to conquer, what remain to be conquered: that Chriſt is deſigned by him that ſat on the white horſe, and is thus deſcribed, is evident from ch. xix. 11, 12, 13. with which compare *Pſ.* xlv. 3, 4. tho' as this emblem may reſpect the *Roman* empire, the white horſe may be an emblem of the ſtrong, warlike, and conquering ſtate of it; and the rider with a bow and crown, may deſign *Veſpaſian*, whom Chriſt made uſe of as an inſtrument to conquer his enemies the *Jews*, and who in conſequence thereof, had the imperial crown put upon him; and it may be further obſerved, that tho' his conqueſt of them was a very great one, yet they afterwards roſe up in the empire, in great numbers, rebelled, and did much miſchief, when they were entirely conquered by *Trajan* and *Hadrian*, who ſeem to be intended in the next ſeal.

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[n] Victor Aurel. de Viris Illuſtr. in Fur. Camill.

[o] T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 93. 1.

[p] In Oneiro Criticis, apud Mede.

[q] Shaare Zion, fol. 102. 2.

Ver. 3. *And when he had opened the ſecond ſeal,* &c.] Of the ſealed book; that is, the Lamb, as before: *I heard the ſecond beaſt ſay, come and ſee*; this living creature was the ox, whoſe ſituation was on the weſt ſide of the throne, as the ſtandard of *Ephraim*, on which was an ox, was on the weſt of the camp of *Iſrael*; no mention is made of the noiſe of thunder, as before, the voice of the ox being lower than that of the lion; and this perhaps may point out a decreaſe in the Goſpel miniſtry; to fix on any particular perſon, as with *Grotius*, the Evangeliſt *Matthew*, becauſe he ſays, *Matt.* xxiv. 7. *nation ſhall riſe againſt nation*, which carries in it ſome likeneſs to what is ſaid at the opening of this ſeal; or, as with *Brightman*, *Juſtin Martyr*, whoſe ſecond apology was not regarded by the emperor, is mere conjecture; the miniſters of the Goſpel are intended who lived under this ſeal, who, tho' they might not be ſtrong and courageous like the lion, or their predeceſſors, yet were like the ox, laborious in preaching, and patient in ſuffering; and theſe are repreſented in this viſion as inviting *John* to behold and obſerve the following hieroglyphick.

Ver. 4. *And there went out another horſe, that was red,* &c.] Which may be an emblem either of the ſuffering ſtate of the church, being anſwerable to the *Smyrnæan* one, as the purity and power of the Goſpel, repreſented in the former ſeal, may anſwer to the *Epheſine* church; or elſe of thoſe contentions and diviſions occaſioned among men thro' the Goſpel, which, tho' of a peaceable nature, yet thro' the corruption and depravity of men, brings not peace, but a ſword; or rather of thoſe bloody wars within the period of time ſignified by this ſeal, which came as puniſhments on the enemies of the Goſpel: *and power was given to him that ſat thereon*; not the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who is ſaid to ride on a red horſe, *Zech.* i. 8. tho' indeed he preſides over his church and people, and takes the care of them when the moſt deſolating judgments are in the earth, and cauſes all things to work together for good; nor ſatan, the red dragon, who was a murderer from the beginning, and delights in effuſion of blood, and in ſtirring up of men to deſtroy one another, whenever he is permitted; but *Trajan* the *Roman* emperor, in whoſe reign *John* died; and who came from the weſt, and was a *Spaniard*, as was *Hadrian* his ſucceſſor, who may be joined with him; which was the ſide, or quarter, on which the living creature was that ſpoke to *John*; and in the times of theſe emperors were very bloody and inteſtine wars: wherefore power is ſaid to be given him, *to take peace from the earth*; that is, from the *Roman* empire, which is ſometimes called the whole world; and which could not have been done, if power had not been given from him who makes peace, and creates evil: *and that they ſhould kill one another*; which refers not to the havock and ſlaughter which the *Jews* made one of another at the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, but to the *Jews* murdering of the *Greeks* and *Romans*, and the *Romans* the *Jews*, in the times of the above emperors. In *Trajan*'s time, the *Jews* who dwelt about *Cyrene*, under the conduct of one *Andrew*, fell upon the *Romans* and *Greeks*, and killed many, fed on their fleſh, eat their bowels, beſmeared themſelves with their blood, and covered themſelves with their ſkins; many of them they ſawed aſunder, from the crown of the head down to the middle; many of them they threw to the wild beaſts, and many of them they forced to fight among themſelves, till they had deſtroyed above two hundred and twenty thouſand men; in *Egypt* and *Cyprus* they committed the ſame kind of outrages, their leader being one *Artemion*, where two hundred and forty thouſand men periſhed [r]; *Libya* was almoſt emptied of men by them; ſo that *Hadrian*, the ſucceſſor of *Trajan*, was obliged to ſend colonies to re-people the places they had made deſolate. But at length they were overcome by *Lupus*, governor of *Egypt*, and by *Marcius Turbo*, and by *Lucius*, whom *Trajan* ſent againſt them [s], and deſtroyed great numbers of them; and for the ſpace of about fourteen years, they were quiet; but in *Hadrian*'s time, they roſe again, and ſet one *Bar Cochab*, a falſe Meſſiah, at the head of them, whom they proclaimed king; when *Hadrian* ſent forces againſt them, and with great difficulty ſubdued them, took the city *Bither*, where they were, and deſtroyed at times five hundred and eighty thouſand of them [t]; the *Jews* ſay, that he put men, women, and children to death in ſuch numbers, that their blood ran down into the main ſea, yea, that a horſe might go up to his noſe in blood [u]; they ſay that he deſtroyed in *Bither* double the number of thoſe that came out of *Egypt*, even twelve hundred thouſand men [w]; ſome of their accounts are very extravagant, and exceed all bounds [x]; however, the ſlaughter was very great, that it may well be ſaid, *and there was given unto him a great ſword*; to ſlay men with; tho' *Hadrian* on his death-bed, amidſt his pains, would fain have had a ſword given to him, to have diſpatched his own life, and could not obtain one [y]: the *Jews* ſay he deſtroyed all the land of *Judea* [z].

Ver. 5. *And when he had opened the third ſeal,* &c.] Of the ſealed book: *I heard the third beaſt ſay, come and ſee*; this living creature was that which was like a man, who was on the ſouth ſide of the throne, as the ſtandard of *Reuben*, which had the figure of a man, was on the ſouth ſide of the camp of *Iſrael*; this was not the Apoſtle *Paul*, as *Grotius* thinks, to whom was made a propheſy of a famine in the days of *Claudius Cæſar*; nor *Tertullian*, who made an apology for the chriſtians in the times of this ſeal, as *Brightman* conjectures; but the miniſters of the Goſpel, whoſe voice was neither the voice of the lion nor of the ox, but of a man, which was ſtill lower, but yet they retained their humanity, reaſoning, prudence, and wiſdom; and theſe are repreſented as calling upon *John* to come and ſee, and take notice of the following hieroglyphick: *and I beheld, and lo a black horſe*; an emblem either of the afflicted ſtate of the church, ſtill anſwering to the *Smyrnæan* one, being black with perſecutions, ſchiſms, errors, and hereſies, which were many; or particularly of the hereſies and hereticks of thoſe times, who might be compared to a horſe for their pride and ambition, ſpeaking great ſwelling words of vanity, and to a black one, for their hidden things of diſhoneſty, and works of darkneſs, for the darkneſs in themſelves, and which they ſpread over others; or rather of a famine, not in a ſpiritual ſenſe, of hearing of the word, but in a literal ſenſe; ſee *Lam.* iv. 7, 8. and v. 10. not what was at the ſiege of *Jeruſalem*, or in the times of *Claudius Cæſar*, *Acts* xi. 28. but in the times of the emperor *Severus*, and others, as the hiſtorians of thoſe times [a], and the writings of *Tertullian* ſhow; when the heathens aſcribed the ſcarcity that was among them to the wickedneſs of the chriſtians [b], whereas it was a judgment upon them for their perſecution of them: *and he that ſat on him had a pair of balances in his hand*; by whom is meant not ſome noted heretick, or hereticks, who had balances of deceit in their hands to prove their tenets by, ſuch as ſpurious writings, *&c.* or who made pretenſions to the ſcriptures, the balance of the ſanctuary, to weigh doctrines in; nor Chriſt, whoſe name hereticks ſhrouded themſelves under, and profeſſed, and who over-ruled and made uſe of their hereſies for the good of his people, that they might be made manifeſt. Mr. *Mede* thinks that *Septimius Severus*, the *Roman* emperor, who came from *Africa*, from the ſouth, on which ſide was the living creature that ſpoke to *John*, is intended, and in which country black horſes were in great eſteem; and he was the only *African* that ever was emperor of *Rome* before [c]: and the ſame author thinks, that his having a pair of balances in his hand, expreſſes the ſtrict juſtice that emperor was famous for; but rather it ſignifies famine, and ſuch a ſcarcity as that bread is delivered out by weight to men; ſee *Lev.* xxvi. 26.

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[r] Dion Caſſius in vita Trajani.

[s] Euſeb. Eccl. Hiſt. l. 4. c. 2.

[t] Dion Caſſius in vita Hadrian.

[u] T. Bab. Gittin, fol. 57. 1. & Hieroſ. Taanith, fol. 69. 1. Echa Rabbati, fol. 52. 3.

[w] Juchaſin, fol. 142. 2. & 143. 1.

[x] T. Hieroſ. Taanith, fol. 68. 4. & T. Bab. Gittin, fol. 157. 2. Shirhaſhirim Rabba, fol. 13. 1.

[y] Spartianus in vita Hadriani, & Aurel. Victor. Epitome.

[z] T. Hieroſ. Peah. fol. 20. 1.

Ver. 6. *And I heard a voice in the midſt of the four beaſts ſay*, &c.] Not the voice of *Agabus* to the Apoſtle *Paul*, *Acts* xi. 28. but rather of Chriſt, who was in the midſt of them, ch. v. 6. the *Ethiopic* verſion adds, *as the voice of an eagle: a meaſure of wheat for a penny, and three meaſures of barley for a penny*; *Chœnix*, the meaſure here uſed, ſignifies as much as was ſufficient for a man for one day, as a penny was the uſual hire of a labourer for a day, *Matt.* xx. 2. ſo a chœnix of corn was allowed to each man in *Xerxes*'s army for a day, according to *Herodotus* [d]; the ſame quantity for a day was given by the *Romans* to their ſhepherds and ſervants, and is generally ſaid to be about two pounds; according to *Agricola* it was two pounds and a quarter [e]. This meaſure was very different; the *Attic* chœnix was a meaſure that held three pounds, the *Italic* chœnix four pounds, and the *military* chœnix five pounds, and anſwers to the *Hebrew Kab* [f]; and in the *Septuagint* verſion of *Ezek.* xlv. 10, 11. it anſwers to the *Bath*; and ſome make it to be the fourth part of a buſhel, and others half a buſhel [g]; the firſt account of its being about two pounds, and the allowance of a man for a day, ſeems beſt to agree with this place: ſo that this phraſe expreſſes ſuch a ſcarcity, as that a man's daily wages would be but juſt enough to buy himſelf bread, without any thing to eat with it; and when he would have nothing left for clothes, and other things, nor any thing for his wife and children: *and ſee that thou hurt not the oil and wine*; ſignifying that this ſcarcity ſhould fall not upon the ſuperfluities, ſuch as oil and wine, which may be ſpared, and men can live without; but upon the neceſſaries of life, particularly bread: ſome render the words, *and be not unjuſt in the oil and wine*; and ſo think they refer to the laws of the *Roman* emperors, in relation to wine and oil, and to the juſt execution of them, that there mig[illegible] be plenty of them; and others underſtand them in an allegorical ſenſe, of the principal doctrines of the Goſpel, comparable to oil and wine, and which Chriſt takes care of, that they ſhall not be hurt and deſtroyed by hereticks and falſe teachers, even when they prevail the moſt, and bring on a famine of the word, and when the church is blackened and darkened with them; and indeed theſe may much better be applied to the Goſpel than, as they are by the *Jews*, to the law; who frequently ſay [h] that the law is called *oil*, and ſpeak of יינה של תורה, *the wine of the law* [i].

Ver. 7. *And when he had opened the fourth ſeal*, &c.] Of the ſeven ſeals of the ſealed book; that is, when the Lamb had opened it, or took it off, as in ver. 1. *I heard the voice of the fourth beaſt ſay, come and ſee*; this living creature was that which was like an eagle, and was on the north ſide of the throne, anſwerable to the ſtandard of *Dan*, which was on the north of the camp of *Iſrael*, and had the figure of an eagle upon it; and the opening of this ſeal begins with *Maximinus* the *Roman* emperor, who came from *Thrace*, far north. This living creature was not *James*, the brother of our Lord, who had been dead long ago, as *Grotius* imagines; nor *Cyprian*, as *Brightman* thinks, tho' he lived under this ſeal; but the miniſters of the Goſpel in general in the times referred to are intended: and it may denote ſome decline in the Goſpel miniſtry, that they had not the courage and ſtrength of the lion, as the firſt Goſpel preachers; nor the patience and laborioufneſs of the ox, the next ſett of miniſters; nor the ſolidity and prudence of the man, the miniſters that followed them; and yet they retained ſome degree of light and knowledge, ſagacity and penetration, and contempt of the world, ſignified by the eagle; theſe invite *John* in a viſionary way to come and ſee the following hieroglyphick.

Ver. 8. *And I looked, and behold a pale horſe*, &c.] An emblem either of the ſtate of the church, pale not with perſecution, as ſome think, for thro' that it was red; but with the hypocriſy and ſuperſtition of many of its members, who were paving the way for the man of ſin, and on account of whom the church was grown ſickly and dying; or rather this is an emblem of the ſickly and dying ſtate of the pagan *Roman* empire, thro' a complication of judgments upon it, hereafter mentioned, as war, famine, peſtilence, and wild beaſts: *and his name that ſat on him was death*; not ſatan, who has the power of death, but death itſelf; who is repreſented as a perſon, as he elſewhere is, ſometimes as a king, *Rom.* v. 14. and as an enemy, 1 *Cor.* xv. 25. ſee *Iſ.* xxviii. 15. and this was a very antient way of ſpeaking of death among the heathens; in the theology of the *Phœnicians*, according to *Sanchoniathon* [k], who wrote before the *Trojan* wars, a ſon of *Saturn* by *Rhea* was called *Muth*, whom the *Phœnicians* ſometimes called *Death*, and ſometimes *Pluto*; which is manifeſtly the ſame with the *Hebrew* word מות, *Death*: the name of the rider of this horſe may well be called death, both with reſpect to the various kinds of death under this ſeal, and with reſpect to the ſhort lives of the emperors; for in leſs than fifty years time, which is the period of this ſeal, namely from *Maximinus*, A. D. 235. or 237. to *Diocleſian*, A. D. 284. or 286. there were more than twenty emperors, and who moſt of them were cut off by violent deaths; beſides the thirty tyrants who ſprung up under one of them, as ſo many muſhrooms, and were ſoon deſtroyed. This is the only rider that has a name given him; and from hence we may learn what to call the reſt, as the rider of the white horſe *truth*, or Chriſt, who is truth itſelf; the rider of the red horſe *war*; and the rider of the black horſe *famine*; and becauſe both the laſt, with other judgments, meet together under this ſeal, the rider of this horſe is emphatically called *death: and hell followed with him*; that is, the grave, which attended on death, or followed after him, and was a ſort of an undertaker, to bury the dead killed by death; ſo theſe two are put together, ch. i. 18. and xx. 13, 14. *and power was given unto them*; to death and hell, or the grave, or rather to death only, for the *Vulgate Latin*, *Syriac*, *Arabic*, and *Ethiopic* verſions read, *to him:* and the power that was given him reached *over the fourth part of the earth*; not of the church, which is never called the earth in this book, but is diſtinguiſhed from it, ch. xii. 16. nor the land of *Judea*, but the *Roman* empire; ſome underſtand it of *Europe*, the fourth part of the world: *to kill with the ſword*; *Maximinus*, with whom this ſeal begins, was of a very barbarous diſpoſition, and a more cruel creature, it is ſaid, was not upon earth; and beſides his perſecution of the chriſtians, he acted a moſt inhuman part to the pagan *Romans* themſelves, ſo that the ſenate dreaded him; and the women and children at *Rome*, having heard of his barbarities, deprecated his ever ſeeing that city; and he was called by the names of the worſt of tyrants; more than four thouſand men he killed, without any charge or judicial proceſs againſt them, and yet his blood-thirſty mind was not ſatiſfied [l]: *Gallienus*, another emperor after him, emptied many cities entirely of men, and killed three or four thouſand a day of his own ſoldiers, whom he underſtood had thoughts of a new emperor [m]; under him thirty tyrants ſprung up together in the empire, who made great havock before they were cut off; and in his time the *Alemanni* (a people in *Germany*) having waſted *France*, broke into *Italy*; *Dacia*, which beyond the *Danube* was added by *Trajan* (to the *Roman* empire) was loſt; *Greece*, *Macedonia*, *Pontus*, and *Aſia*, were deſtroyed by the *Goths*; *Pannonia* was depopulated by (the people called) *Sarmatæ* and *Quadi*; the *Germans* penetrated into *Spain*, and took the famous city of *Tarracon*; the *Parthians* having ſeized *Meſopotamia*, began to claim *Syria* to themſelves; ſo that as the *Roman* hiſtorian obſerves [n], things were now deſperate, and the *Roman* empire was almoſt deſtroyed: not to take notice of the multitudes that were killed in after wars and perſecutions, under other emperors during this ſeal: *and with hunger*; or *famine*; there was a grievous famine in the times of *Gallus* and *Voluſianus*, which *Dionyſius* biſhop of *Alexandria* makes mention of [o]; and *Cyprian*, who lived under this ſeal, alſo ſpeaks of famine, and indeed of all theſe three, war, famine, and peſtilence, as then imputed to the chriſtians, and to their irreligion, which charge he removes [p]: *and with death*; that is with the peſtilence, which by the *Targumiſt* [q], and other *Jewiſh* writers [r], is commonly called מותנא, *death*, becauſe it ſweeps away and carries off ſuch large numbers with it: now in the reign of the laſt-mentioned emperors was a very noiſome peſtilence, which raged moſt cruelly; the *Roman* hiſtorian ſays [s], that their reign is only known, or was famous, for the peſtilence, diſeaſes, and and ſickneſſes; *Hoſtilianus*, who was created emperor by the ſenate, died of it [t]; *Dionyſius* of *Alexandria* has given a moſt ſhocking account of it, who lived at the ſame time [u]; it began in *Ethiopia*, and went thro' the eaſt, and thro' all parts of the *Roman* empire, and laſted fifteen years; to which perhaps, for its large extent and long duration, there never was the like: *and with the beaſts of the earth*; by which many of the chriſtians were deſtroyed in the perſecutions of thoſe times; and is alſo one of God's four judgments, and which goes about with the ſword, famine, and peſtilence, *Ezek.* xiv. 21. and may be literally underſtood of deſtruction by wild beaſts, as *Arnobius*, who lived at this time obſerves [w]; or allegorically, of men comparable to wild beaſts, as *Herod* is called a fox, and *Nero* a lion; and ſuch ſavage creatures were moſt of the *Roman* emperors, and particularly the thirty tyrants under *Gallienus*: ſo the *Targum* on *Jer.* iii. 12. interprets *the beaſts of the field*, מלכי עממיא, *the kings of the nations*. The *Alexandrian* copy reads, *and upon the fourth part of the beaſts*, as if the power of death reached to them as well as to men. Under this ſeal all the judgments of God on *Rome* pagan meet together; and it is obſervable that *Maximinus* a *Roman* emperor, and one of the laſt of the pagans, boaſted, that for worſhipping of the gods, and perſecuting of the chriſtians, neither peſtilence, famine, nor war, were in his times, when on a ſudden all theſe three came together at once [x]; to which may be added the following obſervation, that though the ſeveral ſteps and methods which God took to puniſh, weaken, and deſtroy the *Roman* pagan empire, were remarkably ſeen in the diſtinct periods to which theſe firſt four ſeals belong, yet they muſt not be entirely reſtrained and limited to theſe periods, as if they were not made uſe of in others; ſo tho' the Goſpel proceeded with remarkable ſucceſs under the firſt ſeal, in the times of the Apoſtles, to the ſubduing of multitudes in the *Roman* empire, it was alſo preached with great ſucceſs under the following ſeals; and tho' there were moſt grievous wars under the ſecond ſeal, in the times of *Trajan* and *Adrian*, ſo there were alſo in after-times; that was not the only period of war, tho' it was remarkably ſo; likewiſe there was a famine in the times of *Claudius*, under the firſt ſeal, *Acts* xi. 28. and in the time of *Trajan*, under the ſecond ſeal [y], and of *Commodus* [z], as well as under the third; and there were peſtilences alſo in thoſe times, as well as under the fourth ſeal; and becauſe God did by each of theſe weaken, break, and at laſt bring to ruin that empire, they are ſhewed to *John* one after another.

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[a] Spartianus in vita Severi, & Lampridius in vita Alexandri.

[b] Apolog. c. 40. & ad Scapulam, c. 3.

[c] Caſſiodor. Chronicon. & Eutrop. Hiſt. Roman. l. 8.

[d] Polymnia, c. 187.

[e] De Menſuris Græcis, p. 120.

[f] Waſerus de Menſuris, l. 2. c. 2. §. 5, 6. & c. 3. §. 6. & c. 7. §. 6.

[g] Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 2. c. 20.

[h] Tzeror Hammor, fol. 85. 3. & 96. 1. & 97. 4. & 104. 1. & 105. 2. & 137. 2, 3.

[i] Zohar in Exod. fol. 51. 3. & in Deut. fol. 115. 3. Raya Mehimna in Zohar in Num. fol. 94. 3. Shirhaſhirim Rabba, fol. 5. 3. Midraſh Kohelet, fol. 64. 4.

[k] Apud Euſeb. Prepar. Evangel. l. 2. p. 38.

Ver. 9. *And when he had opened the fifth ſeal*, &c.] Of the ſeven ſeals of the ſealed book; here is no beaſt ſpeaking here, nor horſe and rider preſented to view; it was now a very dark time both with reſpect to the church of God and miniſtry of the word, and the *Roman* empire. This ſeal refers to the times of *Diocleſian*, and the perſecution under him; and inſtead of the voice of one of the living creatures, *John* hears the voice of martyrs: *I ſaw under the altar the ſouls of them that were ſlain*; theſe include not only all the martyrs that were put to death in the perſecution of *Diocleſian*, but all thoſe that ſuffered in all the perſecutions preceding; for this being the laſt, involves them all. *Souls* being immaterial and incorporeal, are inviſible to the bodily eye; theſe therefore were either clothed with corporeal forms, as angels ſometimes are, or rather *John* ſaw them in a viſionary way, as he ſaw the angels: and theſe were the ſouls of ſuch as *were ſlain*; their bodies were dead, but their ſouls were alive; which ſhows the immortality of ſouls, and that they die not with their bodies, and that they live after them in a ſeparate ſtate: נשמתין דקטולי, *the ſouls of them that are ſlain*, is a phraſe uſed by *Jewiſh* writers [a], and who have a notion that the ſouls of thoſe that are ſlain are kept in certain palaces, under the care of one appointed by God [b]: and theſe were ſeen *under the altar*; either this is ſaid in alluſion to the blood of the ſacrifices, which was poured out at the bottom of the altar, *Lev.* iv. 7. and v. 9. in which the life and ſoul of the creature is; or becauſe that martyrdom is a ſacrifice of mens lives, and an offering of them in the cauſe of God and truth, *Phil.* ii. 17. 2 *Tim.* iv. 7. or with ſome reference to a common notion of the *Jews*, that the ſouls of the righteous are treaſured up under the throne of glory [c]; they have alſo a ſaying, every one that is buried in the land of *Iſrael* is as if he was buried *under the altar* [d]; for they think that being buried there expiates their ſins [e]; to which they add, that whoever is buried *under the altar*, is as if he was buried under the throne of glory [f]; yea, they talk of an altar above, upon which *Michael* the high-prieſt cauſes the ſouls of the righteous to aſcend [g]. Chriſt may be meant by the altar here, as he is in *Heb.* xiii. 10. who is both altar, ſacrifice, and prieſt, and is the altar that ſanctifies the gift, and from off which every ſacrifice of prayer and praiſe comes up with acceptance before God; and the ſouls of the martyrs being under this altar, denotes their being in the preſence of Chriſt, and enjoying communion with him, and being in his hands, into whoſe hands they commit their ſouls at death, as *Stephen* did, and being under his care and protection until the reſurrection morn, when they ſhall be re-united to their bodies which ſleep in Jeſus: and they were ſlain *for the word of God*; both for the eſſential Word of God, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, whoſe faith they profeſſed; and for the written word, they made the rule of their faith and practice, and which *Diocleſian* forbid the reading of, and ſought utterly to deſtroy; and for the Goſpel principally, which is contained in it: *and for the teſtimony which they held*; the *Syriac* and *Arabic* verſions read, *for the teſtimony of the Lamb*; and ſo the *Complutenſian* edition; either for the Goſpel, which is a teſtimony of the perſon, office, and grace of Chriſt, the Lamb, which they embraced, profeſſed, and held faſt; or for the witneſs they bore to him, and the profeſſion which they made thereof, and in which they continued.

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[l] Capitolinus in vita ejus. [m] Pollio in vita Gallieni. [n] Eutropius, l. 9. [o] Apud Euſeb. Hiſt. Eccl. l. 7. c. 22. [p] Ad Demetrianum, p. 278. [q] Targum in 1 Chron. xxi. 12, 14, 17. & in 2 Chron. vi. 28. & xx. 9. [r] T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 8. 2. & Sanhedrin, fol. 29. 1. [s] Eutrop, l. 9. [t] Victor. Aurel. de Cæſaribus, & Epitome. [u] Apud Euſeb. l. 7. c. 21, 22. [w] Adv. Gentes, l. 1. p. 13. [x] Euſeb. l. 9. c. 8. [y] Aurel. Victor. Epitome. [z] Herodian, l. 1. c. 37.

Ver. 10. *And they cried with a loud voice*, &c.] With great ardour and fervency, being very preſſing and importunate; and which ſhows that they were awake, and not aſleep, and that the ſoul does not ſleep with the body in the grave, or is after the death of that in a ſtate of inſenſibility and inactivity, as ſome imagine: *ſaying, how long, O Lord, holy and true*; the perſon they addreſs is either the Lamb in the midſt of the throne, with whom they were, and under the ſhelter of whom they were ſafe and happy; or God the Father, who ſat upon the throne, whom they call *holy*, becauſe being ſo in his nature, and as appears in all his works, he could not but hate, and ſo revenge the evil that was done to them by their cruel perſecutors; and whereas he is *true* to all his threatnings, as well as his promiſes, and faithful to every word of his, they doubted not but he would judge and avenge them of their enemies; but they ſeem deſirous to know how long it would be firſt: ſaying, *doſt thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth*; the men of the world, idolatrous perſons, earthly princes, who had ſhed their blood; and which they deſire not out of any ſinful or malicious affection, but that the holineſs and juſtice of God might appear, and alſo his truth and faithfulneſs in his promiſes to them, and threatnings to his enemies; and that God in all things might be glorified, and his church and people on earth might be ſupported and delivered; ſee *Job* xxiv. 12.

Ver. 11. *And white robes were given to every one of them*, &c.] The *Alexandrian* copy, and ſome others, read in the ſingular number, *a white robe*, and ſo does the *Syriac* verſion; as a token of their innocence, that they did not ſuffer, or were ſlain, for any capital crime or immorality they were guilty of; and of their purity and perfection they now enjoyed; as alſo of that ſpiritual delight and pleaſure, which was unſpeakable and full of glory, they now had in the preſence of God and Chriſt; and in ſhort, of that happineſs and glory which ſouls in a ſeparate ſtate, before the reſurrection morn, are partakers of; who beſides the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, comparable to fine linen clean and white, walk with Chriſt in white, in the ſhining robes of bliſs and glory: *and it was ſaid unto them that they ſhould reſt*; or have reſt; eternal reſt from all their toil and labour, from all their ſorrows and ſufferings of every kind, which reſt remains for the people of God, and into which theſe were now entered; or that they ſhould ceaſe from expoſtulating and enquiring after the above manner, and reſt ſatisfied and contented, exerciſing the graces of faith, hope, and patience, believing, looking, and waiting: *yet for a little ſeaſon*; either until the end of this perſecution by *Diocleſian*, when vengeance would be taken of the *Roman* empire, and it would be no more as pagan; or until the day of judgment, when full vengeance will be inflicted on the perſecutors of the ſaints; and which is but a little while with God, with whom a thouſand years is as one day, and in compariſon of that eternity of bleſſedneſs glorified ſaints are partakers of: *until their fellow ſervants alſo, and their brethren that ſhould be killed as they were, ſhould be fulfilled*; meaning either the reſt of the ſaints that ſhould ſuffer martyrdom in the following part of this perſecution; or thoſe who ſhould ſuffer under the *Arian* perſecution, when the empire would become chriſtian; or under *Rome* papal, and in all the perſecutions of the apoſtacy, unto the end of that ſtate: theſe are called the *fellow ſervants* and *brethren* of the ſaints in heaven; for they all worſhip and ſerve the ſame God, and belong to the ſame family, in heaven and in earth; and the ſelf-ſame reaſon that is made uſe of to animate the ſaints below to courage, faith, and patience in ſuffering, 1 *Pet.* v. 9. is uſed to keep up the expectation of the ſaints in heaven, of that vengeance that will be executed on their enemies, and to point out the time when it will be; and it may be obſerved, that the number of martyrs, or of thoſe that ſhall ſuffer and die in the cauſe of Chriſt, and for his Goſpel, is fixed and determined by God; and that number ſhall be perfected and compleated, and when that is done, he'll pour out all his wrath on them that have perſecuted them and put them to death: and ſo the *Arabic* verſion renders it, *that the number of their*

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[a] Toſaphta in Zohar in Exod. fol. 79. 4. [b] Shaare Ora, fol. 31. 2. [c] T. Bab. Sabbath. fol. 152. 2. Zohar in Num. fol. 39. 4. Abot R. Nathan, c. 12. Raziel, fol. 39. 1. Caphtor, fol. 15. 2. & 112. 2. Niſmat Chayim, fol. 16. 2.

[d] T. Bab. Cetubot, fol. 111. 1. [e] Maimon. Hilchot. Melacim, c. 5. §. 11. [f] Abot R. Nathan, c. 26.

[g] Tzeror Hammor, fol. 85. 3.

companions and brethren, and of thoſe who are to be killed as they have been killed, is fulfilled; ſee 2 *Eſdras* ii. 39, 40, 41. Now tho' this ſeal does not introduce any judgment to be executed on the *Roman* empire, as the others do; yet ſince it introduces all the martyrs with one united voice requiring vengeance on their blood, it may very well be conſidered as a ſtep towards, and as making way for, the utter ruin of that empire; and which the next ſeal being opened brings on, and is a full anſwer to the cry of theſe ſouls.

Ver. 12. *And I beheld when he had opened the ſixth ſeal*, &c.] Of the ſealed book, which the Lamb took out of the hand of him that ſat upon the throne, in order to open it, and unlooſe its ſeals. About this ſeal interpreters much differ; ſome refer this to the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, becauſe of the likeneſs of expreſſions here uſed, and in *Matt.* xxiv. 7, 29. *Luke* xxi. 25, 26. and xxiii. 29, 30. but this was paſt many years before this ſeal was opened; and beſides, tho' that time was a day of wrath to the uttermoſt upon the *Jewiſh* people, and it was the Lamb's day of wrath, taking vengeance on them for their unbelief and rejection of him as the Meſſiah; yet they had no ſenſe of the Lamb, nor any apprehenſion of his wrath at that time, nor have they now, but imputed their calamity to their diviſions and quarrels among themſelves. Others think this ſeal belongs to the deſtruction of the *Roman* empire by the *Goths*, *Hunns*, *Vandals*, &c. but it ſhould be obſerved, that the empire ſtood ſome hundreds of years after the end of the fifth ſeal and the opening of this; and it was after the ſeventh ſeal, and at the ſounding of the trumpets, that that deſtruction came on; moreover, that calamity was by the ſavageneſs of ſome barbarous nations which over-run the empire, but this here ſpoken of comes from the wrath of the Lamb; add to which, that that calamity diſtreſſed the chriſtians in the empire, and them chiefly, whereas this falls only upon the enemies of the Lamb, and the perſecutors of his people. Others are of opinion that this has reſpect to the ſtrange change of affairs in the church of Chriſt, through the riſe, power, and tyranny of antichriſt; by *the earthquake* they ſuppoſe is meant the ſhaking of both church and ſtate by the man of ſin; who ſhook the doctrines, ordinances, and diſcipline of the church, and threw all into confuſion, and introduced a new face of things; and alſo ſhook the kingdoms of the earth, and the thrones and crowns of princes: by the *ſun* becoming *black*, they think is meant the ſun of righteouſneſs, Jeſus Chriſt, who was obſcured in the doctrines concerning him, as the one and only mediator, and juſtification by his righteouſneſs, and pardon through his blood, by introducing the mediation of angels and ſaints, the doctrine of juſtification by works, and the doctrine of merit, works of ſupererogation, indulgences, pardons, pennance, and purgatory: by the *moon* they underſtand the church, which receives all its light, grace, righteouſneſs, and holineſs from Chriſt, and which like the moon is changeable as to its outward form and circumſtances; and this became *as blood* thro' the perſecutions, maſſacres, and cruelties of the *Romiſh* antichriſt, who has been made drunk with the blood of the ſaints and martyrs of Jeſus: the *ſtars* they take to be the miniſters of the word; either hypocritical ones, who were like unripe figs, deſtitute of true grace, and ſo were eaſily ſhaken with the wind of papal power, and fell into the earth, and apoſtatized from the faith, and conformed to the corruptions of antichriſt; or the true miniſters of the Goſpel, who were put to death, and that to an untimely and violent one, ſignified by the ſhaking of untimely figs by a mighty wind: by the *heaven* departing as a ſcroll rolled up, they ſuppoſe is deſigned either the church, which fled into the wilderneſs, and remained inviſible during the papal power and cruelty; or elſe the ſcriptures, which the pope made himſelf ſole judge and interpreter of, and ſhut up from the common people in an unknown language, and forbid the laity the reading of them: by *mountains* they think are intended the kings and princes of the earth, who were obliged to ſubmit to the *Romiſh* antichriſt, and give their kingdoms to him, and receive their crowns and kingdoms from him, and be his vaſſals: and by *the iſlands*, the people their ſubjects, who were forced to acknowledge him as the ſupreme head, and receive his mark in their right-hand or forehead, or they could not buy and ſell: and by all ranks and degrees of men, as *kings*, &c. hiding themſelves in rocks and mountains, and calling upon them to fall on them and cover them, they apply either to their invoking the virgin *Mary*, and other ſaints, to intercede for them, and ſkreen them from the wrath of God and Chriſt, on account of their ſins; or elſe to the perſecutors of the ſaints, of every rank and in every age, and to the puniſhments that ſhall fall upon them. But however feaſible this interpretation may ſeem to be, it is certain that this was not the face of things at the cloſe of the fifth ſeal, or the *Diocleſian* perſecution, and at the opening of the ſixth, when *Conſtantine* came to the imperial throne, for then the church appeared as ſhe is deſcribed in *Rev.* xii. 1. which is juſt the reverſe of this. There are others, who becauſe of the very awful things here ſpoken of, and the very awful language in which they are expreſſed, conclude that this ſeal reſpects the day of judgment; not conſidering that the fifth ſeal ends about the year 313. at the cloſe of the laſt of the ten perſecutions, and that the ſixth ſeal begins where that ends; and tho' above 1400 years have elapſed ſince that time, yet the day of judgment is not come, and we know not when it will; beſides, here is another ſeal, a ſeventh ſeal, which follows, and introduces puniſhments on the *Roman* empire, and ſeven vials follow, which pour out plagues upon antichriſt, all which can never be thought to be after the day of judgment; moreover, the account of the day of judgment ſtands in its proper place in *Rev.* xx. 12. after the deſtruction of *Babylon*, the firſt reſurrection, and the ſaints thouſand years reign with Chriſt. But to proceed; the buſineſs which is the ſubject of this ſeal, is the removing of paganiſm, and pagan governors out of the *Roman* empire; this was the thing the rider upon the white horſe, under the firſt ſeal, ſet out upon to effect, and never ceaſed until he had accompliſhed it; and this is what enſued upon the cloſe of the fifth ſeal, when pagan perſecution ceaſed, on *Conſtantine* a chriſtian emperor having the reins of power in his hands; and it cannot be thought that ſo wonderful a change of things as this ſhould be omitted in this prophetic hiſtory; and it is eaſy to obſerve that changes in kingdoms and governments, both as to the polity and religion of them, are ſometimes expreſſed in ſuch like figurative terms as here; ſee *Iſ.* xiii. 9, 10, 13, 17, 19. and xxxiv. 4, 5. and *Haggai* ii. 21, 22. and which may be accommodated to this event as follows: *and lo there was a great earthquake*; or *ſhaking*, both of the heavens and earth, and which, as it denotes in *Hagg.* ii. 6, 7. compared with Heb. xii. 26, 27. the removing of *Jewiſh* worſhip and ordinances, in order to make way for the chriſtian ordinances and inſtitutions, which were to remain; ſo here it intends the removing of pagan worſhip and idolatry, and of pagan magiſtrates, that the chriſtian religion, and chriſtian magiſtrates might take place. This, with what follows, concerning the darkneſs of the ſun and moon, might be literally true; and it ſeems by hiſtorians, that there were ſuch phænomena about thoſe times; for 'tis aſſerted [h], that a very great earthquake in *Syria* followed the *Diocleſian* perſecution, which ſhook, and cauſed to fall the tops of houſes at *Tyre* and *Sidon*, and killed many thouſands; and ſome ſuch like happened at *Rome*, and at *Spoletum*, where above three hundred and fifty pagans periſhed, as they were ſerving their idols. It is alſo obſerved [i], that the moon was turned into blood in the times of *Galerius*, who ſucceeded *Diocleſian*; and that the ſun failed, and the ſtars ſhined for four hours, when *Licinius* was conquered by *Conſtantine*; but then theſe may be conſidered as ſymbols of the change in the empire. *And the ſun became black as ſackcloth of hair*; which is made of black hairs; ſee *Iſ.* l. 3. as when eclipſed. The ſun was the chief deity worſhipped by the heathens, under various names, and this becoming black, may deſign the removing of their principal gods from their honour and glory, or the downfal of idolatry, which the *Jews* [k] call, שמשה של עבודה זרה, *the ſun of idolatry*, which they ſuppoſe is meant in *Cant*. i. 6. And ſatan, the god of this world, who was worſhipped in different forms, now fell, as *Lucifer*, the ſon of the morning, and as lightening from heaven, and was caſt down from all his dignity, influence, and power to the earth; for the caſting out of the red dragon, the old ſerpent, and ſatan, after his combat with *Michael*, and his angels, in *Rev.* xii. 3, 7, 8, 9. refers to this very time; likewiſe the chief magiſtrate, the heathen *Roman* emperor may be included; and it is remarkable, that *Diocleſian* the emperor, who had now retired from the imperial government, and was under a cloud, under diſgrace, and in diſtreſs, had, in the zenith of his glory, cauſed himſelf to be worſhipped as a god, and as the brother of the ſun and moon. *And the moon became as blood*; as when obſcured; the *Alexandrian* copy, and ſome others, the *Complutenſian* edition, the *Vulgate Latin*, and all the *Oriental* verſions read, *the whole moon*; this may deſign the next heathen deity, or claſs of deities, for the moon was alſo worſhipped by the heathens, under different names; and may likewiſe include the pagan prieſthood, which was next, and was annexed to the imperial dignity; and which was diſuſed by *Conſtantine*, and his ſucceſſors; and even the very title, and the robe, which was a ſymbol of it, were laid aſide as unworthy of chriſtian princes; ſee *Mede* upon the place.

Ver. 13. *And the ſtars of heaven fell unto the earth*, &c.] All the other inferior deities loſt their eſteem, worſhip, and honour; for the idol temples being now opened, the idols and ſtatues were expoſed to the common people, and were found to be ſtuffed with hay and ſtraw, which brought them into great contempt [l]. Moreover, as ſtars ſometimes ſignify the miniſters of the Goſpel in the chriſtian church, ch. i. 20. and ſometimes the prieſts in the *Jewiſh* church, *Dan*. viii. 10. ſo they may here likewiſe include the idolatrous prieſts, among the heathens, who were diſcharged and removed by *Conſtantine*, and had their poſts and profits taken away from them; yea, *Maximinus*, an heathen emperor, or tyrant, being beaten by *Licinius*, who was then *Conſtantine*'s collegue, killed many of the prieſts and prophets of his gods, which were formerly had in great admiration by him, as deceivers and betrayers of him, by whoſe oracles he was animated to the war [m]. And in like manner *Licinius* put to death the prieſts and prophets of the new idol at *Antioch* [n]. *Even as a fig-tree caſteth her untimely figs, when ſhe is ſhaken of a mighty wind*; which figs being young and green, and not fixed, fall off eaſily, and in great numbers, when a bluſtring wind beats upon them; and ſo the rabble of pagan deities, and idolatrous prieſts, were eaſily, and in great numbers, removed thro' the power of *Conſtantine*, which carried all before it.

Ver. 14. *And the heaven departed as a ſcroll when it is rolled together*, &c.] The manner of writing formerly was on rolls of parchment; hence the word *volume* is uſed for a book, which, when rolled up, the writing within could not be ſeen, not a ſyllable nor letter of it. In like manner the *Roman* empire, as pagan, which was like a large ſheet, or rather like the expanſe or firmament of the heaven, ſtretched out over all the earth, was now, as to the paganiſm of it, rolled up together, ſo that there were no more heathen gods, nor heathen prieſts; no more idolatry, and idolatrous worſhip of that kind were to be ſeen, and not ſo much as the names of heathen gods to be heard of in the empire. *And every mountain and iſland were moved out of their places*; by *every mountain* may be meant, the places of idolatrous worſhip, which were uſually upon mountains; ſee *Jer*. iii. 6, 23. which were now ſhut up, or demoliſhed, or uſed for chriſtian worſhip; and *every iſland* being moved alſo may ſhow, that paganiſm was not only rooted out of the provinces of the empire, upon the continent, but out of the iſlands alſo; and the eccleſiaſtical hiſtory of theſe times informs us, that there were chriſtian churches in the iſles, which enjoyed the Goſpel free of perſecution and diſtreſs; as in the iſles of *Cyprus*, *Crete*, the *Cyclades*, *Sardinia*, *Sicily*, *Corſica*, and in ours of *England*, *Scotland*, and *Ireland* [o]. Mr. Daubuz thinks, that as *mountains* deſign the temples of idols, *iſlands* ſignify the revenues of them, which were now taken away, and applied to other uſes.

Ver. 15. *And the kings of the earth, and the great men*, &c.] The *Roman* emperors, and other principal magiſtrates, governours of provinces and cities: *and the rich men*; among the commonalty; theſe three may deſign perhaps more particularly the emperors, nobles, and ſenate of *Rome*: *and the chief captains*; or captains of thouſands, that had the command of the *Roman* legions: *and the mighty men*; the ſoldiers, that were under them, men of ſtrength, courage, and valour: *and every bondman, and every freeman*; which takes in all the inhabitants of the *Roman empire*, of every ſtate and condition, and which was an uſual diſtinction among the *Romans*: theſe *hid themſelves in the dens, and in the rocks of the mountains*; where, through their cruel perſecutions, they had forced multitudes of chriſtians to flee, and therefore, *lex talionis*, the law of retaliation was righteouſly inflicted on them; and not to take notice of any other, this was remarkably true of their kings or emperors. *Diocleſian* and *Herculius Maximianus*, who were emperors together, in the heighth of their imperial glory and grandeur, the one being at *Nicomedia*, and the other at *Milan*, did, on one and the ſame day, of their own accord, abdicate the empire, and diveſted themſelves of their imperial crown and government, and retired to a private life; pretending in publick, that old age, and the weight of buſineſs, were the cauſe, but to their friends they owned, that it was thro' deſpair, becauſe they could not extinguiſh the chriſtian religion [p]. Some aſcribed this to phrenzy and madneſs [q]; but the true reaſon was, that the wrath of the Lamb was let into their conſciences, and which they could not bear, and which obliged them to take this ſtep, to the amazement of the whole world. *Maximinus*, who ſucceeded them, being overcome by *Licinius*, laid aſide his imperial habit, and hid himſelf among the common people, and ſkulked about in fields and villages [r]. *Maxentius*, another emperor, fled from *Conſtantine*, the inſtrument of the wrath of the Lamb, and the pouring it out upon his enemies, and fell into the river *Tyber*, from the *Mylvian* bridge, where he periſhed; and which was the very place in which he had laid ſnares for *Conſtantine* [s].

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[h] Magdeburg. Centuriator. cent. 4. c. 3. p. 86. & c. 13. p. 837.

[i] Alſted. Chronolog. Theſaur. p. 59.

[k] Shirhaſhirim Rabba, fol. 6. 2.

[l] Sozomen, l. 2. c. 5.

[m] Euſeb. Eccl. Hiſt. l. 9. c. 10.

[n] Ib. c. 11.

[o] Centuriator. Magdeburg. cent. 4. c. 2. p. 5, 8.

Ver. 16. *And ſaid to the mountains and rocks fall on us*, &c.] They choſe death rather than life. *Diocleſian* being invited by *Conſtantine* to a marriage-feaſt, excuſed himſelf by reaſon of his old age; but receiving threatening letters, the hiſtorian [t] ſays, in which he was charged with having favoured *Maxentius*, and with favouring *Maximinus*, he poiſoned himſelf; and others of the emperors are ſaid to lay violent hands upon themſelves: *and hide us from the face of him that ſitteth upon the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb*; thus they owned the proper deity, and almighty power of God, and Chriſt, which they dreaded; ſo *Maximinus* being afflicted with a moſt horrible diſeaſe, of which he died, aſked pardon of the God of the chriſtians, and owned that he ſuffered juſtly, for his reproaches of Chriſt. [u] *Licinius*, who ſometimes pretended to be a chriſtian, and joined with *Conſtantine*, but afterwards revolted and fought againſt him, being conquered and taken, was put to death; at which time he, and they that ſuffered death with him, confeſſed, that the God of *Conſtantine* was the only true God [w]. This paſſage ſhows, that Chriſt, God's firſt-born, is higher than the kings of the earth; yea, that he is equal with him that ſits upon the throne, with God his Father, ſince his wrath is equally dreaded, as his; and that, tho' he is a Lamb, mild, meek, and gentle, yet there is wrath, fury, and indignation in him, againſt his enemies, which is very dreadful and intolerable; ſee *Pſ.* ii. 12.

Ver. 17. *For the great day of his wrath is come*, &c.] The *Vulgate Latin* and *Syriac* verſions read, *of their wrath*; both of him that ſits upon the throne, and of the Lamb, againſt the heathen gods and heathen perſecutors, in anſwer to the cry of the martyrs in ver. 9, 10. *And who ſhall be able to ſtand?* againſt either of them, or in their preſence, and ſo as to bear their wrath and diſpleaſure; all which expreſſes guilt, ſhame, fear, and deſpair.

CHAP. VII.

THIS chapter contains a viſion ſeen at the end of the ſixth, and at the opening of the ſeventh ſeal, which expreſſes the ſecurity of the ſaints in all ages following, the praiſes of angels and men on that account, and the happineſs of all the people of God in the *millennium* ſtate. Firſt, a viſion of four angels is ſeen reſtraining the winds from blowing on the earth, ſea, and trees, ver. 1. then of another angel deſcribed by the place from whence he came, the eaſt; by what he had, the ſeal of the living God, and by his cry to the four angels not to hurt the earth, ſea, and trees, until the ſervants of God were ſealed, ver. 2, 3. and then follows the number of the ſealed ones in general, ver. 4. and the particular number of them out of each tribe of *Iſrael*, ver. 5, 6, 7, 8. After which is another viſion of all the elect of God together, deſcribed by the numberleſs multitude of them; by their deſcent from all nations; by their poſition and ſituation before the throne, and the lamb; by their habit and attire, and by their loud cry, aſcribing ſalvation to God, and to the Lamb, ver. 9, 10. who are joined by all the angels around them, worſhipping God, and aſcribing glory to him, ver. 11, 12. And next is deſcribed the happineſs of this numerous company, in the thouſand years reign, introduced by ſome diſcourſe which paſſed between *John*, and one of the elders, ver. 13, 14. who are ſaid to be before the throne, to ſerve God continually, and to have his preſence, ver. 15. to be free from every thing troubleſome and diſtreſſing, ver. 16. and to be fed by the Lamb, and to be led by him to fountains of living water, and to have all their tears wiped away from them, ver. 17.

Ver. 1. *And after theſe things*, &c.] After the opening of ſix of the ſeals of the ſealed book, and after the demolition of heathen deities, and of heathen worſhip, and of heathen magiſtrates, in the *Roman* empire, and the repreſentation of theſe to *John*, he had the following viſion; and which therefore does not refer to the preſervation of the chriſtians, before and at the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, which was under the firſt ſeal; nor to the ſecurity of the ſaints from the wrath of the Lamb, when it fell upon the pagan worſhippers of all ranks and degrees, which was under the ſixth ſeal, and was now over; but rather it reſpects an intermediate ſpace of time between the ſixth and ſeventh ſeal, as reaching from *Conſtantine* to *Theodoſius*; for upon *Conſtantine*'s being ſole emperor, the church enjoyed great peace and tranquillity after the bluſtring ſtorms of pagan perſecution ceaſed; and great numbers of God's elect were converted and ſealed, and the winds of heathen perſecution were held, and blew no more, unleſs for a ſhort time under the emperor *Julian*; tho' the church was not free from the wind of error and hereſy, and the ſtorms of contention which aroſe about them, nor from the tempeſt of *Arian* perſecutions, which were very grievous; wherefore this refers to what ſhould be between the ſixth and ſeventh ſeal, which brings on the ſeven trumpets: and now before *John* ſees that ſeal opened, a pauſe is made, and this viſion is ſhown him, to fortify his mind, and all other ſaints, that are obſervers of theſe things, who by the opening of the following ſeal would ſee, what judgments and plagues would come upon the empire, now become chriſtian, and what changes and revolutions would be made in it, and might fear that the church of God would be wholly ſwallowed up and loſt; wherefore this viſion is exhibited to ſhow, that notwithſtanding the devaſtations by the *Goths* and *Vandals*, and the riſe, progreſs, and power of *Mahomet*, and the dreadful apoſtacy of the church of *Rome*, and all the miſeries of it, and the plagues that ſhould come upon the church for it; yet God would have throughout all this, and in every age of time, a ſealed number, a true church, hidden and ſecured, even until the ſeventh angel has ſounded his trumpet, and time ſhall be no more, and the myſtery of God will be finiſhed. *I ſaw four angels ſtanding on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind ſhould not blow on the earth, nor on the ſea, nor on any trees.* Four angels are mentioned, in alluſion to the four ſpirits of the heavens, in *Zech.* vi. 5. and tho' the earth is not a plain ſquare with angles, but round and globular, yet it is ſaid to have four corners, with reſpect to the four points of the heavens; and tho' there is but one wind, which blows ſometimes one way, and ſometimes another, yet four are named with regard to the above points, eaſt, weſt, north, and ſouth, from whence it blows. Theſe are commonly called *the four winds of heaven*, *Dan.* viii. 8. and xi. 4. but here, *of the earth*, as in the *Targum* on *Iſ.* xi. 12. *and he ſhall bring near the captivity of Judah*, מארבע רוחי ארעא, *from the four winds of the earth.* And ſuch things as are chiefly affected with winds, are particularly obſerved, as the earth, upon which buildings are thrown down by them; and the ſea, in which ſhips are wrecked; and trees, which by the violence of them, are blown down, and torn up by the roots. Some by theſe angels underſtand evil angels, who are ſometimes called angels, without any additional epithet to diſtinguiſh them, and that becauſe a deſire of hurting ſeems to have been in them, as well as a power, ver. 2, 3. and who are in every part of the world, ſeeking to do all the miſchief they can; and may be ſaid to hold the winds, not in a literal ſenſe, for God only gathers the wind in his fiſt, and holds it there, and lets it looſe at his pleaſure; but in a myſtical ſenſe, as theſe may refer to the word, and the miniſters of the word, whoſe progreſs and ſucceſs are often hindered by ſatan and his emiſſaries; and ſome particularly underſtand by them the four monarchies of the *Babylonian*, *Perſian*, *Grecian*, and *Roman*; others the four emperors, after that *Diocleſian* and *Maximianus* had reſigned, as *Maximinus*, *Galerius*, *Maxentius*, and *Licinius*; others *Mahomet*, or the *Turk*, in the eaſt, who hindered the Goſpel by his wars and devaſtations, as well as by falſe worſhip; the kings of *France* and *Spain* on the weſt, by fire, and faggot, and ſword; and the pope in the ſouth, by bulls and excommunications; and the empire and emperors of *Germany* on the north, by public edicts; or, in general, all the popiſh tribe, popes, cardinals, biſhops, prieſts, monks, and friars, by their decrees, anathema's, ſermons, writings, and lying miracles, did all they could that the Goſpel might not be preached neither in the earth, on the continent, nor in the ſea, or in the iſlands of it; or that any of the ſaints, the trees of righteouſneſs, who lived in woods and mountainous places, or were forced to fly into woods, might have any advantage by it. But after all, rather this is to be underſtood of good angels, and either of their reſtraining evil angels from doing miſchief, ſee *Dan.* x. 13, 20, 21. *Rev.* xii. 4, 7. or keeping back the winds of falſe doctrines and hereſies from the churches of Chriſt, in the ſeveral parts of the world; or rather, and which is the true ſenſe, of their holding in the ſtorms of calamities and war to the deſtruction of kingdoms, provinces, iſlands, and the ſeveral inhabitants of them, and intends a general peace throughout the world; ſee *Jer.* xlix. 36. and li. 1, 2. This myſtical way of ſpeaking ſeems to agree with the notions of the *Jews*, who ſpeak of angels ſtanding at the gates of the four winds, ומפתחי רוח, *and the keys of the wind in their hands*, whoſe names they give us[x]; and make mention of, מלאכי רוחא, *the angels of the wind*[y]; and the *Magi* among the *Perſians* call the angel of the wind *Bad*, or *Bad-ran*[z].

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[p] Centur. Magd. cent. 4. c. 16. p. 909. Vid. Eutrop. l. 9.
[q] Euſeb. Hiſt. l. 8. c. 13. & de Vita Conſtantin. l. 5. c. 25.
[r] Ib. l. 9. c. 10.
[s] Ib. c. 9. & de Vita Conſtant. l. 1. c. 38. Vid. Aurel. Victor. de Cæſaribus.
[t] Aurel. Victor. Epitome.
[u] Euſeb. Hiſt. l. 9. c. 10. & de Vita Conſtantin. l. 1. c. 59.
[w] Ib. de Vita Conſtantin. l. 2. c. 18.

Ver. 2. *And I ſaw another angel*, &c.] Not *Conſtantine*, who came from the eaſtern parts to the empire, with the true knowledge of God, and the authority of God to propagate it; and who repreſſed the four angels, or evil ſpirits, contention, ambition, hereſy, and war, from doing the miſchief they otherwiſe would; and ſealed the ſaints, by giving them a platform of doctrine at the council of *Nice*, as *Brightman* and others think. But the increated angel, the angel of the covenant, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt; for who but he ſhould have the privy-ſeal of heaven, who is the angel of the great council, as the *Septuagint* render *Iſ.* ix. 6? and who could ſpeak in ſuch an authoritative manner to the four angels, *ſaying*, *hurt not the earth*, &c. but he who is the head of all principality and power? and who ſhould ſeal the ſervants of the Lord, but he who has them in his hands, and keeps them by his power, ſo that none of them ſhall periſh? And to him agrees all that follows: *aſcending from the eaſt*; from *Judea*, from *Zion*, from whence Chriſt, as the ſalvation, or ſaviour of *Iſrael*, came, *Pſ.* xiv. 7. and whoſe name is *the eaſt*, as ſome render *Zech.* iii. 8. he is the day ſpring from on high, the ſun of righteouſneſs, who roſe from the eaſt, the place of the riſing ſun, and brought light, life, and joy to his people, when he came to ſeal them. Compare with this *Ezek.* xliii. 1, 2, 4. and xliv. 1, 2, 3, 4. and xlvi. 1, 2. and xlvii. 1. *Having the ſeal of the living God*; having the impreſs of deity upon him, being the brightneſs of his Father's glory, and the expreſs image or character of his perſon; having a teſtimony, an authentic proof and demonſtration of his being the Son of God, of his being the true and living God; as alſo a commiſſion from God, as mediator, being ſealed by him; and having all power and authority from him, to ſeal and ſecure the people which were given unto him, and for which purpoſe he now came: to which may be added, that Chriſt has the Spirit, with his gifts and graces, without meaſure, by which the ſaints are ſealed unto the day of redemption; and moreover has likewiſe the ſeal of the book of life, or of eternal election in his hands; the elect are choſen in him, and the book of life, in which their names are written to eternal life, is in his keeping, and is therefore called the lamb's book of life. The *Jews* ſpeak[a] of the *eaſt* gate of one of the palaces they ſuppoſe above, which they ſay is ſhut all the ſix days, and on the ſabbath-day is opened; and the governour of this palace has two miniſters, one on his right hand, and one on his left, and two ſeals in their hands, חותם חיים, *the ſeal of life*, and the ſeal of death, and all the books of the world before them; and ſome are ſealed to life, and ſome to death, with which this paſſage may be compared. They ſpeak alſo of an angel that preſides at the eaſtern part of the heavens, who receives the prayers of the *Iſraelites*, whoſe name they call *Gazardia* [b], as this ſame angel is ſaid to offer up the prayers of the ſaints, ch. viii. 3. *And he cried with a loud voice to the four angels*; to ſhow his power and authority over them, they being his creatures and miniſters; and to expreſs his great concern for his people, his care of them, and affection for them; and to ſignify the danger they were in thro' the calamities that were coming on, ſhould they not be ſealed: *to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the ſea*; they had a commiſſion from God to let looſe the winds, or to bring on wars, devaſtations, calamities, and plagues, of various ſorts, upon the *Roman* empire, now chriſtian; and on the ſeat of the beaſt, not only on the continent, but upon the iſlands alſo, even upon all the nations, tongues, and people, ſubject to the ſee of *Rome*.

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[x] Raziel, fol. 36. 1, 2.

[y] Targum in 1 Reg. xix. 11.

[z] Hyde, Hiſt. Relig. Perſ. c. 12.

[a] Zohar in Exod. fol. 100. 1.

Ver. 3. *Saying, hurt not the earth, neither the ſea, nor the trees*, &c.] That is, as yet, for their commiſſion was not contradicted, nor taken away by Chriſt; and at the time appointed, at the blowing of the ſeveral trumpets, they let looſe the winds, and let in the *Goths*, *Hunns*, and *Vandals*, the *Saracens* and *Turks* into the empire, and after that poured out the vials of God's wrath upon the *Romiſh* antichriſt: this retarding of them was but in appearance, that there might be an opportunity to ſhow to *John*, what care would be taken all along of the church of Chriſt, and true ſervants of the living God: *till we have ſealed the ſervants of our God in their foreheads*; the ſervants of ſin, ſatan, and the beaſt of *Rome*, were took no notice nor care of; they were the perſons to be hurt by the winds, ſignified by the earth, ſea, and trees, even idolaters, ſmall and great; but *the ſervants of our God*, who ſerve him with grace in their hearts, from a principle of love, in the exerciſe of faith, without ſervile fear, and with reverence and godly fear, in righteouſneſs and true holineſs, and with a view to his glory; and are worſhippers of him in ſpirit and in truth, being followers of the lamb, whitherſoever he goes; and ſo are the ſervants of his God, and their God: the ſealing of them does not deſign the ſealing of them with the ſeal of election, this was done in eternity; nor with the ſeal of the Spirit, which is common to all the ſaints in all ages; but it denotes the hiding and concealing, and ſo ſecuring the ſaints amidſt all the calamities of the empire, and throughout the whole time of the *Romiſh* apoſtacy, from firſt to laſt; and reſpects the time when the church fled into the wilderneſs, and was hid, and nouriſhed with the hidden manna, for a time, and times, and half a time, *Rev.* xii. 14. Chriſt ſet a mark upon them, as was upon the houſes of the *Iſraelites*, when the deſtroying angel paſſed thro' *Egypt*, and deſtroyed the firſt-born in it; and as was upon the foreheads of thoſe that ſighed and cried in *Jeruſalem*, when orders were given to ſlay young and old, *Exod.* xii. 23. *Ezek.* ix. 4. Chriſt will have a people in the worſt of times; he knows who are his, and he'll take care of them; he has his chambers of protection to hide them in, till the the indignation is over-paſt: the ſealers, *we*, are either Father, Son, and Spirit, who are all jointly concerned for the welfare of the elect; or Chriſt and his miniſtring angels, that attend him, whom he employs for the good and ſafety of the heirs of ſalvation: the ſeal with which theſe are ſealed, is the ſeal of the living God, the fore-knowledge, love, care, and power of God; and the name of God, even Chriſt's Father's name, and their Father's name in their foreheads; the new name of children of God, by and under which they are known and preſerved by him: and this is ſaid to be *in their foreheads*, in alluſion to ſervants, who uſed to be marked in their foreheads; hence they are called by *Apuleius* [c] *frontes literati*; and by *Martial*, a ſervant, is called *fronte notatus* [d]: but then theſe were ſuch who had committed faults, and this was done by way of puniſhment [e]; wherefore it can hardly be thought that the ſervants of God ſhould be ſealed, in alluſion to them: but rather with reference to the mitre on the high-prieſt's forehead, as ſome think; or it may be to *Ezek.* ix. 4. and ſhows, that tho' theſe perſons were hid and concealed from men, they were well known to God and Chriſt; nor were they aſhamed to make a publick and open confeſſion of Chriſt before men, as did the true and faithful witneſſes of Chriſt, the *Waldenſes* and *Albigenſes*, in the midſt of the greateſt darkneſs of popery, and of danger from men; and who ſeem to be chiefly intended.

Ver. 4. *And I heard the number of them which were ſealed*, &c.] And therefore could be ſure of the exact number, which did not depend upon his ſight, and telling them, in which ſome miſtake might have been made, but he heard the number expreſſed: *and there* were *ſealed an hundred* and *forty, and four thouſand*; which is a ſquare number ariſing from twelve, the ſquare root of it, being juſt twelve times twelve thouſand; and may denote their being the true and genuine offspring of the twelve Apoſtles of the Lamb, holding their doctrine, and being built on their foundation; ſee ch. xxi. 14. and theſe were *of all the tribes of the children of Iſrael*; not that theſe were all *Jews* in a literal ſenſe, for the time of their converſion, in great numbers, is not yet come. Dr. *Goodwin* thinks, that theſe ſealed ones deſign the believers of the *Greek* and *Armenian* churches, and his reaſons are not deſpicable; but this is to limit and reſtrain them to a particular part of the church of Chriſt; whereas they take in all the ſaints within this long tract of time, even all that are the true *Iſrael* of God, who are *Jews* inwardly, of what nation, kindred, tongue, and people ſoever; and is a certain and determinate number for an uncertain and indeterminate one; and only intends a large number of perſons known to God and Chriſt; ſee 2 *Eſdras* ii. 38.

Ver. 5. *Of the tribe of Judah were ſealed twelve thouſand*, &c.] *Judah* is mentioned firſt, becauſe Chriſt ſprung from that tribe, and the pure worſhip of God was preſerved in it; and that itſelf was preſerved a diſtinct tribe until the coming of *Shiloh*; its name ſignifies, *praiſe God*, *Gen.* xxix. 35. and ſhows, that it becomes all the ſealed ones, all true believers, and every member of the church of God, to praiſe him, for all favours and bleſſings, temporal, ſpiritual, and eternal. *Of the tribe of Reuben* were *ſealed twelve thouſand*; *Reuben* was *Jacob*'s firſt-born, but by his ſin he loſt the honour and privilege of birth-right, and therefore is mentioned after *Judah*, who prevailed above him, and the reſt of his brethren; his name ſignifies *ſee*

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[b] Zohar in Exod. fol. 79. 2.

[c] Metamorph. l. 9. p. 130.

[d] Epigr. l. 3. Ep. 20.

[e] Vid. Popma de Operis Servorum, p. 170, &c.

the Son, *Gen.* xxix. 32. and ſhews, that the Son of God is to be looked unto for righteouſneſs, life, and ſalvation, by all that expect to be ſaved, and to him does the true church look for eternal life and happineſs. *Of the tribe of Gad* were *ſealed twelve thouſand*; his name ſignifies a *troop*, *Gen.* xxx. 11. and may denote that there would be a numerous company of ſaints, and faithful witneſſes during the time of ſealing, and amidſt all the troubles and afflictions that would attend the church and people of God, and who in the iſſue would be conquerors, and more than conquerors, thro' Chriſt; ſee *Gen.* xlix. 19.

Ver. 6. *Of the tribe of Aſer* were *ſealed twelve thouſand*, &c.] *Aſher*, which the *Septuagint* pronounce *Aſer*, as here, ſignifies *bleſſed*, *Gen.* xxx. 13. as all the ſealed ones are, bleſſed with all ſpiritual bleſſings, with grace here, and glory hereafter. *Of the tribe of Nephthalim* were *ſealed twelve thouſand*; the name of this tribe ſignifies *wreſtlings*, *Gen.* xxx. 8. and may deſign the wreſtlings of ſaints, both with God in prayer, and with their enemies, ſin, ſatan, and the world, and alſo their ſtrivings together for the faith of the Goſpel. *Of the tribe of Manaſſes* were *ſealed twelve thouſand*; this word ſignifies *forgetting*, *Gen.* xli. 51. and ſhows that the followers of Chriſt ſhould forget the things that are behind, their ſinful luſts and pleaſures, the onions and garlick in *Egypt*, and their former company and acquaintance, their own people, and their father's houſe, and all their labours and ſufferings for the ſake of Chriſt.

Ver. 7. *Of the tribe of Simeon* were *ſealed twelve thouſand*, &c.] The name of this tribe ſignifies *hearing*, *Gen.* xxix. 33. and ſuch an hearing as is attended with obedience; and denotes the ſpiritual and practical hearing of the Goſpel by thoſe who hear, and underſtand, and believe, and practice what they hear, and yield the obedience of faith unto it. *Of the tribe of Levi* were *ſealed twelve thouſand*; this name ſignifies *joined*, *Gen.* xxix. 34. and denotes, that theſe ſealed ones were not only joined one to another in love, and holy fellowſhip, but to Chriſt, and were one ſpirit with him, and were members of his body, fleſh, and bones, and cleaved to him with full purpoſe of heart. *Of the tribe of Iſſachar* were *ſealed twelve thouſand*; the interpretation of this name is *hire* or *reward*, *Gen.* xxx. 18. and may deſign thoſe rewards of grace, which God beſtows upon his faithful ſervants, in times of tribulation.

Ver. 8. *Of the tribe of Zabulon* were *ſealed twelve thouſand*, &c.] Which ſignifies *dwelling*, *Gen.* xxx. 20. and was the tribe in which Chriſt had his dwelling, and where he much converſed; and may denote his gracious inhabitation, as well as that of God the Father, and of the Spirit, among the ſaints and ſealed ones. *Of the tribe of Joſeph* were *ſealed twelve thouſand*; whoſe name ſignifies *adding*, *Gen.* xxx. 24. and may intend the additions both of numbers, and of gifts and grace to the churches of thoſe times. *Of the tribe of Benjamin* were *ſealed twelve thouſand*; this word ſignifies *the ſon of the right hand*, *Gen.* xxxv. 18. ſhewing, that theſe ſealed ones are as a ſignet on God's right hand, and are as near and dear unto him as a man's right hand is to him; ſee *Pſ.* lxxx. 17. Now twelve thouſand out of each tribe, make juſt the number of a hundred forty and four thouſand, ver. 4. The tribe of *Dan* is not mentioned, it may be, becauſe of the apoſtaſy of that tribe, one of *Jeroboam*'s golden calves being ſet up there; ſhewing that God had no ſealed ones of that ſort, and inſtead of him *Levi* is reckoned; tho' that tribe had no part in the diviſion of the land of *Iſrael*, yet had a part in Chriſt, and is therefore mentioned in this myſtical account. Nor is the name of *Ephraim* uſed, it may be for the ſame reaſon; there having been a great defection in that tribe from the pure worſhip of God, and inſtead of him the name of *Joſeph* appears.

Ver. 9. *After this I beheld*, &c.] What follows is a diſtinct viſion from the preceding one, and is not a continuation of that, as if the ſealing of the *Jewiſh* believers was deſigned by the former, and the ſealing of the *Gentiles* in this latter; whereas in this viſion, there is no mention made of ſealing, nor was there, or will there be any need of it in the time it refers unto; and which is not the time of the reformation; nor when the vials began to be poured out upon the ſeat of the beaſt; for tho' there were great numbers converted in many nations, kindreds, people, and tongues, yet not in all; nor do the characters of this great multitude, and the happineſs they ſhall enjoy, ſeem to ſuit with perſons in a ſtate of mortality and imperfection, ver. 14, 15, 16, 17. wherefore many interpreters underſtand this viſion of the ſaints in heaven: but it rather reſpects the *millennium* ſtate, or thouſand years reign of Chriſt with his ſaints on earth, with which all that is here ſaid agrees; compare ver. 14. with ch. xx. 4. and ver. 15. with ch. xxii. 3. and ver. 16, 17. with ch. xxi. 4, 6. And the deſign of this viſion is to ſhow to *John*, and every diligent obſerver, that after the ſeventh ſeal is opened, the trumpets are blown, and the vials poured out; during which time there will be a number ſealed, that will profeſs Chriſt; and at the cloſe and winding up of all things, in the days of the voice of the ſeventh angel, Chriſt will deſcend, and all the ſaints with him; their bodies will be raiſed, and the living ſaints changed, and make one general aſſembly, who are ſhown to *John* here, as in ch. xxi. 9, 10. to relieve his mind, and ſupport his ſpirits, in a view of the calamities uſhered in by the opening of the ſeventh ſeal. *And lo a great multitude, which no man could number*; which deſign all the elect of God in the new *Jeruſalem* church-ſtate, the bride, the Lamb's wife, or the new *Jeruſalem* deſcending from God out of heaven; theſe will appear to be a great multitude, not in compariſon of the inhabitants that ſhall have dwelt upon earth, nor of the profeſſors of religion in one ſhape or another; for with reſpect to each of theſe, they are but a few, a ſeed, a remnant, a little flock; but as conſidered in themſelves, and ſo they are many who are ordained to eternal life, whoſe ſins Chriſt has bore, for whom his blood has been ſhed, and whom he juſtifies, and who are called by his grace, and are brought to glory; and who make up ſuch a number as no man can number: God indeed can number them, but not man; for they are a ſett of particular perſons choſen by God, and redeemed by Chriſt, and who are perfectly and diſtinctly known by them; their number and names are with them; their names are written in the Lamb's book of life; and God and Chriſt can, and do call them by their name; and when they were given to Chriſt, they paſſed under the rod of him that telleth them; and he will give an exact account of them, of every individual perſon, another day. But then they are not to be numbered by men; and they will be *of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues*; and therefore muſt conſiſt both of *Jews* and *Gentiles*; theſe were not *all* nations, *&c.* but *of* all nations, ſome of all nations; and ſuch God has choſen, Chriſt has redeemed, and the Spirit calls; God has not choſen all the *Jews*, but a remnant, according to the election of grace, nor all the *Gentiles*, but has taken out of them a people for his name; and ſo Chriſt has redeemed, by his blood, ſome out of every kindred, tongue, people, and nation, of *Jew* and *Gentile*: and hence the Goſpel has been ſent into all the world, and to all nations, for the gathering of theſe perſons out of them; and when they are all gathered in, they'll all meet together in the new *Jeruſalem* church-ſtate, and make up the body here preſented to view. *Stood before the throne, and before the Lamb*; the throne of God, and of the Lamb, will be in the midſt of the new *Jeruſalem* church; the tabernacle of God will be with men, and he will dwell among them; and before the preſence of his glory will all the ſaints be preſented; and the Lamb will then preſent to himſelf his whole church, without ſpot, or wrinkle, or any ſuch thing; and they'll behold his glory, and ſee him as he is: and as they are deſcribed before by their number, and their deſcent, ſo here by their poſition and ſituation, and, as follows, by their habit and attire, *clothed with white robes*; agreeable to their princely and prieſtly characters: it was uſual for princes and noblemen to be arrayed in veſtures of linnen, as *Joſeph* was in *Pharaoh*'s court; and the *Jewiſh* prieſts wore garments of linnen, in their daily miniſtry and ſervice; and in the thouſand years reign the ſaints will appear to be kings and prieſts, *Rev.* v. 10. and xx. 6. and accordingly will be clothed as ſuch: and this may alſo be expreſſive of their entire freedom from ſin by the blood of Chriſt, ver. 14. and their compleat juſtification by his righteouſneſs, which is ſometimes compared to white raiment, and is called fine linnen, clean, and white; and likewiſe their ſpotleſs purity and holineſs, ſanctification in them being now perfect, which was before imperfect: and theſe robes may alſo deſign their ſhining robes of glory and immortality; for they will now be clothed upon with their houſe from heaven, and will have put off mortality and corruption, and have put on immortality and incorruption, and appear with Chriſt in glory; for ſuch will be the then ſtate of things: *and palms in their hands*; or branches of palm-trees, as in *John* xii. 13. as an emblem of their uprightneſs and faithfulneſs, which they had ſhown in the cauſe of Chriſt even unto death, the palm-tree being a very upright tree, *Jer.* x. 5. *Cant.* vii. 7. or of their bearing up under a variety of preſſures and afflictions, by which they were not caſt down and deſtroyed, but bravely ſtood up under them, and were now come out of them; the palm-tree being of ſuch a nature, as is reported, that the more weight is hung upon it, the higher it riſes, and the ſtraighter it grows; ſee *Pſ.* xcii. 12. and chiefly as an emblem of victory and triumph over their enemies, as ſin, ſatan, the world and death, which they had been ſtruggling with, in a ſtate of imperfection, but were now more than conquerors over them; the palm-tree is well known to be a token of victory. So *Philo* the *Jew* [f] ſays, the palm-tree is συμϐολον νικης, *a ſymbol of victory*. Conquerors uſed to carry palm-tree branches in their hands [g]: thoſe who conquered in the combats and plays among the *Greeks*, uſed not only to have crowns of palm-trees given them, but carried branches of it in their hands [h]; as did alſo the *Romans* in their triumphs; yea, they ſometimes wore *toga palmata*, a garment with the figures of palm-trees on it, which were interwoven in it [i]: and hence here palms are mentioned along with white garments; and ſome have been tempted to render the words thus, *clothed with white robes*, and *palms on their ſides*; that is, on the ſides of their robes [k]. The medal which was ſtruck by *Titus Veſpaſian* at the taking of *Jeruſalem*, had on it a palm-tree, and a captive woman ſitting under it, with this inſcription on it, *Judæa capta*, *Judea is taken.* And when our Lord rode in triumph to *Jeruſalem*, the people met him with branches of palm-trees in their hands, and cried, *Hoſanna* to him. So the *Jews*, at the feaſt of tabernacles, which they kept in commemoration of their having dwelt in tents in the wilderneſs, carried *Lulabs*, or palm-tree branches in their hands, in token of joy, *Lev.* xxiii. 40. and in like manner, theſe being come out of the wilderneſs of the world, and the tabernacle of God being among them, expreſs their joy in this way; ſee the note on *John* xii. 13.

Ver. 10. *And cried with a loud voice*, &c.] To ſhew the ſtrength of their affection, and the greatneſs of their joy, and how ſenſible they were of the favour they enjoyed, and how hearty they were in the following aſcription of glory to God, and the Lamb. *Saying, ſalvation to our God which ſitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb*; by *ſalvation* is meant, not only temporal ſalvation, and thoſe many deliverances, which God had wrought for them, and particularly in bringing them out of great tribulation, ver. 14. but ſpiritual and eternal ſalvation, which is the ſalvation of the ſoul, and is owing to the free grace of God, and the blood of Chriſt; and the ſenſe is, that God and the Lamb are the ſole authors of it, and the glory of it ought to be given to them, and to no other: God the Father, who ſits upon the throne, reſolved upon it in his eternal purpoſes and decrees, and contrived and formed the ſcheme of it in the council of peace, and he made ſufficient proviſion for it in the covenant of grace; and as he from eternity appointed his Son to be his ſalvation to the ends of the earth, ſo in the fullneſs of time he ſent him to be the ſaviour of the world, and delivered him up for all his people, unto death itſelf, and ſpared him not, but awoke the ſword of juſtice againſt him, and ſheathed it in him; and ſince he had ſuch a concern in ſalvation, the glory of it in right belongs to him: and the Lamb, the Son of God, he engaged to do the will and work of God, and from everlaſting became the ſurety of the better teſtament; and in time he came to ſeek and to ſave loſt ſinners, and he is become the author of eternal ſalvation to them; his own arm has brought it, and it is in him, and in no other, even a ſalvation from ſin, ſatan, the law, the world, hell, and death, and wrath to come; and it will be the employment of the ſaints, both in the new *Jeruſalem* church-ſtate, during the thouſand years reign, and in heaven to all eternity, to aſcribe the glory of all this, not to themſelves, to their merits and works of righteouſneſs, or to any creature whatever, but to God and the Lamb only.

Ver. 11. *And all the angels ſtood round about the throne*, &c.] The holy and elect angels, even all of them, the ten thouſand times ten thouſand, and thouſands of thouſands, the innumerable company of them, who are repreſented in the ſame poſition, ch. v. 11. ſee the note there: *and* about *the elders, and the four beaſts*; the churches and miniſters; yea, round about the great multitude before mentioned, the camp of the ſaints, and the beloved city; whoſe guardians they will be, and to whom they will always be miniſtring ſpirits. *And fall before the throne on their faces*; in token of ſubmiſſion and reverence: *and worſhipped God*; by celebrating the perfections of his nature, and aſcribing to him the glory of all his works.

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[f] Allegor. l. 2. p. 74.

[g] A. Gell. Noctes Attic. l. 3. c. 6. Sueton. in Caio, c. 32.

[h] Pauſan. Arcadica, l. 8. p. 532. Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 5. c. 8. & l. 6. c. 19.

[i] Iſidor. Hiſpalenſ. Origin. l. 19. c. 24. p. 168.

[k] Vid. Lydium de re Militare, l. 6. c. 3. p. 225.

Ver. 12. *Saying, Amen*, &c.] As approving and confirming what the great multitude of men had ſaid in ver. 10. in aſcribing the glory of ſalvation to God, and the Lamb: the angels, tho' they have no part in it themſelves, yet highly approve of it as right and juſt, that men ſhould give the glory of it where it is due. *Bleſſing, and glory, and wiſdom, and thankſgiving, and honour, and power, and might be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen.* Here a ſevenfold praiſe is given to God by the angels, as to the Lamb, in ch. v. 12. and in words much the ſame. They rightly aſcribe *bleſſing* to God, who is bleſſed in himſelf, and is the ſource of all bleſſedneſs to his creatures, angels and men. And alſo *glory*; the glory of his divine perfections, who is the God of glory; and of all his works of nature and providence, and eſpecially of the ſalvation of men by Chriſt. *And wiſdom*; he being the only wiſe God, whoſe wiſdom is to be ſeen in all the works of creation, and in the government of the world, and in nothing more than in the ſcheme of redemption by the Son of God: *and thankſgiving*; for all mercies and favours, temporal, ſpiritual, and eternal, enjoyed by angels, or by men: *and honour*; which is due to him from all his creatures, as he is the creator of them; and from all his children, as he is their father; and from all his ſervants, as he is their maſter: *and power*; which he has exerted, in making all things out of nothing, in ſupporting the whole univerſe in its being, and in ſaving and preſerving his own people: *and might*; or *ſtrength*, he being the almighty God, the ſtrength of *Iſrael*, and the rock of ages, in whom is everlaſting ſtrength; and the praiſe and aſcription of all this, the angels wiſh to be given him by themſelves and others, to all eternity; and as deſiring that ſo it might be, and as believing that ſo it would be, they add their *Amen* to it.

Ver. 13. *And one of the elders anſwered, ſaying unto me*, &c.] This elder was not the Apoſtle *Peter*, as ſome popiſh interpreters have thought; and ſtill leſs pope *Silveſter*, who lived in the times of *Conſtantine*; he is much more likely, according to others, to be *Conſtantine* himſelf, the firſt of the elders, or the chief magiſtrate when the church ſprung out of its troubles, and enjoyed reſt and peace; though ſome have thought of the prophet *Iſaiah*, ſince many things, ſaid by this elder, are to be found in his prophecy; compare ver. 14, 16, 17. with *Iſ.* i. 18. and xlix. 10. and xxv. 8. but it is needleſs to enquire who the particular perſon was; it is enough to ſay, that he was one of the four and twenty elders about the throne, one that belonged to the church, perhaps the ſame as in ch. v. 5. who, in a viſionary way, is repreſented as accoſting *John* upon the above ſight. The word *anſwered* is a common *Hebraiſm* of the New Teſtament, which is often uſed, when nothing goes before, to which a return is made; and only ſignifies here, that the elder opened his mouth, began to ſpeak, and called to *John*, and ſaid as follows: *what are theſe which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?* This he ſaid, not as being ignorant of them, or of the reaſon of their being clothed in this manner, nor of the place and ſtate from whence they came, as appears by the account afterwards given of them by him; but to ſtir up *John* to take more notice of them, as being a body of men that were worthy of obſervation and contemplation, and were worth his while to conſider well who they were, and from whence they came; and alſo to try him whether he knew them or no, and to bring him to a confeſſion of his ignorance; and that he might have an opportunity of giving him ſome hints about them, which might be uſeful to him, and to the churches, and for the explanation of this viſion, and other parts of this prophecy.

Ver. 14. *And I ſaid unto him, ſir, thou knoweſt*, &c.] *John* replies in a very humble, modeſt, and reſpectful manner, to the elder, calling him *ſir*, according to the uſage of the Eaſtern people; and it is obſervable, that this word is much uſed in his Goſpel, and more than in any other book; ſee *John* iv. 11, 15, 19, 49. and v. 7. and xii. 21. and xx. 15. Some copies, and the *Complutenſian* edition read, *my Lord*; and ſo do the *Vulgate Latin*, *Syriac*, and *Arabic* verſions. *John* confeſſes his ignorance, and aſcribes knowledge to the elder, and deſires information of him; for the ſenſe is, that the elder knew who they were, and from whence they came, but he did not, and therefore deſires that he would inform him; and ſo the *Arabic* verſion renders it, *and my Lord, thou art more learned*; that is, than I am, and therefore inſtruct me, as he accordingly did: *and he ſaid to me, theſe are they which came out of great tribulation*; ſeeing this company deſigns all the elect of God, that ever were, are, or ſhall be in the world; *the great tribulation*, out of which they came, is not to be reſtrained to any particular time of trouble, but includes all that has been, is, or ſhall be; as all the afflictions of the ſaints under the Old Teſtament, from righteous *Abel* to *Zechariah*; and all the troubles of the people of God in the times of the *Maccabees*, *Heb.* xi. 35—38. all the perſecutions of the chriſtians by the *Jews*, at the firſt publication of the Goſpel; and the perſecutions under the *Roman* emperors, both *Pagan* and *Arian*; and the cruelties and barbarities of the *Romiſh* antichriſt, during the whole time of the apoſtacy; and particularly the laſt ſtruggle of the beaſt, which will be the hour of temptation, that will come upon all the world; and in general all the afflictions, reproaches, perſecutions, and many tribulations of all the ſaints, and every member of Chriſt in this world, who in the new *Jeruſalem* church-ſtate will be *come out of* them; which ſuppoſes them to have been in them, and yet were not overwhelmed by them, and loſt in them; but by divine ſupport and aſſiſtance, waded thro' them, and were now quite clear of them, and never more to be annoyed with them; ſee *Rev.* xxi. 4. *And have waſhed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb*; not in the blood of bulls and goats, which could not take away ſin; nor in their own blood, their ſufferings for Chriſt, on which they did not depend, knowing there's no compariſon between them, and the glory revealed in them; nor in any works of righteouſneſs done by them, which are imperfect and filthy, and need waſhing; but in the blood of Chriſt, which cleanſeth from all ſin. The *robes* which they waſhed in his blood, may either deſign themſelves, their conſciences, which this blood purges from dead works; or their outward converſation-garments, which have their ſpots, and need continual waſhing; or elſe the robe of righteouſneſs, and garments of ſalvation, or their juſtification, which is by the blood of Chriſt, *Rom.* v. 9. The act of waſhing from ſin, by the blood of Chriſt, is ſometimes aſcribed to Chriſt himſelf, as in ch. i. 5. but here to the ſaints, and deſigns the concern which faith has in the blood of Chriſt, which deals with it for juſtification, peace, and pardon, for the removing of ſin from the conſcience, and for cleanſing from all impurity, both of fleſh and ſpirit: and the effect of this is, that their robes were *made white*; that is, that they were freed from all ſin, were without fault before the throne, not having ſpot, or wrinkle, or any ſuch thing. This ſhows, that theſe perſons had no truſt in themſelves, or dependence on their own merits, and works of righteouſneſs, but wholly truſted to, and depended on the blood and righteouſneſs of Chriſt; which is the only way to come out of tribulation, and enter the kingdom.

Ver. 15. *Therefore are they before the throne of God*, &c.] As in ver. 9. ſee the note there, not becauſe of their great tribulations, but becauſe they were brought thro' them, and out of them, by the grace and power of God; nor becauſe of their robes, or converſation-garments, but becauſe thoſe were waſhed and made white in the blood of the Lamb; or becauſe of the blood of the Lamb, and their juſtification, pardon, and cleanſing by it: *and ſerve him day and night in his temple*; not in any material temple, but in the new *Jeruſalem*, the general aſſembly and church of the firſt-born, the temple of the living God; for in this ſtate there will be no material temple, or place of worſhip, but God and the Lamb will be the temple thereof, ch. xxi. 22. nor will there be any night there, ch. xxii. 5. wherefore this phraſe, *day and night*, only denotes the conſtancy and uninterruption of their ſervice, there being nothing to obſtruct them in it, or break them off from it, as now; in alluſion to the prieſts and levites, who were one, or other of them, night and day, in the ſervice of the temple: and the ſervice of theſe perſons in the new *Jeruſalem* ſtate, will not lie in attending on the word and ordinances, or in the miniſtration of them, as in the preſent ſtate; but in praiſing God, ſinging Hallelujahs to him, adoring the perfections of his nature, and admiring his wonderful works of providence, and grace, and aſcribing the glory of ſalvation to him, and to the Lamb; and this their ſervice will be the glorious liberty of the children of God. Hence the *Ethiopic* verſion renders it, *and they praiſe him day and night*; this will be the employment of the ſaints in the *millennium* ſtate, and to all eternity: *and he that ſitteth on the throne ſhall dwell among them*; or *tabernacle over them*; for the tabernacle of God ſhall be now among men, and he will dwell among the ſaints; they ſhall enjoy his preſence, and have the moſt intimate communion with him; it will appear moſt manifeſt, that he is their covenant God, and they are his covenant people; and he will be a tabernacle, not only of inhabitation, but of protection for them; and the name of this city, this new *Jeruſalem*, will be *Jehovah Shammah*, the Lord is there.

Ver. 16. *They ſhall hunger no more, nor thirſt any more*, &c.] The words are taken out of *Iſ.* xlix. 10. and will be true in a literal and corporal ſenſe. Now the ſaints are often in hunger and thirſt, then they ſhall be ſo no more; and in a myſtical and ſpiritual ſenſe, there will be no famine of the word; for tho' there will not be the outward miniſtration of the word, as now, the ſubſtance of it will be enjoyed, to full ſatisfaction; nor will there be any uneaſy deſires after ſpiritual things, and much leſs any hungrings and thirſtings, or luſting after carnal, ſenſual, and earthly things. *Neither ſhall the ſun light on them, nor any heat*; not the ſun of perſecution, ſee *Matt.* xiii. 6, 22. nor the heat of ſatan's temptations, or his fiery darts; nor of any fiery trial, or ſore affliction; nor of the divine diſpleaſure, or any fearful ſenſe and apprehenſion of it; nor of toil and labour, called the burden and heat of the day, from all which they will be now free.

Ver. 17. *For the Lamb, which is in the midſt of the throne*, &c.] See ch. v. 6. not before the throne, as the great multitude are ſaid to be, ver. 9. nor round about it, as the angels in ver. 11. but in the midſt of it, being equal to him that ſits upon it; ſitting on the ſame throne with him, and having the ſame power and authority, he ſhall feed them as a ſhepherd his flock; for this Lamb is a ſhepherd, and this great multitude are his flock; whom he will feed in this ſtate, not by his miniſters, word, and ordinances, as now; but in perſon, and with the rich diſcoveries of himſelf, and of his love, ſignified by a feaſt, by new wine in his Father's kingdom, and his own, and by eating and drinking at his table, in the kingdom appointed by him to his followers; and hence it is they ſhall never hunger more: or *ſhall rule them*, as the *Vulgate Latin* verſion renders it; for the ſame word ſignifies to *feed*, and to *rule*, as a king rules his ſubjects; Chriſt will now be viſibly king of ſaints, and king over all the earth, and will reign before his ancients gloriouſly; and in theſe days of his, *Judah* ſhall be ſaved, and *Iſrael* ſhall dwell ſafely under his power and protection: *and ſhall lead them unto living fountains of water*; by *water* is meant the grace, love, and free favour of God in Chriſt, that pure river of water of life, which proceeds from the throne of God, and of the Lamb, from divine ſovereignty; and with which the ſaints, in this ſtate ſhall be ſweetly and fully ſolaced and refreſhed; and hence they ſhall never thirſt more: and this is ſaid to be *living*, becauſe not only refreſhing and reviving, but becauſe it will laſt for ever; the love of God is from everlaſting to everlaſting; and it is ſignified by *fountains*, to denote the abundance of it, even as it will be perceived and enjoyed by the ſaints now; for theſe waters will not be only up to the ankles, and knees, but a broad river to ſwim in, which can't be paſſed over; and hither will Chriſt lead his people, which is one branch of his office as a ſhepherd; and which ſhows his care of them, and affection for them. *And God ſhall wipe away all tears from their eyes*; or *out of their eyes*, as the *Alexandrian* copy reads; ſee *Iſ.* xxv. 8. The ſenſe is, that that which is now the occaſion of tears, will ceaſe, as the ſin and corruptions of God's people, which now are the cauſe of many tears; as alſo ſatan's temptations, the hidings of God's face, and the various afflictions of this life, and the perſecutions of the men of the world; there will be no more of either of theſe; all will be made to ceaſe; ſee *Rev.* xxi. 4. and in the room of them full and everlaſting joy will take place, *Iſ.* xxxv. 10. Mr. *Daubuz* thinks, that the whole of this chapter belongs to the ſixth ſeal, and that the promiſes in it are ſuch as were to be accompliſhed at the opening of the ſeventh, and do not belong to the *millennium* ſtate; but had their fulfillment in the times of *Conſtantine*, who he ſuppoſes is the angel that came from the eaſt, who reſtrained the perſecutors of the church, and introduced a general peace in church and ſtate; and as he came with the ſeal of the living God, which he underſtands of the croſs of Chriſt he put upon his ſtandard, and on the ſhields of his ſoldiers, ſo he ſealed the ſervants of God on their foreheads with it, by allowing them to make a publick profeſſion of a crucified Chriſt, and by protecting them in that profeſſion, even men of all nations, *Jews* and *Gentiles*; and particularly he thinks the innumerable palm-bearing company may deſign the council of *Nice*, gathered by him, which conſiſted of the repreſentatives of the whole chriſtian church in the ſeveral nations of the world, who had great honour, freedom, and immunities conferred upon them; and that the angels are the chriſtian magiſtrates, ſubmitting to the chriſtian religion, and defending the church, which was now come out of the great tribulation of heathen perſecution, and had temples and places of publick worſhip opened for them; in which they had full liberty to ſerve the Lord continually, without interruption, and were ſecure from all affliction and perſecution, and were filled with joy and gladneſs; and the Lamb, by the means of *Conſtantine*, as Chriſt's vicar and ſervant, he declared himſelf to be, fed and protected the church in peace and quietneſs; all which are accompliſhed during the reſt, or *ſilence*, under the next ſeal; and which I ſhould very readily agree to, ſince this interpretation carries on the thread of the prophetic hiſtory without any interruption, were it not for the deſcription of the palm-bearing company, both as to quantity and quality, and the declaration of the happy ſtate of thoſe come out of great tribulation, which I think cannot be made to ſuit with any imperfect ſtate of the church on earth, without greatly lowering the ſenſe of the expreſſions uſed; however, if any one prefers this expoſition to what is given, I am not much averſe unto it.

CHAP. VIII.

THIS chapter contains the opening of the ſeventh ſeal, and the things that followed on it, and particularly the ſounding of the firſt four trumpets. Upon the opening of the ſeventh ſeal there was ſilence in heaven for half an hour, ver. 1. then follows a viſion of ſeven angels, who ſtood before God, and had ſeven trumpets given to them, ver. 2. then of another angel, deſcribed by his poſition, ſtanding at the altar; by his having a golden cenſer, and by much incenſe being given him, the end of which was to offer up the prayers of all ſaints, which with it went up to God, and were acceptable to him; and by filling his cenſer with the fire of the altar, and caſting it to the earth; the effects of which were voices, thundrings, lightnings, and an earthquake, ver. 3, 4, 5. after which the ſeven angels prepare to ſound their trumpets, ver. 6. the firſt blows his, which brings hail and fire, mingled with blood, upon the earth, which burns up the third part of trees and all green graſs, ver. 7. the ſecond blows, upon which a burning mountain is caſt into the ſea, and a third part of it becomes blood, a third part of the creatures in it die, and a third part of the ſhips upon it are deſtroyed, ver. 8, 9. the third angel blows, upon which a ſtar, like a burning lamp, falls upon the third part of rivers and fountains, whoſe name is wormwood, and embitters them, ſo that many men die of them, ver. 10, 11. the fourth angel blows, and the third part of the ſun, moon, and ſtars is ſmitten, and becomes dark, ſo that there is no light for a third part of the day and night, ver. 12. and the chapter is concluded with the viſion of another angel flying thro' the midſt of heaven, proclaiming three times woe to the inhabitants of the earth, on account of what would be uttered by the three following angels, who were yet to blow their trumpets, ver. 13.

Ver. 1. *And when he had opened the ſeventh ſeal*, &c.] That is, when the Lamb had opened the ſeventh and laſt ſeal of the ſealed book: *there was great ſilence in heaven about the ſpace of half an hour*; not in the third heaven, the ſeat of the divine being, of angels and glorified ſaints, where are hallelujahs without intermiſſion; but in the church, which is oftentimes ſignified by heaven in this book, and where now the throne of God was placed, in that form as deſcribed in ch. iv. or rather in the *Roman* empire: nor is this ſilence the ſum of this ſeal, or the only thing in it; for it includes the preparation of the ſeven angels to take their trumpets, though none of them were ſounded during this period. This ſpace of time ſome think refers to the time which elapſed whilſt the angel who had incenſe given him to offer it with the prayers of ſaints, did ſo, and took fire off the altar with his cenſer, and caſt it on the earth; and while the ſeven angels had their trumpets given them, and they were preparing to ſound. Others are of opinion that this was only a pauſe, a breathing-time for *John* between the former viſions and ſeals, and the following; nothing being ſaid or done, or any thing exhibited to him during this interval; but he was at leiſure to reflect on what he had ſeen, and to prepare for what was to come. Others underſtand it of the amazement of the ſaints at the judgments of God, which were coming upon the chriſtian empire, and of their quiet and ſilent preparations for theſe troubles and combats, both within and without, they were to be exerciſed with; ſee *Zech.* ii. 13. Others have thought that this refers to the ſtate of the ſaints after the day of judgment, when there will be an entire ceſſation from perſecution and trouble, and when the ſouls under the altar will have done crying for vengeance; but this will be not for half an hour only, but to all eternity; nor will angels and ſaints be then ſilent. Rather this is to be underſtood of that peace and reſt which the church enjoyed upon *Conſtantine*'s having defeated all his enemies, when he brought the church into a ſtate of profound tranquillity and eaſe; and this laſted but for a little while, which is here expreſſed by about, or almoſt half an hour, as the *Syriac* verſion renders it; for in a ſhort time the *Arian* hereſy broke out, which introduced great troubles in the church, and at laſt violent perſecutions. The alluſion is, as in the whole of the following viſion of the angel at the altar, to the offering of incenſe; at which time the people were removed from the temple, from between the porch and altar [l], to ſome more diſtant place; and the prieſt was alone while he offered incenſe, and then prayed a ſhort prayer that the people might not be affrighted leſt he ſhould be dead [m]; and who in the mean while were praying in a ſilent manner without; ſee *Luke* i. 9, 10. hence the *Jews* ſay [n], that the offering of incenſe atones for an ill tongue, for it is a thing that is introduced בחשאי, *ſilently*, and it atones for what is done ſilently, ſuch as whiſperings, backbitings, &c. and they call [o] ſilence the beſt of ſpices, even of thoſe of which the ſweet incenſe was made.

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[l] T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 44. 1. Maimon. Hilchot. Tamidin, c. 3. §. 3.

[m] Miſn. Yoma, c. 5. §. 1.

[n] T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 44. 1. & Zebachim, fol. 88. 2.

[o] T. Bab. Megilla, fol. 18. 1.

Ver. 2. *And I ſaw the ſeven angels*, &c.] Not the ſeven ſpirits of God, ch. i. 4. and v. 5. their names, as well as their office, differ; nor the miniſters of the word, though theſe are often called angels in this book, and blow the trumpet of the Goſpel, and lift up their voice like a trumpet; but the angelic ſpirits, and theſe either evil ones, ſince they are the executioners of wrath and vengeance, and bring judgments on the earth; and who are ſometimes ſaid to ſtand before God, 1 *Kings* xxii. 21, 22. *Job* i. 6. or rather good angels, who are ſometimes miniſters of divine wrath; ſee 2 *Sam.* xxiv. 16, 17. 2 *Kings* xix. 35. *ſeven* of them are mentioned, as being a proper number for the blowing of the ſeven trumpets, which would compleat all the woes that were to come upon the world, and in alluſion to the ſeven princes the eaſtern monarchs uſed to have continually about them, *Eſth.* i. 14. as it follows: *which ſtood before God*; and denotes their nearneſs to him, and familiarity with him, they always behold his face; and their ſervice and miniſtrations, and their readineſs to execute his will: the alluſion is to the two prieſts ſtanding at the table of fat, with two ſilver trumpets in their hands, with which they blew, and another ſtruck the cymbal, and the Levites ſung, which was always done at the time of the daily ſacrifice [p]: *and to them were given ſeven trumpets*; every one had one; and which were an emblem of thoſe wars, and deſolations, and calamities, which would come upon the empire, and upon the world, at the blowing of each of them; the trumpet being an alarm, preparing for, proclaiming, and introducing theſe things; *Jer.* iv. 19. *Hoſ.* v. 8. theſe are ſaid to be *given* them; either by him that ſat upon the throne, about which they were; or by the Lamb that opened the ſeal; and ſhows that they did nothing but what they had a commiſſion and order to do. Here is manifeſtly an alluſion to the prieſts and Levites blowing their trumpets at the cloſe of the daily ſacrifice, and at the offering of incenſe [q], as before obſerved.

Ver. 3. *And another angel came*, &c.] The *Ethiopic* verſion adds, *from the eaſt*, as in ch. vii. 2. pointing to the ſame angel, and who is intended; for not a created angel, as *Gabriel*, or any other, is meant; nor any mere man, at leaſt not pope *Damaſus*, who lived in *Conſtantine*'s time, as *Lyra* thought; nor *Conſtantine* himſelf, which is the opinion of *Brightman*, who thinks that his, and the deſires of other good men to make peace, and compoſe the differences occaſioned by the *Arian* hereſy, are deſigned by the incenſe and prayers; and this being brought about at the council of *Nice*, when the *Arian* blaſphemy was condemned, and truth confirmed, is intended by the aſcent of the ſmoke of the incenſe with the prayers, out of the angel's hands; when there followed upon this, great contentions, heart-burnings, and perſecutions, ſignified by fire, voices, thundrings, &c. and others have been of opinion that the emperor *Theodoſius* is deſigned, and that reſpect is had to his prayer both in the church, and at the head of his army, before the battle with *Eugenius*, the ſaints in the mean while putting up united prayers to God for ſucceſs, and which was obtained; and this victory was attended with a miraculous tempeſt, and gave a deadly blow to the pagan religion. Yet neither of thoſe, but Chriſt himſelf, the angel of the covenant, and of God's preſence, is here intended, who appeared in an angelic form; ſo the high-prieſt in the day of atonement was called שליח [r], *an angel*, or meſſenger, to which the alluſion is: *and ſtood at the altar*; either of burnt-offerings, and may be rendered *ſtood upon it*; and ſo may repreſent his ſacrifice, which had been lately offered up for the ſins of his people, he being both altar, ſacrifice, and prieſt; or rather the altar of incenſe, ſince mention is made of a cenſer and of incenſe, and the ſmoke of it; and ſeeing this altar is a golden one, as that was, and is before the throne, as that was before the vail, by the ark of the teſtimony; *Exod.* xxx. 1, 3, 6. and ſo Chriſt is here introduced as the high-prieſt, advocate, and interceſſor for his people; tho' both altars may be reſpected in this verſe: *the altar* may deſign the altar of burnt-offering, from whence the coals were taken in the cenſer; and the *golden altar*, the altar of incenſe, where the coals being brought, the incenſe was put upon them, and offered; and here he *ſtood*, as every one concerned in the ſervice of the ſanctuary did [s]: *having a golden cenſer*; the *Ethiopic* verſion adds, *of fire*, for this was a veſſel in which were put burning coals of fire, taken from off the altar before the Lord, *Lev.* xvi. 12. and which may denote the ſufferings of Chriſt, the pains he endured in his body, the ſorrows of his ſoul, and the wrath of God, which was poured like fire upon him; the altar from which they were taken off, was typical of Chriſt in his divine nature, which is the altar that ſanctifies the gift, and gave virtue to his blood and ſacrifice; and all this being before the Lord, may ſhow that Chriſt's ſufferings were according to the will of God, were grateful to him, and always before him; for theſe burning coals in the cenſer were alſo carried within the vail, repreſenting heaven, where Chriſt entered by his own blood, and where he is as a Lamb that had been ſlain, the efficacy of whoſe death always continues; and this being a golden cenſer, ſhows the excellency and perpetuity of Chriſt's ſacrifice and interceſſion. In the daily ſervice the prieſt uſed a ſilver cenſer, but on the day of atonement a golden one [t]; tho' at the daily ſacrifice there was a veſſel uſed, called הכף, like to a large golden buſhel, in which was a ſmaller veſſel full of incenſe [u], and may be what is here deſigned: *and there was given unto him much incenſe*; the interceſſion of Chriſt is meant by *the incenſe*, which, like that, is ſweet and fragrant, very grateful and acceptable to God, and alſo pure and holy; for tho' it is made for tranſgreſſors, yet in a way of righteouſneſs, and conſiſtent with the holineſs and juſtice of God; nor is there any like it, nor ſhould there be any beſides it; the interceſſion of angels, and ſaints departed, ought to be rejected: and it is perpetual, or will be for ever; ſee *Exod.* xxx. 7, 8, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38. and whereas it is ſaid to be *much*, this is in alluſion either to the many ſpices uſed in the compoſition of the incenſe, ſee *Exod.* xxx. 34. the *Jews* ſay [w], that eleven ſorts of ſpices were ordered to *Moſes*, and the wiſe men have added three more, in all fourteen; or to the prieſt's handfuls of incenſe, which he took and brought within the vail on the day of atonement, *Lev.* xvi. 12. and which were added to, and were over and above the quantity uſed every day [x]; and even in the daily ſervice the pot of incenſe was not only filled, but גדוש, *heaped up* [y]; now this may denote the fullneſs of Chriſt's interceſſion, which is for all his elect, called and uncalled, greater or leſſer believers, and for all things for them, as their caſes be; for converſion, diſcoveries of pardon, preſervation, perſeverance, and glorification; and to ſupport this, he has a fullneſs of merit, which makes his interceſſion efficacious; for incenſe was put upon the burning coals in the cenſer, or upon the fire before the Lord, *Lev.* xvi. 13. ſignifying that Chriſt's interceſſion proceeds upon his ſufferings and death, his blood and ſacrifice, from whence all his pleas and arguments are taken in favour of his people, and which always prevail: and this is ſaid to be *given* him, as his whole work and office as mediator, and every branch of it is; he is appointed to this work, is allowed to do it, and is accepted in it, by him that ſits upon the throne: in the daily offering of the incenſe, one took the incenſe and *gave* it into the hand of his friend, or the prieſt that was next him; and if he wanted inſtruction how to offer it, he taught him, nor might any one offer incenſe until the preſident bid him [z]; to which there ſeems to be an alluſion here: now the end of this was, *that he ſhould offer it with the prayers of all ſaints upon the golden altar which was before the throne*; the *Vulgate Latin* and *Ethiopic* verſions add, *of God*; the prayers of the ſaints, rightly performed, are themſelves compared to incenſe, being very grateful and acceptable to God, *Pſ.* cxli. 2. and the *Arabic* verſion here renders it in connection with the preceding clauſe, and explanative of that, *and there was given unto him much incenſe and much ſpice, which are the prayers of the ſaints*, as in ch. v. 8. and at the time of incenſe the people prayed; ſee *Luke* i. 10. and theſe are ſpiritual ſacrifices, which Chriſt the high-prieſt preſents for the ſaints, perfumes with the incenſe of his mediation, and makes acceptable to God; being offered upon, and coming up from that altar which is before him, and which gives value to every thing that is put upon it: and they are the prayers of *ſaints*; who are ſet apart by God the Father, whoſe ſins are expiated by the blood of Chriſt, and who are ſanctified by the Spirit of God; who draw nigh to God with a true heart, and call upon him out of a pure heart, and in ſincerity and truth; the prayers of ſuch righteous ones, through faith in Chriſt, avail much with God; and the prayers of all ſaints are regarded by Chriſt, and preſented by him, whether they be rich or poor, high or low, greater or leſſer believers. The *Jews* often ſpeak of an angel, whoſe name is *Sandalphon*, who is appointed over the prayers of the righteous, and takes them and preſents them to God [a]: ſo *Raphael* in *Tobit* xii. 15. ſays he was one of the ſeven holy angels that carry up the prayers of the ſaints; and the heretick *Elxai*, who was originally a *Jew*, talked of the holy angels of prayer [b]: ſo the *Jews* ſay, that God *by*, or *thro'* his *word*, receives the prayers of *Iſrael*, and has mercy on them [c]. In the *Greek* text it is, *that he ſhould give*, &c. that is, the *incenſe*, agreeable to the *Hebrew* phraſe in *Numb.* xvi. 47. and elſewhere.

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[p] Miſn. Tamid. c. 7. §. 3.

[q] Maimon. Hilch. Tamidin, c. 6. §. 5.

[r] Miſn. Yoma, c. 1. §. 5.

[s] Maimon. Biath. Hamikdaſh, c. 5. §. 17.

[t] Yoma, c. 4. §. 4.

[u] Miſn. Tamid. c. 5. §. 4.

[w] Maimon. Cele Hamikdaſh, c. 2. §. 1, 2.

[x] Yoma, c. 5. §. 1. & T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 47. 1.

[y] Miſn. Tamid. c. 5. §. 4.

Ver. 4. *And the ſmoke of the incenſe*, &c.] For the incenſe being put, as it was uſed to be, upon burning coals of fire, cauſed a ſmoke to ariſe like a cloud, *Lev.* xvi. 13. *Ezek.* viii. 11. ſo that the whole houſe, or temple, was filled with it [d]: *which came with the prayers of the ſaints, aſcended before God out of the angel's hand*; alluding to the incenſe the prieſt took in his hand, and caſt upon the burning coals; and ſhows how that by the ſmoke of the incenſe, or the virtue of Chriſt's mediation, the imperfections of the prayers of the ſaints are covered; and how they are by it perfumed and made acceptable to God; and ſo are ſaid to aſcend up before him, and to be regarded by him, as the prayers of *Cornelius* were, *Acts* x. 4. now all this is expreſſive of the wonderful affection of Chriſt for his church and people, and care of them; that before the angels ſound their trumpets, and bring on wars and deſolations into the empire, Chriſt is repreſented as interceding for them, and preſenting their prayers both for deliverance for themſelves, and vengeance on their enemies.

Ver. 5. *And the angel took the cenſer*, &c.] The golden one before-mentioned, the uſe of which was to take and carry in it burning coals of fire: *and filled it with fire of the altar*; of burnt-offering, for upon that, and not upon the altar of incenſe, fire was: the alluſion is to the prieſt "that was worthy to uſe a cenſer [e]; who took a ſilver cenſer, and went to the top of the altar (of burnt-offering) and having removed the coals there, and there took them in his cenſer, and went down and emptied them into a golden one, and there was ſcattered from it about a kab of coals;" for the golden one held a kab leſs than the ſilver one [f]: *and caſt it into the earth*; the *Roman* empire: by *fire* ſome underſtand the Spirit of God, and his gifts and graces, which ſat upon the Apoſtles as cloven tongues of fire on the day of Pentecoſt; and which they ſuppoſe were now plentifully beſtowed on the miniſters of the word, to enlighten them, inſpire them with zeal, and abundantly fit them for the work of the miniſtry, in conſequence of Chriſt's mediation and interceſſion: and others think the Goſpel is intended, which is ſometimes compared to fire, *Jer.* xx. 9. and xxiii. 29. or elſe thoſe contentions and quarrels which, thro' the corruptions of men, ariſe on account of the Goſpel, *Luke* xii. 49. tho' rather by fire here are meant the judgments of God, and his wrath and fury poured forth like fire upon the *Roman* empire, now become chriſtian; and ſo was an emblem of thoſe calamities coming upon it at the ſounding of the trumpets; and ſhows that as Chriſt prays and intercedes for his own people, for their comfort and ſafety, ſo he'll bring down his judgments upon his and their enemies; ſee *Ezek.* x. 2. and the *Targum* on it: *and there were voices, and thundrings, and lightnings, and an earthquake*; which may be underſtood either of the nature, uſe, and effects of the Goſpel, ſpeaking to the hearts of men by the ſons of thunder, enlightning their minds, and ſhaking their conſciences; the like were at the giving of the law, *Exod.* xix. 16. or rather of thoſe terrors, diſtreſſes, and commotions in the world, becauſe of God's righteous judgments, and which particularly will be at the ſound of the ſeventh trumpet, and the pouring out of the ſeventh vial, ch. xi. 15. and xvi. 17, 18. the alluſion is to the ſounds that were heard at the time of the daily ſacrifice; for beſides the blowing of the trumpets by the prieſts, and the ſinging of the *Levites*, of which ſee the note on ver. 2. there was a muſical inſtrument called מגרפה, *magrephah* [g], which being ſounded, a man could not hear another ſpeak in *Jeruſalem*; yea, they ſay it was heard as far as *Jericho*.

Ver. 6. *And the ſeven angels which had the ſeven trumpets*, &c.] Given them, ver. 2. *prepared themſelves to ſound*; they ſtood up, took their trumpets in their hands, and put them to their mouths; this was giving notice of what was coming upon the earth, and a kind of warning to men, and a call upon them to repentance, and to prepare to meet God in the way of his judgments. The time when theſe trumpets began to blow was after the opening of the ſeventh ſeal, and ſo after the deſtruction of the empire as pagan, which was under the ſixth ſeal; and after that peace and reſt from perſecution in *Conſtantine*'s time, ſignified by the half hour's ſilence in heaven; and after the prayers of the ſaints for vengeance becauſe of their blood ſhed in the time of *Rome* pagan, were offered up, heard, taken notice of, and accepted; and therefore cannot regard, nor have any concern with the ſtate of the church before *Conſtantine*'s time, as ſome have thought the three firſt trumpets had; the firſt introducing the contradictions and blaſphemies of the *Jews*, and their perſecutions of the chriſtians, and the effuſion of their blood by them; the ſecond the ten perſecutions under the heathen emperors; and the third, the errors and hereſies which peſtered the churches of thoſe times: nor indeed do they concern the ſtate of the church at all; tho' it ſeems much more likely that the firſt four trumpets ſhould bring in, as others have thought, the ſeveral hereſies of *Arius*, *Macedonius*, *Pelagius*, and *Eutycheus*, which ſprung up before the riſe of *Mahomet*, who appears under the fifth trumpet. But all the ſix trumpets have to do with the empire as chriſtian; for as the ſix ſeals are ſo many ſteps towards the deſtruction of the empire as pagan, and the vials bring on the ruin of *Rome* papal; ſo the ſix trumpets are ſo many gradual advances to the ruin of the empire, now chriſtian: and it muſt be obſerved, that the emperor *Theodoſius*, at his death, left the empire divided between his two ſons, *Arcadius* and *Honorius*, the eaſtern part of it, which had *Conſtantinople* for its ſeat, to the former, and the weſtern part of it, which had *Rome* for its ſeat, to the latter; now the firſt four trumpets bring in a barbarous people out of the north, the *Goths*, *Huns*, and *Vandals*, into the weſtern part, who by various incurſions and wars, at laſt utterly deſtroy it; and the fifth and ſixth trumpets bring in the *Saracens* under *Mahomet*, and the *Turks* into the eaſtern part, who take poſſeſſion of that, and have kept it unto this day. A preparation being made, the angels begin to ſound their trumpets.

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[z] Miſn. Tamid. c. 6. §. 3. Maimon. Tamidin, c. 3. §. 8, 9.

[a] Zohar in Gen. ſol. 97. 2. & in Exod. fol. 99. 1. Shemot Rabba, §. 21. fol. 106. 2.

[b] Epiphan. Contr. Hæreſ. l. 1. Hæreſ. 19.

[c] Targum in Hoſ. xiv. 8.

[d] Miſn. Yoma, c. 5. §. 1.

[e] Miſn. Tamid. c. 5. §. 5.

[f] Vid. Miſn. Yoma, c. 4. §. 4.

[g] Miſn. Tamid. c. 5. §. 6. & 3. 8.

Ver. 7. *The firſt angel ſounded*, &c.] Or blew his trumpet: *and there followed hail and fire, mingled with blood*; ſomewhat like one of the plagues of *Egypt*, *Exod.* ix. 23, 24, 25. in which was hail mingled with fire, only no blood, but what was cauſed by its fall on man and beaſt. Some have thought the *Arian* hereſy is here intended, which may well enough agree with the time; and which may be compared to *hail*, for the miſchief it did to the vines, the churches; and becauſe of the violence with which it came, and the chillneſs of affection to Chriſt and his people, which it brought on profeſſors of religion; and the barrenneſs which followed upon it, it making men barren and unfruitful in the knowledge of Chriſt Jeſus; and to *fire*, becauſe of the wrath, contentions, animoſities, and diviſions it occaſioned among thoſe who were called chriſtians: and *blood* may be brought into the account, ſince the like perſecutions under *Conſtantius* and *Valens* were raiſed againſt the orthodox on account of it, as were againſt the chriſtians under the heathen emperors: and this ſtorm fell upon *the earth*; the whole *Roman* empire; for even all the world was once ſaid to be *Arian*, except one *Athanaſius*; and particularly upon the carnal and earthly part of the church, who were ſeeking places and preferments under the *Arian* emperors: *and burnt up the third part of trees*; the trees of righteouſneſs, the ſaints, particularly the doctors of the church, the tall cedars in *Lebanon*; who either ſeemed to be ſuch, and were infected with this hereſy, and deſtroyed by it, as many were; or were truly ſuch, and were greatly oppreſſed, afflicted, and perſecuted for not embracing it: and alſo *all green graſs*; the common people, private chriſtians, weak believers, who had the truth of grace in them, and ſuffered much for not giving into this hereſy; or who ſeemed to have it, but had it not, but withered away, being ſcorched up and deſtroyed with this pernicious notion: but rather this trumpet regards not the church, but the empire; and this ſtorm of hail, fire, and blood, deſigns the irruption of the *Goths* into it, from the year 395, in which *Theodoſius* died, to the year 408, under *Radagaiſus* their general; with two hundred thouſand of them, ſome ſay four hundred thouſand, he entered and over-run all *Italy*, but was ſtopped and defeated by *Stilicho*; alſo *Alaricus* king of the *Goths* penetrated into *Italy*, came to *Ravenna*, and pitched his camp not far from *Polentia*, to whom the emperor *Honorius* gave up *France* and *Spain* to make him eaſy, and that he might ceaſe from his ravages and depredations [h]; and theſe irruptions and devaſtations may be fitly expreſſed by hail, fire, and blood, juſt as the coming of the *Aſſyrian* monarch into the land of *Iſrael* is ſignified by a tempeſt of hail, and a deſtroying ſtorm, *Iſ.* xxviii. 2. and it is remarkable, as Mr. *Daubuz* obſerves, that *Claudian* the poet [i], who lived at the time of *Alarick*'s war, compares it to hail: *and they were caſt upon the earth*; the *Roman* empire, the continent more eſpecially, as *Germany*, *France*, *Spain*, and *Italy*, which were particularly affected and diſtreſſed with theſe barbarous people: and *the third part of trees were burnt up*; by which ſeem to be meant people of the higher rank, the richer ſort of people, who ſuffered much in theſe calamities; ſee *Iſ.* ii. 13. *Zech.* xi. 2. yea, princes, nobles, and rulers, both civil and eccleſiaſtical, who ſuffered much at this time, as *Jerom* [k], who was then living, teſtifies; and ſo *trees* are interpreted of kings, rulers, and governors, by the *Targum* on *Iſ.* ii. 13. and *Zech.* xi. 1, 2. *the trees of the field* in *Iſ.* lv. 12. are interpreted of kingdoms [l]: the *Alexandrian* copy, the *Complutenſian* edition, the *Vulgate Latin*, and all the *Oriental* verſions, read before this clauſe, *and the third part of the earth was burnt*; that is of the *Roman* empire: *and all green graſs was burnt up*; the common people, who may be compared to ſpires of *graſs* for their multitude, being as it were innumerable; and to *green* graſs, for their delightful, comfortable, and flouriſhing condition before theſe calamities came upon them; and for their weakneſs and impotency to withſtand ſuch powerful enemies; ſee *Job* v. 25. *Pſ.* lxxii. 16. *Eſ.* xl. 6, 7. and xxxvii. 27. *Numb.* xxii. 4. and theſe commonly ſuffer moſt when a country is over-run and plundered by an enemy.

Ver. 8. *And the ſecond angel ſounded*, &c.] His trumpet: *and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was caſt into the ſea*; by which is meant not the devil, as ſome think; called a *mountain* from his height of pride, a *great* one from his might and power, and a *burning* one from his great wrath and malice againſt Chriſt, his Goſpel, and his people; and who may be ſaid to be *caſt into the ſea* of this world, and the men of it, whom he inſtigates againſt the ſaints, and who are like a troubled ſea, that cannot reſt: but rather ſome hereſy, and as ſome have thought, the *Macedonian* hereſy, which was levelled againſt the deity of the Holy Spirit, as was the *Arian* hereſy againſt the deity of the Son; the abettors of which looked big, and were ſupported by power, and ſhewed great zeal for religion, and pretended to great light and knowledge; and which hereſy much affected the ſea of pure doctrine, particularly the third part of doctrine, in which the third perſon, the Spirit of God, is more eſpecially concerned; and was of ſo pernicious a nature, as to kill many that profeſſed the Goſpel, and had a name to live, and deſtroy many particular churches, comparable to ſhips: but as before, it is beſt to underſtand this of another incurſion of the *Goths* into the *Roman* empire, and of the effects of it; and it ſeems to have reſpect to the taking and ſacking of *Rome* by *Alaricus* king of the *Weſt Goths*, in the year 410, or 412[m]. *Rome* is very fitly repreſented by a great mountain, as kingdoms and cities ſometimes are; ſee *Zech.* iv. 7. *Iſ.* xiii. 2. ſeeing it was built on ſeven mountains; and its being taken and burnt by *Alaricus*, is aptly expreſſed by a burning mountain, as the deſtruction of *Babylon*, which is another name for *Rome*, is by a burnt mountain in *Jer.* li. 25. the *ſea* into which this was caſt, may ſignify the great number of people and nations within its juriſdiction, which ſuffered, and were thrown into confuſion at this time; ſo diſtreſſes and calamities in nations are expreſſed by a like figure in *Pſ.* xlvi. 2. *and the third part of the ſea became blood*; that is, a third part of the juriſdiction of *Rome*, ſignified by the ſea, ſee *Jer.* li. 36. was afflicted with wars and blood-ſhed, by this ſame ſort of people; for whilſt theſe things were done in *Italy*, a like calamity fell on *France* and *Spain*; the *Alans*, *Vandals*, and *Sueves*, having depopulated *France*, paſſed over the *Pyrænean* mountains, and ſeized on *Spain*; the *Vandals* and *Sueves* on *Gallæcia*; the *Alans* on *Portugal*; and the *Silingi*, which was another ſort of *Vandals*, invaded *Andaluſia*[n]; the *Goths* under *Ataulphus* entered *France*, and the *Burgundians* ſeized that part of it next the *Rhine*[o]: ſee *Exod.* vii. 20, 21.

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[h] Caſſiodor. Chronicon in Arcad. & Honor. 42. Petav. Rationar. Tempor. par. 1. l. 6. c. 10. p. 275. Hiſt. Eccl. Magdeburg. cent. 5. c. 16. p. 871.

[i] De Bello Getico, v. 174. p. 209. Ed. Barthii.

[k] In Epitaph. Nepotian. fol. 9. I.

[l] Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 50. 1.

Ver. 9. *And the third part of the creatures which were in the ſea*, &c.] The fiſhes; by whom men are meant, the inhabitants of the *Roman* empire; ſee *Ezek.* xxix. 4, 5. where by *fiſh* the *Targum* underſtands mighty princes and governors: *and had life, died*; were put to death by theſe ſavage and barbarous people, who killed all they met with, men, women, and children, young and old, rich and poor, high and low: *and the third part of the ſhips were deſtroyed*; by which may be deſigned either the cities and towns within ſuch a part of the *Roman* juriſdiction, which were burnt or plundered by them; or their goods and effects, which they pillaged, and carried off the wealth and riches of the people, even all their ſubſtance, as *Auſtin*[p] and *Jerom*[q], who lived in thoſe times, affirm.

Ver. 10. *And the third angel ſounded*, &c.] His trumpet: *and there fell a great ſtar from heaven*; not *Mahomet*, as ſome think, for this time is too ſoon for him, who roſe up under the fifth trumpet; nor *Arius*, for whom it is too late, who lived in the times of *Conſtantine*; and ſtill leſs *Origen*, who lived before his time; but rather *Pelagius*, who was a man of great eminence in the church, of much learning, and made great pretenſions to religion and holineſs, and like a ſtar and lamp, ſhone forth a while, with great luſtre and ſplendor, but fell into very great errors; denying original ſin, and aſſerting the purity of human nature, crying up the power of man's free will, and aſſerting that human nature, without the grace of God, was able to keep the whole law, even to perfection; and his name, according to his doctrine, was wormwood and gall, which imbittered the ſweet doctrines of the free grace of God, and affected the fountains and rivers, the ſacred ſcriptures, from whence theſe doctrines flow; ſo that inſtead of being pleaſant and wholeſome to men, thro' his falſe gloſſes and perverſe interpretations of them, they became bitter and poiſonous; and many ſouls that received and imbibed his ſenſe of them, died ſpiritually, and were loſt and periſhed, as all muſt inevitably, who depend on the ſtrength and works of nature, and deny and deſpiſe the grace of God: but it is beſt, as the other trumpets, ſo to underſtand this, of the invaſions of the above barbarous people, particularly the *Vandals* under *Genſeric*, who being turned out of *Spain* by the *Goths*, went into *Africa*, where peace was made, and part of *Africa* given them to dwell in; after which *Genſeric* thro' treachery ſeized upon *Carthage*, and greatly afflicted *Sicily*: *Theodoſius* made war againſt them to no purpoſe, and peace being made between *Valentinian* and *Genſeric*, *Africa* was divided between them; and ſome time after *Rome* was ſpoiled by *Genſeric* of all its riches[r]: Mr. *Daubuz* thinks *Attila* king of the *Hunns*, called *the dread of the world*, and *the ſcourge of God*, is meant by this ſtar; who was a rebel againſt the *Romans*, and made ſad ravages in the empire; at the beginning of which troubles a great comet appeared; and, according to *Caſſiodorus*[s], the *Huns* were auxiliaries to the *Romans* againſt the *Goths*; but *Litorius* the *Roman* general was taken; and after this the *Huns* rebelled, and depopulated *Thrace* and *Illyricum*; and *Attila* their king having ſlain his brother *Bleda*, and partner, became ſole monarch; and tho' the *Romans* under *Aeius*, by the help of the *Goths*, beat him in the fields of *Catalaun*, and obliged him to depart, yet afterwards, having got a reinforcement, he entered with great force into *Aquileia*, with whom pope *Leo* made peace: *burning as it were a lamp*; this ſtar reſembled that which is called *Lampadias*, which *Pliny* ſays[t] imitates, or bears a likeneſs to burning torches; and he ſpeaks of a ſpark which fell out of a ſtar, which had ſuch an appearance[u]: this is expreſſive of war, and great deſtruction in the empire: *and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of water*; that is, upon the large provinces and chief cities belonging to the *Roman* empire, and the governors of them, who ſuffered very bitterly and ſeverely in theſe times; compare with this *Ezek.* xxxii. 2, 6. The laſt clauſe, *and upon the fountains of waters*, is left out in the *Alexandrian* copy.

Ver. 11. *And the name of the ſtar is called wormwood*, &c.] Becauſe of the bitter afflictions, ſorrows, and diſtreſſes which it was the inſtrument of; juſt as *Naomi* called herſelf *Mara*, becauſe the Almighty had dealt bitterly with her, *Ruth* i. 20. *and the third part of the waters became wormwood*; that is, the inhabitants of the provinces and cities belonging to the *Roman* empire were afflicted with grievous and bitter afflictions and calamities; ſo great diſtreſſes are called wormwood, and waters of gall, given to drink, *Jer.* ix. 15. *Lam.* iii. 19. *and many men*

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[m] Caſſiodor. Chronicon in Honor. & Theodoſ. 43. Petav. ib. p. 276. Hiſt. Eccl. Magdeburg. cent. ib. p. 872. Vid. Hieron. ad Gaudentium, fol. 34. M. [n] Caſſiodor. ib. Petav. ib. [o] Caſſiodor. Chronicon ib. [p] De Civitate Dei, l. 1. c 10. vid. L. Vivem in ib. [q] Ad Euſtochium. [r] Caſſiodor. Chronicon in Theodoſ. 44. & in Marcian. 45. [s] Chronicon, ib. [t] Nat. Hiſt. l. 2. c. 25. [u] Ib. c. 35.

men died of the waters, becauſe they were bitter; thro' the barbarities and cruelties of theſe ſavage people, who afflicted the empire: there ſeems to be an alluſion to *Exod.* xv. 23.

Ver. 12. *And the fourth angel ſounded*, &c.] His trumpet. Some think this refers to the *Eutychian* hereſy, which confounded the two natures of Chriſt, and of two made one mixed nature, neither human nor divine; and brought great darkneſs upon the doctrine of Chriſt's perſon, the *ſun* of righteouſneſs, and into the church, ſignified by the *moon*, and among the miniſters of the word, the *ſtars*. Others are of opinion that that darkneſs which preceded the riſe of the papacy, and introduced it, is here intended: *and the third part of the ſun was ſmitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the ſtars, ſo as the third part of them was darkened, and the day ſhone not for a third part of it, and the night likewiſe*; when the doctrine concerning the perſon and offices of Chriſt, who is the *ſun* and light of the world, was obſcured by hereſies; and the diſcipline of the church, which, like the *moon*, has all its light, beauty, and order from Chriſt, was ſadly defaced by the introduction of *Jewiſh* and paganiſh rites and ceremonies; and the miniſters, the *ſtars*, were drawn by the tail of the dragon, and caſt to the earth, became corrupt in their principles, and carnal and ſenſual in their lives; ſo that it was a time of great darkneſs and gloomineſs, night and day: but rather this trumpet has reſpect to that darkneſs and ignorance which the above barbarous nations, the *Goths*, *Huns*, *Vandals*, and *Heruli* ſpread, and left throughout the empire; for from this time there was a viſible decline, as of evangelical light and knowledge, ſo of all kind of uſeful knowledge, and nothing but ignorance, ſtupidity, and barbarity took place every where; and which were very aſſiſting to the man of ſin, antichriſt, to fix and ſettle his dominion over the kingdoms which roſe up out of the empire at this time; and it alſo refers to the entire deſtruction of the weſtern *Roman* empire, which is expreſſed by much the ſame figures as the ruin of the *Roman* pagan empire, in ch. vi. 12, 13. and which the various irruptions of theſe ſavage people iſſued in; compare with this *Ezek.* xxxii. 7, 8. where the deſtruction of the *Egyptian* monarchy is ſignified in like terms: *Jerom*, who lived about the time of the firſt inundation of theſe nations, in very mournful language expreſſes the inhumanity and impiety of them, and the ruin they threatened the empire with; and ſays [w], Romanus *orbis ruit*, *the* Roman *empire is falling*. About the year 455, when *Rome* was taken by *Genſeric* the *Vandal*, the empire was divided into ten kingdoms; and in the year 476, *Auguſtulus*, the laſt of the *Roman* emperors, was obliged to quit his imperial dignity: the *Heruli*, a people of the ſame kind with the *Goths*, and originally *Scythians*, as they, under their king and leader *Odoacer* ſeized on *Italy*, took *Rome*, killed *Oreſtes* and his brother *Paul*, and depoſed *Auguſtulus*, the laſt of the *Roman* emperors, and baniſhed him into *Campania*; and ſo the weſtern empire ceaſed, *Odoacer* taking upon him the title of king of *Italy*, and tranſlated the ſeat of the empire from *Rome* to *Ravenna* [x]; and then might the ſun be truly ſaid to be ſmitten: but ſtill, tho' *Odoacer* the *Herulian* reigned in *Italy*, the *Roman* form of government was not altered, the conſulſhip and ſenate ſtill continued, as they did alſo under *Theodoric* the *Goth*, his ſucceſſor; but when *Italy* was recovered by *Narſes*, the emperor *Juſtinian*'s general, theſe, with other magiſtrates, ceaſed, and *Rome* became a dukedom, and was ſubject to an exarch of *Ravenna*; and then the moon and ſtars were ſmitten alſo. The phraſe of *ſmiting* the ſun, moon, and ſtars, is *Jewiſh*; for the *Jews* expreſs the eclipſes of the luminaries in this way, and ſay [y], that when the luminaries לוקין, *are ſmitten*, it is an ill omen; when החמה לוקה, *the ſun is ſmitten*, it is an ill ſign to the nations of the world; and when לבנה לוקה, *the moon is ſmitten*, it is a bad omen to the enemies of *Iſrael* [z]: and ſo the phraſe *the day ſhone not*, is alſo *Jewiſh*; it is ſaid [a] of ſome *Rabbins*, that they ſat and ſtudied in the law, עד דנהיר יומא, *until the day ſhone*; and when *the day ſhone*, they roſe up and went on their way.

Ver. 13. *And I beheld and heard an angel flying thro' the midſt of heaven*, &c.] The *Alexandrian* copy, the *Complutenſian* edition, the *Vulgate Latin*, *Syriac*, and *Ethiopic* verſions, inſtead of *an angel*, read *an eagle*; and to *fly* agrees with either of them, and the ſenſe is the ſame let it be read either way; and this angel may deſign either Chriſt, or a created angel, or a miniſter of the Goſpel, as in ch. xiv. 6. did the next trumpet introduce popery, as ſome have ſuppoſed, *Gregory* biſhop of *Rome* might be thought, as he is by ſome, to be the angel here intended, ſince he gave notice and warning of antichriſt being at hand: *ſaying with a loud voice*; that all might hear, and as having ſomething of importance to ſay, and delivering it with great fervour and affection: *wo, wo, wo*; three times, anſwerable to the three trumpets yet to be blown; and which are therefore called the wo trumpets: and theſe woes are denounced *to the inhabiters of the earth*; the *Roman* empire, particularly the eaſtern part of it, which the fifth and ſixth trumpets relate unto; and even the whole world, with which the ſeventh trumpet is concerned: *by reaſon of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels which are yet to ſound*; the deſign of this loud cry of the angel is to ſhow, that though the diſtreſſes and ruin which the barbarous nations had brought upon the weſtern empire, were very great; yet thoſe which would come upon the eaſtern empire by the *Saracens* and *Turks*, under the ſounding of the fifth and ſixth trumpets, would be much more grievous; and eſpecially the judgments which the ſeventh trumpet would bring upon the whole world, when all the nations of the earth will be judged. From the ſounding of the fourth trumpet, to the ſounding of the fifth, was a ſpace of a hundred and thirty-five years, that is, from the depoſition of *Auguſtulus*, A. D. 476. to the publick preaching of *Mahomet*, A. D. 612.

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[w] Epitaph. Nepotian, fol. 9. I. tom. 1. vid. etiam Epiſt. ad Gerontiam, fol. 32. E. & Epitaph. Fabiolæ, fol. 68. H.

[x] Vid. Caſſiodor. Chronicon in Zenon. 47. Hiſt. Eccl. Magdeburg. cent. 5. c. 16. p. 876. Petav. Rationar. Temp. par. 1. c. 18. p. 304.

[y] Jarchi in Gen. i. 14.

[z] T. Bab. Succa, fol. 29. 1. Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 63. 1.

[a] Zohar in Deut. fol. 113. 3.

CHAP. IX.

THIS chapter gives an account of the blowing of the fifth and ſixth trumpets, and of the effects following upon them. The fifth angel blows his trumpet, and a ſtar falls; the key of the bottomleſs pit is given to him, which being opened by it, out of it comes ſmoke to the darkening of the ſun and air, and out of the ſmoke locuſts, who have power like ſcorpions, ver. 1, 2, 3. whoſe power is reſtrained from uſing it to the hurt of the graſs, or any green thing or tree, only of thoſe who had not the ſeal of God in their foreheads; but are permitted, tho' not to kill men, yet to torment them five months, which is worſe than death unto them, ver. 4, 5, 6. The ſhapes of theſe locuſts, which are ſaid to be like horſes, are deſcribed by their heads, faces, hair, teeth, breaſt-plates, wings, and tails, and are ſaid to have a king over them, whoſe name is mentioned, ver. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11. The blowing of this trumpet brings on one of the woes mentioned in the preceding chapter, and the two other follow, ver. 12. The ſixth angel blows his trumpet, and a voice is heard from the horns of the altar, directed to the ſaid angel, ordering him to looſe four angels bound in the great river *Euphrates*, where they were prepared, for a determinate time, to ſlay the third part of men, and they were looſed accordingly, ver. 13, 14, 15. The number of the army, under theſe angels, is given, ver. 16. and the horſes and horſemen are deſcribed; the riders by their breaſt-plates of fire, jacinth, and brimſtone; their horſes heads as heads of lions, fire, ſmoke, and brimſtone iſſuing out of their mouths, by which the third part of men are killed, ver. 17, 18. The reaſon of this ſlaughter is, becauſe they had power both in their mouth and tails, which latter were like ſerpents, and had heads, with which they did miſchief, ver. 19. and yet ſuch who were not killed by theſe plagues, but eſcaped, did not repent of their idolatry, murders, ſorceries, fornication, and theft, ver. 20, 21.

Ver. 1. *And the fifth angel ſounded*, &c.] His trumpet: *and I ſaw a ſtar fall from heaven unto the earth*; ſome take this ſtar to be Jeſus Chriſt, the bright and morning ſtar; and underſtand by falling, no other than his deſcending from heaven to earth, in which ſenſe the word is uſed in *Gen.* xiv. 10. and that becauſe he is not only ſaid to have the keys of hell and death, ch. i. 18. but particularly the key of the bottomleſs pit, ch. xx. 1. but then there is a wide difference in the uſe of the key by the ſtar here, and the angel there, or between the opening of the pit, and letting out ſmoke and locuſts, and the ſhutting it up, and ſatan in it; the one well ſuits with Chriſt, the other not: nor is ſatan here deſigned, as others think, who once was a bright ſtar, and ſhone among the morning ſtars, but by ſin fell from heaven, his firſt eſtate; and the fall of this Lucifer, ſon of the morning, was as lightning from heaven, *Luke* x. 18. But then this was a matter over and paſt, and what was well known to *John*; nor did he need a viſion to repreſent this unto him: nor is *Arius* intended, who lived before any of the trumpets were blown; nor the emperor *Valens*, who fell from the heavenly doctrine of Chriſt's divinity, into the *Arian* hereſy, which he encouraged and defended; whereby Chriſt, the *ſun* of righteouſneſs, was obſcured, and the *air*, the church, enlightened by Chriſt, was darkened; in whoſe time the *locuſts*, the *Goths* and *Vandals*, infected with *Arianiſm*, greatly diſtreſſed the eaſtern chriſtians; but his reign was long before the fifth angel ſounded his trumpet, which was after the year 600: wherefore by this ſtar is meant antichriſt; but whether the weſtern or eaſtern antichriſt, the pope of *Rome*, or *Mahomet*, is a queſtion: ſome interpreters go one way, and ſome another: *Brightman* thinks both are intended, ſeeing they both are antichriſt, and roſe to the heighth of their power, much about the ſame time; and the characters and circumſtances in this viſion very well agree with them both: what is objected to *Mahomet* is, that he never was a doctor or teacher in the church, or had any dignity in it, which a ſtar in this book moſt commonly ſignifies, and therefore could not be ſaid to fall from it; but this may be obſerved, that the *Arabians*, among whom he lived, had received the chriſtian religion before his time; that he himſelf was converſant with the ſcriptures, as appears by his wretched perverſion of them in his *Alkoran*; and certain it is, that his accomplices were ſuch as had profeſſed chriſtianity, as *Sergius*, a *Neſtorian* of *Conſtantinople*, and *John* of *Antioch*, an *Arian*, and he himſelf ſet up for a prophet: others think the pope of *Rome* is meant by the ſtar, ſeeing the biſhops of that city had ſhone out in great light and purity of doctrine and practice formerly, but now about this time moſt ſadly apoſtatized; they had been indeed gradually declining for ſome time, but now they may be ſaid openly to fall from heaven, when *Phocas*, who murdered his maſter, the emperor *Mauritius*, and took the imperial crown to himſelf, gave to pope *Boniface* the third, the title and power of univerſal biſhop, about the year 606, which he and his ſucceſſors exerciſed in a moſt haughty and tyrannical manner: *and to him was given the key of the bottomleſs pit*; which ſhews, that this could not be a ſtar in a literal ſenſe, but muſt deſign ſome man, or body of men, and agrees well with the popes of *Rome*: by *the bottomleſs pit* is meant hell, out of which the beaſt aroſe, and into which ſatan will be caſt, ch. xi. 7. and xvii. 8. and xx. 3. and by *the key* is deſigned the power of it, of opening and ſhutting it, of ſaving perſons from it, or of caſting them into it; and which the popes of *Rome* take to themſelves, even all power in heaven, earth and hell, ſignified by their triple crown; and which they arrogate to ſuch a degree, as to ſay, that if the pope ſhould ſend many thouſands into hell, no one ought to ſay, what doſt thou? This is a different key from what were given to *Peter*; he had the keys of the kingdom of heaven, his pretended ſucceſſors have the key of the bottomleſs pit; his were keys of knowledge, theirs of ignorance, and of the depths of ſatan, let out of this bottomleſs pit, of which the antichriſtian religion, both *Popiſh* and *Mahometan*, conſiſt; his were given by Chriſt, theirs by *Phocas* a murderer; or they had their power from the dragon, ch. xiii. 2, 4. from ſatan himſelf, according to whoſe working and influence they come forth, tho' by divine permiſſion.

Ver. 2. *And he opened the bottomleſs pit*, &c.] With the key that was given him; he made uſe of his univerſal power over all biſhops and churches, enacted laws, iſſued out decrees, made articles of faith, and impoſed them on mens conſciences, and obliged all to ſubmit to his helliſh principles and practices; and this, as it may be applied to *Mahomet*,

met, the eaſtern antichriſt, may regard the publiſhing of his *Alkoran*, and obliging all his followers to receive it as the infallible word of God: *and there aroſe a ſmoke out of the pit, as the ſmoke of a great furnace*; the *Complutenſian* edition reads, *of a burning furnace*; and ſo the *Syriac* and *Arabic* verſions; which may deſign falſe doctrine, and ſuperſtitious worſhip, which ſprung from the decrees of popes and councils, and the *Alkoran* of *Mahomet*: and ſmoke being a dark, thin vapour, and very troubleſome to the eyes, and noſe, and of a periſhing nature, which ſoon vaniſhes away, theſe are fitly expreſſed by it; for they are the hidden things of darkneſs, and the authors and abetters of them are ſuch who darken counſel by words without knowledge; they are empty things, have no ſolidity and ſubſtance in them, are comparable to wood, hay, ſtubble, ſmoke, and wind; and are very troubleſome, and offenſive to all enlightened perſons, and who have the ſmell and ſavour of divine things; and will all periſh with the uſing, being the doctrines and commandments of men, when the true Goſpel is an everlaſting one. Smoke ſometimes deſigns great afflictions, puniſhments, and judgments upon men, *Gen.* xv. 17. *Iſ.* xiv. 31. and here may repreſent thoſe judgments, both ſpiritual and temporal, which the antichriſtian doctrine and worſhip brought upon the world, and which have been manifeſt in all ages ſince. *And the ſun and the air were darkened by reaſon of the ſmoke of the pit*; Chriſt, the *ſun* of righteouſneſs, was greatly obſcured by the *Romiſh* antichriſt, by his falſe doctrine and worſhip, in his offices, merits, and grace, he taking upon him to be head of the church, the infallible interpreter of ſcripture, and to give out pardons and indulgences; and particularly by the doctrines of merit, of works of ſupererogation, and of juſtification by works, *&c.* as he alſo was by *Mahomet*, who repreſented him only as a mere man, and exalted himſelf above him as a prophet; and by both were *the air*, the church, which receives its light from Chriſt, darkened; or the ſcriptures, which are the breath of God, are given by inſpiration of him, theſe were moſt grievouſly beclouded, and moſt wretchedly perverted, both by the decrees of popes, and the *Alkoran* of *Mahomet*. And it is remarkable what *Abulpharagius* [b], an *Arabic* writer, reports, that in the ſeventeenth year of *Heraclius* the emperor, which was the year 627, and the fifth of the *Hegira*, in which year *Mahomet* began to plunder and make war; for in this year was his plundering excurſion into *Dumato'l Jundal*, and the battle of *Bani Lahyan*, that half of the body of the ſun was darkened; and the darkneſs remained from *Tiſrin* the firſt, to the month *Haziran*, ſo that very little of its light appeared; which might portend that darkneſs he was introducing by his wretched religion. And frequently the ſun and air have been darkened at noonday by the locuſts, as *Pliny* [c] relates; and of which we have had a late account from *Tranſylvania*; ſee *Exod.* viii. 15.

Ver. 3. *And there came out of the ſmoke locuſts upon the earth*, &c.] Not literally, for theſe locuſts might not meddle with the graſs, nor any green thing, or tree, as locuſts do, only men, ver. 4. and had a king over them, ver. 11. which locuſts have not, *Prov.* xxx. 27. tho' the alluſion is to ſuch, which ſpawn and breed in pits, and may be properly ſaid to come out of them; hence in the *Hebrew* tongue they are called גבי, from גבא, a *pit*, or *ditch*: nor are devils intended, tho' they may be compared to locuſts for their original, hell, or the bottomleſs pit; and for their numbers, we read of a legion of them in one man; and for their hurtful and miſchievous nature: nor are the *Goths* and *Vandals* deſigned; theſe, tho' they harraſſed ſome parts of the eaſtern empire, yet chiefly the weſtern; beſides, they appeared under the former trumpets: but theſe are to be underſtood of the weſtern and eaſtern locuſts, eſpecially the latter. The weſtern locuſts are the clergy of the church of *Rome*, cardinals, biſhops, prieſts, monks and friars, of every order; theſe were not inſtituted by Chriſt, but roſe out of the bottomleſs pit, from the antichriſtian ſmoke of councils, decrees, and traditions; and are fitly compared to locuſts, for their number, which have been almoſt as the ſand of the ſea, innumerable, and have ſpread themſelves all over the nations of the earth, that have gone by the name of *Chriſtendom*; and for their devouring nature, living in plenty and idleneſs, upon the fat of the land, in the beſt commons, glutting themſelves with the ſpoils of others, devouring widows houſes, and impoveriſhing countries and kingdoms whereever they come. The eaſtern locuſts are the *Saracens*, and who are chiefly deſigned; and who were to harraſs and diſtreſs the eaſtern empire, and prepare for its ruin, which is brought on under the next trumpet, by the *Turks*. Theſe are fitly ſignified by locuſts, becauſe the locuſts generally come out of the eaſtern parts: it was an Eaſt wind which brought the plague of locuſts into *Egypt*, *Exod.* x. 13. and the children of the Eaſt, the *Arabians*, are compared to graſhoppers or locuſts, in *Judg.* vii. 12. and one of the names of a locuſt is, ארבה, *Arbeh*, not much unlike, in ſound, to an *Arab*. To which may be added, that it is a tradition of the *Arabians*, that there fell locuſts into the hands of *Mahomet*, on whoſe backs and wings were written theſe words; "we are the army of the moſt high God; we are "the ninety and nine eggs, and if the hundred "ſhould be made perfect, we ſhould conſume the "whole world, and whatever is in it." And it was a law eſtabliſhed by *Mahomet*, ye ſhall not kill the locuſts, for they are the army of the moſt high God; and the *Mahometans* fancy, that the locuſts were made of the ſame clay as *Adam* was: and beſides the tradition before mentioned, they ſay, that as *Mahomet* ſat at table, a locuſt fell, with theſe words on its back and wings; "I am God, neither is there any Lord of the locuſts beſides me, "who feed them; and when I pleaſe I ſend them "to be food to the people, and when I pleaſe I "ſend them to be a ſcourge unto them;" hence his *Saracens* may well go by this name. Now theſe *Saracens* ſprung up in the times of *antichriſtian* darkneſs, both *Papal* and *Mahometan*, and may be ſaid to come out of the ſmoke of the bottomleſs pit; and the religion of *Mahomet*, which they embraced, was no other; and like locuſts they were innumerable, they went in troops and bands, as locuſts do, *Prov.* xxx. 27. pillaging and ravaging all they could; and their ſudden and frequent incurſions, the deſolations and ravages which they made in the eaſtern empire, are very aptly expreſſed by the running to and fro of locuſts; ſee *Iſ.* xxxiii. 4. *Joel* ii. 9. *And unto them was given power, as the ſcorpions of the earth have power*; that is, to torment men, by ſtriking them with their ſtings in their tails, ver. 5, 10. Theſe are called *ſcorpions of the earth*, to diſtinguiſh them from ſea ſcorpions, which are a kind of fiſh: ſo *Ariſtotle*[d] and [e] *Pliny* ſpeak of terreſtrial ſcorpions, which are the moſt hurtful; theſe are of the ſerpentine kind, have an innocent and harmleſs look, but are ſoon angry; have ſtings in their tails, which they are always ſtriking with, that they may miſs no opportunity of doing miſchief, and with which they ſtrike in an an oblique way[f]; and which very fitly deſcribes the *Saracens*, the race of the *Iſhmaelites*, a generation of vipers, a ſubtle and treacherous ſort of people, very furious and wrathful, and who lived by continual robbing and plundering of others, at an unawares: and this may be applied to the weſtern locuſts, the monks and friars, who are the ſeed of the ſerpent; and who by good words, and fair ſpeeches, deceive the hearts of the ſimple, have a form of godlineſs, and ſpeak lyes in hypocriſy, and lie in wait to deceive; and being provoked, are full of wrath and anger, and ſtrike very hard with their anathemas and excommunications, and other ſorts of puniſhment, which they have power to inflict.

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[b] Hiſt. Dynaſt. p. 99, 102.

[c] Nat. Hiſt. l. 11. c. 29.

Ver. 4. *And it was commanded them*, &c.] The locuſts, by Chriſt, who has a ſovereign power over all men, and lays them under the reſtraints of his providence: *that they ſhould not hurt the graſs of the earth*; true chriſtians, private believers, it may be thoſe of the lower claſs; who for their numbers, and for their flouriſhing eſtate, under the dews of heavenly grace, and the diſtillations of the doctrine of grace, and the clear ſhining of the ſun of righteouſneſs upon them, and for their weakneſs may be compared to graſs; and yet as theſe being a company reſerved by Chriſt for himſelf, who will not break nor bruiſe them, ſo neither will he ſuffer others to hurt them, and reſents every offence done to theſe little ones: *neither any green thing*; who have the truth of grace in them, are ſpiritually alive, and in proſperous circumſtances, in a fruitful condition, being filled with the fruits of righteouſneſs from Chriſt, the green firr-tree, and whoſe leaves of profeſſion continue green; and are themſelves, as *David* ſays of himſelf, like a green olive-tree in the houſe of God, *Pſ.* lii. 8. *Neither any tree*; any trees of righteouſneſs, good and righteous men, who are often compared to trees planted by rivers of water, *Pſ.* i. 3. *Jer.* xvii. 7. it may be the miniſters of the Goſpel, men of great grace and gifts, the tall cedars in *Lebanon* may be intended; and ſo by theſe various expreſſions, chriſtians of every ſize, from the loweſt to the higheſt claſs, may be ſignified. Green things, and leaves of trees, are what the locuſts generally deſtroy, as appears from the plague of them in *Egypt*, *Exod.* x. 5, 12, 15. and as they did in *Syria* in the year 1586, as *Thuanus* reports[g]. Now as graſs, green things, and trees, are what locuſts moſt deſire to feed upon and hurt, ſo real believers, truly godly perſons, are thoſe which both the eaſtern and weſtern locuſts, the *Mahometans* and *Papiſts*, have been very deſirous of rooting out and deſtroying; but Chriſt takes care of theſe; theſe are as the apple of his eye, his jewels, his ſheep, his ſealed ones; none ſhall hurt them, they ſhall never periſh; he knows them that are his, and he'll preſerve them amidſt fire and ſmoke, amidſt all the corruptions and calamities in the world: *but only thoſe men which have not the ſeal of God in their foreheads*; ſee ch. vii. 2, 3. the antichriſtian party, thoſe of the *Romiſh* apoſtacy, the papiſts; and theſe were they that ſuffered moſt by the *Saracens*, who abhorred image-worſhip, and fell foul on the idolaters of this kind: and, on the other hand, the weſtern locuſts, the clergy of the church of *Rome*, had only influence over the reprobate part of mankind, and only wrought with all deceiveableneſs of unrighteouſneſs in them that periſh, who were given up to believe a lye, that they might be damned, but not upon any of the choſen ones, 2 *Theſſ.* ii. 11, 12, 13.

Ver. 5. *And to them it was given that they ſhould not kill them*, &c.] As the power of the locuſts was limited, with reſpect to the perſons they ſhould hurt, ſo with regard alſo to the miſchief they ſhould do; for even thoſe whom they were ſuffered to annoy, they might not kill, that is, utterly root out and deſtroy, ſo as that they were no more: and thus, tho' the *Saracens* killed great numbers in the eaſtern empire, by their frequent incurſions and ravages, and made large conqueſts, yet they could never deſtroy the empire itſelf, or bring it in ſubjection to them; nor did they ever take *Conſtantinople*, the metropolis and ſeat of the empire, tho' they often beſieged it. And as for the weſtern locuſts, the monks, friars, *&c.* tho' they kill the ſouls, yet not the bodies of men, that are under their power and influence: *but that they ſhould be tormented five months*; that is, not that the locuſts ſhould be tormented, but men by the locuſts; and ſo the eaſtern empire was grievouſly teized and tormented by the *Saracens*, and many parts of it were conquered, plundered, and pillaged by them, tho' it was not killed, and put an end to. In the year 628, *Mahomet*, with his *Saracens*, having obtained a place in *Arabia Felex* to dwell in, died in the year 631; from which time his ſucceſſors, the *Saracens*, by little and little, ſubdued *Paleſtine*, *Syria*, and *Egypt*; and in the year 640, took *Perſis*, putting king *Hormiſda* to flight; they laid ſiege to *Conſtantinople* ſeven years, but without ſucceſs; in the year 698, *Carthage* was taken by them; and in following times many countries on the continent, and many of the iſlands were grievouſly infeſted and diſtreſſed by them; tho' the empire itſelf did not fall into their hands; it was tormented by them, but not deſtroyed. And the weſtern locuſts have moſt dreadfully tormented men by their exorbitant dues demanded of them; and by obliging them to confeſſions, and to attend maſs; by enjoining them whippings, faſtings, pilgrimages, and pennances, and with the terrors of purgatory, and the like. The time that the locuſts ſhould torment men, which is *five months*, ſeems not to deſign any determinate time; but only that ſeeing five months is the time that locuſts live, and are in their ſtrength and power, even the five hotteſt months in the year, from *April* to *September*[h], this ſeems to denote, that as long as the locuſts live, the *Saracens* in the eaſt, and the monks and friars in the weſt, ſo long men ſhould be tormented by them; for it is certain that theſe have had power to torment men longer time than barely five months; yea, even tho' theſe ſhould be underſtood, according to the prophetic ſtile uſed in this book, of five months of years, or an hundred and fifty years; and though this ſhould be doubled, ſeeing they are repeated, ver. 10. and ſo make up in all three hundred years; for both the *Saracens*, and the *Romiſh* clergy, have diſtreſſed men, either of them, longer time than this: indeed, the flouriſhing condition of the *Saracens* was but about three hundred years, or two five months; but their empire or dominion laſted longer, even from the year 622, which was the year of the *Hegira*, or flight of *Mahomet*, to the year 1057 [i], when the *Turkiſh* empire ſucceeded it; tho' it is pretty remarkable, that from the year 612, in which *Mahomet* began to preach publickly, and ſo let out the ſmoke with the locuſts, to the year 762, in which the city *Bagdad* was built; when and where the *Saracens* ſettled, and made no more excurſions of any conſequence, were juſt an hundred and fifty years, or five months of years, as Mr. *Daubuz* obſerves; and I will not ſay that this is not intended by this prophecy. *Noah*'s flood prevailed over the earth one hundred and fifty days, or five months, *Gen.* vii. 24. *And their torment was as the torment of a ſcorpion when he ſtriketh a man*; which gives great pain, is very diſtreſſing, and their ſtings are poiſonous and mortal: it ſignifies how troubleſome and afflictive thoſe locuſts were; to be among them was to live among ſcorpions, as in *Ezek.* ii. 6. As theſe locuſts are like ſcorpions, ſo ſcorpions have been ſeen ſometimes with wings like locuſts; ſuch an one *Pauſanias* [k] relates, was brought into *Ionia* by a *Phrygian*.

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[d] Hiſt. Animal. l. 5. c. 26. p. 162. Ed. Francofurt.

[e] Hiſt. Nat. l. 51. c. 25.

[f] Ib.

[g] Hiſt. ſui Temporis, par. 4. l. 84.

[h] Plin. Nat. Hiſt. l. 11. c. 29.

Ver. 6. *And in thoſe days men ſhall ſeek death*, &c.] Or deſire to die, as *Job* did: *and ſhall not find it*; or ſhall not die: *and ſhall deſire to die, and death ſhall flee from them*; death will be preferred to a miſerable life; it will be choſen rather than life, *Jer.* viii. 3. The ravages of the *Saracens*, their incurſions, and the invaſions by them, ſtruck ſuch terror into the inhabitants of divers parts of the empire, that they made death more eligible to them than life.

Ver. 7. *And the ſhapes of the locuſts* were *like unto horſes*, &c.] The heads of locuſts, eſpecially of ſome of them, are very much like the heads of horſes: and here they are compared to horſes *prepared unto battle*; as they are in *Joel* ii. 4. The horſe is a warlike creature, ſwift, ſtrong, and couragious, *Job* xxxix. 21—25. Locuſts ſometimes have appeared in the form of armies, and have marched in great order with their leaders before them, and have pitched their camps very regularly; ſee *Joel* ii. 7. of which we have lately had an account from *Tranſylvania* in our publick papers. This part of their deſcription may denote the wars of the *Saracens*, and the rapidity, force, and power with which they over-ran great part of the empire; and as it may be applied to the weſtern locuſts, the diſputes, contentions, and quarrels raiſed by the *Romiſh* clergy. *And on their heads* were, *as it were, crowns like gold*; and in this ſhape ſome locuſts have appeared, to which the alluſion ſeems to be in *Nah.* iii. 17. *thy crowned men are as the locuſts*. In the year 1542, 'tis ſaid [l], that locuſts came out of *Turkiſh Sarmatia*, into *Auſtria*, *Sileſia*, and other places, which had on their heads *little crowns*; ſee *Ezek.* xxiii. 42. And the *Arabians*, as *Pliny* obſerves, go *mitrati* [m], with mitres, turbants like crowns, on their heads. This may deſign the ſeveral victories and conqueſts which the *Saracens* obtained in *Arabia*, *Perſia*, *Syria*, *Egypt*, *Africa*, *Spain*, and many other places; and ſuppoſing this to have any reference to the weſtern locuſts, it may reſpect the triple crown of the head of them, the caps of the cardinals, the mitres of the biſhops, and the ſhaven pates of the prieſts, in form of crowns. *And their faces* were *as the faces of men*; which may be expreſſive of the affable carriage of *Mahomet*, and his followers, eſpecially to the chriſtians, and of his great pretenſions to holineſs and religion, and of the plauſible and inſinuating ways, and artful methods, uſed by him, to gain upon men; and being applied to the clergy of the church of *Rome*, may denote their ſhew of humanity, and their pretended great concern for the welfare of the ſouls of men, their flatteries, good words, and fair ſpeeches, with which they deceive the ſimple and unwary.

Ver. 8. *And they had hair, as the hair of women*, &c.] Some locuſts have ſmooth, others hairy heads [n]: this fitly points at the *Arabians* or *Saracens*, who, as *Pliny* ſays [o], uſed to wear long hair without cutting it, and attired as women, and have their names alſo from women: they were called *Hagarenes*, from *Hagar*, *Abraham*'s handmaid, by whom he had *Iſhmael*, the father of theſe people; afterwards they took the name of *Saracens*, from *Sarah*, the wife of *Abraham*, whoſe poſterity they would be thought to be; tho' they may have the latter name, either from סרק, to *rob* and *ſteal* with the *Arabians*, or from the ſame word, as it ſignifies to *comb*, from the combing and plaiting of their hair. This may alſo point at the effeminacy of the weſtern locuſts, the monks and friars, who dreſs more like women than men; and many of them claim the virgin *Mary* for their patroneſs; and may in general deſign the votaries of the church of *Rome*, who are under the vow of a monaſtic life, as thoſe among the *Jews*, under a *Nazarite*'s vow, wore long hair. *And their teeth were as* the teeth *of lions*; ſo in *Joel* i. 6. which may denote the ravages and devaſtations of the *Saracens* in the empire, robbing, pillaging, and deſtroying all they met with; and is applicable enough to the devouring jaws of the *Romiſh* clergy, their plundering the eſtates of men, their cruelties and barbarities exerciſed by their inquiſition, *&c.* *Pliny* ſays [p], that locuſts will knaw the doors of houſes.

Ver. 9. *And they had breaſt-plates, as it were breaſt-plates of iron*, &c.] Alluding to the hard ſkin of the locuſts, with which nature has fenced it [q]; ſee *Joel* ii. 8. and denotes the armour with which the *Saracens* were accoutred: and if to be underſtood of the weſtern locuſts, the hardneſs of their hearts, their ſeared conſciences, or their protection by the princes of the earth, the many privileges they are poſſeſſed of, the laws made in their favour, and for their ſecurity; their breaſt-plates were not breaſt-plates of righteouſneſs, faith, and love, nor in defence of truth, but againſt it. And ſome think the iron colour may denote the colour of their habit, their black garments: *and the ſound of their wings* was *as the ſound of chariots of many horſes running to battle*; ſee *Joel* ii. 5. The ſound of locuſts, when they fly or march in large companies, is very great. *Pliny* ſays [r], they make ſuch a noiſe with their wings, when they fly, that they have been thought to have been other winged creatures; hence a locuſt, in *Hebrew*, is ſometimes called, צלצל, the ſame name that is given to the high-ſounding cymbal. The ſound of them is ſaid to have been heard ſix miles [s]. *Ariſtotle* [t] aſcribes it to the rubbing of their legs or thighs one againſt another; and ſo the *Ethiopic* verſion here renders it, *the ſound of their feet*: this may be expreſſive of the ſwift and rapid incurſions of the *Saracens*, and of the dreadful alarms to the nations which their invaſions made; and may be applied to the noiſy declamations, anathema's, excommunications, and interdicts of the *Romiſh* clergy.

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[i] Petav. Rationar. par. 1. l. 7. c. 13. & l. 8. c. 13.

[k] Bœotica, ſive l. 9. p. 573. Vid. Plin. Nat. Hiſt. l. 11. c. 25. & Ælian. Hiſt. Animal. l. 6. c. 20. & l. 16. c. 41, 42.

[l] Vid. Frentz. Hiſt. Animal. ſacr. p. 5. c. 4. p. 799.

[m] Nat. Hiſt. l. 6. c. 28.

[n] Gloſſ. in T. Bab. Cholin. fol. 65. 1.

[o] Hiſt. Nat. l. 6. c. 28.

[p] L. 11. c. 29.

[q] Claudian. Epigram. 13.

[r] Plin. l. 11. c. 29, 51.

[s] Altiſſiodorenſis in Joel ii. 5.

[t] Hiſt. Animal. l. 4. c. 9. Vid. Plin. l. 11. c. 51.

Ver. 10. *And they had tails like unto ſcorpions,* &c.] Locuſts are ſaid to have the tail of a ſerpent, and of the vipers of the earth [u]; ſee the notes on ver. 3, 5. *And there were ſtings in their tails*; either in the baſer ſort of them, the *Saracens* and *Papiſts*; or in their doctrines, the prophet being the tail, *Iſ.* ix. 15. with which both *Mahomet*, who ſet up himſelf for a prophet, and the *Romiſh* clergy, who ſet up their decrees and unwritten traditions above the word of God, have poiſoned and deſtroyed multitudes of ſouls: *and their power* was *to hurt men five months*; ſee the note on ver. 5.

Ver. 11. *And they had a king over them,* &c.] Which natural locuſts have not, *Prov.* xxx. 27. by whom is meant the falſe prophet *Mahomet*, who was at the head of the *Saracens*, and led them on to commit the outrages they did; and is believed in by the *Turks* to this day, as the great prophet of God, and by them preferred to all prophets, not only to *Moſes*, but to Jeſus Chriſt; he is the king of the eaſtern locuſts, as the pope of *Rome* is the king of the weſtern ones; for the *Romiſh* antichriſt reigns, or at leaſt has reigned, over the kings of the earth, ch. xvii. 17, 18. which is *the angel of the bottomleſs pit*; to whom the key of it was given, ver. 1. *whoſe name in the Hebrew tongue* is *Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath* his *name Apollyon*; both which ſignify a *deſtroyer*; and are very applicable both to *Mahomet*, who by his impoſture has been the cauſe of the deſtruction of multitudes of ſouls, as well as by his wars, and thoſe of the *Saracens* and *Turks*, of the lives of millions, and of the ruin of many kingdoms, countries, cities and towns. *Abulpharagius* [w], an *Arabic* writer, relates, that in the times of the *Chalif Al-walid*, there was one *Hejajus*, who had cauſed to be ſlain, of the chief and illuſtrious men, an hundred and twenty thouſand, beſides others of the common people, and that fell in war; moreover, that there died in his priſon fifty thouſand men, and thirty thouſand women: and the ſame writer reports [x], that the famous *Abu Moſlem* put to death ſix hundred thouſand men, who were known, beſides thoſe that were unknown, and whom he ſlew in wars and battles: both theſe inſtances are taken notice of by Mr. *Daubuz*, who juſtly obſerves, that ſurely nothing can come near this *Abaddon*, but the beaſt, the ſon of perdition, 2 *Theſſ.* ii. 3. And to him, the pope of *Rome*, may the name be truly applied, who has led thouſands into perdition, and will go into it himſelf; and both he, and the falſe prophet, with the devil, will be caſt into the lake which burns with fire and brimſtone, and will be tormented for ever and ever, 2 *Theſſ.* ii. 4. *Rev.* xvii. 8, 11. and xx. 10. *Abaddon*, with the *Jews*, is one of the habitations or apartments of hell [y], becauſe it deſtroys all; *Apollyon* is the ſame with *Apollo*, the God of the heathens, who has his name from deſtroying [z].

Ver. 12. *One wo is paſt*, &c.] One of the three wo-trumpets, the firſt of them; that is, in the viſion which *John* had of it, not the thing itſelf deſigned by it: and *behold there come two woes more hereafter*; under the blowing of the ſixth and ſeventh trumpets.

Ver. 13. *And the ſixth angel ſounded*, &c.] His trumpet: *and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar, which is before God*; the alluſion is not to the altar of burnt-offering, which was covered with braſs, but to the altar of incenſe covered with gold; and hence here, and elſewhere, it is called *the golden altar*, and was a figure of the interceſſion of Chriſt; for on this altar incenſe was offered, which was typical of the prayers of the ſaints offered by Chriſt, thro' his mediation: the matter of this altar was ſhittim-wood, a wood that is incorruptible, and of long duration, denoting the perpetuity of Chriſt's interceſſion; and its being covered with gold, expreſſes the glory and excellency of it; its form was four-ſquare, as is the city of the new *Jeruſalem*, and ſhews that Chriſt's interceſſion avails for all his people in the four parts of the world: and on it were *four horns*, which ſome think repreſent the four evangeliſts, or the Goſpel ſent into the four parts of the world, and which is the power of God unto ſalvation; and for the contempt of which, in the eaſtern empire, the judgments ſignified under this trumpet came upon it; tho' rather theſe may point at the large extent and fullneſs of Chriſt's interceſſion, for all his people, in the four corners of the earth, as well as his power to protect and defend them, and to ſcatter and deſtroy his and their enemies. This altar is ſaid to be *before God*, in a viſionary way, as the altar of incenſe was before the vail, and the mercy-ſeat, and by the ark of the teſtimony, *Exod.* xxx. 1, 2, 3, 6. ſuggeſting, that Chriſt continually appears in the preſence of God for all the ſaints. Now from hence was a *voice heard* by *John*, and which ſeems to be the voice of Chriſt, the advocate and interceſſor. In the *Greek* text it is, *one voice*; not the voice of many angels round about the throne, nor of the ſouls under the altar, but of the one and only mediator between God and man, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt; and this was a voice, not ſupplicating, but commanding, being addreſſed to one of his miniſtring ſpirits.

Ver. 14. *Saying to the ſixth angel which had the trumpet*, &c.] The ſixth trumpet which was given him, and he had prepared himſelf to ſound, and had ſounded: *looſe the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates*; not the four angels in ch. vii. 1. they ſtood upon the four corners of the earth; theſe were in, or at the river *Euphrates*; they held the four winds that they ſhould not blow, or reſtrained the ſavage nations that they ſhould not hurt; theſe are bound themſelves, that they might not do miſchief: nor are angels by nature at all intended; not evil angels, tho' they are bound in chains of darkneſs, and are reſerved to judgment, they are admitted indeed to rove about in the air and earth, but are under the reſtraints of the power and providence of God; nor good angels, who are at the divine beck, and go in and out, and are detained and ſent forth according to the pleaſure of God, and are ſometimes employed in killing great numbers of men; ſee 2 *Sam.* xxiv. 15, 16. 2 *Kings* xix. 35. but men are here meant, as appears from ver. 16, 17. and particularly the *Turks*, as moſt interpreters agree; who dwelt on the other ſide the river *Euphrates*, and were let looſe, or ſuffered to paſs over that river into the eaſtern empire, to ruin and deſtroy it, as they did: theſe are called *angels*, becauſe of their might and force, their power and ſtrength, with which they bore all before them; and for their great ſwiftneſs and rapidity in the victories and conqueſts which the *Ottoman* family obtained;

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[u] Scriptores Arab.

[w] Hiſt. Dynaſt. p. 129. Dyn. 9.

[x] Ib. p. 140.

[y] T. Bab. Erubin, fol. 19. 1. Zohar in Gen. fol. 47. 2. & in Num. fol. 74. 2. Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 47. 3. & 93. 4. Raziel, fol. 14. 2. & 35. 2.

[z] Phurnutus de Natura Deorum, p. 92. Macrob. Saturnal. l. 1, c. 17.

tained; who, from very ſmall beginnings, raiſed themſelves, in a very little time, to a large monarchy, and founded the *Turkiſh* empire, which, from them, is to this day called the *Ottoman* empire. *Ottoman* the firſt ſubdued great part of *Bithynia*, and fixed the ſeat of his kingdom at *Pruſa*; or rather his ſon *Urchanes*, who conquered *Myſia*, *Lycaonia*, *Phrygia*, *Caria*, and the reſt, to the *Helleſpont*, and the *Euxine* ſea. *Amurath* his ſon took *Callipolis*, *Hadrianople*, and the circumjacent provinces. *Bajazet* added to the empire *Theſſalia*, *Macedonia*, *Phocis*, *Attica*, *Myſia*, and *Bulgaria*; and *Mahomet* the ſecond took *Conſtantinople* itſelf, and thereby put an end to the eaſtern empire; and all this was done in a very few years: it is ſaid of this laſt, that he conquered two empires, and twelve kingdoms, and above two hundred cities [a]. And theſe *Ottoman Turks* may be called angels, or meſſengers, becauſe they were the meſſengers and executioners of God's wrath upon the eaſtern empire: they are ſignified by *four* angels, either, as ſome think, becauſe of the four names of *Saracens*, *Turks*, *Tartars*, and *Arabians*, tho' all *Mahometans*, under which they went, before they were united under one emperor *Ottoman*; or rather becauſe of the four principalities, or governments, into which they were divided, while they were upon the banks of, or near to the river *Euphrates*; the ſeat of one being at *Iconium*, another at *Bagdad*, a third at *Aleppo*, and a fourth at *Damaſcus*; and chiefly becauſe when they paſſed the river *Euphrates*, they had four princes at the head of them, *Soliman Shak*, and his three ſons. *Soliman* himſelf, as he paſſed, not knowing the fords of the river, was drowned in it; at which his ſons being ſo affrighted, two of them, *Sankur Zengi*, and *Cun Tugdi*, returned to *Perſia*, but the third, *Ortogrules*, with his three ſons (which made *four* again) *Condoz*, *Sarubani*, and *Othman*, or *Ottoman*, continued, to whom *Aladdin*, *Sultan* of *Iconium*, gave them ſome land among the mountains of *Armenia* [b]; and from hence, by degrees, as before obſerved, a large empire was raiſed. Now theſe are ſaid to be *bound in the great river Euphrates*; which river is to be literally underſtood, and is the ſame with that which is ſo called in *Gen.* ii. 14. and xv. 18. and ran through *Meſopotamia* and *Chaldea*, and was the boundary of the *Roman* empire; ſo it was fixed by *Hadrian* [c]; and beyond which the *Turks*, before this time, did rarely go, and if they did, retired again: for till this time, as the hiſtorian ſays [d], the *Turks* had *Aſia*, εντος τȣ Ευφρατȣ, *within Euphrates*, and the *Arabians Cœloſyria* and *Phœnicia*. Now here theſe were bound; they were not ſuffered to paſs the river, or to make any inroads of any conſequence further into the *Roman* empire; they were reſtrained, by the decree of God, from proceeding any further till this time; which, as he fixes a decreed place for the ſea, that its waves ſhould come thus far, and no further, ſo he reſtrains princes from their enterprizes, and ſettles the bounds of empires, as long as he pleaſes; and they were kept back by the power of God, from pouring in upon the empire, and pouring forth their fury upon it, who cauſes the wrath of men to praiſe him, and reſtrains the remainder of it; and they were alſo prevented from coming any further, as yet, thro' the inteſtine diviſions among themſelves, and by the victories of the chriſtians in *Paleſtine*.

Ver. 15. *And the four angels were looſed*, &c.] The time being come, fixed by the decrees of God, for making uſe of the *Turks* for the deſtruction of the eaſtern empire, the reſtraints of divine providence were taken off from them, and they were ſuffered to paſs the river *Euphrates*; they were let looſe like ſo many furies, and in a little time over-ran and deſtroyed the whole empire, and ſettled their own, now called the *Turkiſh* or *Ottoman* empire; and which was done about the year 1301. *Which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to ſlay the third part of men*; which may in general denote their readineſs, vigilance, and quick diſpatch: they lay for a good while hovering over the banks of the river *Euphrates*, as if they were waiting for an order, or a commiſſion to go over it: they were ready not only at a year's, a month's, a day's, but at an hour's warning, and all of them together; and as ſoon as ever they had the divine permiſſion, they loſt no time; they improved every opportunity, every year, every month, every day, every hour, to ſettle and enlarge their dominions to the ruin of others; and in a very ſhort time did they accompliſh what they deſired: tho' others think this refers to a certain time fixed by God, in which they ſhould be employed in killing men; and the ſenſe is, that theſe people were prepared in the purpoſes and decrees of God, or were appointed for ſuch a length of time here ſignified, by ſeveral dates, in which they ſhould deſtroy a large multitude of men, by way of puniſhment for their idolatries, murders, ſorceries, fornication, and thefts, ver. 20, 21. An hour, which is the twenty-fourth of a day or year, in the prophetic ſtile, is fifteen days, and a day is a year, and a month is thirty years, and a year is three hundred ſixty-five years and a quarter, or ninety-one days; in all, three hundred and ninety-ſix years, and a hundred and ſix days; which is the preciſe time between A. D. 1057, when the *Turkiſh* empire begun, the empire of the *Saracens* being entirely demoliſhed by *Togrul Beg*, or *Tangrolipix*, and A. D. 1453, in which year *Conſtantinople* was taken by the *Turks*, and an end put to the eaſtern *Roman* empire, ſignified by the third part of men; or elſe this ſpace of time may be reckoned from the date of *Ottoman*'s reign, *May* 19, 1301, which, to *Sept.* 1, 1697, is juſt this term of time, when prince *Eugene* obtained a remarkable victory over the *Turks*, the effect of which was the peace at *Carlowitz* the next year, ſince which time the *Turks* have done but little in *Europe*: and by this it ſhould ſeem that their time of killing men here, is over, and that their own deſtruction is haſtening on. Mr. *Daubuz* rejects theſe computations, ſince a prophetic year conſiſts of 360 days or years, and not 365, as thoſe ſuppoſe; and thinks there is no myſtery in theſe dates, and only ſignify the angels unanimous execution of their commiſſion at once.

Ver. 16. *And the number of the army of the horſemen*, &c.] This ſhows, that the four angels before mentioned were men, and deſign generals of armies, or armies of men, even of horſemen; and manifeſtly point at the *Turks*, who were not only originally *Perſians*, and had their name, as ſome ſay [e], from *Turca* in *Perſia*, and פרש, from whence the *Perſians* have their name, ſignifies an horſeman; but the armies of the *Turks* chiefly conſiſted of horſe, and what for ſhow and for uſe, they had generally double the number of horſes and mules as of men [f]; and they are very good horſemen, and very dextrous at leaping on and off [g]; and the horſe's tail is ſtill carried before the general, and principal officers, as an enſign expreſſive of their military exploits, and ſhewing where their main ſtrength lies. And the number of this mighty army, it is ſaid, were *two hundred thouſand thouſand*; or *two myriads of myriads*; two hundred millions, or twenty thouſand brigades of ten thouſand each; that is, a very large and prodigious number, almoſt infinite and incredible, like the army of *Gog* and *Magog*, as the ſand of the ſea, ch. xx. 8. The *Turks* uſed to bring, and ſtill do bring vaſt armies into the field: in the year 1396, *Bajazet*, with three hundred thouſand men, fell upon ſixty thouſand chriſtians, killed twenty thouſand of them, and loſt ſixty thouſand of his own: againſt him afterward, in the year 1397, came *Tamerlane* the *Tartar*, with four hundred thouſand horſe, and ſix hundred thouſand foot, and having killed two hundred thouſand *Turks*, took *Bajazet* priſoner, and carried him about in a cage in golden chains. In the year 1438, *Amurath* entered into *Pannonia*, with three hundred thouſand horſemen: and in the year 1453, *Mahomet* took *Conſtantinople* with the like number [h]; yea, it it is ſaid, that the army at the ſiege of that city conſiſted of forty myriads, or four hundred thouſand men [i]. It is reported, that the great *Turk* contemptuouſly ſent to the emperor of the *Romans* a camel, or a dromedary, loaden with wheat, with this vow by a meſſage, that he ſhould bring againſt him as many fighting men as there were grains of wheat therein [k]. And it is related [l], that when *Ladiſlaus*, king of *Hungary*, went out againſt *Amurath* with four and twenty thouſand horſe, *Dracula*, governour of *Walachia*, adviſed him not to attack the emperor of the *Turks* with ſo ſmall an army, ſince he went out every day a hunting with more men than ſuch a number: *and I heard the number of them*; expreſſed by ſome angel, and therefore *John* was certain of it, otherwiſe he could not have told them.

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[a] Petav. Ration. Temp. par. 1. l. 9. c. 7.

[b] Pocock. Supplem. Hiſt. Dynaſt. Abulpharaji, p. 41, 42.

[c] Rufi Feſt. Brev. p. 368. Eutrop. Hiſt. Roman. l. 8. p. 502.

[d] Nicephor. Gregor. Hiſt. Roman. l. 2. p. 29.

[e] Laonic. Chalcocondylas de reb. Turc. l. 1. p. 6.

[f] Ib. l. 7. p. 227, 255.

Ver. 17. *And thus I ſaw the horſes in the viſion, and them that ſat on them*, &c.] In ſuch numbers, and with horſemen on them, and in ſuch order, and in appearance, as follows: *having breaſt-plates of fire, and of jacinth and brimſtone*; which may be underſtood either literally of their external breaſt-plates, which being of poliſhed iron, according to the cuſtom of theſe people, looked at a diſtance like ſparkling fire, and ſeemed to be of the colour of hyacinth, or of a ſky colour, and appeared as flaming ſulphur; tho' ſome think, that their breaſt-plates were of different colours, ſome looked like fire, others like jacinth, and others like brimſtone; or it may denote that they would be accoutred in ſcarlet, blue, and yellow, which are the colours the *Turks* have commonly wore; or this may be underſtood of their internal breaſt-plates, and the diſpoſition of their minds, having in their breaſts nothing but wrath, fury, deſolation, and deſtruction; a fire devoured before them, and behind them a flame burned: *and the heads of the horſes were as the heads of lions*; gaping and roaring for their prey, or all bloody with it, and looked fierce, and ſavage, and terrible: this deſigns not ſo much the ſtrength, boldneſs, and intrepidity of their horſes, which are warlike creatures, and very undaunted in battle, as of the men that ſat upon them, who were like *David*'s heroes and warriors, 1 *Chron.* xii. 8. *And out of their mouths iſſued fire, and ſmoke, and brimſtone*; which may be referred either to the horſes, or to the horſemen, or both: ſome interpret this allegorically, and by *fire* underſtand either the tyranny of the *Turks* over their own people, or their fury againſt others, or their blaſphemy againſt God, and Chriſt, and his people, being like ſo many railing *Rabſhakehs* againſt the God of the chriſtians; and by *ſmoke*, the falſe doctrine of *Mahomet*, which came out of the ſame bottomleſs pit the doctrine of the *Romiſh* antichriſt; did and is fitly compared to ſmoke for its diſagreeableneſs, darkneſs, levity, and duration; ſee the note on ver. 2. and by *brimſtone* the immorality and ſad corruption of manners among the *Turks*, and what is allowed of, or winked at, as fornication, polygamy, ſodomy, &c. but rather this is to be taken more literally, and repreſents the firing of guns on horſeback in battle. Guns are a late invention, and the uſe of them was found out in the age this trumpet refers to; and were much made uſe of by the *Turks* in their wars, and particularly great guns or cannons; theſe were uſed by *Amurath* at the ſieges of *Belgrade*, and of *Conſtantinople* [m]; and by *Mahomet* the ſecond at the taking of *Conſtantinople*, where a gun or cannon was uſed of that bigneſs, as to be drawn by ſeventy yoke of oxen, and two thouſand men [n]. Gunpowder ſet on fire, is fitly ſignified by fire, ſmoke, and brimſtone, which is made of nitre, charcoal, and brimſtone; and the firing of guns on horſeback, is moſt aptly deſcribed by theſe coming out of the mouths of horſes and horſemen: nor could it well appear to *John* to be otherwiſe, who could never have ſeen a gun, and one fired off in his life; nor could he well repreſent to others what he ſaw in viſion, than in this manner.

Ver. 18. *And by theſe three was the third part of men killed*, &c.] The *Alexandrian* copy, and ſome others, the *Complutenſian* edition, the *Vulgate Latin*, *Syriac*, and *Ethiopic* verſions read, *by theſe three plagues*: as the weſtern *Roman* empire is in the preceding chapter frequently expreſſed by the third part of ſeveral things, ſee ch. viii. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12. ſo here the eaſtern *Roman* empire, by the third part of men; vaſt numbers of the inhabitants of which were deſtroyed by the *Turks*, through the uſe of guns, out of which iſſued fire, ſmoke, and brimſtone; and *Conſtantinople*, the metropolis of it, was taken in this way, as before obſerved, with the taking of which the empire ceaſed. *By the fire, and by the ſmoke, and by the brimſtone, which iſſued out of their mouths*; that is, by the firing of guns.

Ver. 19. *For their power is in their mouth*, &c.] In what proceeded out of their mouth, or ſeemed to do ſo; in their guns, and what come out of them: *and in their tails*; which may deſign their foot-ſoldiers, which were as the tail to their horſe, and who ſometimes did great ſervice; or their way of fighting when they fled, by caſting up arrows into the air, which would fall upon the heads and horſes of thoſe that purſued them; or their ambuſhments, by which they deſtroyed many; or their perfidious violation of treaties; or it may be their tails may intend the doctrine of *Mahomet*, the falſe prophet, who is the tail, *Iſ.* ix. 15. *for their tails were like unto ſerpents*; crooked, crafty, poiſonous, and pernicious: *and had heads*; every tail had a head to it; which may be underſtood of the officers of the foot-ſoldiers, or of the prieſts and teachers of the *Mahometan* religion: *and with them they do hurt*; with their guns, the power in their mouth, they did hurt to the bodies of men; and with their falſe doctrines, their tails, they did hurt to the ſouls of men; the *Ethiopic* verſion here adds, *five months*; which ſeems to be taken from ver. 10.

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[g] Laonic. Chalcocond. l 1. p 65.

[h] Alſted. Chronol. p. 321.

[i] Laonic. Chalcocond. l. 7. p. 255.

[k] Napeir in loc.

[l] Bonfinius apud Pareum in loc.

[m] Chalcocond. l. 5. p. 152, 163.

[n] Ib. l. 8. p. 252.

Ver. 20. *And the reſt of men which were not killed by theſe plagues,* &c.] By whom are meant the weſtern antichriſtian party; and ſuch of them as were not plagued, harraſſed, and deſtroyed by the *Turks*, as in *Germany*, at leaſt ſome parts of it, *France*, *Spain*, *Italy*, &c. *yet repented not of the works of their hands*; their idols, their images of ſaints departed, which their hands had made; the goodneſs of God in ſaving them from the depredations of the *Turks*, ſhould have led them to repentance for their idolatrous worſhip of images, but it did not: *that they ſhould not worſhip devils*; or dæmons, a ſort of deities with the heathens, that mediated between the ſuperior gods and men; and here deſign angels and ſaints departed, which the papiſts worſhip, and uſe as mediators of interceſſion for them; and this is no other than worſhipping of devils, in God's account, and is downright idolatry, and the doctrine of it is the doctrine of devils: *and idols of gold, and ſilver, and braſs, and ſtone, and of wood*; which are the ſeveral materials of which the popiſh images are made: and what aggravates the ſtupidity of the worſhippers of theſe images, and of the perſons repreſented by them, is, that theſe are ſuch *which neither can ſee, nor hear, nor walk*; can neither ſee their perſons, nor hear their prayers, nor ſtir one foot to their help and aſſiſtance; ſee *Pſ.* cxv. 4, 5, 6, 7.

Ver. 21. *Neither repented they of their murders,* &c.] Of the ſaints and martyrs of Jeſus, with whoſe blood the weſtern antichriſt is made drunk, and which will be found in her, and for which ſhe is anſwerable. Now, tho' the weſtern parts of the empire eſcaped the ſcourge of the *Turks*, yet this did not bring them to repent of their murderous practices, but they went on to take away the lives of godly men; witneſs the perſecutions of the *Waldenſes* and *Albigenſes*, the murders of *John Huſs* and *Jerom of Prague*, the burning of the martyrs here in queen *Mary*'s days, and the maſſacres in *Paris* and in *Ireland*, and their butcheries elſewhere; and which they have continued unto this day, where the inquiſition obtains: *nor of their ſorceries*; *Jezabel* the whore of *Rome* has been famous for, by which ſhe has deceived all nations; many of the popes of *Rome* have been necromancers, given to the magic art, and have entered into covenant, and have had familiarity with the devil; and one part of the *Romiſh* ſervice lies in exorciſms, conjurations, and enchantments, and which they ſtill continue: *nor of their fornication*; all ſorts of uncleanneſs; not only ſimple fornication, but adultery, inceſt, ſodomy, and all unnatural luſts; brothel-houſes have been ſet up and licenſed by authority, which have yielded to the popes a yearly revenue of forty thouſand ducats; the *Romiſh* clergy, popes, cardinals, prieſts, monks, and friars, have been dreadfully guilty of all manner of uncleanneſs, and ſtill are; whence *Rome* is called Sodom, ch. xi. 8. *nor of their thefts*; who under pretence of granting indulgences and pardons, and praying ſouls out of purgatory, with other tricks, cheat men of their money, pillage and plunder their eſtates, and devour widows houſes; rob men of their ſubſtance, and make merchandize of their ſouls: now all theſe iniquities the papiſts in the eaſtern empire were guilty of, for which the *Turks* as a ſcourge were let in upon it, and deſtroyed it; and yet the weſtern papacy, who did not ſuffer in theſe calamities, took no warning by them, did not repent of their ſins, and reform their practices; but went on, and ſtill go on in the ſame wicked way, and by their hardneſs and impenitence treaſure up wrath againſt the day of wrath.

CHAP. X.

THIS chapter contains a viſion of an angel of a wonderful appearance, the voices of the ſeven thunders, and an order to *John* to take the book in the hand of the angel, eat it, and propheſy. The angel is deſcribed by his ſtrength, a mighty one; by his deſcent from heaven; by his attire, being clothed with a cloud; by a rainbow on his head; by his face being like the ſun; by his feet, which were as pillars of fire, the one foot ſet on the ſea, and the other on the earth; by having a little book open in his hand, and by the loud cry he made, like the roaring of a lion, ver. 1, 2, 3. upon which ſeven thunders uttered their voices, which *John* was going to write, but was forbid, ver. 4. next follows a ſolemn oath of the angel's; the geſture he uſed, lifting up his hand to heaven; the perſon by whom he ſwore, the living God; what he ſwore to, that time ſhould be no more, and that the myſtery of God would be finiſhed at the beginning of the ſeventh trumpet, ver. 5, 6, 7. then ſeveral orders are given to *John*, as to take the open book in the hand of the angel, which he did, to eat it, as he accordingly did; when he found it to be as it was told him it would be, namely, ſweet in his mouth, but bitter in his belly; and then to propheſy again before people, nations, tongues, and kings, ver. 8, 9, 10, 11.

Ver. 1. *And I ſaw another mighty angel,* &c.] Not any mere man, as *Juſtin* the emperor, as ſome have thought, who ſent letters abroad in favour of the orthodox doctrine, againſt the *Arians*, which they ſuppoſe is meant by the little book open in his right-hand; and ſtill leſs the pope of *Rome*, whether in the ſenſe of *Papiſts* or *Proteſtants*, which latter repreſent him as a tyrant, treading upon men both in the iſlands and in the continent, and holding forth the book of canons and decrees; rather, as Mr. *Daubuz* thinks, *Luther*, with the reſt of the reformers, is intended, and eſpecially ſince the prophecy of this chapter reſpects the reformation, which began before the end of the ſixth trumpet; and the epithets given to this angel may denote his ſtrength and courage, his divine authority, the protection of him, and the clear doctrine of peace and reconciliation he brought: however, a created angel is not intended; not the angel that made proclamation for the opening of the book, and unſealing it, ch. v. 2. between which, and having the book in his right-hand open, is a wide difference; nor any other, tho' the epithet *mighty* belongs to angels in common; and tho' this angel ſwears by the living God; and tho' it was an angel by whom Chriſt ſignified the things contained in this book to *John*; but the increated angel, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, ſeems rather deſigned, as appears both by comparing this with *Dan.* xii. 7. and x. 5, 6. and from the power he gave to the two witneſſes, ch. xi. 3. which can't agree with a created angel; and beſides, who ſo proper to hold the book open as he who unlooſed the ſeals, and opened it, and to whom the epithet *mighty* may be applied in the higheſt ſenſe, as God; and who as man may be ſaid to ſwear by the living God, and to whom the whole deſcription well agrees? he is ſometimes called an angel ſimply, *Gen.* xlviii. 16. *Exod.* xxiii. 20. *Acts* vii. 35, 38. ſometimes the angel of the Lord, and who appears to be *Jehovah* himſelf, the ſecond perſon, *Gen.* xvi. 7, 10. and xviii. 1, 2. compared with xix. 1. and xxii. 11, 12. and ſometimes the angel of God's preſence, *Iſ.* lxiii. 9. and the angel of the great council in the *Septuagint* on *Iſ.* ix. 6. and the angel, or meſſenger, of the covenant, *Mal.* iii. 1. and may be ſo called becauſe he is a meſſenger from God as man and mediator, being ſent by him to declare his will and redeem his people: and he is a *mighty* one; not only as God, being the mighty God, the Almighty, which appears by his creation of all things, and upholding them in their beings; but as mediator, having all power in heaven and in earth, and being far above all principality, power, and might; and as man, made ſtrong by God for himſelf, and for his people: he appears now as *another* angel, diſtinct from the ſeven angels who had trumpets given them to ſound, and ſix of which had already ſounded; and particularly from the angel of the ſixth trumpet, who had juſt ſounded; though ſome copies, and the *Complutenſian* edition, leave out the word αλλον, *another*; and very opportunely does he appear for the comfort of his church, when the trumpets that had been blown had brought ſuch deſolations upon the empire, weſtern and eaſtern, and when both the weſtern and eaſtern antichriſts had appeared, and before the ſeventh trumpet ſounds, and brings in the laſt and greateſt wo: and he is ſaid to *come down from heaven*; which does not deſign his incarnation, that was long before this time; nor his ſpiritual preſence with his people, which is common to them in all ages; nor his ſecond coming to judgment, which will be by a deſcent from heaven, and in the clouds of heaven, for that is yet future; but in a viſionary way, his appearance to and for his church and people in the dark times of antichriſt, when afflicted by the *Turk* on the one hand, and the pope on the other: *clothed with a cloud*[n]; which is expreſſive not of the human nature of Chriſt, with which his divinity was veiled in his ſtate of humiliation, ſo that few ſaw the glory of his divine perſon, and the greater part eſteemed him a mere man; but rather of the obſcurity of him, his perſon, offices, and grace, in thoſe times of antichriſtian darkneſs, and even of the dim light and knowledge which his true and faithful followers had of him in thoſe times; it was a dark and cloudy day with them, as well as the whole earth was covered with the groſs darkneſs of *Popery* and *Mahometaniſm*; tho' it ſeems beſt of all to interpret this phraſe of the majeſtic preſence of Chriſt in his appearances to his people, who went before the people of *Iſrael* in a cloud by day in the wilderneſs, deſcended in one on mount *Sinai*, dwelt in one both in the tabernacle and temple, was overſhadowed by one on the mount when transfigured, aſcended in one to heaven, and will return in one, or more: moreover, the cloud may denote the power and protection of God attending the reformation; ſee *Pſ.* lxviii. 34. *Iſ.* iv. 5. *and a rainbow was upon his head*; which was a token of the covenant; ſee ch. iv. 3. and the note there: this, with its bleſſings, is upon the head of Chriſt, the antitypical *Joſeph*, and who is the head of his church and people; and Chriſt appearing in this form at this time, when the world was overflowed with *Popery* and *Mahometaniſm*, ſhows that God was ſtill mindful of his covenant, even in thoſe worſt of times, and would not ſuffer his church to be overwhelmed, and ſunk in the general deluge of antichriſtianiſm, or the gates of hell to prevail againſt it; Chriſt at ſuch a time as this, very ſeaſonably appears with the rainbow of the covenant on his head, as a meſſenger of peace, and bringer of good tidings, to let his people know that ere long it would be halcyon days with them, and there would be times of refreſhing from the preſence of the Lord, who was ever mindful of his covenant with them; and that the Goſpel of peace and reconciliation would be preached unto them: *and his face was as it were the ſun*; or looked like the ſun, as it did at the time of his transfiguration on the mount, and as he is deſcribed in ch. i. 16. and may denote the clearneſs and purity of Chriſt; both as God, who is the brightneſs of his Father's glory, and the expreſs image of his perſon; and as man, who is holy, harmleſs, and undefiled; and is alſo expreſſive of that light of nature, grace, and glory, which he imparts unto the ſons of men; as well as of that beauty, lovelineſs, and amiableneſs in his perſon, which renders him as the ſun, delightful to behold; and of the majeſty of his perſon, and the manifeſtations of himſelf, to the great comfort, pleaſure, and refreſhment of his ſaints: *and his feet as pillars of fire*; which may refer to the ſtate of the church of Chriſt at this time, which was in the *fire* of afflictions, when many of its members were called to the ſtake, and burnt there for the ſake of the Goſpel, and yet were like *pillars*, firm and unſhaken; the church was like the buſh that *Moſes* ſaw, which was on fire, but not conſumed; Chriſt was with his people as they paſſed thro' it, that it could not kindle upon them ſo as to deſtroy them; and their faith, which was tried by it, was found to be much more precious than of gold that periſheth: or this may ſhow what Chriſt then was, both to his people and to his enemies; to his people his feet were as *pillars* of braſs and marble, to bear them up, and ſupport them under all their trials and afflictions; his goings forth towards them in a way both of providence and grace, were in ſuch a manner, as to ſtrengthen and confirm them in the faith of him againſt all the powers of hell and earth; and they were like *fire*, to conſume his and their enemies; with his feet he trod upon them, and ſubdued them under him, who were as ſtubble, briars and thorns, eaſily conſumed by him, when at the ſame time he was a wall of fire to his people, and the glory in the midſt of them.

Ver. 2. *And he had in his hand a little book open*, &c.] By which is meant not the Bible, the ſcriptures of the Old and New Teſtament; or the book of the Goſpel, the ſubſtance of which lies in a little room, and is no other than the preaching of Chriſt, and him crucified, as God's way of ſalvation; and which is now more open and manifeſt, and more clearly made known unto the ſons of men, under the Goſpel-diſpenſation, than it was before, and eſpecially ſince the time of the reformation, to which this book, and the prophecies of it, may have reſpect; but the ſame book is here deſigned, which in ch. v. 1. is repreſented as in the right-hand of him that ſat on the throne, as ſhut and ſealed; but the lion of the tribe of *Judah*, the Lamb in the midſt of the throne, having taken it out of his hand, unlooſed its ſeals, and opened it; and whereas we never read of his laying this book down, or of his delivering it to any other, he may be well ſuppoſed to be this mighty angel, who held it open in his hand: it may be ſaid to be *a little book*, becauſe now not only many of the ſcenes and viſions in it were exhibited, upon the opening of the ſeals; but becauſe at the time this viſion refers to, many of its prophecies were accompliſhed, ſo that the bulk of it was greatly reduced; and it may be repreſented as *open*, becauſe the ſeals of it were unlooſed, and the things in it revealed; and it is to be obſerved, that as the ſeveral ſeals of this book, and the opening of them, refer to the ſtate of the empire, both as pagan and as chriſtian, as has been ſeen; ſo the little book itſelf, clear of theſe ſeals, ſets forth the ſtate and condition of the church in the empire, under its different revolutions and appearances: *and he ſet his right foot upon the ſea, and his left* foot *on the earth*; which ſignifies that he was Lord and poſſeſſor of both, of the whole terraqueous globe, being the maker and ſupporter of it; and that his Goſpel ſhould be ſpread all over the world, both on the continent and in the iſlands of the ſea; and that his kingdom ſhould be from ſea to ſea, and from the rivers to the ends of the earth; that the abundance of the ſea ſhould be converted to him, or the maritime parts of the world ſhould be ſubject to the ſcepter of his grace and government; and that the earth, and the uttermoſt parts of it, ſhould be his poſſeſſion, tho' it was now almoſt wholly in the hands of the *Turk* and pope; and it may be obſerved, that he ſet his foot upon both earth and ſea, out of which the two beaſts ariſe, ch. xiii. 1, 11. which ſhall be deſtroyed by him.

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[n] Εγκατειλημμενος τη νεφελη, Philo de vita Moſis, l. 1. p. 628.

Ver. 3. *And cried with a loud voice*, &c.] That all might hear, and to ſhew earneſtneſs and affection, and that it was a matter of great importance, as well as to denote the certainty of it; what he ſaid is not expreſſed, but ſeems to be the book-prophecy, or what regarded the ſtate of his church and kingdom, in the ſeveral periods of time to the blowing of the ſeventh trumpet, when the kingdoms of this world ſhall become his: and this voice of his was *as* when *a lion roareth*; loud and terrible; and indeed it was the voice of the lion of the tribe of *Judah*, which was heard far and near, throughout the whole world, by his people, and is terrible to his enemies: *and when he had cried, ſeven thunders uttered their voices*; which ſome underſtand of the miniſters of the Goſpel in the times of the reformation, who were *Boanergeſſes*, ſons of thunder, and think that they are the ſame with the angels in ch. xiv. 6, *&c.* or rather theſe may ſignify the denunciations of God's judgments, and of his wrath, both upon the eaſtern and weſtern antichriſt, the *Turk* and pope, ſignified by the ſeven vials, hereafter to be poured out, mentioned in ch. xvi.

Ver. 4. *And when the ſeven thunders had uttered their voices*, &c.] Or declared all they had to denounce upon the enemies of Chriſt and his church: *I was about to write*; *John* taking particular notice of what they ſaid, and believing it might be for the advantage, comfort, and ſupport, of the church of Chriſt under its ſuffering circumſtances, to be informed of what God had in reſerve among the treaſures of his wrath, for their adverſaries, was going to put it down in writing, that he might retain it, and the better communicate it, and in obedience to the order given him, ch. i. 19. *and I heard a voice from heaven*; from God the Father, for the Son of God in a viſionary way was come down from heaven, in the form before deſcribed; and this voice anſwers to the *Bath Kol* of the *Jews*, and is the ſame which ordered *John* to write, ch. xiv. 13. tho' it here forbad him: *ſaying unto me, ſeal up thoſe things*; treaſure them up in thy mind, keep them within thy breaſt, hide them from men, for the preſent, and ſay nothing of them: *which the ſeven thunders have uttered, and write them not*; that they may not be ſeen and read, at preſent, becauſe the ſame things were to be exhibited in another form, and at another time, under the ſeven vials; only it was thought proper that *John* ſhould have ſome intimations of them for his own advantage, and to prepare him for the following viſion, for the eating of the book, and for his propheſying before people, nations, tongues, and kings. Mr. *Daubuz* is of opinion, that by theſe *ſeven thunders* are meant ſeven kingdoms which have received the reformation, and eſtabliſhed it by law within their ſeveral dominions, whereby the doctrine and worſhip of the reformers are become the eſtabliſhed religion there; and the laws by which it is eſtabliſhed are *the voices* uttered by thoſe ſupreme authorities; and they are theſe, 1. The *German* princes, making one republick. 2. The *Swiſs* cantons. 3. *Sweden.* 4. *Denmark*, with *Norway.* 5. *England* and *Ireland.* 6. *Scotland.* 7. The *United Provinces* of the *Netherlands*: and whereas *John*, who repreſents the firſt reformers, and other faithful men, was for writing what theſe thunders uttered, this denotes the zeal and earneſt deſires of theſe good men to puſh the reformation further, and make a thorough work of it, as well as their expectation that now was the time in which the myſtery of God was to be fulfilled, in which they were miſtaken; wherefore *John* is bid to ſeal up theſe things, and not write them, which ſhows that the progreſs of the reformaton was to be ſtopped from doing fully what the firſt reformers were prompted to by the ſupreme powers which encouraged them, and that by the oppoſition of other temporal princes; it not being the will of God that the glorious ſtate of the church ſhould ariſe from theſe thunders, and be built on their laws and eſtabliſhments; and ſuggeſts, that this is not the time in which, nor theſe the ways and means, by which the myſtery of God will be finiſhed, which will not be until the ſeventh angel has ſounded his trumpet, ver. 7. whereas this period of time, to which the reformation belongs, is an event of the ſixth trumpet: and this expoſition bids very fair to be the right one.

Ver. 5. *And the angel which I ſaw ſtand upon the ſea and upon the earth*, &c.] His right foot being on the one, and his left foot upon the other, as deſcribed in ver. 2. *lifted up his hand to heaven*; the *Oriental* verſions read, *his right-hand*; and ſo ſome copies, and the *Complutenſian* edition: the man clothed in linnen, *Dan.* xii. 6, 7. who is the ſame with the angel here, held up both his hands; the lifting up of the hand was a geſture uſed in ſwearing; ſee *Gen.* xiv. 22. ſo the *Jews* ſay [o], *the right-hand*, or by the right hand, זו שבועה, *this is an oath*, according to *Dan.* xii. 7. or whether the right-hand or the left, is an oath, according to *Iſ.* lxii. 8.

Ver. 6. *And ſware by him that liveth for ever and ever*, &c.] That is, by the living God, who is the true God; and is ſo deſcribed to diſtinguiſh him from idol gods, who have no life nor breath in them; and to aſſert the excellency and perfection of his nature, who has life in himſelf originally, and independently, is the fountain of life to all creatures living, and who are ſupported in their life and being by him; and ſo he always was, is, and ever will be; this is the ſame as ſwearing by *Anchialus* [p]: *who created heaven, and the things that therein are*; the airy, ſtarry, and third heavens, and the inhabitants of them, the fowls of the air, the ſun, moon, and ſtars, and the angels of heaven, as well as the ſouls of departed ſaints, and the bodies of as many as are there: *and the earth, and the things that therein are*; men, beaſts, and creeping things, trees, herbs, minerals, *&c.* *and the ſea, and the things which are therein*; the ſeveral ſorts of fiſhes in it: this is alſo ſaid to diſtinguiſh the great God from all falſe gods, who made not the heavens and the earth, who alone is, and ought to be the object of an oath, or by whom

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[o] T. Bab. Nazir, fol. 3. 2. Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 58. 1.

[p] Martial Epigr. l. 11. ep. 60.

an oath is to be made, and not any creature whatſoever; and ſince the angel that here ſwears is the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, this may be underſtood of him either as man, ſwearing by God the Father, in which reſpect the Father is greater than he; or as a divine perſon, and ſo ſwears by himſelf, *Heb.* vi. 13. for to himſelf do theſe characters belong of living for ever and ever, and of having made the heaven, earth, and ſea, and all in them: the thing he ſwears to is, *that there ſhould be time no longer*; which is not to be underſtood of the ceſſation of time, and the ſwallowing of it up in eternity, at the end of all things, when it will be no more meaſured out by the revolutions of the ſun and moon, which will then be no more; for this did not take place upon the angel's oath, or at the time this viſion refers to; for after this, there is to be time for the ſeventh angel to ſound his trumpet in, tho' perhaps that is excepted in the next verſe; and after the ſounding of that, there will be the ſpace of a thouſand years, in which Chriſt will reign with his people on earth; and after that there will be ſome ſpace of time for the *Gog* and *Magog* army to attack the beloved city; all which will be before the end of all things, or before eternity, properly ſpeaking, takes place; and beſides, ſuch an illuſtrious appearing of Chriſt as before deſcribed, and ſo ſolemn an oath as is here made, do not ſeem neceſſary to aſcertain a truth which no body doubts of; and every one knows that after this world, and all things in it are at an end, time will be no more. The true key to this paſſage is *Dan.* xii. 7. where the man clothed in linnen ſwears, that to the end of wonders ſhould be a time, times and a half, and here the angel ſwears that time ſhould be no longer; that is, that theſe time, and times and half a time, ſhould be no longer; that theſe dates would be up, and the events affixed to them be accompliſhed, when the ſeventh angel ſhould begin to ſound his trumpet: the ſame diviſions of time are made in *Rev.* xii. 14. and are the ſame exactly with the 1260 days, or years, and the forty-two months of years, ſo often mentioned in this book; for a time, is a prophetick year, that is, 360 years; and times are two prophetick years, or 720 years; and half a time is half a prophetic year, or 180 years, in all 1260 years: now add the ſeveral events to be accompliſhed in this period of time, and it will give the full ſenſe of this paſſage thus; the angel ſwears that the time of antichriſt's reign, his tyranny over the ſaints, his perſecution of them, which was to laſt forty-two months, *Rev.* xiii. 5. ſhould be no longer; nor of the holy city being trodden under foot by the *Gentiles*, the *Papiſts*, which bears the ſame date *Rev.* xi. 2. and is called the times of the *Gentiles*, *Luke* xxi. 24. nor of the witneſſes propheſying in ſackcloth, which has juſt the ſame meaſure of duration, *Rev.* xi. 3. nor of the church's retirement, and being hid in the wilderneſs, *Rev.* xii. 14. in ſhort, the time of the four monarchies, and of the laſt of them, the *Roman*, and of the laſt branch of that, the papal, ſhould be no more, than till the ſounding of the ſeventh trumpet, when the kingdoms of this world ſhall become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Chriſt, *Rev.* xi. 15. the words will bear to be rendered, as ſome have obſerved, *that there ſhould be delay no longer*; that is, of the coming and kingdom of Chriſt; tho' the bridegroom has tarried, he will come, and will not tarry beyond the time the angel ſwears to; every ſeal of the ſealed book is a delay of, and a ſtop upon the open appearance of Chriſt's kingdom; and the opening of every ſeal is an advance to it; and when the ſixth ſeal was opened, and paganiſm deſtroyed, and chriſtianity ſpread throughout the empire, the kingdom of Chriſt might have been expected to have appeared; but there was a ſeventh ſeal to be opened, which was a ſtop upon it, and which when opened brought ruin and deſtruction upon the chriſtian empire, both weſtern and eaſtern, under the ſix firſt trumpets; and till the ſeventh ſounds there will be a delay of Chriſt's kingdom, but when that ſounds, there will be no more a delay.

Ver. 7. *But in the days of the voice of the ſeventh angel, when he ſhall begin to ſound*, &c.] This is an exception to what the angel had ſaid and ſwore to, that time ſhould be no longer; *but*, or *unleſs*, or *except the time of the voice of the ſeventh angel*, as the *Ethiopic* verſion renders it; when a new period and ſort of time ſhould begin, very different from the former, which then ſhould be no more; for now will be the time of Chriſt's kingdom on earth, which ſhall laſt a thouſand years; this time will not be like the former, a time of darkneſs and ignorance, as was in ſome periods, partly thro' the errors and hereſies which were propagated in early times, and thro' that barbarity and ignorance which the *Goths*, *Huns*, and *Vandals* ſpread over the empire, when they broke into it, and chiefly thro' the ſmoke of the bottomleſs pit, the falſe doctrine and worſhip of the *Papiſts* and *Mahometans*; but in the time of the ſeventh angel, all this groſs darkneſs will be removed, and it will be a time of unſpeakable and everlaſting light, ſo that there will be no need of the ſun and moon, of Goſpel-miniſtrations and ordinances: nor will it be a time of affliction and perſecution; time in that ſenſe will be no more, as it has been under the ten *pagan* emperors, and under the *Arian* emperors, and under the *papal* hierarchy; for in this period there will be no more death, ſorrow, crying, pain, and tears; tho' there will be time, it will be another ſort of time, quite different from the former, which will be no more when the ſeventh angel once begins; and as ſoon as he begins to ſound, this will put an end to antichriſtian time; and at the end of his ſounding will begin the time of Chriſt, or the thouſand years reign: and then *the myſtery of God ſhould be finiſhed*; that is, the angel not only ſwears that time ſhall be no longer, but that alſo then ſhall be finiſhed the myſtery of God; by which is meant, not the reſurrection of the dead, and the change of the living, which is called a myſtery, 1 *Cor.* xv. 51. for tho' when this angel ſounds, and has done ſounding, and Chriſt comes, the firſt reſurrection, or the reſurrection of the dead in Chriſt, will be finiſhed, yet not the whole reſurrection; for the reſt of the dead will not live again till the end of the thouſand years: but rather the Goſpel is deſigned, which is often called the myſtery, and the myſtery of the Goſpel, and contains many myſteries in it, which are ſtiled the myſteries of God; which reſpect him, his being, perſons, operations, and grace; and are revealed and made known by him; and the finiſhing of this may reſpect the preaching of the Goſpel to all nations, which will be before the end of the world, and whereby the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord, and multitudes of ſouls converted; wherefore it may be beſt of all to underſtand this of the church of God, the general aſſembly and church of the firſt-born, even all the elect of God, whoſe number will now be finiſhed and compleated, in the converſion of the *Jews*, and in the bringing in the fullneſs of the *Gentiles*, both which are called *myſteries*, *Rom.* xi. 25, 26. *Eph.* iii. 4, 5, 6. and now as the antichriſtian church is called *myſtery*, *Babylon*, *Rev.* xvii. 5. and *the myſtery of iniquity*, 2 *Theſſ.* ii. 7. ſo the true chriſtian church, the new *Jeruſalem*, coming down from heaven, and prepared as a bride adorned for her huſband, may bear the name of *the myſtery of God*; and this may alſo take in the myſtery of all God's providences and promiſes, and prophecies, reſpecting the ſtate of his church and people on earth: *as he hath declared to his ſervants and prophets*; as to *Iſaiah* in ch. lx. 3, 4, 5, *&c.* and lxvi. 8. and to *Daniel*, in ch. ii. 44. and vii. 25. and xii. 6, 7. and to *Zechariah*, in ch. xiv. 9. and others; and which was a Goſpel declaration, as the word ſignifies; it was good news and glad tidings; glorious things were declared to them, and ſpoken by them, concerning the city and church of God, its happy ſtate on earth, and Chriſt's reign in it.

Ver. 8. *And the voice which I heard from heaven*, &c.] In ver. 4. *ſpake to me again, and ſaid, go and take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel which ſtandeth upon the ſea and upon the earth*; as *John* was to propheſy, ver. 11. it was neceſſary that he ſhould have a miſſion and a commiſſion from heaven; and that he ſhould have the open book of prophecy to propheſy out of; and that he ſhould receive this from the angel's hands, who had unlooſed its ſeals, and opened it: and juſt ſo to ordinary propheſying, or preaching, it is neceſſary that men ſhould have their commiſſion from heaven, ſhould be called of God, and ſent by him; and that they ſhould have the book of the ſcriptures before them, and open to them, and ſpeak according to theſe oracles, agreeable to the law and to the teſtimony, which are profitable for doctrine; and that they ſhould alſo receive the Goſpel, and the doctrines of it, with gifts, and a commiſſion to preach it, from the angel of the covenant, Jeſus Chriſt, who has all power both in heaven and in earth; ſee ver. 2.

Ver. 9. *And I went to the angel*, &c.] According to the order given him; he was not diſobedient to the heavenly viſion; and, indeed, whither ſhould any go for knowledge but to him who has the words of eternal life, and is the great prophet of the church? and to whom ſhould *John* go to qualify him for propheſying, but to him, who as man and mediator, had this revelation of future things given him? ch. i. 1. *and ſaid unto him, give me the little book*; he did not take it without his leave, but in a modeſt and humble manner aſks him to give it him, that he might deliver out the prophecies in it to others: ſo ordinary prophets and miniſters of the word ſhould go to Chriſt, to have their eyes opened, their underſtandings enlightned, that they may underſtand the ſcriptures, and explain them to others: *and he ſaid unto me, take it and eat it up*; which muſt be underſtood not literally, but myſtically; and the ſenſe is this, take the book, and diligently peruſe it, and with as much eagerneſs as an hungry man would eat a meal; ſo greedy are ſome perſons of reading, and as it were of devouring books; hence *Cicero* called [q] *Cato, Helluo librorum, A glutton at books:* and in ſuch manner *John* is bid to take and eat this book, and look into it, and read it over diligently, and conſider what was in it, and meditate upon it, and digeſt the things contained in it, and lay them up in his mind and memory; and for the preſent hide and conceal them, in like manner as he was bid to ſeal, and not write what the ſeven thunders uttered; and ſo, tho' this book is repreſented to him as open in the angel's hand, yet he muſt take it and eat it, and hide it in his belly, becauſe the things in it as yet were not to be accompliſhed: ſo for ordinary propheſying, or preaching, the miniſters of the word ſhould diligently read the ſcriptures, conſtantly meditate on them, digeſt the truths of the Goſpel in their own minds, and lay them up in the treaſury of their hearts, and bring them forth from thence in due ſeaſon: *and it ſhall make thy belly bitter, but it ſhall be in thy mouth ſweet as honey*; as *Ezekiel*'s roll was to him when he eat it, *Ezek.* iii. 1, 2, 3. the *Alexandrian* copy, inſtead of *thy belly*, reads *thy heart*.

Ver. 10. *And I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate it up*, &c.] As he was bid to do: *and it was in my mouth ſweet as honey*; ſo is the Goſpel in the mouth of a faithful miniſter of it, who has a ſpiritual knowledge, and a ſavoury experience of it; and ſo it is in the mouth of an underſtanding hearer, who finds it, and eats it, to the joy and rejoicing of his heart; and ſo this little book of prophecy being looked into, read, and conſidered by *John*, the firſt taſte and knowledge he had of the things contained in it were exceeding grateful and delightful; the view it gave him of the glorious ſtate of the church and kingdom of Chriſt on earth, filled him with unſpeakable pleaſure: *and as ſoon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter*; ſo the miniſtration of the Goſpel occaſions bitterneſs, grief, and ſorrow, to the preachers and profeſſors of it, thro' the perſecutions that attend it, the obſtinacy and hardneſs of mens hearts againſt it, and its being the ſavour of death unto death to many that hear it; and ſo the little book of prophecy, upon a peruſal of it, giving to *John* a view of the witneſſes propheſying in ſackcloth, and of their bodies being killed, and lying expoſed in the ſtreets of the great city, and of the church's flying into the wilderneſs, and continuing there for a time and times, and half a time, and of the barbarities and cruelties exerciſed on the ſaints by the whore of *Rome*, whom he ſaw made drunk with their blood, made his belly bitter, or filled him with ſorrow, grief, and pain.

Ver. 11. *And he ſaid unto me*, &c.] That is the angel, from whom *John* received the little book; the *Alexandrian* copy reads, *they ſaid unto me*; both the voice of God the Father from heaven, that bid him take the book, and the angel that bid him eat it: *thou muſt propheſy again before many people, and nations, and tongues, and kings*; which is to be underſtood not of *John*'s preaching again to many people, and nations, after his return from his exile at *Patmos*, as he had done before his baniſhment thither; and much leſs of his propheſying along with *Enoch* and *Elias*, towards the end of the world, grounded upon two fabulous notions, the one that *Enoch* and *Elias* will appear in perſon before the coming of Chriſt, and the other, that *John* died not, but is ſtill alive ſome where, and will continue till Chriſt's ſecond coming; but rather of his delivering more prophecies out of the open little book; not *before*, as we render it, but either *concerning* many people, nations, tongues, and kings, as the *Syriac* verſion renders it; or *againſt* them, that is, thoſe people, multitudes, nations, and tongues, over which the whore of *Babylon* reigns, or has reigned, and the ten kings, and kings of the earth ſhe rules over, *Rev.* xvii. 12, 13, 15, 18. Moreover, this may not ſo much deſign *John*'s propheſying in perſon, as the propheſying of the witneſſes, or miniſters of the word in the ſeveral periods of time, whom *John* perſonated and repreſented; and of whom mention is made in the next chapter, to which this ſeems to be a tranſition.

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[q] Cicero de Finibus Bon. & Mal. l. 3. c. 1.

CHAP. XI.

THIS chapter contains the order to meaſure the temple of God; an account of the two witneſſes, their propheſying and power, their ſlaying, reſurrection, and aſcenſion to heaven, with what followed upon it; and the ſounding of the ſeventh trumpet, and the effects of that. A meaſuring rod is given to *John*, with an order to riſe and meaſure the temple, altar, and worſhippers, and to leave out the outer-court, which was to be given to the *Gentiles*, who tread the holy city under foot forty and two months, ver. 1, 2. the ſame date with the 1260 days the witneſſes propheſy in ſackcloth, ver. 3. who are compared to two olive-trees and to two candleſticks, and are ſaid to ſtand before God, ver. 4. and who are further deſcribed, by their power to deſtroy thoſe that hurt them, with fire that proceeds out of their mouths; to ſhut the heaven, that it rain not during their prophecy; to turn water into blood, and ſmite the earth with all manner of plagues at pleaſure, ver. 5, 6. but when the time of their prophecy and teſtimony is expired, their enemies will have the advantage of them; the antichriſtian beaſt of *Rome*, deſcribed by the place of his aſcent, the bottomleſs pit, will fight againſt them, overcome, and kill them; their dead bodies will be expoſed publickly within the *Roman* juriſdiction, and not ſuffered to be interred; and their enemies will make a publick and general rejoicing over them, ver. 7, 8, 9, 10. but after a ſhort ſpace of time, they will revive, and ſtand upon their feet, to the ſurprize of all ſpectators; and being invited by a voice from heaven, will aſcend thither, in the ſight of their enemies; upon which will be an earthquake, in which the tenth part of the city of *Rome* will fall, and ſeven thouſand men be ſlain; which will cauſe conſternation in the reſt, and put them upon giving glory to God, ver. 11, 12, 13. and this will put an end to the ſecond wo, and the third will quickly follow, ver. 14. which is the ſounding of the ſeventh trumpet; the effects of which are, voices heard in heaven, declaring that the kingdoms of the world are become Chriſt's, and that he ſhall reign for ever and ever, ver. 15. upon which the four and twenty elders that ſat on their ſeats before God, congratulate him, worſhip, and give thanks unto him, as the Lord God Almighty and eternal; partly becauſe of his viſible power and kingdom he now takes to himſelf; and partly becauſe the time of avenging his people that had ſuffered for him upon the nations, which makes them angry, was now come; as alſo becauſe now would be given rewards to all his prophets, ſaints, and thoſe that feared him, as well as antichriſt and his followers would be deſtroyed, ver. 16, 17, 18. and other effects of this trumpet are, the opening of the temple of God in heaven, a ſight of the ark of the teſtament, lightnings, voices, thundrings, an earthquake, and great hail, ver. 19.

Ver. 1. *And there was given me a reed like unto a rod*, &c.] A meaſuring reed, which with the *Jews* was ſix cubits long, *Ezek.* xl. 5. with the *Greeks* and *Romans* ten feet long; the *Ethiopic* verſion here calls it a *golden reed*, as in ch. xxi. 15. This was given unto *John* very likely by the ſame angel that gave him the little book, ſince he afterwards bids him ariſe and meaſure with it; and by it ſeems to be deſigned the holy ſcripture, or the word of God, which is ſometimes called a line, a rule, and rod, *Pſ.* xix. 4. and cx. 2. *Gal.* vi. 16. and which is the rule and meaſure of doctrine and faith; and by it all doctrine is to be tried and meaſured, and whatſoever is not agreeable to it, is not of God, nor to be received, but rejected; and it is the rule and meaſure of all diſcipline, worſhip, and practice; it lays down the plan of a Goſpel church, which ſhould be gathered out of the world, and ſeparated from it; it ſhows who are the proper materials of it, what officers are to be conſtituted in it, and what ordinances are to be adminiſtred, and what laws and rules ſhould be obſerved in receiving and rejecting of members, and according to which the whole community ſhould walk; in ſhort, it directs to all the forms, laws, and ordinances of God's houſe; and this is the uſe *John*, or thoſe whom he perſonates, were to make of it: *and the angel ſtood*; the ſame that ſtood with his right foot on the ſea, and his left foot on the earth, and gave to *John* the little book, ch. x. 1, 2, 9. tho' it may be not in the ſame place and ſituation, but rather at the gate of the temple, as in *Ezek.* xl. 3. This clauſe is not in the *Vulgate Latin*, *Arabic* and *Ethiopic* verſions, but is in the *Syriac* verſion and *Complutenſian* edition, and is rightly retained, or otherwiſe it would ſeem as if the reed ſpoke: *ſaying, riſe and meaſure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worſhip therein*; the alluſion is to the temple of *Jeruſalem*, with its appurtenances; there were the moſt holy place, and the holy place, which was the inner court of the prieſts, into which they only entered, which was ſtrictly ſpeaking the temple, and is referred to here; and there was the altar of burnt-offering, which was in the court of the prieſts, and the altar of incenſe, which was before the vail that divided between the holy and holy of holies; and then there was the outer court for all the *Iſraelites* to worſhip in, referred to in the next verſe: and by *the temple of God* is here meant the church, of which the temple was a type; and ſo particular congregated churches are called temples, 1 *Cor.* iii. 16, 17. 2 *Cor.* vi. 16. *Eph.* ii. 21. *Solomon*, a man of peace, was the builder of the one, and Chriſt, the prince of peace, the builder of the other; *Solomon*'s temple was built of hewn ſtones, made ready before they were brought thither, and a true church of Chriſt conſiſts of lively ſtones, hewed and fitted for this ſpiritual building by the Spirit of God; the temple at *Jeruſalem* was built on a high mountain, and on the north of the city, the church is built upon the rock Chriſt Jeſus, and the Goſpel church, or churches, in the times of the ſixth trumpet, which this viſion refers to, and to the cloſe of it, are in the northern parts of *Europe*; and as the temple was for religious uſe and ſervice, for the worſhip of God, and ſacrifices, ſo is the Goſpel church, and ſo are Goſpel churches, for the miniſtry of the word, and adminiſtration of ordinances, and for the offering up the ſacrifices of prayer and praiſe; and as in the moſt holy place were the ark of the covenant, and the mercy-ſeat, and as it was the place of the divine preſence, where God granted communion to his people, ſo in the church are held forth the myſteries of the covenant, Chriſt as the mercy-ſeat and the propitiatory, in whom the diſplays of grace are made, and through whom the ſaints have fellowſhip with God, and enjoy his preſence: *the altar* may deſign Chriſt himſelf, by whom the ſaints draw nigh to God, offer up their ſacrifices, and are accepted with him; or the whole of Goſpel worſhip and ordinances, as prayer, preaching, ſinging of praiſe, and the adminiſtration of baptiſm and the Lord's ſupper: and they *that worſhip therein*, or *thereat*, are the royal prieſthood, or ſuch who are made kings and prieſts unto God, for none went into the inner court, or ſerved at the altar, but prieſts; and who make uſe of Chriſt the altar, of his perſon, blood, righteouſneſs, and ſacrifice, in their approaches to God; and who are praying ſouls, wait at the altar of incenſe, and draw nigh to the throne of grace with a true heart, and worſhip God in ſpirit and in truth: now *meaſuring* of theſe, reſpects not the primitive church for the firſt three or four hundred years, and the formation of that according to the rule of God's word, and as a pattern to other churches; for tho' the apoſtolical church, or the church as it was in the Apoſtles time, and as deſcribed in their writings, was ſuch a church; yet the church, for ſuch a ſpace of time as above, was not; there were great departures both from doctrine and diſcipline, the myſtery of iniquity began to work, and way was made for the man of ſin; and it was far from being a pattern to be imitated; and beſides, this meaſuring refers to the times of the ſixth trumpet, and the cloſe of it: nor does it reſpect the ſealing of the 144000 between the ſixth ſeal and the opening of the ſeventh ſeal, which was for the protection and ſecurity of them, during the times of the ſix trumpets, which brought deſolation into the empire, and apoſtacy into the church; tho' meaſuring ſometimes may ſeem to denote protection, as in *Zech.* ii. 1, 2, 5. and tho' the outer court is, and will be a protection to ſpiritual worſhippers, ſo long as it is not in the hands of the *Gentiles*, yet this is not the ſenſe, at leaſt not the whole of it: nor does this refer to the hiding of the church in the wilderneſs, during the reign of antichriſt; which might ſeem to be ſignified by the internal worſhippers retiring to the altar, and to the holy and the moſt holy place, and being concealed there; and eſpecially ſince the opening of the temple in ver. 19. may ſeem to be oppoſed to this; but that takes in too large a compaſs of time, this being an affair relating only to the cloſe of the ſixth trumpet, and which was to be before the ſeventh trumpet ſounded: it ſeems rather to reſpect the times of the reformation by *Luther*, *Calvin*, and others, when the meaſuring reed of the word was taken in hand, and uſed; but then it was uſed chiefly for the reſtoration of pure doctrine, and with good ſucceſs, but not ſo much for the regulating, and orderly diſcipline of the churches, for the purity of Goſpel worſhip and ordinances; moſt, if not all the reformed churches, ſet out upon too broad a bottom, being national, provincial, or parochial; there was a temple, and an altar erected for God, and there were internal and ſpiritual worſhippers; but then they took in the outward court, which ſhould not have been meaſured in, and circumſcribed with them, but ſhould have been left out; but the time for this was not yet come, but now is: in ſhort, I take it that this meaſuring refers to what was done in the laſt age, particularly in our nation; and that it has reſpect to the ſeparation from the national church, when churches, more or leſs, were gathered and formed according to the Goſpel plan, and the primitive inſtitution; a work which never was ſet about, and ſo effectually done before, ſince the age of the Apoſtles: the baptized and congregational churches are the temple, altar, and worſhippers meaſured, who have both the true doctrine, worſhip, and diſcipline of God's houſe among them; a ſett of men in the laſt age were raiſed up, who drew a plan of churches, and of church-diſcipline, according to the antient model; gathered churches out of the world, and conſtituted them according to the order of the Goſpel; circumſcribed them, and incloſed them according to the rules of God's word, admitting none but ſuch into communion who were judged by the churches ſubjects of the grace of God; and rejected and excluded from among them ſuch as were wicked and ſcandalous; and ſo reduced the pure members of churches to a ſmall number, a little flock, a few names in *Sardis*: and I am of opinion that the meaſuring reed muſt be uſed again; we have got of late, thro' negligence, or a want of a ſpirit of diſcerning, too many of the outward court among us; who muſt be left out, in order to be given up to other hands, as follows.

Ver. 2. *But the court which is without the temple, leave out, and meaſure it not*, &c.] The alluſion is to the court of the *Iſraelites*, where was the great croud and company of worſhippers, even the national church of the *Jews*, called by *Ezekiel* the outer court, ch. xlii. 14. and xlvi. 21. and which was meaſured in *Ezek.* xlii. 20. but this muſt not be meaſured: this deſigns not the viſible church apoſtatized, as ſucceeding the pure, primitive, and apoſtolical church, or the apoſtate church of *Rome*, antichriſt and his followers, for theſe are meant by the *Gentiles*, to whom this outward court is given; this outward court, or the worſhippers in it, intend a diſtinct ſett of worſhippers from the internal worſhippers, the prieſts of God, in the temple, altar, and inner court, and from the *Gentiles*, the *Papiſts*; and are no other than carnal *Proteſtants*, the bulk of the reformed churches, who have only the name, but not the nature of living chriſtians, have a form of godlineſs, but deny its power, are *Jews* outwardly, but not inwardly, and worſhip only in an external manner, attend to outward forms and ceremonies, but know nothing of true doctrine, pure worſhip, or ſpiritual religion; and which are very numerous, as the worſhippers in the outward court were: now theſe, upon a new meaſuring and regulating of the churches, are ordered to be left, or caſt out, and not taken into the dimenſions of the Goſpel church; theſe were to be ſeparated from, and have been, and not to be admitted members of regular and orderly conſtituted churches, and which is here reckoned a ſort of caſting of them out; the reaſon of which follows: *for it is given unto the Gentiles*; by whom are meant the *Papiſts*, who are no other than paganized chriſtians, having introduced a great deal of *Gentiliſm* into the divine ſervice; as the worſhipping of the virgin *Mary*, angels, and ſaints departed, which is in imitation of the dæmon-worſhip of the heathens; as alſo the dedication of their churches to ſaints, their ſaints days, divers feſtivals, and many other rites and ceremonies, are plainly of pagan original; and therefore they may very well be called by this name: now it ſeems by theſe words that the bulk of the reformed churches, the croud of outward-court worſhippers, will be gained over to the *Popiſh* party, and fall off to the church of *Rome*, to which their doctrines and practices are plainly verging; the pope of *Rome*, as low a condition as he now is in, will be ſet *in ſtatu quo*, before his utter deſtruction; he will regain all his former dominions, and be in poſſeſſion of them, at the time of his ruin; the whore of *Rome*, the antichriſtian *Babylon*, will ſit as a queen, and promiſe herſelf a great deal of peace and pleaſure, the inward-court worſhippers and witneſſes being ſlain, and ſhe reſtored to all her former power and grandeur; when in one day, on a ſudden, her deſtruction will come upon her, when the term of the beaſt's reign will be expired, mentioned in the next clauſe: *and the holy city ſhall they tread under foot forty* and *two months*; by *the holy city* is meant all the kingdoms of *Europe*, or what has been called *Chriſtendom*, the weſtern empire as chriſtian, the main ſeat of the chriſtian religion, or all the churches ſtiled chriſtian, and ſo called in alluſion to *Jeruſalem*, which bears this name, *Matt.* iv. 5. and which was ſtill of a far larger extent than the outward court: the *treading* of this *under foot*, does not barely deſign poſſeſſing of it, or worſhipping in the ſame place, as the phraſe of treading in the courts does in *Iſ.* i. 12. but a tyrannical power over it, and a waſting, ſpoiling, and deſtroying it, in alluſion to *Jeruſalem* being trodden under foot, waſted and deſtroyed by the *Gentiles*, or the *Romans*, *Luke* xxi. 24. and the duration of this tyrannical and oppreſſive reign will be *forty and two months*; ſee *Rev.* xiii. 5. which being reduced to years, make juſt three years and a half: but then this date can't be underſtood ſtrictly and literally; for ſuch a term can never be ſufficient for the whore's reign, who was to rule over the kings of the earth, and all nations were to drink of the wine of her fornication: this is too ſhort a time for her to gain ſo much power, honour, and riches in, as the 13th, 17th, and 18th chapters of this book ſhew, as well as too ſhort for the afflictions and perſecutions of the ſaints by her; wherefore this muſt be underſtood prophetically of ſo many months of years; and a month with the *Chaldeans* conſiſting of thirty days, and a year of 360 days, which account *Daniel* uſed, and *John* after him, forty-two months, reckoning a day for a year, after the prophetic ſtile, make 1260 years; which is the exact time of the witneſſes propheſying in ſackcloth, of the church's being hid and nouriſhed in the wilderneſs, and of the beaſt's reign, and ſo of the holy city being trodden under foot. Now this date is not to be reckoned from the outer court being given to the *Gentiles*, but from the firſt of antichriſt's reign, when the pope of *Rome* was declared univerſal biſhop; and is only here mentioned, to ſhew, that the giving of the outward court to his *Gentiles*, will be towards the expiration of this date.

Ver. 3. *And I will give* power *unto my two witneſſes*, &c.] By whom are meant, not *Enoch* and *Elias*, as ſome of the ancient fathers thought, who, they ſuppoſed, would come before the appearance of Chriſt, and oppoſe antichriſt, and be ſlain by him, which ſenſe the *Papiſts* greedily catch at; nor are the ſcriptures, the two Teſtaments, Old and New, deſigned, tho' their name and number agree, and alſo their office, which is to teſtify of Chriſt; but then to be clothed in ſackcloth, to be killed, and riſe again, and aſcend to heaven, are things that can't ſo well be accommodated to them: but theſe witneſſes intend the miniſters of the Goſpel, and churches of Chriſt, who have bore teſtimony for Chriſt, and againſt antichriſt, ever ſince he appeared in the world; and particularly the churches and miniſters in *Piedmont* bid fair for this character; who were upon the ſpot when antichriſt aroſe, always bore their proteſt againſt him, and were ever independent of the church of *Rome*, and ſubſiſted in the midſt of the darkneſs of the apoſtacy; and ſuffered much, and very great perſecutions from the *Papiſts*; and have ſtood their ground, and continue to this day; and have been like olive-trees and candleſticks, imparting oil and light to others. Tho' they ought not to be conſidered excluſive of other miniſters and churches, who alſo have bore, and ſtill do bear a witneſs for Chriſt, and againſt the idolatries of the church of *Rome*: no two individual perſons can be meant, ſince theſe witneſſes were to propheſy 1260 days, that is, ſo many years, but a ſucceſſion of miniſters and churches; and theſe are called *two*, both on account of the fewneſs of them, and becauſe the teſtimony of two is ſufficient to confirm any matter; and it may be in alluſion to the various inſtances of two eminent perſons, being raiſed up at certain periods of time, as *Moſes* and *Aaron*, at the deliverance of the children of *Iſrael* out of *Egypt*; *Caleb* and *Joſhua* at their entrance into *Canaan*; *Elijah* and *Eliſhah* in the idolatrous times of *Ahab*; and *Joſhua* and *Zerubbabel* at the rebuilding and finiſhing of the ſecond temple. Now the angel, and who is Chriſt, here promiſes, that he will give ſomething to theſe witneſſes: ſome ſupply the words, *I will give it*; that is, the holy city, or the church, to them, to be taken care of, and defended; others, *I will give* them a mouth, and wiſdom, which their adverſaries ſhall not be able to reſiſt, according to the promiſe in *Luke* xxi. 15. We ſupply the words, *I will give power*; that is, authority to preach the Goſpel, and ſtrength to profeſs it, and to continue to bear a teſtimony to it, ſignified by propheſying; ſee 1 *Cor.* xiv. 1, 3. *And they ſhall propheſy*; that is, *that they may propheſy*; which is ſupported by the *Arabic* and *Ethiopic* verſions, the former rendering the words, *I will give to my two witneſſes to propheſy*, and the latter, *I will give in command to my two witneſſes that they may propheſy*; the ſenſe is, that Chriſt will give to them a miſſion and commiſſion, ſufficient authority, all needful gifts and grace, courage and preſence of mind to preach his Goſpel, to hold forth his word, and bear a teſtimony for him during the whole time of the apoſtacy, even *a thouſand two hundred and threeſcore days*; that is, ſo many years, which, as before obſerved, is the date of the beaſt's reign, of the holy city being trodden under foot of the *Gentiles*, and of the church's retirement into the wilderneſs: it is obſervable, that the date of the beaſt's reign and tyranny is expreſſed by months, and the date of the church's being in the wilderneſs, and the propheſying of the witneſſes is ſignified by days; and the reaſon which ſome give is not deſpicable, as that the beaſt, and his followers, are the children of darkneſs, and of the night, over which the moon preſides, from whence months are numbered; and the church, and the witneſſes, are children of the day, over which the ſun rules. The habit of theſe witneſſes, during their time of propheſying, follows, *clothed in ſackcloth*; expreſſive either of their outward ſtate and condition, being poor, mean, and abject, whilſt the followers of the beaſt are clad in ſilks, and live deliciouſly; or elſe of the inward frame of their minds, as mourning for the ſad eſtate of the church of Chriſt, groaning under the tyranny and perſecutions of antichriſt.

Ver. 4. *Theſe are the two olive trees*, &c.] Or repreſented by the two olive trees in *Zech.* iv. 3, 11, 12, 13, 14. which there deſign *Joſhuah* and *Zerubbabel*; and who in laying out themſelves, their gifts and wealth, in rebuilding and finiſhing the temple, were types of theſe witneſſes, the miniſters of the Goſpel, in the ſucceſſive ages of the apoſtacy; who may be compared to olive trees, becauſe of the oil of grace, and the truth of it in them; and becauſe of the gifts of the Spirit of God beſtowed on them, or their having that anointing which teacheth all things; and becauſe they freely impart their gifts, and the golden oil of the Goſpel unto others, and alſo bring the good tidings of peace and ſalvation by Chriſt, of which the olive leaf is a ſymbol; and becauſe they are like the olive tree, fat, flouriſhing, and fruitful in ſpiritual things; they are ſons of oil, and God's anointed ones: *and the two candleſticks*; which hold forth the light of the word, in the midſt of popiſh darkneſs: this ſhows that churches, as well as miniſters, are deſigned by the witneſſes, ſince the candleſticks are explained of the churches, ch. i. 20. tho' the ſimile well agrees with miniſters of the word, who are the lights of the world, or hold forth the light of the Goſpel, which is put into them by Chriſt: and theſe olive trees and candleſticks are repreſented as *ſtanding before the God of the earth*; miniſtring unto him, enjoying his preſence, and having his aſſiſtance, and being under his protection. The *Alexandrian* copy, the *Vulgate Latin*, *Syriac*, and *Arabic* verſions read, *the Lord of the earth*; and ſo the *Complutenſian* edition; ſee *Zech.* iv. 14. and vi. 5.

Ver. 5. *And if any man will hurt them*, &c.] Do any injury to their perſons, or properties, oppoſe their writings, blaſpheme their doctrines, and hinder their miniſtrations; whoever they be, whether they be any that live among them, or in other parts; whether they be ſecret or open enemies; or whether they be of the outward court, or be really *Gentiles* or *Papiſts*; and eſpecially if they do them any injuſtice, if they wrong, oppreſs, afflict, and diſtreſs them knowingly and willingly: *fire proceedeth out of their mouth*; by which may be meant the word of God, which they preach and hold forth, which is comparable to fire, *Jer.* xxiii. 29. both for light, it being a means of enlightening ſinners, who are darkneſs itſelf; and of directing ſaints in their walk and converſation; and of detecting the errors, immoralities, idolatry, and ſuperſtition of men, and particularly of the church of *Rome*; who can't bear the light of this word, and therefore forbid the reading of it to the laity, and keep it locked up from them in the *Latin* tongue: and alſo for the heat of it, it being the means of quickening, or of conveying a vital heat to dead ſinners; and of warming and comforting the ſaints, cauſing their hearts to burn within them, whilſt they hear or read it, or meditate upon it; and of ſcorching and tormenting reprobate ſinners, and filling them with wrath, pain, and anguiſh, eſpecially the followers of antichriſt; and this is greatly deſigned, for this has a particular reference to the pouring out of the fourth vial, *Rev.* xvi. 9. Likewiſe, the word of God may be compared to fire for its purity in itſelf, for every word of his is pure; and for its purifying nature, when faithfully preached, and powerfully applied, it penetrates deep, it ſearches, and diſcovers, and purges from the droſs of prophaneneſs, falſe doctrine, and will-worſhip; and for its conſuming nature, as follows, it pronouncing damnation to unbelievers and impenitent ſinners, and it being the ſavour of death unto death to ſuch: or elſe the prayers of theſe witneſſes are intended by the fire that proceeds out of their mouth, for vengeance on their enemies, who hinder their miniſtrations, blaſpheme the truth, and ſhed their blood; which do not ariſe from a paſſionate and revengeful ſpirit, but from a pure zeal for the glory of God, and the honour of his name, and truth; and which prayers are heard by God, who will avenge his elect, that cry unto him day and night: the alluſion is to the fire, which, at the requeſt of *Moſes*, came forth from the Lord, and deſtroyed two hundred and fifty perſons, that oppoſed him and *Aaron*; and to the fire which *Elias* called for from heaven, upon the captains, and the fifties, that came to take him, who were types of theſe witneſſes; ſee *Numb.* xvi. 3, 29, 35. 2 *Kings* i. 9, 10, 11, 12. And alſo this fire may denote the denunciations of God's wrath by them upon the antichriſtian party, theſe being as wood, and their words as fire, to conſume them; ſee *Jer.* v. 14. *Rev.* xiv. 9, 10, 11, 18. *And devoureth their enemies*; whether open or ſecret; juſt as the fire devoured *Nadab* and *Abihu*, the offerers of ſtrange fire, which the Lord commanded not; ſo the fire out of the mouth of God's faithful ſervants, devours ſuch who introduce divers and ſtrange doctrines, and the inventions of men into the church of God; the light of God's word convinces and confounds them, tho' it may not convert them; it flaſhes in their conſciences, and diſtreſſes them, ſo that they gnaw their tongues for pain; there being nothing but a fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation, which ſhall devour and deſtroy them, tho' not corporally, yet ſpiritually and eternally; for even theſe ſhall afterwards make war againſt them, conquer them, and ſlay them, and ſhall ſee them aſcend to heaven, ver. 7, 12. *And if any man will hurt them, he muſt in this manner be killed*; this is repeated, partly to ſhew the certainty of this deſtruction; and partly to point out the manner of it, which will be not by the uſe of carnal weapons: theſe enemies of the witneſſes will not be killed by the ſword, or any other weapon, but by the word of God, and thro' the prayers of the ſaints, and by the denunciations of God's judgments on them. The *Jews* expreſs the doctrines and traditions of their *Rabbins*, delivered from one to another, by fire, proceeding out of their mouths; who ſay [r], "*Rab* ſat before *Rabbi*, and *there went forth*, "זיקוקין דנור מפומיה, *ſparks of fire, from the* "*mouth* of *Rab*, into the mouth of *Rabbi*, and from "the mouth of *Rabbi*, into the mouth of *Rab*;" which the Gloſs explains of their communicating their doctrines and traditions to one another.

Ver. 6. *Theſe have power to ſhut heaven*, &c.] For theſe have the keys of the kingdom of heaven given them, and whatever they bind or looſe on earth, is bound or looſed in heaven; or in other words; having the true key of knowledge in matters, both of doctrine and diſcipline, given them, whatever they declare, according to the word of God, to be doctrines fit to be received or rejected, and to be the ordinances of God, and matters of worſhip to be attended to, and what are not, ſhould be ſo: and in particular, *that it rain not in the days of their prophecy*; that is, on their enemies, the antichriſtian party; for otherwiſe it muſt rain on thoſe to whom they miniſter, their prophecy itſelf being rain in a ſpiritual ſenſe: ſo rain is explained of prophecy in the *Targum* on *Iſ.* v. 6. which paraphraſes the words thus; "I will command the "prophets that they do not propheſy upon them "prophecy:" for this is to be underſtood not literally, ſince the days of their prophecy, or preaching in ſackcloth, are 1260, that is, 1260 years, and which is the term and duration of antichriſt's reign: wherefore, if this was the caſe, there muſt be a famine and great diſtreſs, during this long ſpace of time; but as this is not matter of fact, ſo it would not comport with that plenty, luxury, and deliciouſneſs, in which the whore of *Babylon* is ſaid to live: but the words are to be taken in a ſpiritual ſenſe, and to be underſtood of the Goſpel, and doctrines of it, or the word of God, which is ſometimes compared to rain, *Deut.* xxxii. 2. *Iſ.* lv. 10, 11. God is the author and giver of rain, and he only; none of the vanities, or idols of the *Gentiles*, can give it; has the rain a father? it has, but not on earth, only God who is in heaven; and ſo the Goſpel is of God, and it is he only that can make men able miniſters of it; the rain comes down from above, from heaven, and of the ſame original and deſcent is the Goſpel, it is the voice ſpeaking from heaven; the rain falls, according to divine direction, in one place, and not another, on one city, and not another; and ſo the Goſpel is ſometimes in one place, and ſometimes in another; it is forbid here, and ordered there. Showers of rain moiſten and ſoften the earth, and make it ſuſceptive of ſeed; and the Goſpel is the means of ſoftening hard hearts, and of making them capable of receiving ſuitable impreſſions: rain refreſhes the earth, revives the plants and trees, and makes them fruitful; and ſo the Goſpel, attended with a divine bleſſing, refreſhes drooping ſaints, revives the work of God in them, and is the means of filling them with all the fruits of righteouſneſs. Now the with-holding of this rain denotes a famine, not of bread, or a thirſt for water, but of hearing the word of the Lord; and as it is a judgment on a nation, or on a city, not to be rained upon, ſo it is a ſpiritual judgment upon a people, when God commands his clouds, his miniſters, to rain no rain of the Goſpel on them; and it is one of the judgments upon the antichriſtian party, that they have not the Goſpel preached unto them, nor any dew of powerful and efficacious grace diſtilled on them, but are left to their blindneſs, darkneſs, and hardneſs of heart: and theſe witneſſes carrying the Goſpel along with them, where they propheſy and preach, is called a ſhutting up heaven, ſo that it rain not on the followers of antichriſt, from whom they ſeparate themſelves, or by whom they are caſt out; and this is aſcribed to them, and is owing to their removal or ejection; much in the ſame ſenſe as the night and darkneſs are to the ſun's remove; that is, theſe follow upon it. The alluſion is to the with-holding of rain in the times of *Elijah*, one of the types of theſe witneſſes, becauſe of the idolatries of *Ahab* and *Jezabel*, 1 *Kings* xvii. 1. and xviii. 1, 41, 45. In like manner is the rain of the Goſpel with-held during the reign of antichriſt, becauſe of the idolatry and ſuperſtition of the apoſtacy. *And have power over waters to turn them to blood*; by *waters* are meant people, multitudes, nations, and tongues, and particularly thoſe over whom antichriſt reigns, *Rev.* xvii. 15. and turning of them into blood, deſigns the confuſions and wars raiſed among them on account of the propheſying of theſe witneſſes, and the perſecutions and blood-ſhed which followed upon it; which eventually are the end and iſſue of preaching the Goſpel; ſee *Matt.* x. 34, 35. The alluſion is to one of the plagues of *Egypt*, and to *Moſes* and *Aaron*, who were types of theſe witneſſes turning the waters of *Egypt* into blood, *Exod.* vii. 20. and anſwers to the ſecond and third vials, *Rev.* xvi. 3, 4. *And to ſmite the earth with all plagues as often as they will*; alluding to the plagues of *Egypt*, one of the names of *Rome*, or the *Roman* juriſdiction, in a following verſe, and which is meant by the earth here; and referring to the reſt of the ſeven vials poured out by theſe witneſſes, ſignified by ſeven angels; and their having power ſo to do as often as they will, is to be underſtood of theſe plagues being inflicted on the inhabitants of the earth, or followers of antichriſt, in anſwer to their propheſies and prayers, which are made according to the will of God, and ſo always have their effect, being ſuch.

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[r] T. Bab. Cholin, fol. 137. 2. Juchaſin, fol. 113. 2.

Ver. 7. *And when they ſhall have finiſhed their teſtimony*, &c.] For Chriſt, his truths and ordinances; when they are about to finiſh it, and almoſt concluded it, even towards the cloſe of the 1260 days or years, in which they muſt propheſy in ſackcloth: or elſe their teſtimony and their propheſying may be conſidered as two diſtinct things, and the one be finiſhed before the other; their open public teſtimony, as witneſſes, ſo as to be heard, attended to, and received, will be finiſhed before the laſt war of the beaſt againſt them, in which they'll be killed; but their propheſying will continue to the end of the beaſt's reign, theſe two being cotemporary, of equal date, beginning and ending together; for they'll propheſy, when they are dead; being dead they'll yet ſpeak, and their very death will be a propheſying or foretelling, that the ruin of antichriſt is at hand; and upon their reſurrection and aſcenſion, that will immediately come on. But when their teſtimony is finiſhed, by a free and open publication of the Goſpel, *the beaſt that aſcended out of the bottomleſs pit*; the ſame with that in ch. xiii. 11. with which compare ch. xvii. 8. and which is no other than the *Romiſh* antichriſt; called a beaſt for his filthineſs and cruelty; and ſaid to aſcend out of the bottomleſs pit, out of hell, becauſe his coming is after the working of ſatan: he is raiſed up, influenced and ſupported by him; he is a creature of his, and has his power, ſeat, and authority from him, the great dragon, the old ſerpent, called the devil and ſatan; his original and riſe are the ſame with thoſe of his doctrine and worſhip, the ſmoke of the bottomleſs pit; they all come out of it, and they'll return thither again. The *Alexandrian* copy, and ſome others, read, *the fourth beaſt that aſcendeth*, &c. as if it was the ſame with *Daniel*'s fourth beaſt, *Dan.* vii. 7, 19. as it doubtleſs is. Now this filthy and ſavage beaſt *ſhall make war againſt them*; the witneſſes; a war he has been making againſt the ſaints ever ſince he was in power, by his decrees, his counſels, his anathemas, and by ſword, fire, and faggot, ch. xiii. 7. but this will be his laſt war, and it will be a dreadful one; it will be the laſt ſtruggle of the beaſt; and tho' it will be attended with the conqueſt and ſlaughter of the witneſſes, yet it will lead on to, and iſſue in his own ruin: this is *the hour of temptation*, in ch. iii. 10. *and ſhall overcome them*; not by arguments taken out of the word of God, by which their mouths will be ſtopped, ſo as to be confounded, and have nothing to ſay, or ſo as to yield to him, and give up the truths and ordinances of the Goſpel; but by outward force and tyranny, ſo as that they ſhall be obliged to give way, and he'll take poſſeſſion of the kingdoms and nations, in which they have propheſied: he will firſt attack the outward court, the bulk of formal profeſſors, and will prevail over them; and then the outworks being taken, he will more eaſily come at the inner court worſhippers within the temple. *And kill them*; not corporally, but civilly; for as their dead bodies lying three days and a half, that is, three years and a half, unburied, and their reſurrection from the dead, and aſcenſion to heaven, cannot be underſtood literally, ſo neither the killing of them; not but that in this war there may be a great ſlaughter, and much blood ſhed, in a literal ſenſe: but the killing ſpoken of ſeems to regard them, not as men, but as witneſſes; they'll not be ſuffered to bear an open teſtimony any longer; they'll be ſilenced; they will be baniſhed, or removed into corners; and they will not only be under the cenſures, excommunications, and anathemas of the *Romiſh* antichriſt, but they will loſe all credit and eſteem among thoſe, who once pretended to be their friends; who will be aſhamed of them, and will join in reproaching and rejecting them; ſo that their miniſtrations will be quite ſhut up, and at an end.

Ver. 8. *And their dead bodies* ſhall lie *in the ſtreets of the great city*, &c.] Not *Jeruſalem*, which was deſtroyed when *John* had this viſion, and which will not be rebuilt at the time it refers to; nor is it ever called the great city, tho' the city of the great king; however, not in this book, tho' the new *Jeruſalem* is ſo called, ch. xxi. 10. but that can never be deſigned here; but the city of *Rome*, or the *Roman* juriſdiction, the whole empire of the *Romiſh* antichriſt, which is often called the great city in this book; ſee ch. xvi. 19. and xvii. 18. and xviii. 10, 16, 18, 21. The city of *Rome* itſelf was very large, and the *Roman* empire ſtill larger, ſo as to be called the whole world; and the antichriſtian ſee of *Rome* has been of great extent. Now as the *ſtreet* of a city denotes a public open place in it, a place of concourſe and reſort, *Prov.* i. 20, 21. the dead bodies of thoſe witneſſes being ſaid to lie here, may deſign the publickneſs of their ſilence, diſgrace, and contempt; and that the ſilencing and degrading them, and depriving them of all privileges, will be known all over the antichriſtian empire; and that they will be expoſed to public ignominy and ſhame, their perſons, their characters, their teſtimony, their doctrines, their writings, their churches and families, and all that belong to them: or elſe this *ſtreet* may deſign ſome part of the *Romiſh* juriſdiction, and it may be *Great-Britain* may be particularly deſigned; for where ſhould the dead bodies of the witneſſes lie, but where they are ſlain? and where can they be ſlain, but where they are? and where are they, at leaſt where are there ſo many as in theſe iſlands? It may be objected, that *Great-Britain* is not a part of the ſee of *Rome*, does not belong to the juriſdiction of it; to this it may be replied, that in this laſt war of the beaſt, the outer court will be given to the *Gentiles*, the bulk of the reformed churches will fall off to popery, and their countries again fall into the hands of the pope, and among the reſt, *Great-Britain*. The fears of Dr. *Goodwin* ſeem to be too juſt, and well-grounded, that the prophecy in *Dan.* xi. 45. reſpects our iſland, which ſpeaks of antichriſt planting *the tabernacles of his palace between the ſeas, in the glorious holy mountain*, or *the mountain of delight, of holineſs*. Now where has God ſuch a mountain of delight, or a people that are the darling of his ſoul, as here? where in all the globe is there ſuch a ſpot where God has ſo many ſaints, ſo many holy ones, as in this iſland? it may have been truly called a glorious holy mountain, or a mountain of delight; and what place between the ſeas is there, to which theſe characters can agree, but *Great-Britain?* Here then antichriſt will plant the tabernacles of his palace; but it will be but a tabernacle, or tent; it will be but for a ſhort time, as it follows, *yet he ſhall come to his end, and none ſhall help him.* Now this great city, in the ſtreet of which the bodies of the witneſſes will lie expoſed, is that *which ſpiritually is called Sodom and Egypt*; that is, it is called ſo in a myſtic and allegoric ſenſe, in diſtinction from the literal ſenſe; ſee 1 *Cor.* x. 3, 4. it is called *Sodom* becauſe of the fullneſs of bread, plenty and abundance of all outward good things in it; as well as for the pride and idleneſs of the prieſts, monks, and friars which ſwarm in it; and alſo for the open prophaneneſs and contempt of true and ſerious religion in it; and particularly for the ſin of ſodomy, ſo frequently committed here, with impunity, yea with allowance, and even with commendation. This ſin was extolled with praiſes, as *Brightman* obſerves, by *John a Caſa*, archbiſhop of *Beneventum*; and was defended in a book, publiſhed for that purpoſe, by one *Mutius*; and which was allowed by the bulls and letters patent of pope *Julius* the third: and it is called *Egypt*, becauſe of its tyranny and oppreſſion; as the *Egyptians* kept the *Iſraelites* in bondage, and made them to ſerve with rigour, and embittered their lives, ſo the pope, and his *Gentiles*, or *Egyptians*, have in a moſt oppreſſive and rigorous manner tyrannized over the ſouls, bodies, and eſtates of men; and alſo becauſe of its great idolatry, *Egypt* being very remarkable for the number of its deities, and the meanneſs of them; by which the idols and idolatries of the church of *Rome* may be fitly expreſſed: *where alſo our Lord was crucified*; that is, in the great city, which is fitly compared to *Sodom* and *Egypt*; for Chriſt was crucified actually in *Judea*, which was then become a *Roman* province, and under *Pontius Pilate*, a *Roman* governour, and by his order, and ſuffered a *Roman* kind of death, crucifixion, and for a crime he was charged with, tho' a falſe one, againſt *Cæſar* the *Roman* emperor; and Chriſt has been crucified at *Rome* itſelf in his members, who have ſuffered perſecution and death, and even the death of the croſs there; and he has been crucified afreſh, both by the ſins and immoralities of thoſe who have bore the chriſtian name there, and by the frequent ſacrifices of him in the maſs. Moreover, by this periphraſis may be meant *Jeruſalem*; and the ſenſe be, that as the great city, or juriſdiction of *Rome*, may be ſpiritually or myſtically called *Sodom* and *Egypt*, ſo likewiſe the place where our Lord was crucified, that is, *Jeruſalem*; and that for this reaſon, becauſe that as *Jeruſalem* ſtoned and killed the prophets of the Lord, and upon the inhabitants of it were found all the righteous blood ſhed upon the earth, ſo in *Rome*, in myſtical *Babylon*, will be found the blood of prophets, and of ſaints, and of all that were ſlain upon earth, *Matt.* xxiii. 35, 37. *Rev.* xviii. 24. The *Alexandrian* copy, the *Complutenſian* edition, the *Vulgate Latin*, *Syriac*, and *Ethiopic* verſions read, *where alſo their Lord was crucified*; and the *Arabic* verſion more expreſly, *the Lord of theſe two*, i. e. the two witneſſes.

Ver. 9. *And they of the people, and kindreds, and tongues, and nations*, &c.] Theſe are either the enemies of the witneſſes, who conſiſted of the people, kindred, tongues, and nations, out from among whom they were choſen, redeemed, and called; and before or againſt whom *John*, perſonating theſe witneſſes, propheſied; and over whom the *Romiſh* antichriſt ſits and rules, chap. v. 9. and x. 11. and xiii. 7. and xvii. 15. or elſe their friends, either real or pretended; ſince it is not ſaid *the people*, nor *all the people, kindred, tongues, and nations*, as it is when the antichriſtian party are ſpoken of; and ſeeing *they that dwell upon the earth*, in the following verſe, are mentioned as a diſtinct company from theſe; and theſe are ſaid to be ſome *of*, or *out* of the people, *&c.* and accordingly the following words will admit of different ſenſes: *ſhall ſee their* *dead bodies three days and a half, and ſhall not ſuffer their dead bodies to be put in graves.* Now, tho' this is not literally to be underſtood, yet it may have ſome reference to the uſages of the witneſſes enemies, who ſometimes have not allowed them a burial: ſo the bodies of *John Huſs*, and *Jerom* of *Prague*, were burnt, and their aſhes caſt into the *Rhine*; the body of *Peter Ramus* was caſt about the ſtreets, thrown into ponds and ditches, then dragged out, and beat with rods; and ſome have had their bones dug up again, after they have been buried many years, and then burnt, and their aſhes ſcattered abroad, as *Wicleff* and *Bucer* here in *England*: but as this is to be underſtood in a myſtical and alluſive ſenſe, the meaning is, as it may refer to enemies, that they ſhall ſee, and look upon with joy and pleaſure, and with ſcorn and contempt, and inſult over the witneſſes, being ſilenced and deprived of power and opportunity of propheſying, and as quite diſpirited, caſt down, and trodden under foot; and whereas not to have a burial granted, is always reckoned a piece of the greateſt barbarity and inhumanity, as well as of ignominy and reproach, and is expreſſive of a moſt unhappy and miſerable condition; ſee *Pſ.* lxxix. 2, 3. *Jer.* xxii. 19. *Eccl.* vi. 3. ſo it here ſignifies, that the enemies of the witneſſes having obtained power over them, will not only inſult them, but treat them in a very cruel and inhuman manner, and expoſe them to ſcorn and contempt; and it repreſents their caſe, as being very uncomfortable, and deplorable: or as it may reſpect friends, real or pretended, ſuch as had been, or were, the ſenſe is, that they ſhall ſee them in their unhappy condition, and look upon them with pity and compaſſion; and ſhall thoroughly conſider, and lay to heart, their caſe and circumſtances; and ſhall remember them, their doctrine and teſtimony, and their godly lives, and not ſuffer them to be buried in oblivion; and ſhall alſo call to mind this prediction concerning them, that they ſhould continue in this ſtate but three days and a half, and then revive; and therefore they ſhall entertain hopes of them, as perſons ſometimes do of their friends, when they are in doubt whether they are dead or no, and therefore keep them above ground for ſome time, and will not ſuffer them to be buried; for when put into the grave, there's no more hope, or when a perſon has been dead, as in the caſe of *Lazarus*, four days; ſo that this conduct may expreſs the kindneſs and hope of theſe friends: or it may be, the meaning is, that they will not look at them but very ſhyly, and at a diſtance, as being aſhamed of them, and having no heart to ſuccour, relieve, and encourage them; but act as did the prieſt and the levite towards the man that fell among thieves, and was left half dead, looked upon him, and turned from him, to the other ſide of the way; as alſo, that they will not entertain them, or give them any ſhelter and refuge among them, when in this their diſtreſs, they ſhall apply to them: the grave is a reſting-place; there the wicked ceaſe from troubling, and there the weary are at reſt, *Job* iii. 17. Such reſting-places the witneſſes in former times have found, as the *Engliſh* in queen *Mary*'s days found at *Frankford* and *Geneva*, and other places, and ſince in *Holland*; and as now the *French* refugees here, who being killed in a civil ſenſe in their own country, are put into graves, or are allowed places of reſt and ſecurity here: but now theſe witneſſes will find none; thoſe who pretended to be their friends will look ſhy upon them, and not harbour them, yea, will not ſuffer any to do it; they will by ſome public act, thro' fear of the popiſh party, forbid the reception and entertainment of them. The time that this will laſt, will be *three days and a half*; after which, as in ver. 11. they'll live again, which cannot be underſtood literally of ſo many preciſe days; for it will not be poſſible, that in ſo ſhort a time, the news of the ſlaying of the witneſſes ſhould be ſpread among the inhabitants of the earth, and they be able to expreſs their general joy and rejoicing, and to ſend their gifts to one another upon this occaſion, as is ſignified in the following verſe; nor does this deſign ſo long a time, as the time and times, and half a time, elſewhere mentioned; or that it is a period of the ſame date and duration with the forty-two months, in which the holy city is trodden under foot, and the 1260 days, or years in which the witneſſes propheſy in ſackcloth; for during that time they will propheſy, and hold forth their teſtimony, tho' in ſackcloth; but now they will be killed, and during this ſpace will lie dead, and in entire ſilence: beſides, it will be when they ſhall have finiſhed their teſtimony, or towards the cloſe of the 1260 days or years, that this war and ſlaughter will be, and when theſe three days and a half will take place, which are to be underſtood of three years and a half, according to the prophetic ſtile, a day for a year; and ſeems intended for the comfort of the ſaints, that this moſt afflictive and diſtreſſed condition of the witneſſes ſhould laſt but for a little while. It is made a queſtion, whether this war with the witneſſes, and the ſlaughter of them, and their lying unburied, are over or no: ſome have thought that theſe things had their accompliſhment in the council of *Conſtance*, held about the year 1414, and which laſted three years and a half exactly, when thoſe two witneſſes, *John Huſs*, and *Jerom* of *Prague*, were killed, inſulted, and triumphed over by this council, which was made up of almoſt all nations. *Brightman* refers it to the *Smalcaldic* war in *Germany* in 1547, when the proteſtant army was beaten, and *John Frederick*, elector of *Saxony*, and *Erneſt*, the ſon of the *Lantgrave*, and after that the *Lantgrave* himſelf, were taken priſoners; which was a grievous blow to the proteſtant cauſe, and occaſioned great rejoicing in the popiſh party; but in the year 1550, juſt three years and a half after that defeat, the men of *Magdeburgh* roſe up with great ſpirit and courage, and revived the cauſe. About this time was the council of *Trent*, to which alſo the ſame writer accommodates theſe things, which conſiſted of men of all nations, and continued three years and a half; when the authority of the ſcriptures was deſtroyed, which he ſuppoſes are the witneſſes; when they were ſuppreſſed and ſilenced, and lay as a mere carkaſs, a dead letter, without any life in them: and it is eaſy to obſerve, that there have been ſeveral periods of time, in which there has been a ſeeming fulfillment of theſe things; the perſecution under queen *Mary*, and the burning of the martyrs in her time, continued about three years and a half; the maſſacre in *France* in 1572, threatened an utter extirpation of the proteſtant religion there, which yet revived in 1576, much about the ſame ſpace of time here mentioned; and there are ſeveral others that have been obſerved by writers; but what ſeems moſt remarkable of all, is the caſe of the proteſtants in the valleys of *Piedmont*, commonly called the *Vaudois*. The duke of *Savoy*, their ſovereign, by an edict, dated *January* 31, 168$\frac{5}{6}$, N. S. forbad the exerciſe of their religion on pain of death, ordered their churches to be demoliſhed, and their miniſters to be baniſhed; which was publiſhed in the valleys *April* the 11th, and was put in execution on the 22d of the ſame month, by *Savoy* and *French* troops, who killed great numbers of them, took others, and put them into priſons, whom they releaſed about the beginning of *December* 1686, and ſuffered them to depart into other countries, where they were kindly received, relieved, and preſerved, particularly by the kingdoms and ſtates of *England*, *Holland*, *Brandenburgh*, *Geneva*, and *Switzerland*, while the popiſh party were rejoicing at their ruin: and toward the latter end of the year 1689, about three years and a half after the publiſhing of the edict, theſe people were inſpired, on a ſudden, with a ſpirit of reſolution and courage; and, contrary to the advice of their friends, who thought their caſe deſperate, ſecretly paſſed the lake of *Geneva*, and entred *Savoy* with ſword in hand, and recovered their ancient poſſeſſions; and by the month of *April*, A. D. 1690, eſtabliſhed themſelves in it, notwithſtanding the troops of *France* and *Savoy*, to whom they were comparatively few, and whom they ſlew in great numbers, with little loſs to themſelves; when the duke perceiving they were encouraged and aſſiſted by foreign princes, and he having left the *French* intereſt, re-called the reſt of them, and re-eſtabliſhed them by an edict, ſigned *June* 4, 1690, juſt three years and a half after their total diſſipation, and gave leave to the *French* refugees to return with them. Now I take it, that theſe ſeveral things which have happened at certain times, in particular places, are ſo many hints and pledges of what hereafter will be univerſal to the witneſſes in all places where they are. It would be very deſireable if it could be aſcertained, and concluded upon a good foundation, that this affair of the killing of the witneſſes was over; but becauſe of the following things it cannot be; for the outward court is not yet given to the *Gentiles*, at leaſt not the whole of it, which muſt be, 'ere they can come at the witneſſes in the inner court to ſlay them: they have indeed attacked it, and have taken ſome part of it, as in *Germany*, *Poland*, &c. but as yet not in *Great-Britain*, *Holland*, &c. at leaſt not thoroughly, tho' it is plain they are getting ground. Moreover, the witneſſes have not finiſhed their teſtimony, they are ſtill propheſying in ſackcloth; whereas it will be when they have finiſhed it, and towards the cloſe of the 1260 days or years, that they will be killed: to which add, that the ruin of antichriſt will quickly follow their riſing and aſcenſion; ſo that if any of the above inſtances had been the fulfilling of theſe things relating to the witneſſes, antichriſt muſt have been deſtroyed before now. And it may be further obſerved, that the ſecond wo, which is the *Turkiſh* wo, will, upon the fulfillment of theſe things, paſs away; and the third wo, or the ſounding of the ſeventh trumpet, will immediately take place, which brings on the kingdom of Chriſt; whereas the *Turkiſh* government is ſtill in being, and in great power; and there is no appearance, as yet, of the kingdoms of this world becoming the kingdoms of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. There may be an alluſion in this ſpace of time, to the time that *Antiochus*, called *Epiphanes*, held *Jeruſalem* in his hands, after he had conquered it, which was juſt three years and ſix months [s], during which time he ſpoiled the temple, and cauſed the daily ſacrifice to ceaſe: this term of time is much ſpoken of by the *Jews*; ſo long they ſay *Nebuchadnezzar* beſieged *Jeruſalem*, and likewiſe *Veſpaſian*, and alſo three years and a half *Adrian* beſieged *Bither* [t].

Ver. 10. *And they that dwell upon the earth*, &c.] Out of which the beaſt aroſe, and over which he reigns, even the inhabitants of the *Roman* empire, often in this book called the earth, the followers of antichriſt, men that mind nothing but earth, and earthly things: *ſhall rejoice over them, and make merry, and ſhall ſend gifts one to another*; as is uſual with perſons, and was with the *Jews*, to do in times of public rejoicing; ſee *Eſther* ix. 18, 19. *Neh.* viii. 10, 11. *Becauſe theſe two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth*; not becauſe they were tormented by them, but becauſe they were now freed from their tormenting miniſtry; they had tormented them by the preaching of the Goſpel, which is fooliſhneſs, and the ſavour of death to natural men, and gives them pain, and fills them with vexation and wrath; by their teſtimony which they had bore for Chriſt, and againſt antichriſt; by their ſharp reproof of them for their falſe doctrine, and will-worſhip, and their impure lives and converſations; by their own holy lives, which would ſometimes flaſh light into their conſciences, and make them uneaſy; and by their foretelling the calamities and ruin, temporal and eternal, that would come upon them; but now they are ſilenced, and they hear and ſee no more of theſe things at which they rejoice.

Ver. 11. *And after three days and a half*, &c.] When it was certain they were dead, and all hope of reviving was over; ſee *John* xi. 39. that is, three years and a half: *the Spirit of life from God entred into them*; this phraſe is expreſſive of a reſurrection. The *Jews* frequently call the general reſurrection, תחייה, *a quickening*, and have the very phraſe here uſed; for ſpeaking of the reſurrection, they ſay [u], רוחא דחיי, *the ſpirit of life* does not dwell but in the holy land. This reſurrection of the witneſſes is not to be underſtood of a corporal reſurrection; for there is no reaſon to believe that there will be a reſurrection of any particular ſaints, until the general reſurrection, which will be at the perſonal coming of Chriſt, and at the beginning of the thouſand years, and after the ſounding of the ſeventh trumpet; whereas this will be before that, and towards the cloſe of the ſixth trumpet: and beſides, the death of theſe witneſſes is not corporal, as has been obſerved: nor is a ſpiritual reſurrection from the death of ſin, to a life of grace, intended, which is owing to the ſpirit of life from Chriſt; for theſe witneſſes were ſuch who had been quickened, and raiſed in this ſenſe antecedent to their propheſying and killing; but a civil reſurrection of them, or a reſurrection of them as witneſſes, when their ſpirits will revive, and they'll take heart and courage again to appear for Chriſt: and this may be underſtood of the ſame individual perſons that were ſilenced, or of thoſe that ſucceeded ſuch that corporally died in the war of the beaſt, or during this interval; and ſo theſe witneſſes may be ſaid to riſe in them, they appearing in the ſame ſpirit they did; juſt as *John* the *Baptiſt* came in the ſpirit and power of *Elias*: and this will be owing to the ſpirit of life from God, entring into them; which is ſaid in alluſion to the living ſoul of man, which returns to God, and at the reſurrection, whether particular or general, comes from him, and re-enters the body; and which alſo is owing to the Spirit of God, by whom mortal bodies will be quickened; and in alluſion to the breathing on the dry bones in *Ezekiel*'s viſion, *Ezek.* xxxvii. and the ſenſe is, that the Spirit of God will inſpire theſe witneſſes with freſh life and vigour, zeal and reſolution; ſo that tho' they have been ſo long ſilent, lifeleſs, and diſpirited, they ſhall now riſe in high ſpirits, and bravely exert themſelves in the cauſe of Chriſt; and this will not be by any worldly power and authority, or by any ſecular arm, that ſhall encourage them, but by the Spirit of God, who ſhall breathe upon them, and afreſh quicken them, and fill them with reſolution and courage: *and they ſtood upon their feet*; in great numbers, like the army in *Ezekiel*'s viſion; and will re-aſſume their former ſtation, and be in a poſition, and a ſtate of readineſs to ſerve the Lord, and to defend his truths, and diſcharge their duty with boldneſs and courage, fearing the face of none: *and great fear fell upon them which ſaw them*; in this poſture; either on their enemies, who may fear that they ſhould be tormented with them again; that the things which they had foretold concerning their ruin, are now coming upon them; that they ſhall be turned out of their places of profit, and loſe all their worldly advantages, and carnal pleaſures now, and be miſerable to all eternity: or upon their friends, either their falſe-hearted ones, that would not ſuccour them when in diſtreſs, who may fear that God, whoſe finger they will ſee in this matter, will by them reſent their conduct towards them; or elſe their real friends, who may be filled with reverence and awe of the divine majeſty, as the church was upon the buſineſs of *Ananias* and *Sapphira*, *Acts* v. 11.

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[s] Joſeph. de Bello Jud. l. 1. c. 1. §. 7.

[t] Echa Rabbati, fol. 43. 4. & 46. 3. & 48. 1. & 52. 2. & 58. 3. T. Hieroſ. Taanith, fol. 68. 4. Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 93. 1.

[u] Zohar in Gen. fol. 79. 3.

Ver. 12. *And they heard a great voice from heaven*, &c.] The *Complutenſian* edition reads, *I heard*, i. e. *John*; and ſo the *Syriac* and *Arabic* verſions; but the copies in general read *they*; not the enemies, but the witneſſes: and this ſeems not to come from any chriſtian civil magiſtrate in the church, but from Chriſt himſelf; not but that Chriſt may make uſe of ſuch, for the bringing of his people into a more glorious and comfortable ſtate in this world: *ſaying unto them, come up hither*; as the angel ſaid to *John*, ch. iv. 1. and Chriſt will ſay to his people, tho' on another account, *Matt.* xxv. 34. *And they aſcended up to heaven in a cloud*; which is to be underſtood not literally, for no man hath aſcended to heaven, nor will any, until the thouſand years are ended, when the ſaints will, in a body, aſcend thither; but myſtically, of a more glorious ſtate of the church; ſo to aſcend to heaven, ſignifies a more exalted ſtate in a prince, or a kingdom, *Iſ.* xiv. 13. and here intends a ſtate of comfortable communion of the ſaints one with another, of great purity and holineſs, of large enjoyments of bleſſings and privileges, and of great ſecurity from enemies, and of great glory, and honour, and power, that ſhall be beſtowed upon them; they now dwelling on high, and their place of defence being the munition of rocks. This will be the beginning of the ſpiritual reign of Chriſt; and this aſcenſion of the witneſſes will be in a cloud, in alluſion to our Lord's aſcenſion to heaven, and as expreſſive of that glory and majeſty which will be put upon theſe riſen witneſſes, and in which they ſhall enter into this happy ſtate of things; or it may be, that this may denote that the firſt appearance of theſe happy times, and of Chriſt's ſpiritual reign in his church, and their more comfortable enjoyment, will be at firſt but dim and obſcure, and yet ſuch as in compariſon of their former ſtate, will be viſible to, and be taken notice of, even by their very enemies: *and their enemies beheld them*; going up to heaven, or entring into a purer, and more glorious, and ſpiritual ſtate; for the mountain of the Lord's houſe will be eſtabliſhed upon the top of the mountains, and *Jeruſalem* ſhall be made the praiſe of the whole earth, an eternal excellency, and the joy of many generations; and this ſhall be ſeen and known of all, tho' to their grief and ſorrow.

Ver. 13. *And the ſame hour was there a great earthquake*, &c.] Or *the ſame day*, as the *Complutenſian* edition, and ſome copies, read; that is, at the time of the reſurrection and aſcenſion of the witneſſes, as there was at the reſurrection of Chriſt; and is to be underſtood of a very great commotion in the civil affairs of kingdoms and nations within the *Roman* juriſdiction, as there was when *Rome* pagan was near its ruin, ch. vi. 12. *And the tenth part of the city fell.* Mr. *Daubuz* interprets *the earthquake* of the irruption of the *Ottomans* upon the *Grecian* empire, and the *tenth* part of the city, of the *Greek* church, and the falling of it, of its loſs of liberty, and falling into ſlavery; but ſomething yet to come is here intended. By *the city* is meant the city of *Rome*, the great city, mentioned in ver. 8. and by *the tenth part* of it, may be deſigned either *Rome* itſelf, which as it now is, according to the obſervation of ſome, is but a tenth part of what it was once; ſo that the ſame thing is meant, as when it is ſaid, *Babylon* is fallen, is fallen: or it may deſign the tithes and profits which ariſe from the ſeveral kingdoms belonging to the juriſdiction and ſee of *Rome*, which now will fall off from thoſe who uſed to ſhare them, upon this new and ſpiritual ſtate of things; the Goſpel daily gaining ground, and enlightening the minds of men, and freeing them from the ſlavery they were held in: or elſe the tenfold government of the *Roman* empire, or the ten kings that gave their kingdoms to the whore of *Rome*, and are the ten horns of the beaſt, on which ſhe ſits, who will now hate her, and burn her fleſh with fire; or rather one of the ten kingdoms, into which the *Roman* weſtern empire was divided. Dr. *Goodwin* ſeems inclined to think, that *Great-Britain* is intended, which having been gained over to the popiſh party, will now fall off again: but I rather think the kingdom of *France* is meant, the laſt of the ten kingdoms, which roſe up out of the ruins of the *Roman* empire, which will be conquered, and which will be the means of its reformation from popery. *And in the earthquake were ſlain of men ſeven thouſand*; the meaning is, that in the commotions, maſſacres, tumults, and wars which will be throughout the empire, ſuch a number of men will be ſlain; which is either put for a greater number, a certain for an uncertain, as in *Rom.* xi. 4. and perhaps in reference to the account there; otherwiſe ſeven thouſand is but a ſmall number to be ſlain in battle; or as it is in the original text, *the names of men ſeven thouſand*. Now it is obſerved by ſome, that the ſmalleſt name of number belonging to men, is a centurion, or captain of an hundred men; and ſuppoſing that to be meant, then ſeven thouſand names of men will imply, that in an hour, or about a fortnight's time, may be ſlain throughout all *Europe*, in battles and maſſacres, about ſeven hundred thouſand men, which is a very large number: or names of men may ſignify men of name, of great renown, as in *Numb.* xvi. 2. and then if ſeven thouſand men of name, officers in armies, ſhould be ſlain, how great muſt be the number of the common ſoldiers? Some have thought, that eccleſiaſtical dignities, or men diſtinguiſhed by names and titles, ſuch as cardinals, archbiſhops, biſhops, prieſts, &c. and the whole rabble of the antichriſtian hierarchy, which will now fall, and be utterly demoliſhed, are intended: ***and the remnant were affrighted***; who were not ſlain in this earthquake; theſe will be affected with the judgments of God upon others, and be made ſenſible of their danger, and of their deliverance, which will ſo work upon them, as to reform them from popery: ***and gave glory to the God of heaven***; will acknowledge the juſtice of God, and the righteouſneſs of his judgments upon thoſe that were ſlain, and his goodneſs to them, who are ſpared; will confeſs their tranſgreſſions and ſins, they have been guilty of; and give the glory of their deliverance, not to their idols and images, but to the true God, whoſe religion they now embrace; for this reſpects the large converſions among the popiſh party, to the true religion, under the influence of the grace of God, thro' the preaching of the Goſpel, which will now be ſpread throughout the world.

Ver. 14. *The ſecond wo is paſt*, &c.] Not in *John*'s time, only in a viſionary way; the meaning is, that the ſecond wo-trumpet, which is the ſixth, will now have done ſounding, when the four angels, bound in the river *Euphrates*, ſhall have been looſed, and they, with their horſemen, ſhall have done what they were deſigned to do; when the two witneſſes ſhall have been ſlain, and are raiſed again, and aſcended to heaven; and the things attending, or following thereon, as the earthquake, and ſlaughter, and the converſions of men, are accompliſhed. And ***behold the third wo cometh quickly***; immediately, upon the paſſing of the other; namely, the ſounding of the ſeventh trumpet, as follows.

Ver. 15. *And the ſeventh angel ſounded*, &c.] The laſt of the ſeven angels, who had trumpets given them to ſound, ch. viii. 2, 6. The days of the voice of this angel, as in ch. x. 7. can't refer to the times of *Conſtantine*; for tho' there was then a ſtrange turn of affairs in favour of the kingdom of Chriſt, when there was a great ſpread of the Goſpel, and large converſions in many places, and many churches were raiſed and formed in ſeveral countries, and the whole empire became chriſtian; yet this, as we have ſeen, came to paſs under the ſixth ſeal, before any of the trumpets were ſounded, and much leſs this ſeventh and laſt; nor do they belong to the times of the reformation in *Germany*. *Brightman* fixes the ſounding of this trumpet to the year 1558, when the kings of *Sweden* and *Denmark* ſet up the Goſpel in their kingdoms, and reformed them from popery; and when queen *Elizabeth* came to the throne of *England*, and rooted out great part of the *Romiſh* ſuperſtition: but it is certain, that this angel has not yet ſounded his trumpet, and therefore can't refer to any thing paſt, but to what is to come; we are yet under the ſixth trumpet; the outward court is not yet given to the *Gentiles*; the witneſſes are not ſlain, and much leſs riſen and aſcended; the earthquake, the fall of the tenth part of the city, and the ſlaughter of ſeven thouſand names of men, with what will follow thereon, are things yet to come; the *Turkiſh* wo is not over, and antichriſt ſtill reigns, and the kingdoms of this world are far from appearing to be the kingdoms of Chriſt. Some think, and indeed the generality of interpreters, that this reſpects the voice of the archangel, and trump of God, the laſt trump, which will ſound at the reſurrection of the dead, and the day of judgment; but none of theſe appear in the account of things under this trumpet; but rather the whole has a view to the ſpiritual reign of Chriſt, when both the eaſtern and weſtern antichriſt will be deſtroyed; the Goſpel will be carried all over the world, and there will be large converſions both among *Jews* and *Gentiles*, and Chriſt will reign in a ſpiritual manner over all the earth. Hence it follows, ***and there were great voices in heaven***; theſe are either the voices of the angels in heaven, who rejoice at every appearance, and breaking forth of Chriſt's kingdom and glory, as in ch. v. 11, 12. and vii. 11, 12. and indeed, if they rejoice at the converſion of one ſinner, at a ſingle addition to Chriſt's intereſt, then much more will they, when the kingdoms of this world become his; or rather theſe may be the voices of the multitude of the ſaints in the churches, the ſame company with thoſe in ch. xix. 1—7. who expreſs their joy at the judgment of the great whore, and at the marriage of the Lamb; and who, as here, are attended with the thankſgivings and hallelujahs of the four and twenty elders: and it may be, that theſe are alſo the voices of the four living creatures, the miniſters of the word, ſince the four and twenty elders generally follow them, ch. iv. 9, 10. and v. 14. they may be the witneſſes, who were ſilenced, but are now raiſed up, and are aſcended into heaven, and their mouths are opened, and their voices heard again: ***ſaying, the kingdoms of this world are become*** the kingdoms ***of our Lord, and of his Chriſt***; by ***the kingdoms of this world*** are meant, worldly kingdoms, which are ſet up by worldly power, and are ſupported by worldly policy, and ſubſiſt upon worldly principles and maxims; the government of which proceeds upon worldy ends and views; in diſtinction from the kingdom of Chriſt, which is not of this world, and is not ſupported by any ſuch methods; and they are the kingdoms, into which the world is divided, which, and the glory of them, ſatan ſhowed to Chriſt, and inſolently offered to give him them, if he would worſhip him; but theſe were to come to Chriſt in another way, and at another time. The *Alexandrian* copy, and ſome others, the *Complutenſian* edition, the *Vulgate Latin* verſion, and all the *Oriental* verſions, read in the ſingular number, ***the kingdom of this world***; the whole government of it, which is his by right of nature, and will be overturned, and overturned again and again, till he comes, whoſe right it is; and then all power, rule, and authority will be put down, and his kingdom, which will fill the face of the whole earth, will take place: all the antichriſtian ſtates and kingdoms are here intended, particularly the kingdoms, into which the *Roman* empire, ſometimes called the whole world, *Luke* ii. 1. is divided, which are ten; one of the ten, a tenth part of the city or juriſdiction of *Rome* will fall at the cloſe of the ſixth trumpet, and the other nine, or the other nine parts, will fall at the ſounding of the ſeventh; the ten kings that have given their kingdoms to the beaſt, will have an averſion to the whore, hate her, and burn her fleſh, will fall off from her, and into the hands of Chriſt; there will be a general and thorough reformation from popery in all the kingdoms of the *Roman* empire: but tho' theſe are greatly intended, yet not only they, but the *Mahometan* nations alſo, as the *Turkiſh* wo will now be over, and the great river *Euphrates* dried up, to make way for the kings of the eaſt, thoſe large kingdoms, and countries of *China*, *Tartary*, and *Perſia*; and theſe now under the power of the *Turk*, will embrace the chriſtian faith; and alſo all the pagan nations are to be taken into the account, and who will now enjoy the light of the Goſpel: and all, and every one of thoſe pagan, papal, and *Mahometan* kingdoms, will *become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Chriſt*; by *our Lord* may be deſigned God the Father, who is the Lord of the whole earth, the Lord God Almighty, and is acknowledged as ſuch by angels and men; and by *his Chriſt*, his Son Jeſus Chriſt, who is equal with him; and what belongs to the one, belongs to the other; and who, as mediator, is his anointed one; anointed to be prophet, prieſt, and king; anointed with the oil of gladneſs, the Holy Ghoſt; ſee *Pſ.* ii. 2. where the ſame diſtinction is. In the *Targum* on *Iſ.* iv. 2, mention is made of, משיחא דיי, the *Meſſiah*, or *Chriſt of Jehovah*: and in the ſame *Targum* on *Iſ.* liii. 10. it is ſaid, *they ſhall look*, במלכות משיחהין, *upon the kingdom of their Meſſiah*; tho' it may be rather that Chriſt is deſigned by both theſe phraſes, and the words be rendred, *our Lord, even his Chriſt*; ſince the phraſe, *our Lord*, as well as Chriſt, is generally underſtood of Jeſus Chriſt in the New Teſtament; and who is Lord of all, of angels, and of men, and the Chriſt of God. Now theſe kingdoms will become his, not merely by right, for ſo they are his already, by right of nature, and creation, and preſervation; but theſe have ſhaken off his goverment, and have refuſed to have him to reign over them, and have fallen into the hands of uſurpers, as ſatan, the god of this world, the *Romiſh* antichriſt, that reigns over the kings of the earth, and *Mahomet* the king of the locuſts; but now theſe will, in fact, come into his hands, and be under his government; they will acknowledge him as their Lord and ſovereign, and fear and worſhip him, as king of ſaints: and this will be brought about, not by force of arms, as *Mahomet* got his dominions; nor by policy and fraud, by impoſture and lying wonders, by which the pope of *Rome* has obtained his authority, over the nations; but partly by the pouring out of the vials of God's wrath upon the ſeat of the beaſt, and upon the river *Euphrates*, that is, both upon the pope, and *Turk*, which will weaken and deſtroy their power and authority, and make way for Chriſt to ſet up his kingdom; and partly, and chiefly, by the preaching of the Goſpel: now will an open door be ſet, which none can ſhut; many will run to and fro, and knowledge will be increaſed; the earth will be covered with it, as the ſea with waters; multitudes of ſouls every where will be converted; a nation will be born at once; churches will be ſet up in every place, which are Chriſt's kingdom, where he reigns, and where his ſubjects are, and his laws are put in execution; where his word will be now faithfully preached, his ordinances purely adminiſtred, and he in his perſon, office, and grace, will be alone exalted: the conſequence of which will be, *and he ſhall reign for ever and ever*; no uſurper will ever ſtart up more, or obtain; neither ſatan, nor the beaſt, nor the falſe prophet, ſhall ever regain their power and authority any more; neither paganiſm, nor judaiſm, nor antichriſtianiſm, either papal or *Mahometan* ſhall ever have place more; Chriſt will reign in this ſpiritual way, more or leſs, until he comes perſonally, and then he'll reign with his people on earth a thouſand years; and when they are ended, he'll reign with them in heaven to all eternity; for tho' at the end of theſe years, he ſhall deliver up the kingdom to the Father, yet he will not ceaſe to reign; indeed he'll nor reign in the ſame manner, but he'll reign with equal power and authority, and over, and with the ſame perſons. The *Vulgate Latin* verſion adds, *Amen*.

Ver. 16. *And the four and twenty elders*, &c.] The ſame with thoſe in ch. iv. 4. *which ſat before God on their ſeats*; as they are alſo there deſcribed; and which may be expreſſive of their enjoyment of the divine preſence; and alſo of their quiet and undiſturbed ſituation, being reſtored to their former places, which they now poſſeſs without moleſtation and interruption; for as theſe are the repreſentatives of Goſpel churches in all ages, they were with the church in the wilderneſs during the 1260 days, or years: hence we hear nothing of them from the time of the ſealing of the hundred and forty and four thouſand, and during the ſounding of the trumpets; but now they are reſtored to their former ſeats, and upon this wonderful change of things in the world, they *fell upon their faces and worſhipped God*; in a very humble and reverential poſture, and in a way of praiſe and thankſgiving.

Ver. 17. *Saying, we give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty*, &c.] The perſon addreſſed is the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, whoſe the kingdoms are become, and who now reigns in great power and authority; he is Lord of all, and truly and properly God, and the Almighty, as his works of creation, preſervation, redemption, raiſing himſelf from the dead, *&c.* declare; and each of theſe titles exceedingly well ſuit him, when his viſible kingdom on earth will be ſo greatly enlarged: *which art, and waſt, and art to come*; the everlaſting *I am*, the unchangeable *Jehovah*: the phraſe is expreſſive of the eternity and immutability of Chriſt; ſee the note on ch. i. 8. and it may be obſerved, that whereas in this deſcription of him, it is ſaid, *and art to come*, this therefore does not belong to his perſonal, but to his ſpiritual reign; he will not be as yet come in perſon, to raiſe the dead, and judge the world, when theſe voices ſhall be in heaven, and theſe congratulations of the elders be made: the reaſon of their praiſe and thankſgiving follows, *becauſe thou haſt taken to thee thy great power, and haſt reigned*; power always belonged to him, as God; he always was the mighty God, and as ſuch, help for his people was laid upon him, he being mighty to ſave, and able to bear the government of them, laid on his ſhoulders; and as mediator, all power in heaven, and in earth, was given to him at his reſurrection; and he had a name given him above every name, when exalted at the right hand of God, and was made, or declared, Lord and Chriſt; and from that time he has, in ſome meaſure, exerted his power and reigned: he endued his Apoſtles with power from an high; and he went forth in the miniſtry of the Goſpel conquering, and to conquer; and has ever ſince reigned in the hearts of his people; but now he'll manifeſt and diſplay his *great* power; he will ſhow it more openly, and uſe it more extenſively; his kingdom ſhall be from ſea to ſea, and from the river to the ends of the earth; he ſhall be king over all the earth; his power has been ſeen in ages paſt, but now the *greatneſs* of his power will be made manifeſt; he has always had a kingdom on earth, but now the *greatneſs* of the kingdom, under the whole heaven, will be his.

Ver. 18. *And the nations were angry*, &c.] See *Pſ.* xcix. 1. which the *Septuagint* render, the *Lord reigns, let the nations be angry.* This refers not to the times of the dragon, or the pagan *Roman* emperors, who were wroth with the woman, the church, and made war with her ſeed; but *Rome* papal, and its *Gentiles*, are intended; theſe are the nations, that antichriſt reigns over: and it does not ſo much deſign their anger againſt Chriſt, and his people, expreſſed by their anathemas, excomunications, murders, and maſſacres, and bloody perſecutions,

tions, which could not be cauſe of thankſgiving to the elders; but their anger and reſentment at his power and reign, at having the outward court taken from them, ſaid to be given them, ver. 2. and at their loſs of power, profit, pleaſure, and plenty, thro' the fall of *Babylon*, and the ſetting up of Chriſt's kingdom; and tho' theſe things will make the *Gentiles*, the followers of antichriſt, gnaſh their teeth, it will occaſion joy and thankſgiving among the ſaints: *and thy wrath is come*; the time is come to make *Babylon*, or the *Romiſh* antichriſt, to drink of the wine of the fierceneſs of divine wrath; as the time of the Lamb's wrath and vengeance upon *Rome* pagan, was come, at the opening of the ſixth ſeal; ſo the time of his wrath and vengeance on *Rome* papal will be come at the ſounding of the ſeventh trumpet: *and the time of the dead, that they ſhould be judged*; not the time of the wicked, who are dead in ſins, while they live, and who die in their ſins, not their time to be raiſed from the dead, in order to be judged, for they will not riſe till after the thouſand years are ended; nor the time of the dead in Chriſt, who will riſe upon Chriſt's perſonal coming, at the beginning of the thouſand years; but this trumpet reſpects not the perſonal coming of Chriſt to raiſe the dead, and judge the world, but his ſpiritual coming to reign in his churches, and judge their enemies: the time of thoſe that were dead for Chriſt, whoſe blood had been ſhed in his cauſe, the time for the vindication of them, and avenging their blood is now come; the ſouls of thoſe under the altar had been a long time crying to God to avenge their blood on them that dwell on the earth; and now the time will be come, when God will judge his people, vindicate their cauſe; and when he, to whom vengeance belongs, will repay it, by pouring out the vials of his wrath on the antichriſtian party, by giving them blood to drink, becauſe they are worthy; this judgment will iſſue in the fall and ruin, both of the weſtern and eaſtern antichriſt. *And that thou ſhouldſt give reward unto thy ſervants*; not a reward of debt, but of grace; not the recompence of reward, or the reward of the inheritance in heaven; but ſome marks of honour and reſpect; ſome meaſure of happineſs, peace, and joy, which Chriſt of his rich grace will give to his miniſters, and churches, and all that love him in this glorious period of time: and who are diſtinguiſhed in the following manner, *the prophets, and to the ſaints, and them that fear thy name, ſmall and great*; by the *prophets* are meant, not the prophets of the Old Teſtament, but the prophets of the New; and not thoſe extraordinary perſons, who are diſtinguiſhed on the one hand from Apoſtles and Evangeliſts, and on the other from paſtors and teachers, who had an extraordinary gift of interpreting the ſcriptures, and of foretelling things to come; but the miniſters of the word, the two prophets or witneſſes, who had propheſied in ſackcloth, but ſhall now be clothed with ſalvation: and by *the ſaints* are deſigned, ſuch as were ſet apart by God the Father from eternity, and whoſe ſins are expiated by the blood of Chriſt, and who are internally ſanctified by the Spirit of God, and externally ſeparated from the reſt of mankind, and incorparated into a Goſpel church-ſtate, and are in holy fellowſhip one with another: and they that *fear the name* of God, are ſuch as truly love and reverence him, and worſhip him in ſpirit and in truth, but are not members of any particular church; who yet will be taken notice of by the Lord, and a book of remembrance be written for them; ſo the proſelytes from among the *Gentiles* are diſtinguiſhed from the *Iſraelites* by the ſame character; ſee the note on *Acts* xiii. 16. or rather this is a general character of both miniſters and churches, ſince to fear the name of the Lord, is a phraſe that includes all religious worſhip, internal and external. And now all theſe, *ſmall and great*, whether greater or leſſer believers, whether men of larger, or meaner gifts and abilities, will all have the ſame reward, enjoy the ſame church privileges, partake of the ſame ordinances, in the purity of them, have the ſame communion with God, and fellowſhip with Chriſt, and one another, and ſhare in the ſame common peace, and liberty, and ſecurity from enemies: the laſt thing taken notice of by theſe elders, as matter of thankſgiving, is the deſtruction of antichriſt. *And ſhouldſt deſtroy them which deſtroy the earth*; or *corrupt it*; meaning antichriſt and his followers; who deſtroy the bodies, ſouls, and eſtates of men, and not only the inhabitants of the earth, but even the earth itſelf; for thro' that lazineſs and idleneſs which they ſpread where 'ere they come, a fruitful country is turned into barrenneſs; who corrupt the minds of men, with falſe doctrine, idolatry, and ſuperſtition, and the bodies of women and men with all uncleanneſs and filthineſs, with fornication, ſodomy, *&c.* ch. xix. 2. and are the cauſe of their own deſtruction, and the deſtruction of others; which, upon the blowing of the ſeventh trumpet, will come ſwiftly and irrecoverably. Now will *Babylon* ſink as a milſtone into the ſea, never to be ſeen more; both the weſtern and eaſtern antichriſts are intended; the former is called the ſon of perdition, becauſe of his deſtroying others, and going into perdition himſelf; and the latter is called *Abaddon*, and *Apollyon*, which both ſignify a deſtroyer, 2 *Theſſ.* ii. 4. *Rev.* ix. 11.

Ver. 19. *And the temple of God was opened in heaven*, &c.] The temple at *Jeruſalem*, to which the alluſion is, was the place of public worſhip; this, in times of idolatry, was ſhut up, and fell to decay; and when there was a reformation its doors were opened, and that repaired; and to this the reference ſeems to be; and the ſenſe is, that at this time the pure worſhip of God will be reſtored, and there will be a free and uninterrupted exerciſe of it; the temple will be open to all; here every one may come, and ſit, and worſhip, without fear; churches will now be formed according to the original plan, and primitive order and inſtitution of them; the laws of Chriſt concerning the admiſſion, regulation, and excluſion of members, will be carefully and punctually obſerved; the ordinances of Chriſt will be kept, as they were firſt delivered, and be purged from all the corruptions introduced by papiſts, or retained by proteſtants; the ordinance of the Lord's ſupper will be freed from the ſenſeleſs notions of tranſubſtantiation and conſubſtantiation, and from all vain and impertinent rites and ceremonies, that attend it; and the ordinance of baptiſm will be adminiſtred, both as to mode and ſubject, according to the word of God, as well as be cleared from the ſuperſtitious rites of the ſign of the croſs, chriſm, ſpittle, *&c.* in ſhort, all external worſhip will be pure, plain, and evangelical: hence it appears, that by this temple is not meant the church triumphant, and the happineſs of the ſaints in heaven, as becoming viſible, nor even the new *Jeruſalem* church-ſtate, or the perſonal reign of Chriſt on earth for a thouſand years; for in that ſtate there will be no temple at all, nor will the ſaints then need the ſun, or moon of Goſpel ordinances, ch. xxi. 22. 23. and *there was ſeen in his temple the ark of his teſtament*; the ark was a cheſt, in which the covenant or tables of the law were put; upon it was the mercy ſeat, and over that the cherubim of glory, ſhadowing it; between which were the ſeat of the divine majeſty: this ark ſtood in the holy of holies, and was ſeen only by the high prieſt once a year, and was covered with a covering vail, *Numb.* iv. 5. it was wanting in the ſecond temple [*]; to this the alluſion is here; ſee the note on *Heb.* ix. 4. Now in this ſpiritual Goſpel church-ſtate, thro' the pure miniſtry of the word, and the faithful adminiſtration of ordinances, the myſteries of the Goſpel, into which angels deſire to look, ſignified by the cherubim over the mercy-ſeat, will be clearly revealed, to all chriſtians, *Jews* and *Gentiles*; particularly to the former, from whom they have been hid; the vail that is over their hearts will then be done away, when they ſhall be turned to the Lord; and indeed, the vail which is over all people, will then be removed; and thoſe truths which have been ſo much obſcured by antichriſt, will be clearly ſeen; and eſpecially the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the antitype of the ark, in whom are hid the treaſures of wiſdom; by whom the law, and the two tables of it, are fulfilled; and in whom they are pure and perfect; and by whom the covenant of grace is ratified and confirmed; and in whom it is ſure; and thro' whom God is propitious to his people, and grants them communion with him; he will be viſibly held forth in the miniſtry of the word; and be ſeen in the glory of his perſon, and offices, and grace; who has been ſo long and greatly hid, and kept out of ſight, by *Popiſh* and *Mahometan* darkneſs: *and there were lightnings, and voices, and thundrings, and an earthquake, and great hail*; which may be underſtood of the vials of God's wrath, that will be poured out upon the pope and *Turk*; which tho' mentioned laſt, will be firſt, and make way for this ſpiritual ſtate; particularly the things here ſpoken of, may be compared with what will be at the pouring out of the ſeventh vial, ch. xvi. 18, 21. or this may deſign the powerful *voices*, and clear miniſtrations of the Goſpel, and the efficacy of them at this time; which, like *thunders*, will awaken the conſciences of men; and, like *earthquakes*, will make them ſhake and tremble, and cry out, what ſhall we do to be ſaved? and as *lightnings* illuminate their underſtandings, and give them a clear diſcerning of divine things; and as *hail* beat down all ſelf-righteouſneſs and ſelf-confidence, and all errors, hereſies, ſuperſtition, and will-worſhip. Tho' I ſuſpect, that theſe ſeveral things are expreſſive of the change and revolution, that will be made, after a time, in this happy and comfortable ſtate; and that the cold, which generally attends an hail ſtorm, repreſents that coldneſs and lukewarmneſs, into which the churches of Chriſt will again ſink, expreſſed in the *Laodicean* church-ſtate, in which condition Chriſt will find them when he perſonally appears; ſo that the ſeven ſeals, with the ſeven trumpets, bring us exactly to the ſame period of time, as the ſeven churches do.

CHAP. XII.

THIS chapter contains a viſion of two wonders or ſigns ſeen in heaven, a woman and a dragon, and an account of what followed thereon, war both in heaven and earth. The viſion of the woman is in ver. 1, 2. who is deſcribed by her being clothed with the ſun; by her having the moon under her feet; by a crown of twelve ſtars on her head; and by her pregnancy, travail, pains, and cry. The viſion of the dragon is in ver. 3, 4. who is deſcribed by his bigneſs, a great one; by his colour, red; by the number of his heads and horns, and the crowns on the former; by the force and ſtrength of his tail, drawing and caſting down to the earth the third part of the ſtars of heaven; and by his poſition, ſtanding before the woman, in order to devour her child when born. Next follows an account of the birth of her child, and what became of that, and her: the child is ſaid to be a man-child, is deſcribed as a monarch, and as advanced to great honour and dignity; but ſhe flies into the wilderneſs, where a place is prepared for her of God, and where ſhe is hid for the ſpace of 1260 days, ver. 5, 6. upon this enſues a war in heaven; the combatants on one ſide were *Michael* and his angels, and on the other the dragon and his; the iſſue of which was, that the latter were conquered, and caſt out into the earth, ver. 7, 8, 9. on account of which victory a triumphant ſong is ſung by the inhabitants of heaven, becauſe of ſalvation and ſtrength that were come to them; and becauſe of the kingdom and power of Chriſt, which now took place; and becauſe of the ejection of ſatan, the accuſer of their brethren; in which ſong, alſo notice is taken of the manner in which ſatan was overcome by thoſe he accuſed, by the blood of the Lamb, by the word of their teſtimony, and by their death: and it is concluded with an apoſtrophe to thoſe that dwell in heaven, calling on them to rejoice, and to the inhabitants of the earth denouncing wo to them, becauſe the devil was among them, whoſe wrath was great, his time being ſhort, ver. 10, 11, 12. Next follow the dragon's perſecution of the woman, and her flight into the wilderneſs, and the care took of her there, as before deſcribed, ver. 13, 14. then the method the ſerpent took to annoy her, the help ſhe received from the earth, and the wrath of the dragon upon that; which put him upon making war with the remnant of her ſeed, who kept the commandments of God, and had the teſtimony of Jeſus, ver. 15, 16, 17.

Ver. 1. And *there appeared a great wonder in heaven*, &c.] This viſion begins a new account of things, and repreſents the church in the Apoſtles times, and purer ages of chriſtianity, and under the heathen and *Arian* perſecutions; after which an account is given of the beaſt, mentioned in ch. xi. 7. of his riſe, power, and reign, and then of the victories of the ſaints over him; and of the vials of God's wrath upon him, and of his utter ruin and deſtruction; when comes on the marriage of the Lamb, and after that the firſt reſurrection, and the thouſand years reign; and the whole is cloſed with a moſt beautiful deſcription of the new *Jeruſalem* ſtate, which is the grand point and utmoſt period this prophetic book leads unto. This viſion was ſeen *in heaven*, whither *John* was called up to, ch. iv. 1. and where the various ſcenes in a viſionary way, were acted, both before, and after this; and which was an emblem of the ſtate of the church on earth: what was ſeen is called *a wonder*, or *ſign*, it being very amazing to behold, and very ſignificative of perſons and things; and a *great* one, becauſe it reſpects great affairs, and wonderful events relating to the ſtate of the church in future times, as well as preſent: and the firſt thing ſeen and obſerved was *a woman*; by whom is meant, not the virgin *Mary*, as highly favoured of God, and big with her firſt-born ſon Jeſus; tho' there may be an alluſion to her, and in ſome things there is a likeneſs, as is by ſome obſerved; as *Mary* brought forth Chriſt corporally, and God in the fulneſs of time ſent forth his Son, made of a woman, ſo this woman brings forth Chriſt ſpiritually, or the manly birth of his kingdom in the world, or one that ſhould be the inſtrument of enlarging his kingdom; and as *Herod* ſought to deſtroy Chriſt in his infancy, and as ſoon as born, ſo the dragon here ſtands watching to deſtroy the manly birth as ſoon as brought forth; and as *Joſeph*, with *Mary*, and her ſon, by a divine direction, fled into *Egypt*, where they continued during the reign of *Herod*, ſo to this woman are given two wings of an eagle, to flee into the wilderneſs, where ſhe abides, and is nouriſhed, during the reign of antichriſt; and as *Herod*, after the flight of *Mary*, killed all the infants of *Bethlehem*, of two years of age, and under, that he might deſtroy her ſon, ſo the dragon caſts out a flood of water after the woman, to carry her away, and makes war with the remnant of her ſeed; and as the ſon of *Mary*, after he had done his work, was taken up to heaven, and made Lord and Chriſt, ſo the man-child, this woman brings forth, is caught up to God, and his throne, to rule all nations with a rod of iron. But *Mary*, and the birth of Chriſt, can never be intended in this viſion, that affair being paſt and over, and would never be repreſented to *John* in this manner, who was well accquainted with it: nor is the church of God, among the *Jews*, of the former diſpenſation, deſigned; who were highly honoured of God, on whom he ſhone forth at the giving of the law to them; who had his word and ordinances, to be a light unto them, and had the prieſts and prophets of the Lord among them; and whoſe crown and glory it was to deſcend from the twelve patriarchs; and who were in great expectation of, and moſt earneſtly deſired, and longed for, and were, as it were, in pain for the coming of the Meſſiah; but to what purpoſe could ſuch a repreſentation of them be made to *John* now? much leſs is the church of the *Jews*, or the *Jewiſh* ſynagogue, as it was at the coming and birth of Chriſt, here deſigned, which was an evil, wicked, and adulterous generation, and ſo bad as not to be declared by the tongue, and pen of man, and therefore far from anſwering the deſcription here; but the pure apoſtolic church is meant, or the church of Chriſt, as it was in the times of the Apoſtles, and the firſt ages of chriſtianity: the deſcription anſwers to the firſt of the ſeven churches, the church at *Epheſus*, and to the opening of the firſt ſeal; and the church apoſtolical is here called *a woman*, becauſe the church was not now in its infancy, in nonage, as under the former diſpenſation, but grown up, mature, and at full age; and becauſe eſpouſed and married to Chriſt her huſband, to whom ſhe now brought forth many children, in a ſpiritual ſenſe, as ſhe hereafter will bring forth many more; and becauſe of her beauty in the eyes of her lord and huſband, which is greatly deſired, and highly commended by him; as alſo becauſe of her weakneſs in herſelf, her miniſters and members, not being able to do any thing without her huſband, Chriſt, thro' whom ſhe can do all things. And who is further deſcribed by her habit and attire, *clothed with the ſun*; which does not point at her future ſtate in glory; ſee *Matt.* xiii. 47. but to her then preſent ſtate on earth; and is expreſſive of that clear light of Goſpel doctrine, which ſhone out upon her, like the ſun in its meridian glory, and of the heat of love to God, Chriſt, and his people, and zeal for his truths, ordinances, worſhip, and diſcipline which appeared in her; and of that inward holineſs of heart which made her all glorious within; and of the outward purity of life and converſation, which greatly adorned her; but above all, of the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, who is the ſun of righteouſneſs, and the Lord her righteouſneſs; which righteouſneſs, as it was doctrinally held forth by her in the cleareſt manner, was alſo as a garment on her, to cover, preſerve, and beautify her; and is comparable to the ſun for its glory and excellency, outſhining that of angels and men; and for its ſpotleſs purity, being without any blemiſh or deficiency; and for its perpetuity, being an everlaſting one, and even exceeding the ſun in duration. *And the moon under her feet*; the church is ſometimes compared to the moon herſelf, becauſe as the moon receives its light from the ſun, ſo ſhe receives her light from Chriſt; and as the moon often changes, and has its various *phaſes* and appearances, ſo the church ſometimes is in the exerciſe of grace, and ſometimes not; ſometimes under trials and perſecutions, and at other times in reſt and peace; one while retaining the doctrines and ordinances of the Goſpel in their power and purity, and anon almoſt over-run with errors and ſuperſtition; but this cannot be the ſenſe here. The common interpretation is, that it ſignifies the church's contempt of, and trampling upon all worldly things, which are changeable, periſhing, and paſſing away; and which very well ſuits with the primitive ſaints, who did not ſet their affections on things in earth, but on things in heaven, who ſold their worldly poſſeſſions, and laid them at the Apoſtles feet. *Brightman* thinks, that as the moon is a luminary, it may denote the light derived from the word of God, which was a lamp to her feet, and a lantern to her paths, by which her diſcipline and public worſhip were directed, and all the private actions of life were ſquared; which is no contemptible ſenſe of the words: but I rather think the ceremonial law is intended, which is very fitly repreſented by the moon; it conſiſted much in the obſervation of new moons, and its ſolemn feſtivals were governed and regulated by them; ſee 2 *Chron.* viii. 12, 13. *Iſ.* i. 13. *Amos* viii. 5. There was ſome light in it, and it gave light to the ſaints in the night of *Jewiſh* darkneſs; it pointed out Chriſt to them, and was their ſchool-maſter to teach and lead them to him; yet like the moon, it was the leſſer light, the light it gave was inferior to that which the Goſpel now gives; and as the moon has its ſpots, ſo had that its imperfections; had it been faultleſs, there had been no need of another, and a new diſpenſation, but that could make nothing perfect; and as the moon, it was variable and changeable; it was but for a time, and is now done away; it is not only waxen old, like the moon in the wain, but is entirely vaniſhed away: and yet, tho' it was aboliſhed by the death of Chriſt, it was kept up and maintained by many of the *Jews*, even of them that believed: perſons are naturally fond of ceremonies; and many had rather part with a doctrine of the Goſpel, than with an old cuſtom, or an uſeleſs ceremony; and this was, in a great meaſure, the caſe of the *Jews*; ſee *Acts* xxi. 20. ſo that it was one of the greateſt difficulties the chriſtian church had to grapple with, to get the ceremonial law under foot; for tho' it was under the feet of Chriſt, it was a long time 'ere it was under the feet of the church; and a wonder it was when it was accompliſhed. Mr. *Daubuz* has given a new interpretation of this clauſe; and by *the moon* he underſtands the Holy Ghoſt, the governour of the church, next to Chriſt, his ſucceſſor and vicar, and the miniſter of him, the ſun of righteouſneſs; who is ſaid to be *under* the *feet* of the church, to aſſiſt her in her labour, and in the bringing forth of her man-child; and to ſupport and ſuſtain her followers and members; and to be a luminary to them, to guide them in their ways. *And upon her head a crown of twelve ſtars*; by *ſtars* are meant the miniſters of the Goſpel, which Chriſt holds in his right hand, and the church here bears on her head, ch. i. 20. And theſe *twelve* have reſpect to the twelve Apoſtles of Chriſt; and the *crown*, which was compoſed of theſe ſtars, deſigns the doctrine which they preached; and this being on her *head*, ſhows that it was in the beginning of this church-ſtate that the pure apoſtolic doctrine was embraced, profeſſed, and held forth; for in the latter part of it there was a great decline, and falling off from it; in the times of the Apoſtle *Paul*, the myſtery of iniquity began to work; and in *John*'s time many antichriſts were come into the world: and alſo this ſignifies, that the church openly owned the doctrine of the Apoſtles, and was not aſhamed of it before men, and publickly preached, and held it forth in her miniſters, to all the world; and that this was her crown and glory, ſo long as ſhe held it in its power, purity, and was both what ſhe gloried in, and was a glory, an ornament to her: and this was alſo an emblem of her victory over her enemies, and of her future happineſs, and pointed at the means of both; that it was by a faithful and ſteadfaſt adherence to the doctrine of the Apoſtles, that ſhe overcame ſatan, and all her ſpiritual enemies, and came to the poſſeſſion of the crown of life and glory.

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[*] T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 21. 2. See 1 Eſdras i. 54. 2 Maccab. ii. 4, 5.

Ver. 2. *And ſhe being big with child*, &c.] Which may be expreſſive of the fruitfulneſs of the church in bearing and bringing forth many ſouls to Chriſt, and which were very numerous in this period of time, when it was ſaid of *Zion* that this and that man was born in her; and particularly of her pregnancy with the kingdom of Chriſt, to be brought forth, and ſet up in the *Roman* empire, under the influence of a *Roman* emperor: and this being her caſe, ſhe *cried*, *travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered*; which are metaphors taken from a woman in travail; and may either denote the earneſt cries and fervent prayers of the members of the church, and the laborious and painful miniſtrations of the preachers of the Goſpel for the converſion of ſouls, and eſpecially for the ſetting up of the kingdom of Chriſt in the empire of *Rome*; or elſe the ſore and grievous perſecutions which attended the Apoſtles of Chriſt, and ſucceeding miniſters of the word, throughout the times of the ten *Roman* emperors, and eſpecially under *Diocleſian*; when the church was big, and laboured in great pain, and the time was drawing on apace that a chriſtian emperor ſhould be brought forth, who ſhould be a means of ſpreading the Goſpel, and the kingdom of Chriſt, all over the empire; ſee *Jer.* xxx. 6, 7. *Matt.* xxiv. 8. ſo the *Targumiſt* frequently explains the pains of a woman in travail in *the prophets* by עקא, *tribulation*; ſee the *Targum* on *Iſ.* xiii. 8. xxvi. 18. and lxvi. 7.

Ver. 3. *And there appeared another wonder in heaven*, &c.] Or *ſign*; which repreſents the woman, or the church's adverſary, ſatan; not that he was in heaven, in the third heaven, the place of glory and happineſs, for out of that he had been caſt long ago; but in his great power and authority here on earth, particularly in the *Roman* empire, where the church was labouring to bring forth her man child: *and behold a great red dragon*; the devil, as it is explained in ver. 9. though not he in perſon, but the heathen *Roman* empire, or the heathen *Roman* emperors, acted, influenced, directed, and preſided over by him; ſo *Pharaoh* king of *Egypt*, and other cruel and perſecuting monarchs and ſtates are called dragons in ſcripture, *Iſ.* xxvii. 1. and li. 9. *Ezek.* xxix. 3. all which places the *Targum* interprets of מלכא, *a king*, and particularly of *Pharaoh* king of *Egypt*, who is like to a great and mighty dragon: and the *Roman* pagan empire, as under the influence of ſatan, the god of this world, is fitly compared to a *dragon*, for its policy and cunning in circumventing and enſnaring the profeſſors of chriſtianity; and for its cruelty and inhumanity in perſecuting of them; and for its poiſon of idolatry, will-worſhip, and ſuperſtition: and it may be called a *great* one, for its ſtrength and power, which lay in its immenſe treaſure and riches, in numbers of men, in powerful armies, in ſtrong cities, caſtles, *&c.* and for its large extent and juriſdiction; and a *red* one, becauſe of the blood of the ſaints ſhed in it, by which it became of this colour; ſuitable to the character and bloody practices of the old ſerpent the devil, by whom it was influenced, who was a murderer from the beginning; and agreeable to one of the names by which the *Jews* [x] frequently call the *Roman* empire, *Edom*, the name *Eſau* had from the red pottage he ſold his birth-right for, and who himſelf was born red, *Gen.* xxv. 29, 30. it ſeems there were red dragons; *Homer* [y] ſays of the dragon, that it is red upon its back: *having ſeven heads, and ten horns, and ſeven crowns upon his heads*; the *ſeven heads* of the *Roman* empire, either deſign the ſeven mountains, or hills, on which *Rome*, the metropolis of the empire, was built, as the ſeven heads of the beaſt on which the woman drunk with the blood of the ſaints ſat, are explained in ch. xvii. 9. or rather the ſeven forms of government which ſucceſſively ſhould obtain in the empire, as kings, conſuls, decemvirs, dictators, tribunes, emperors, and popes; hence theſe heads are ſaid to have *ſeven crowns* upon them, as expreſſive of the imperial power and dignity which were in them, and exerciſed by them: Mr. *Daubuz* thinks ſeven capital cities in the *Roman* empire are meant, as *Rome*, *Carthage*, *Æge*, *Antiochia*, *Auguſtodunum*, *Alexandria*, and *Conſtantinople*; and nothing is more common than to call chief cities the heads of the countries they belong unto, as *Damaſcus* the head of *Syria*, and *Samaria* the head of *Ephraim*, *Iſ.* vii. 8, 9. *Pliny* [z] calls *Babylon* the head of *Chaldea*; and *Cornelius Nepos* ſays [a] of *Thebes*, that it was the head of all *Greece*; and *Syracuſe* is by *Florus* [b] called the head of *Sicily*, as *Rome* is in *Livy* [c], and other writers, the head of the world: and by the *ten horns* are meant either the ten kingdoms which ſhould hereafter ariſe out of the *Roman* empire, and whoſe kings ſhould give their kingdoms to the beaſt; or the ten *Roman* emperors, the perſecutors of the chriſtians; or rather the ten provinces, or juriſdictions, which the empire was divided into whilſt pagan: *Brightman* out of *Strabo* has ſhewn, that in the times of *Auguſtus Cæſar* the *Roman* empire was diſtributed into two parts, the one was more immediately under the care of the emperor, and the other was governed by deputies; and each were divided into ten provinces; that which the emperor held conſiſted of *Africa*, *France*, *Britain*, *Germany*, *Dacia* with *Myſia* and *Thracia*, *Cappadocia*, *Armenia*, *Syria*, *Paleſtine* with *Judea*

and

[x] Vid. Buxtorf. Lex. Rab. in voce אדם.

[y] Iliad. 2. l. 308.

[z] Nat. Hiſt. l. 5. c. 26.

[a] In vita Epaminond. l. 15. c. 10.

[b] Hiſt. Roman. l. 2. c. 6.

[c] Hiſt. l. 21. c. 30.

and *Egypt*, in all ten; and that part which was governed by deputies, were the outermoſt *Spain*, and the iſles by it, the innermoſt *Spain*, &c. *Sardinia* with *Corſica*, *Sicily*, *Illyricum* with *Epirus*, *Macedonia*, *Achaia*, *Crete* with *Cyreniaca*, *Cyprus*, *Bithynia* with *Propontis*; ſo that the *Roman* pagan empire, as under the dominion of ſatan, is manifeſtly deſigned by the dragon thus deſcribed. The *Jews*[d] ſpeak of ten horns which the *Iſraelites* had, which when they ſinned were taken from them, as it is written, *Lam.* ii. 3. and were given to the nations of the world, according to *Dan.* vii. 20. *and of the ten horns that were in his head*, &c.

Ver. 4. *And his tail drew the third part of the ſtars of heaven, and did caſt them to the earth*, &c.] So *Solinus*[e] ſpeaks of dragons that have power not only in their teeth, but in their tails, and do more hurt by ſtriking than by biting; and the great ſerpent which *Attilius Regulus* and his army fought with, not only deſtroyed many of his ſoldiers with its vaſt mouth, but daſhed many to pieces with its tail[f]; which ſerpent, *Pliny*[g] ſays, was a hundred and twenty foot long: this is ſaid in alluſion to *Antiochus Epiphanes*, in *Dan.* viii. 10. and deſigns either the ſubduing of the third part of the principalities, ſtates, and kingdoms of the known world, to the *Roman* empire, thro' its great power and ſtrength; which lay in its tail, in its train of armies, which attended it, whereby ſuch a number of nations were drawn into ſubjection to it, inſomuch that the empire was called all the world, *Luke* ii. 1. or elſe the influence the dragon ſhould have upon the miniſters of the word, who are compared to ſtars, ch. i. 20. by cauſing them to relinquiſh their miniſtry, and drop their heavenly employment, and fall from that high and honourable ſtate in which they were, into a carnal, earthly, and worldly religion; and that either thro' policy, cunning, and flattery, or thro' ſorcery, magic art, lying oracles and prophecy; ſee *Iſ.* ix. 15. or thro' the violence of perſecution, they had not power to withſtand; of which falling ſtars there are many inſtances, as the eccleſiaſtical hiſtories of thoſe times ſhow: *and the dragon ſtood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as ſoon as it was born*; juſt as the dragon *Pharaoh* lay in the midſt of his rivers, in the river *Nile*, *Ezek.* xxix. 3. to ſlay the male children of *Iſrael*, as ſoon as born; and as the dragon *Herod* ſought to take away the life of Jeſus quickly after his birth; and as ſatan is like a roaring lion, ſeeking whom he may devour, ſo the pagan empire, or the pagan emperors, took every opportunity to ſtifle the kingdom of Chriſt in embryo, and to prevent the bringing forth of any illuſtrious perſon; and ſought to deſtroy him as ſoon as he appeared, who might be thought, or ſuſpected to be an inſtrument of encouraging and eſtabliſhing the kingdom of Chriſt in the empire: the inſtances *Brightman* produces are appoſite, and to the purpoſe; as of *Maximinus* deſtroying *Alexander* the ſon of *Mammea*, who he ſaw was inclined to the chriſtians; and of *Decius* taking off the two *Philips*, father and ſon, who were favourable to their cauſe; but eſpecially the watchfullneſs of the dragon to deſtroy the man-child was very manifeſt in the *Roman* emperors towards *Conſtantine*; *Diocleſian* and *Galerius* obſerving his virtuous diſpoſition in his youth, left nothing unattempted to cut him off privately; he was ſent againſt the *Sarmatians*, a cruel and ſavage people, in hopes he would have been deſtroyed by them; and was ſet to fight with a lion in the theatre, under a pretence of exerciſing and ſhewing his valour; and many other methods were uſed to take away his life, but none ſucceeded.

Ver. 5. *And ſhe brought forth a man child*, &c.] Not Chriſt literally and perſonally conſidered, or Chriſt in his human nature, as made of a woman, and born of a virgin, which was a fact that had been years ago; but Chriſt myſtically, or Chriſt in his members, who are called by his name, becauſe he is formed in them, and they are the ſeed of the woman, the church; and many of theſe were brought forth to Chriſt by the church in the primitive times, who were a manly birth, hale, ſtrong, and robuſt chriſtians; or rather this manly birth may deſign a more glorious appearing and breaking forth of the kingdom of Chriſt in the *Roman* empire; for tho' Chriſt came as a king, yet his kingdom was not with obſervation in the days of his fleſh; and tho' upon his aſcenſion to heaven, he was made and declared Lord and Chriſt, and had a kingdom and intereſt in the world, and even in the *Roman* empire, during the firſt three centuries, yet this was attended with the croſs and perſecution; but now towards the cloſe of that period, *Conſtantine* a chriſtian emperor was born, under whoſe influence and encouragement the Goſpel was ſpread, and the kingdom of Chriſt ſet up, and eſtabliſhed in the empire; and this ſeems to be the thing intended here, he being of a generous, heroic, and manly diſpoſition: *who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron*; this has a manifeſt reference to *Pſ.* ii. 9. which pſalm, and the paſſage referred to in it, evidently belong to Chriſt; and as this is repreſented as ſomething future, what ſhould be hereafter, and not what would immediately take place, it may regard the kingdom of Chriſt in the laſt times, of which the preſent breaking forth of it in *Conſtantine*'s time, was an emblem and pledge; and may denote the univerſality of it, it reaching to all the kingdoms of the world, and the manner in which Chriſt will rule, eſpecially over his enemies, antichriſt and his followers, whom he'll deſtroy with the breath of his mouth, and break in pieces with his rod of iron, and order all that would not have him to reign over them, ſlain before him; and as this may be applied to Chriſt myſtical, the ſeed of the church, and members of Chriſt, as it is in *Rev.* ii. 26, 27. it may relate to their reign with Chriſt on earth, when they ſhall ſit on thrones, and judge the world, when the kingdom and dominion, and the greatneſs of the kingdom under the whole heaven ſhall be given to them; but ſince this is expreſly ſaid of the man-child in the text, it may be expreſſive even of the temporal government of *Conſtantine*, who was an heroic and victorious prince, and extended his dominions to the ſeveral parts of the world; as far as *Britain* to the weſt, and all *Scythia* to the north, *Ethiopia* to the ſouth, and the remote parts of *India* to the eaſt, even to the ultimate parts of the whole world, as *Euſebius*[h] affirms, making his kingdom to be three times larger than that of *Alexander the Great*: and more eſpecially it may deſcribe the kingdom of Chriſt in his times; which was ſpread throughout all the nations of the empire; when paganiſm was demoliſhed, both in the continent and in the iſles of the ſea, and the ſtrong holds of ſatan were pulled down, not by carnal, but ſpiritual weapons; when multitudes of ſouls were converted by the word, the rod of Chriſt's ſtrength, and when the ſaints were guided, directed, fed, and comforted by it; for the alluſion ſeems to be to the ſhepherd's rod, with which he leads and feeds his ſheep; the ſame word ſignifies both to rule and feed: *and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne*; which is to be underſtood not of Chriſt's aſcent to heaven in human nature, when he was ſet down on the ſame throne with his Father; nor of Chriſt myſtical, or of the ſaints being caught up into the air, to meet the Lord, and be for ever with him, and ſit down with him on the ſame throne; but rather of ſome glorious advance of the church and kingdom of Chriſt on earth; for as to fall from heaven is expreſſive of debaſement and meanneſs, and of a low eſtate that a perſon is brought into, *Iſ.* xiv. 12. ſo an aſcending up to heaven, as the two witneſſes in the preceding chapter are ſaid to do, denotes exaltation, or a riſe to ſome more glorious ſtate and condition, which was the caſe of the church in *Conſtantine*'s time: and this may alſo take in the acceſſion of *Conſtantine* himſelf to the imperial throne, which was the throne of God; for kings have their ſceptres, thrones and kingdoms from him, they are his vicegerents, and in ſome meaſure repreſent him, and are therefore called gods, and the children of the moſt high; yea, ſince *Conſtantine*, as advanced to the empire, was ſuch an inſtrument in Chriſt's hand for the ſetting up and eſtabliſhing his kingdom in it, Chriſt himſelf may be here repreſented as reigning over the *Roman* empire, as a preſage and prelude of his reigning over all the earth another day.

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[d] Echa Rabbati, fol. 53. 2, 3.

[e] Polyhiſt. c. 43.

[f] Valer. Maxim. l. 1. c. 8.

[g] Nat. Hiſt. l. 8. c. 14.

[h] De vita Conſtantini, l. 1. c. 8.

Ver. 6. *And the woman fled into the wilderneſs*, &c.] Not as ſoon as ſhe was delivered of her child, which is not reaſonable to ſuppoſe, and would have been improper, if not impracticable; nor indeed was this flight until after the war was over, mentioned in the next verſes; nor until the dragon and his angels were conquered, and caſt out; nor until a freſh perſecution was raiſed by the dragon againſt the woman, as appears from ver. 14. where this account ſtands in its proper place, and is here only introduced by way of prolepſis, or anticipation, and that with this view, to ſhow what care was taken of the woman, as well as of her ſon: and this does not deſign the flight of the chriſtians from *Jeruſalem* to *Pella*, a little before the deſtruction of the former; nor the expulſion of the *Jews* or chriſtians from *Rome*, either by *Claudius* or by *Nero*; but the diſappearance of the true church, and its obſcure ſtate and condition quickly after the above advance of it; for thro' the riches and honours which *Conſtantine* beſtowed upon the chriſtians, they became vain, proud, ambitious, and careleſs; falſe doctrine and ſuperſtition obtained; the antichriſtian apoſtacy came on apace, and prevailed and increaſed, and ſo obſcured the true church, that in proceſs of time it became inviſible, was in the cleft of the rock, and in the ſecret places of the ſtairs, or like perſons in a wood or wilderneſs, not to be ſeen, as well as deſolate and uncomfortable: *where ſhe hath a place prepared of God*; for God has had, and will have a church in the worſt of times; as he reſerved a number in *Elijah*'s time, ſo he did in the times of the antichriſtian apoſtacy, who bowed not the knee to idolatry; this woman, the church, and her caſe, are the ſame with the 144000 ſealed ones in ch. vii. whom God diſtinguiſhed, hid, and preſerved; for the wilderneſs is a place of retirement and ſafety, *Ezek.* xxxiv. 25. as well as of obſcurity; and if any particular place is pointed at, I ſhould think the valleys of *Piedmont*, which lie between *France* and *Italy*, are intended, where God has preſerved, and continued a ſett of witneſſes to the truth, in a ſucceſſion, from the beginning of the apoſtacy to the preſent time, living in obſcurity, and in ſafety, ſo far as not to be utterly deſtroyed: *that they ſhould feed her there a thouſand two hundred and threeſcore days*; in alluſion to the children of *Iſrael* in the wilderneſs, where they were fed with manna forty years; ſo the overcomers, or true chriſtians in the *Pergamos* church-ſtate, have hidden manna given them to eat, the food of the wilderneſs, with which church-ſtate the church in the wilderneſs muſt be conſidered, as cotemporary, as alſo with the *Thyatirian* and *Sardian* church-ſtates; for tho' at the reformation, which the *Sardian* church-ſtate introduces, the church appeared again, and has been ever ſince coming up out of the wilderneſs, yet ſhe is ſtill in it; where ſhe is fed and nouriſhed with the Goſpel, and the ordinances of it, by the faithful miniſters of the word, the two witneſſes that propheſy in ſackcloth; the time of whoſe propheſying is exactly of the ſame date with the woman's being in the wilderneſs, and with the reign of antichriſt, namely forty-two months, or 1260 days, that is, ſo many years, ch. xi. 2, 3. and xiii. 5.

Ver. 7. *And there was war in heaven*, &c.] Not in the third heaven, the habitation of God, the ſeat of the angels and glorified ſaints, there is no diſcord, jars, and contentions there, nothing but peace, love, and joy; but in the church below, which is militant, and has in it as it were a company of two armies; or rather in the *Roman* empire, which was the heaven of ſatan, the God of this world, and of his angels: and this war refers not to the diſpute between *Michael* the archangel and the devil about the body of *Moſes*; nor to the fall of the angels when they rebelled againſt God, left their firſt eſtate, and were caſt down to hell; nor to that antient and ſtated enmity between the ſeed of the ſerpent and the ſeed of the woman, which has appeared in all ages of time, more or leſs, ſince the fall of *Adam*; nor to the combats which Chriſt perſonally had with ſatan and his powers, when here on earth, as in the wilderneſs, immediately after his baptiſm, and in the garden, a little before his death, and on the croſs, when he ſpoiled principalities and powers, and deſtroyed him that had the power of death, the devil; but rather to the conflict which Chriſt and his people had with the rulers of the darkneſs of this world, with the *Roman* powers, and with falſe teachers, during the three firſt centuries; though it ſeems beſt to underſtand it of the war commenced by *Conſtantine* againſt paganiſm, and which was finiſhed by *Theodoſius*, by whom heatheniſm received its death-wound, and was never reſtored ſince: the phraſe of war in heaven, is not unknown to the *Jews*; they ſay [i], when *Pharaoh* purſued after *Iſrael*, there was war above and below, and there was a very *fierce war* בשמים, *in heaven*: *Michael and his angels fought againſt the dragon*; by whom is meant not a created angel, with whom his name does not agree, it ſignifying *who is as God*; nor does it appear that there is any one created angel that preſides over the reſt, and has them at his command; tho' the *Jews* ſeem to imagine as if the angels were ranged under ſeveral heads and governors, of whom they make *Michael* to be one; for they ſay [k], "when "the holy bleſſed God deſcended on mount *Sinai*, "ſeveral companies of angels deſcended with him, "מיכאל וחבורתו, *Michael and his company*, and *Ga*"*briel* and his company:" ſo *kings of armies*, in *Pſ.* lxviii. 12. are by them interpreted of *kings of angels*; and it is aſked who are theſe? and the anſwer is, *Michael* and *Gabriel* [l]. Lord *Napeir* thinks that the Holy Ghoſt is deſigned, who is equally and truly God as the Father and the Son, and who in the hearts of the ſaints oppoſes ſatan and his temptations; but it ſeems beſt to interpret it of Jeſus Chriſt, who is equal with God, is his fellow, is one with the Father, and in whom the fullneſs of the Godhead dwells bodily; he is the archangel, the firſt of the chief princes, the head of all principality and power, who is on the ſide of the Lord's people, pleads their cauſe, defends their perſons, and ſaves them; ſee *Jude* 9. *Dan*. x. 13. and xii. 1. and by *his angels* may be meant either the good angels, literally underſtood, who are his creatures, his miniſters, and whom he employs under him, in protecting his people, and in deſtroying his enemies; or elſe the miniſters of the Goſpel, who are called angels in this book, and who, under Chriſt, fight the good fight of faith, contend earneſtly for it, being valiant for the truth upon earth; or rather the chriſtian emperors, particularly *Conſtantine* and *Theodoſius*, and the chriſtians with them, who oppoſed paganiſm in the empire, and at laſt ſubdued, and caſt it out: *and the dragon fought, and his angels*; there is ſuch an order among the evil angels, as to have one of their own at the head of them, they having caſt off their allegiance to God and Chriſt, who is ſtiled the prince of devils, and his name is *Beelzebub*; hence we read of the devil and his angels; ſee *Matt*. xii. 24. and xxv. 41. and theſe may be intended here, unleſs falſe teachers, who transform themſelves into angels of light, as their leader ſometimes does, ſhould be thought to be meant, who reſiſt the truth, and oppoſe themſelves to the miniſters of it; tho' rather ſatan as preſiding over, and influencing the *Roman* pagan empire, and the *Roman* emperors, who acted under him, are here deſigned; with whom *Conſtantine* and *Theodoſius*, under Chriſt, combated, ſuch as *Maximinus*, *Maxentius*, *Licinius*, *Arbogaſtes*, and *Eugenius*, and thoſe that were with them. The *Arabic* verſion renders it, *the ſerpent with his ſoldiers*.

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[i] Shaare Ora, fol. 26. 4.

[k] Debarim Rabba, fol. 237. 4.

[l] Shirhaſhirim Rabba, fol. 14. 3. & 26. 3.

Ver. 8. *And prevailed not*, &c.] That is, the dragon, or the devil, and his angels, prevailed not againſt *Michael* and his angels; but on the other hand, were conquered by them, as the above tyrants were by *Conſtantine* and *Theodoſius*: ſome copies read in the ſingular number, *and he prevailed not*, as the *Alexandrian* copy, the *Complutenſian* edition, the *Arabic* and *Ethiopic* verſions; and other copies in the plural number, *they prevailed not*; and as the *Vulgate Latin* and *Syriac* verſions: *neither was their place found any more in heaven*; in the *Roman* empire; or *his place*, as ſome copies and verſions: this was the time of the judgment of the world, or of the empire as pagan, ſatan the prince of the world, who had long governed in it, was now caſt out of all power and authority in it, and all the idol gods in whom he was worſhipped, with all the idolatrous prieſts; nor were there any more any heathen emperors, for after *Conſtantine*'s time there was only *Julian* the apoſtate, and who reigned but a little while; and after *Theodoſius*, who cleared the empire of *paganiſm*, there never was any, and there is reaſon to believe there never will be.

Ver. 9. *And the great dragon was caſt out*, &c.] From heaven, or from power and authority in the *Roman* empire, namely the devil, where he had long preſided; it is obſervable that *Conſtantine* himſelf ſpeaks of *the dragon* being removed from the government of the commonwealth by the providence of God, and by the miniſtry, or means of him [m]; and he had his own effigies on a table placed before the porch of his palace, with the croſs over his head, and a dragon under his feet thruſt tho' with darts, and falling headlong [n]: *the old ſerpent*; who is ſo called becauſe of old, from the beginning, almoſt as ſoon as the world was, he appeared in the form of a ſerpent, or rather made uſe of it as an inſtrument and means, by which he ſeduced *Eve*, and ſo brought on the ruin of mankind: it is very uſual with the *Jews* to call the devil נחש הקדמיני, *the old ſerpent* [o]; wherefore *John* uſes this phraſe as a known one, to explain who was meant by the great dragon: *called the devil and ſatan*; the firſt of theſe names ſignifies an accuſer, and a forger of calumnies, and ſuch is the old ſerpent; he accuſes God to men, as if he was envious of their happineſs, as in the caſe of our firſt parents, and of men to God, of which there is an inſtance in the caſe of *Job*; and hence he is in the following verſe called the accuſer of the brethren; and the latter of them ſignifies an enemy, one that is filled with hatred and enmity to God and Chriſt, and to his church and people, whoſe adverſary he is ſaid to be, and at whoſe right-hand he ſtands to reſiſt, as he did *Joſhua* the high-prieſt: *which deceiveth the whole world*; which he did by deceiving our firſt parents, from whom all mankind ſpring, and in whoſe loins they were when they were deceived; ſo the *Jews* ſay [p] of the old ſerpent, that מטעה לכל העולם, *he deceives the whole world*; and ſo he deceived and corrupted the old world before the flood; and ſo he ſeduces every age and generation of men in the world; but here the *Roman* empire, ſometimes called all the world, as in *Luke* ii. 1. is meant, whom ſatan deceived by drawing it into idolatry and ſuperſtition: *he was caſt out into the earth*; he was caſt out of the *Roman* empire, from the rule of it, and worſhip in it, the heathen gods and heathen emperors being no more; when he poſſeſſed and inſtigated, and influenced the *Huns*, *Goths*, and *Vandals*, a meaner and baſer ſort of people, hereafter in this chapter called the earth, which is ſaid to help the woman, contrary to the intention of ſatan; the phraſe denotes the greatneſs of the fall of ſatan, his loſs of power, and the meanneſs and low eſtate of the perſons he afterwards had the power of, both the ſavage people beforementioned, and the antichriſtian party: *and his angels were caſt out with him*; the heathen emperors, magiſtrates, prieſts, and other votaries of his, which he made uſe of as inſtruments to do his will.

Ver. 10. *And I heard a loud voice ſaying in heaven*, &c.] Which was a ſong of praiſe on account of the victory obtained by *Michael* and his angels over the dragon and his, or for the overthrow and downfall of paganiſm in the *Roman* empire; for by *heaven* is meant the empire, now become chriſtian, or the chriſtian church-ſtate in it; and the *loud voice* heard in it by *John*, ſhows that there was a great number in it, who rejoiced on this occaſion, and that they were full of affection and fervency, and therefore expreſſed themſelves in ſuch manner, and in form following: *now is come ſalvation and ſtrength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Chriſt*; *ſalvation* was come when Chriſt obtained it by his ſufferings and death, and comes to particular perſons in effectual vocation, and it will only be fully come when it is perfectly enjoyed in heaven; but here it deſigns a deliverance from ſatan, as the god of this world, who was now dethroned, and caſt down from his power, authority, and influence in the empire; and from pagan idolatry and ſuperſtition, and from the ten days of tribulation, the cruel and bloody perſecutions under the heathen emperors; and denotes that ſafety and ſecurity, comfort, peace, and happineſs, the churches enjoyed under the government of a chriſtian emperor: and now was come *ſtrength*; not the ſtrength of Chriſt perſonal, diſplayed in the redemption of his people; but rather of Chriſt myſtical, of his church and intereſt, which had been very weak and low, and under oppreſſion and perſecution, but was now exalted, and in a flouriſhing condition, and was become ſtrong and mighty; or it may deſign the ſtrength and power of Chriſt, ſhown in deſtroying his enemies, in caſting the dragon out of heaven down to the earth, and in bringing to confuſion and deſtruction the heathen emperors, princes, and others, who fled to the rocks and mountains for fear of him, and becauſe of his great wrath: alſo now came *the kingdom of our God*; the Goſpel of the kingdom was preached every where, and Goſpel churches were ſet up in all parts of the empire, both which are ſometimes ſignified by the kingdom of God; here was now an illuſtrious appearance of the kingdom of God in the world, ſuch as had never been before; and which was a pledge and preſage of the greatneſs of the kingdom, or of that everlaſting kingdom which will be ſet up hereafter, when all other kingdoms will be at an end: to which is added *the power of his Chriſt*; or his authority as Lord and Chriſt, which took place at his reſurrection, aſcenſion, and ſeſſion at the right-hand of God; and which will more fully appear at the laſt day, when he ſhall come in glory, and exerciſe his authority in judging the quick and dead; of which there was ſome reſemblance at this time, in dethroning ſatan, deſtroying paganiſm, and putting an end to the power of the heathen emperors and empire; and which is expreſſed in ſuch language as the day of judgment is, ch. vi. 12—17. for to the opening of the ſixth ſeal does this paſſage belong: a further account is given of the matter of this ſong, and the reaſon of it: *for the accuſer of our brethren is caſt down*; hence it appears that this is not a ſong of the angels in heaven, ſince the ſaints are never called their brethren, nor the angels theirs, but their fellow-ſervants; rather it may be thought to be the ſong of the ſaints in heaven, acknowledging thoſe on earth to be their brethren, as they are, for there is but one family in heaven and in earth; and the ſaints on earth are called the brethren of the ſouls under the altar, ch. vi. 9, 11. but as this refers to the ſtate of the church in *Conſtantine*'s time, it muſt be the ſong of the ſaints in that ſtate, who call the martyrs that had been ſlain under the former perſecutions, their brethren; for that they are the perſons meant, is clear from the following verſe, whom ſatan is an accuſer of, for he is deſigned here; the word rendered *devil* ſignifies an accuſer, and a falſe one, and is ſo tranſlated *Tit.* ii. 3. this is a name frequently given to ſatan by the *Jews*, and have adopted into their language the very *Greek* word [q] that is here uſed; and often ſay of him that he accuſes *Iſrael*, and particularly that he accuſes *Iſrael* above, that is in heaven; and that he ſtands and מקטרג תמיד [r], *continually accuſes them*, the very phraſe uſed in the next clauſe: when *Iſrael* came out of *Egypt* they ſay [s], the angel *Samael* (the devil) ſtood and accuſed them; the firſt day of the month *Tiſri*, according to them [t] is appointed a day for blowing of trumpets, to confound ſatan, who comes to accuſe at that time; ſo they ſay [u], that ſatan ſtood and accuſed *Abraham*, and others; and indeed he was an accuſer from the beginning, both of God to men, and of men to God; we have inſtances in *Job*, and *Joſhua* the high-prieſt, *Job* i. 8, 9, 10, 11. *Zech.* iii. 1. but here it refers to the accuſations brought againſt the chriſtians in the primitive times, during the ten perſecutions, which were very horrid ones indeed; as that they had their private ſuppers, at which they eat their own infants, and their nightly meetings, for the gratifying of their luſts, in which they committed adultery, inceſt, and all manner of uncleanneſs; if ever a fire happened in a city, they were charged with it; and whenever there were any famine, or peſtilence, or wars, or any public calamity, they were accuſed as the cauſe and occaſion of it; as appears from the apologies for them written by *Juſtin*, *Tertullian*, *Cyprian*, *Minutius Felix*, &c. ſo that ſatan at this time was remarkably the accuſer of the brethren; but now this father of lyes was caſt down, he was caſt out of heaven, and deprived of that power and authority he had in the empire, and loſt his influence over men, and could not ſpread his lyes, and get his falſe charges and accuſations credited and received as before; he was not indeed wholly deſtroyed, nor even ſhut up in the bottomleſs pit, but he was caſt down to the earth; he was in a low condition, his power was greatly diminiſhed, and he was conquered by Chriſt, and caſt down and bruiſed under the feet of the ſaints: *which accuſed them before our God day and night*; ſo the evil ſpirit in *Ahab*'s time, and ſatan in *Job*'s time, are ſaid to ſtand before the Lord; and this ſhows the malice, and alſo the inſolence of the devil, that he ſhould ſtand and accuſe the ſaints before God, who he knew was their God, and was on their ſide, and therefore his accuſations could be of no avail; and tho' Chriſt appears in the preſence of God for them, and is their advocate with the Father, yet he is conſtant and indefatigable in going about, and picking up charges againſt them, and carrying them to God.

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[m] Euſeb. de Vita Conſtantini, l. 2. c. 46.

[n] Ib. l. 3. c. 3.

[o] T. Bab. Sota, fol. 9. 2. & Sanhedrin, fol. 29. 1. Imre Binah in Zohar in Gen. fol. 3. 1. & 15. 2. & Paſſim, Raya Mehimna in Zohar in Exod. fol. 50. 1. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 7. 3. & 8. 2. & 26. 3. & 46. 1. & Caphtor, fol. 101. 2.

[p] Tzeror Hammor, fol. 13. 3.

Ver. 11. *And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb*, &c.] The Lord Jeſus Chriſt, by whoſe blood they were redeemed and ranſomed out of the hands of ſatan, that was ſtronger than they; and by which they were juſtified from all ſin, and ſo all charges and condemnation were of no avail againſt them, whether of ſatan or the world; and by which they were cleanſed from all pollution, both internal and external; and by which even their converſation-garments were waſhed and made white; by this alſo they drew nigh to God with boldneſs, as to their own God, notwithſtanding the accuſations of ſatan; and this they could, and did make uſe of as a ſhield to defend them againſt all his charges; and this being ſprinkled upon them, as it gave them an inward conſcience-peace amidſt all, ſo it was their ſecurity from the deſtroying angel; and under this purple covering they went triumphantly to glory, having thro' it obtained an entire conqueſt over ſatan: as alſo *and by the word of their teſtimony*; either by Chriſt, the eſſential Word, they bore record of, who is ſharper than any two-edged ſword, and through whom they were made more than conquerors; or rather by the uſe they made of the ſcriptures of truth, the ſword of the ſpirit, the word of God, to which they bore a faithful teſtimony, and to which they adhered, and by ſo doing gained the victory over ſatan and his inſtruments, whether falſe teachers or perſecutors; and particularly by the Goſpel, which they embraced, profeſſed, and preached with conſtancy and courage, and by their laſt teſtimony they bore to it at their death, on the account of it, as it follows: *and they loved not their lives unto the death*; they did not value them; they made no account of them; they were not anxiouſly careful to preſerve them; they choſe to loſe them; they ran to the ſtake, and willingly and chearfully laid them down; they did not count them dear unto them, as ſaid the Apoſtle *Paul*, that they might finiſh their courſe with joy, and teſtify the Goſpel of the grace of God, or bear a teſtimony to it, *Acts* xx. 24. yea, as Chriſt has directed, *Luke* xiv. 26. they hated their lives in compariſon of him, and when in competition with him and his Goſpel; and by dying thus they conquered ſatan; had they loved their lives, and ſaved them by denying Chriſt and his truths, ſatan would have conquered them; but dying in the cauſe of Chriſt, and for it, they got the victory over him.

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[q] Pirke Abot, c. 4. §. 11. Maimon. & Bartenora in ib.

[r] Shaare Ora, fol. 21. 4. & 24. 2.

[s] Shemot Rabba, §. 21. fol. 106. 4.

[t] Targum Jon. in Num. xxix. 1.

[u] Zohar in Num. fol. 107. 2.

Ver. 12. *Therefore rejoice ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them*, &c.] So in the prophetic language, at times, and upon occaſions of rejoicing, the heavens are called upon to join, and bear a part therein, *Pſ.* xcvi. 10, 11. *Iſ.* xliv. 23. and by theſe may be meant here, the angels of heaven, who rejoice at every advance of Chriſt's kingdom and intereſt; they rejoiced at his incarnation, and ſo they do at the converſion of every ſingle ſinner; and much more may they be thought to do ſo at ſuch a time as this, when there were ſuch multitudes of converſions, and the churches and intereſt of Chriſt in ſo flouriſhing a condition, and ſatan's kingdom ſo much weakened; and to theſe may be joined the ſouls of the ſaints departed, who might be made acquainted with this wonderful change of things in the empire; and it may be alſo underſtood of the ſaints, the members of the ſeveral churches, even all heavenly-minded perſons, who were born from above, and were partakers of the heavenly calling, and whoſe converſations were in heaven; theſe are called upon to take their part in this ſong of praiſe and thankſgiving: *wo to the inhabitants of the earth, and of the ſea*; ſuch as are of the earth, earthy, ſenſual, and earthly-minded perſons; and who are like the troubled waters, and raging waves of the ſea, cannot reſt, but caſt up mire and dirt, and foam out their own ſhame; the barbarous nations of the *Goths* and *Vandals*, carnal profeſſors of religion, and the antichriſtian party, which quickly upon this ſprung up, may be intended, on whom this wo is denounced; the reaſon of which follows: *for the devil is come down unto you*; and a greater wo can't be upon men on earth, than to have the devil among them, who always brings miſchief with him, and breathes nothing but ruin and deſtruction to men; he having loſt his power in the *Roman* empire, poſſeſſed the above perſons, and took up his reſidence among them; he came down, but not willingly, he was forced to it, he was caſt down: *having great wrath*; becauſe he was conquered, and caſt out of heaven, and was deprived of the worſhip that had been long given him, as the god of the world, and of that authority and influence which he had over men: and this his great wrath was ſeen in ſtirring up the *Arians* to perſecute the chriſtians; and in the times of *Julian*, when he endeavoured to regain his loſt power; and in bringing in the *Goths*, *Huns*, and *Vandals* into the empire, to waſte and deſtroy it; and in moving the antichriſtian party, which ſoon prevailed, to make war againſt the ſaints: *becauſe he knoweth he hath but a ſhort time*; ere he ſhould be ſhut up in the bottomleſs pit, or be confined in the place of torment, and ere his full puniſhment ſhould be inflicted on him; which time of his to tempt, deceive, diſturb, and diſtreſs men, is to be no longer than during the forty-two months of antichriſt's reign, and the 1260 days, or years, of the witneſſes propheſying in ſackcloth, and of the church's being in the wilderneſs, and no longer than till the thouſand years reign of Chriſt with his ſaints begins, which in compariſon of his long reign in the *Gentile* world, is but a ſhort time; and though after the thouſand years are ended, he will be let looſe, yet it will be but for a ſeaſon, a very ſmall time, when he will be caſt into the lake of fire and brimſtone, and be tormented night and day for ever and ever.

Ver. 13. *And when the dragon ſaw that he was caſt unto the earth*, &c.] When the devil perceived he had not the power in the *Roman* empire he formerly had; and that his influence was only over the common and meaner ſort of people, or over the earthly part of the church, and the barbarous nations in the world: *he perſecuted the woman which brought forth the man-child*; he was enraged at the church, and purſued her with great wrath, who had brought forth a chriſtian emperor, by whom the kingdom of Chriſt was encouraged and ſupported in the empire; and becauſe he could not come at this child to deſtroy it, that being caught up to God and to his throne, he attacks the woman, the church, in a new way, by ſtirring up earthly-minded profeſſors of chriſtianity, the *Arians*, againſt her, and by bringing in an inundation of the barbarous nations into the empire, now become chriſtian; for this perſecution cannot be underſtood of the perſecution raiſed by the *Jews*, under the inſtigation of ſatan, againſt the chriſtian church, quickly after the aſcenſion of Chriſt to heaven, for then the dragon had his place and power in the *Roman* empire, whereas this perſecution was not till after the downfall of paganiſm in it; and for the ſame reaſon, it cannot deſign the perſecution againſt the chriſtians begun by *Nero*, and carried on under ſucceeding emperors, which were the ten days of tribulation under the *Smyrnæan* church-ſtate, and were now over; theſe were the pains and birth-throws of the woman, the church, antecedent to, and which brought on the birth of the man-child; and the perſons that endured them were thoſe that overcame ſatan by the blood of the Lamb, the word of their teſtimony, and their death, which were all previous to theſe times: nor does it reſpect ſo much the perſecution under *Julian*, which was carried on not by open force and violence, but by ſubtlety; he abſtained from corporal puniſhments and ſhedding of blood, obſerving that theſe methods in former times had given the chriſtians an opportunity of ſhewing their faith, patience, and fortitude, which had been the means of increaſing their number; wherefore he betook himſelf to more private and artful methods, as to content himſelf with taking away the revenues of the miniſters of the word, not ſuffering any chriſtians to be in military employments, denying their children the uſe of ſchools, encouraging the *Jews*, their ſworn enemies, and tolerating all ſorts of hereſies among themſelves, that ſo they might deſtroy one another; to which may be added, that his reign was but one year and ſeven or eight months, and therefore can ſcarcely be thought to be pointed at here; but inaſmuch as the *Arian* perſecution was the firſt after the fall of paganiſm, and the principal one before the riſe of antichriſt, this may moſt reaſonably be concluded to be meant here; and this began even in *Conſtantine*'s time, for by means of an *Arian* preſbyter that belonged to his ſiſter *Conſtantia*, he was prevailed upon towards the cloſe of his days, to believe that *Arius* was not the man he was ſaid to be, and that he had had hard meaſure; inſomuch that he was recalled, and received into communion, and *Athanaſius* was driven from his church, and baniſhed to *Triers* in *France:* and the hiſtorian ſays [w], that *Conſtantine* exerciſed *vim perſecutionis*, the force of perſecution, or a violent one; biſhops were exiled, the clergy were ſeverely handled, and laymen taken notice of, who ſeparated themſelves from the communion of the *Arians*. Under *Conſtantius*, his ſon, the perſecution raged much, *Athanaſius* being gone from *Alexandria*, and one *Gregory* put in his room; and the people being uneaſy at it, ſome were baniſhed, others caſt into priſon, and others had their goods confiſcated; women were dragged by the hair of their heads to the tribunals, and uſed very ignominiouſly; three thouſand ſoldiers entred a church on an Eaſter-day, and killed many women and children; virgins were ſtripped naked, and the bodies of thoſe who died of their wounds were denied a burial, and caſt to the dogs; and the perſecution did not ſtop here, but went thro' *Egypt*, where the biſhops, ſome of them were beaten with rods, others were laid in bonds, and others were baniſhed: in *Egypt* and *Lybia* ninety biſhops were forced away, ſixteen were baniſhed, whoſe churches were delivered to the *Arians*. *Lucius* of *Adrianople* was bound in chains, caſt into priſon, and there periſhed; *Paul* of *Conſtantinople* was firſt expelled, after that murdered, and *Macedonius*, an *Arian*, put in his room; and ſuch who refuſed to commune with him ſuffered ſtripes, bonds, impriſonment, and other tortures, of which they died, and others were baniſhed, where they periſhed; women that refuſed had their breaſts cut off, or burnt, either with red-hot irons, or with eggs roaſted at the fire to a very great heat [x]; with other inſtances, too many to recite. Under *Valens* the emperor things were ſtill worſe, who became an *Arian* at the perſuaſion of his wife, and was baptized by *Eudoxius*, the *Arian* biſhop of *Conſtantinople*, who, at his baptiſm, obliged him to ſwear, that he would defend *Arianiſm*, and perſecute thoſe of a contrary opinion; and accordingly he moved an irreconcileable war againſt them; at one time he expelled *Meleſius* from *Antioch*, *Euſebius* from *Samoſata*, *Pelagius* from *Laodicea*, and *Barſis* from *Edeſſa*; and all the reſt that would not communicate with *Euzoius*, an *Arian*, he puniſhed, either with pecuniary fines, or with ſtripes; and he is ſaid to drown many in the river *Orontes*. This perſecution went thro' the churches of *Thrace*, *Dacia*, and *Pannonia*; but what is moſt ſhocking of all, is, that ſome choſen eccleſiaſtical men, to the number of fourſcore and one, were ſent to him from *Conſtantinople* to *Nicomedia*, with a ſupplication to redreſs ſome injuries and grievances; at which he being angry, ordered *Modeſtus*, the governour, to take them and put them to death; but the governour fearing to do it openly, leſt there ſhould be an inſurrection, ordered a ſhip to be got ready, pretending to carry them into exile, but directed the mariners to go in a fiſher's boat behind, and ſet fire to the ſhip, which they accordingly did when at ſea, where all the above worthy men periſhed at once [y]. It would be endleſs to rehearſe all the inſtances of cruelty under this perſecution; it need only be obſerved, that this was at the inſtigation of the devil, as all perſecution is; and that ſatan herein acted like himſelf, as the great dragon, as he was when *Rome* pagan was in power: theſe were chriſtian emperors in name, but they exerciſed all the cruelties of the heathen ones, if they did not exceed them; and a greater regard was ſhown to paganiſm than to the orthodox religion. *Valens* tolerated all religions but that, eſpecially heatheniſm; all his reign the fire burned upon the altars, images were honoured with libations and ſacrifices, the public feſtivals of the heathens were kept, and the rites of *Bacchus* were performed in the ſtreets [z]; and this perſecution was followed by the inundation of the barbarous nations, of which hereafter.

Ver. 14. *And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle*, &c.] By which are meant, not the two teſtaments, by which ſhe was ſupported under afflictions, trials, and perſecutions, and againſt ſatan and all his efforts; nor the two graces of faith and hope, by which ſhe roſe, and dwelt on high, in the view of inviſible things, and with contempt of the world, its frowns, or flatteries; nor, as others think, prayer and good works, by the former of which ſhe flew to God for ſupplies of grace and protection, and by the latter was uſeful and profitable to men, and gave glory to God, and eſcaped the juſt cenſures of the world; nor are two powerful kingdoms, within the dominions of the dragon, intended, as others have thought, who take them to be *France* and *Spain*, to which *Britain* was an appendix; when they were in the poſſeſſion of *Conſtantius Chlorus*, the father of *Conſtantine* the great, where the chriſtians had refuge in the perſecution under *Diocleſian*; but this was before the war in heaven, and the downfal of paganiſm in the empire, and before the above perſecution; rather theſe two wings of the eagle deſign the eaſtern and weſtern diviſions of the *Roman* empire: it is not unuſual in ſcripture for a monarchy, or monarch, as the *Aſſyrian* king and kingdom, to be ſignified by an eagle, and the wings of eagles, *Ezek.* xvii. 3, 12. *Dan.* vii. 4. and it is well known that the eagle is the enſign of the *Roman* empire, to which the alluſion is in *Matt.* xxiv. 28. and at the death of *Theodoſius*, the empire was divided, as has been obſerved before, into two parts; the eaſtern empire was given to one of his ſons, and the weſtern to another; and this was between the *Arian* perſecution, and the irruption of the *Goths* and *Vandals*, when the church was fleeing, and gradually diſappearing; and theſe two empires both went under the chriſtian name, and ſupported the outward viſible church, tho' much corrupted, and ſtill more and more corrupting; by which means the pure members of the church, tho' few, and very obſcure, were preſerved. In a word, theſe wings may denote the ſwiftneſs in which the church proceeded to diſappear, having loſt her former ſimplicity, and glory, for which eagles wings are famous, *Prov.* xxiii. 5. and more eſpecially, that divine ſtrength and ſupport by which ſhe was bore up, and carried thro', and delivered out of ſore afflictions and perſecutions; ſee *Iſ.* xl. 31. The alluſion is, to God's deliverance of the people of *Iſrael* out of *Egypt*, when he bore them as on eagles wings, and carried them thro' the wilderneſs, *Exod.* xix. 4. *Deut.* xxxii. 10, 11, 12. ſo here it follows, *that ſhe might fly into the wilderneſs*; a place deſolate, and full of ſerpents and ſcorpions, uncomfortable, and deſtitute of proviſions, and yet a place of ſafety as well as of ſolitarineſs and retirement; and chiefly

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[w] Sulpitii Sever. Hiſt. Sacr. l. 2.

[x] Hiſt. Eccl. Magdeburg. cent. 4. c. 3. p. 50, 56.

[y] Ib. p. 73, 74.

[z] Ib. p. 73. & c. 7. p. 304.

deſigns the obſcure and inviſible ſtate of the pure church in the times of the antichriſtian apoſtacy; ſee the note on ver. 6. *Into her place*; which was prepared of God for her, as in ver. 6. *where ſhe is nouriſhed*; by the miniſters of the word, the two witneſſes that propheſy in ſackcloth, who feed the church with knowledge and underſtanding; with the words of faith and good doctrine, with the Goſpel, and the truths of it, which are ſweet, comfortable, and nutritive; and with the ordinances of the Goſpel, the entertainment of wiſdom's houſe, the feaſt of fat things, and the breaſts of conſolation; and with Chriſt the hidden manna, the food of the wilderneſs: and that *for a time, and times, and half a time*; that is, all the times of antichriſt, the forty-two months of his reign; during which time the holy city is trodden under foot, and in a deſolate and afflicted condition outwardly, as may be learned by comparing together *Dan.* vii. 25. *Rev.* xiii. 5. and xi. 2. and until the end of wonders, or when time ſhall be no longer, or till the ſeventh angel has ſounded his trumpet, as appears from *Dan.* xii. 7. and *Rev.* x. 6, 7. This date is the ſame with 1260 days in ver. 6. for *time* ſignifies a prophetic year, or 360 years; and *times* two years, or 720 years; and half a time, half a year, or 180 years, in all 1260 years; and which are to be reckoned, not from the beginning of the church's flight in *Conſtantine*'s time, or from the *Arian* perſecution, but from her entering into her wilderneſs ſtate, or entire diſappearance upon the prevalence of the antichriſtian apoſtacy; which might be when the biſhop of *Rome* took upon him the title of univerſal biſhop: and here, and during this time ſhe is hid *from the face of the ſerpent*; that is, from his wrath, ſo as that he cannot utterly deſtroy her, God having reſerved a ſealed number for himſelf; ſee ch. vi. 16. or from the ſight of the ſerpent, as the *Arabic* verſion renders it, ſo as that he could not diſcern, with all his quick ſight, where the church was.

Ver. 15. *And the ſerpent caſt out of his mouth water as a flood*, &c.] Which cannot deſign any perſecution before the fall of paganiſm, either of the *Jews*, or of the *Romans*; nor indeed the *Arian* perſecution, ſince the caſting out of this flood is diſtinguiſhed from the above perſecution, and was after the church began to flee upon that perſecution; tho' it is not unuſual for wicked perſecutors, and violent perſecutions, to be expreſſed by waters, and they are called proud waters, *Pſ.* cxxiv. 1, 2, 3, 4. and theſe may be ſaid to be caſt out of the mouth of the ſerpent, the devil, who was a perſecutor, and a murderer from the beginning, and by whom all perſecutors and perſecutions are inſtigated, moved, and carried on; but rather, as the words of a man's mouth are as deep waters, *Prov.* xviii. 4. and doctrines, good or bad, may be ſo called; that flood of errors and hereſies, which were poured in between the times of *Conſtantine*, and the riſe of antichriſt may be here intended; ſuch as the *Arian* hereſy, which denied the divinity of Chriſt; the *Neſtorian* hereſy, which divided his perſon; and the *Eutychian* hereſy, which confounded the two natures in him; and the *Macedonian* hereſy, which took away the deity of the Holy Ghoſt; and the *Pelagian* hereſy, which deſtroyed the grace of God, and ſet up the power of man's free-will: and this flood of errors and hereſies may be truly ſaid to be caſt out of the ſerpent's mouth; ſince the old ſerpent, the devil, is the father of all lyes, and errors; and the above hereſies are the doctrines of devils, and damnable ones; and were deſigned by ſatan to deſtroy the ſouls of men, and ruin the church: tho' ſince this flood followed upon the *Arian* perſecution, and was after the church began to flee, being ſupported and ſecured by the two diviſions of the empire, eaſtern and weſtern, the wings of the *Roman* eagle; it ſeems beſt by this flood to underſtand the irruption of the barbarous nations, which quickly followed that diviſion; the *Goths*, *Hunns*, *Vandals*, *Heruli*, *Alans*, and *Lombards*, who were poured in to the weſtern empire, and overran, and at laſt deſtroyed it; ſo that this flood is cotemporary with the firſt four trumpets; after which followed the ſwarms of locuſts, the *Saracens*, which infeſted, teized, and tormented the *eaſtern* empire; and after them the *Turks*, the four angels bound at the great river *Euphrates*, were let looſe, and like a mighty torrent overflowed, and utterly deſtroyed it; and all this was done at the inſtigation of ſatan, he being filled with wrath, becauſe the empire was become chriſtian, and his view was to deſtroy the church in it: for this flood was caſt *after the woman, that he might cauſe her to be carried away of the flood*; along with the empire, and be no more; but his deſigns were fruſtrated, and he diſappointed; ſo people, nations, and tongues are compared to waters in ch. xvii. 15. ſee *Iſ.* viii. 7. and xxviii. 2. which the *Targum* interprets of the armies of much people.

Ver. 16. *And the earth helped the woman*, &c.] By opening itſelf, and taking in what the ſerpent caſt out, ſo that it could not reach the woman, and annoy her, as follows: *and the earth opened her mouth*; as it did when it ſwallowed up *Corah*, *Dathan*, and *Abiram*, *Numb.* xvi. 30. to which hiſtory this may have ſome reſpect: *and ſwallowed up the flood which the dragon caſt out of his mouth*; if the flood refers to the *Arian* perſecution, then the earth helping the woman, the church, and ſwallowing up this flood, may reſpect the *Goths*, who broke into the *Roman* provinces, under their king *Athanaricus*, and fell upon the *Arians*, with great rage and cruelty, and infeſted the *Roman* provinces, which were nearer; they ſeized upon *Thrace*, which was the occaſion of tranquillity to the orthodox; for *Valens* being moved by theſe things, deſiſted from perſecuting them, and leaving *Antioch*, he went to *Conſtantinople* to form meaſures for the carrying on of the war againſt the *Goths*[*]; and thus the earth helped the woman. But if by the flood, the errors and hereſies of thoſe times are meant, then the councils may be intended by the earth; which, tho' they conſiſted of men that were earthly, and greatly apoſtatized in other things, yet oppoſed, refuted, and condemned theſe hereſies and errors, and ſo were the means of preſerving the church from them, as ſome think; tho' others are of opinion, that the barbarous nations are in this alſo deſigned, who embracing *Arianiſm*, and the corrupt religion, where they came, by which they were, in ſome meaſure, mollified and reconciled to the chriſtians, did not ſeek to root them out, and deſtroy them, as ſatan hoped they would; but ſince they themſelves, with the *Mahometans*, are meant by the flood, the earth muſt be interpreted of the corrupt and antichriſtian church, the idolaters which ſuſtained the force of this inundation, and for ſometime repelled it, and ſo ſecured the true church; and when the weſtern empire was over-run by it, as by the *Goths*, *&c.* idolaters, earthly-minded men, and carnal profeſſors, were the ſufferers, and bore the ſhock of it; and when the eaſtern empire was over-run by the *Saracens*, the tormenting locuſts, the green things, graſs and trees, were not hurt by them; none of the ſealed ones, only thoſe who were not ſealed, ch. ix. 4. and the *Turkiſh* inundation was a ſcourge upon the antichriſtian party; ſo that it was the earth, or earthly part of profeſſors, the idolaters, that bore the fury and force of this flood, and broke it off from the church. And ſo ſometimes wicked men are helpful to the ſaints, as the *Philiſtines* were ſerviceable to *David*, to ſkreen him from the fury of *Saul*; and *Lyſias*, the chief captain, and *Felix* and *Feſtus*, *Roman* governours, were inſtruments of preſerving the Apoſtle *Paul* from falling into the hands of the *Jews*, his enemies; and the chriſtians that were ſcattered by the perſecution at *Jeruſalem*, found refuge and ſafety among the *Gentiles*.

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[*] Hiſt. Eccl. Magdeburg. cent. 4. c. 3. p. 80.

Ver. 17. *And the dragon was wroth with the woman*, &c.] The devil was very angry with the church, becauſe he could not deſtroy her by the *Arian* perſecution, he had raiſed; and becauſe he could not carry her away with the flood, either of errors and hereſies, or of the barbarous nations; and becauſe he could not, by any means, come at her, and indeed did not well know where ſhe was, a place being prepared for her of God in the wilderneſs, where ſhe was taken care of: wherefore he took another method, as follows, *and went to make war with the remnant of her ſeed*; which refers to the war, the beaſt, to whom he gave his power, ſeat, and authority, is ſaid to make with the ſaints; and which was entered into, and carried on by his inſtigation, of which there is an account in the following chapter: the perſons with whom he went to make war are deſcribed as *her ſeed*; the ſeed of the church, her ſpiritual offſpring, the ſons and daughters ſhe brought forth to Chriſt; between which ſeed, and ſatan and his ſeed, there always was an enmity: and theſe are *the remnant* of her ſeed, a few perſons ſcattered up and down, a remnant according to the election of grace; who were not in bodies, or in church-ſtates, regularly formed, as heretofore, but in private families, and ſome here, and ſome there; and who were called out to bear a teſtimony for Chriſt in corrupt times: and theſe are further deſcribed as ſuch, *who keep the commandments of God*; and not the traditions of men; nor are the commands of the moral law of God ſo much deſigned, tho' it is true, that theſe were kept by the ſeed of the church; but rather the ordinances of the Goſpel, the commands of God our ſaviour, ſuch as baptiſm and the Lord's ſupper; which were kept by theſe faithful ones, as they had been delivered, when they began now to be ſadly corrupted by the antichriſtian party: *and have the teſtimony of Jeſus Chriſt*; the Goſpel, which is a teſtimony concerning him; ſee the note on ch. i. 2. This they had in their hearts, a ſpiritual knowledge, and ſaving experience of it; and this they had in their hands, they made a profeſſion of it, they held it forth, and held it faſt; all which was the reaſon of ſatan's enmity againſt them, and war with them.

CHAP. XIII.

THIS chapter contains a deſcription of the *Romiſh* antichriſt, under the figure of two beaſts, the one repreſenting him in his civil power, the other in his eccleſiaſtical power. The firſt beaſt is deſcribed by its original, the ſea, and by the monſtrous ſhape of its ſeveral parts; its heads ſeven, in which were the name of blaſphemy; its horns ten, on which were crowns; its ſkin like a leopard, its feet as a bear, and its mouth as a lion; and by its ſtate and condition, having power, a throne, and great authority; and having one of its heads wounded, and healed; and by the great regard had unto him, being wondered at, and worſhipped by all the world, and declared to be more powerful than any, and none to be like him, ver. 1, 2, 3, 4. Next an account is given, of what he was ſuffered to have, a blaſpheming mouth, and power to continue forty-two months, ver. 5. and of what he ſaid or uttered, his blaſphemy againſt God, his name, tabernacle, and the inhabitants of heaven, ver. 6. and of what he did by permiſſion, made war with the ſaints, overcame them, and had power over all people, ver. 7. and of the worſhip given him by the reprobate part of the world, ver. 8. and the whole is concluded with an exhortation exciting attention to what had been ſaid, with a threatening to the beaſt, and a word of comfort to the ſaints, ver. 9, 10. And then follows the deſcription of the ſecond beaſt, by its original the earth; by its likeneſs to a lamb, and a dragon; to the former for its two horns, and to the latter for its ſpeech, ver. 11. and by the actions aſcribed to it, which are many; as exerciſing all the power of the firſt beaſt; cauſing all the inhabitants of the earth to worſhip that; doing miracles, of which one is mentioned, thereby deceiving the men of the world; ordering them to make an image to the wounded beaſt; giving life to it, ſo that it could ſpeak; putting to death all that refuſed to worſhip it; obliging men of all ranks and degrees to have a mark in their right hands or foreheads, and forbidding ſuch that had not, to buy or ſell, ver. 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17. And the chapter is concluded with an *Epiphonema*, exciting men of underſtanding to ſearch out, and count the number of the beaſt's name, ſince it is poſſible to be done, being the number of a man, and eaſy to be done, conſiſting of three *Greek* letters, χξϛ, which are numerically 666, ver. 18.

Ver. 1. *And I ſtood upon the ſand of the ſea*, &c.] The *Vulgate Latin*, *Syriac*, and *Ethiopic* verſions read, *and he ſtood*, &c. and ſo the *Alexandrian* copy; meaning the dragon, ſaid to be wroth with the woman, and to go forth to make war with her ſeed, in the latter part of the preceding chapter, where ſome verſions place this clauſe; and the *Arabic* verſion reads expreſly, *and the ſerpent ſtood*, &c. And this is thought by ſome to be the better reading, becauſe of the connexion with what goes before, and becauſe there is no mention of the name of *John*, nor of his being called or removed from heaven, where he was beholding ſights, and continuing the account of them, ch. iv. 1. and xii. 1. and xv. 1. as there is when he is ſhown ſights elſewhere; ſee ch. xvii. 3. and xxi. 10. And beſides, as the dragon was contriving a new way of perſecuting the ſaints, and about to raiſe up a beaſt out of the ſea, by which he might do it, to whom he would give his power, ſeat, and authority, he is repreſented as ſtanding in a proper place for this purpoſe; it was upon the ſand, which may ſignify a multitude of people employed by him, and alſo may denote the weakneſs and unſucceſsfulneſs of his efforts in the iſſue; yet the *Greek* copies in general agree in the common reading, and refer it to *John*, who ſtood on the ſhore of the iſle of *Patmos*, and in a fit place, in a viſionary way, to behold the following ſight: for that the next clauſe belongs to him is without doubt, *and ſaw a beaſt riſe up out of the ſea*; by which is meant, not the devil, becauſe it is in ver. 2. diſtinguiſhed from the dragon, who is the devil and ſatan, as alſo elſewhere, ch. xvi. 13. and xx. 10. nor the old *Roman* empire, tho' there are many things which ſeem to agree; the *Roman* monarchy is called a *beaſt*; it is one of the four beaſts in *Daniel* vii. 2, 4. which roſe up out of the ſea, from a multitude of people and nations, which were gathered to it, and compoſed it. *Rome* pagan had, as this beaſt has, ſeven heads, and ten horns, ch. xii. 3. and had power over all nations, and is therefore ſometimes called the whole world, and exerciſed great cruelty upon the chriſtians; but then this is ſignified by the *red dragon* itſelf, in the preceding chapter, and beſides, had riſen up before the times of *John*, whereas this is one of the things ſhown him, which ſhould be hereafter: this beaſt then was not, but was to come, ch. iv. 1. and xvii. 11. and was not to ariſe, nor did it ariſe 'till after the downfal of *Rome* pagan, and after the *Arian* perſecution, after the woman's flight into the wilderneſs, and after, and upon the inundation of the barbarous nations into the empire, as appears from the preceding chapter; nor will the time of this beaſt's duration agree with the old *Roman* empire, for this beaſt is to continue forty-two months, ver. 5. which is the whole time of the holy city being trodden under foot, and of the church's being in the wilderneſs, and of the witneſſes propheſying in ſackcloth; whereas the *Roman* monarchy, governed by emperors, did not laſt four hundred years. Moreover, as this beaſt is diſtinguiſhed from the dragon, ſo it is ſaid to have its power from him; whereas the *Roman* empire was of God, and obedience and ſubjection to it are always recommended to the ſaints in the ſcriptures, *Rom.* xiii. 1. *Tit.* iii. 1. 1 *Pet.* ii. 13. much leſs can the empire, as become truly chriſtian, be intended; nor are either the eaſtern or the *Turkiſh* empires deſigned, for neither of theſe had their ſeat at *Rome*, which the dragon gave to this beaſt, but at *Conſtantinople*: it remains then, that by it is meant the *Roman* empire, when divided into ten kingdoms, and united in the papacy; or it deſigns antichriſt in his ſecular power, with the ten kings, that receive power with him as ſuch one hour, and give their kingdom to him: now this beaſt is ſaid to *riſe up out of the ſea*; either out of the abyſs, the bottomleſs pit of hell, ſee ch. xi. 7. and xvii. 8. or out of the ſea of this world, and the wicked in it, who are like a troubled ſea that cannot reſt; or out of the floods of errors and hereſies, by which this man of ſin was conceived, and cheriſhed, and a way was paved for his open riſing and appearance in the world; or rather, ſince waters deſign, in this book, nations, people, and tongues, ſee ch. xvii. 15. and the four beaſts in *Daniel* are ſaid to riſe out of the ſea, ch. vii. 2. and a multitude of people are compared to the waves of the ſea, *Ezek.* xxvi. 3. ſee alſo *Iſ.* xvii. 12. and lvii. 20. where the *Jewiſh* writers ſay [b], the nations are compared to the ſea, as *Iſrael* to the ſand, the inundation of the barbarous nations, the *Goths*, *Huns*, and *Vandals* into the empire, ſeem to be intended, which made great commotions and changes in it: theſe ſet up ten kingdoms in it, upon which antichriſt aroſe, and placed himſelf at the head of them; theſe gave their kingdoms to the beaſt, and ſo may be ſaid to give riſe unto him, eſpecially as to his ſecular power. *Having ſeven heads*; which ſome underſtand of his perfect wiſdom and knowledge, the head being the ſeat of knowledge, and ſeven a number of perfection; and ſo may refer to thoſe boaſted treaſures of wiſdom and knowledge, which antichriſt pretends to have, as being the judge of controverſies, and the infallible interpreter of the ſcriptures; or elſe the ſevenfold form of government among the *Romans* is intended, as in ch. xii. 3. or rather as it's interpreted in ch. xvii. 9. the ſeven mountains on which *Rome* was built, and ſo deſign the city itſelf built on them, that being the metropolis of the empire; or the ſeven capital cities of the empire, as Mr. *Daubuz* thinks; the whole is meant, for it is the ſame *Roman* monarchy as before, only in a different form: *and ten horns*; the ten kingdoms, into which the empire was divided upon its being waſted and vanquiſhed by the *Goths*, and the ten kings of them, which reigned with the beaſt, and gave their kingdoms to him; ſo horns ſignify kingdoms in *Zech.* i. 18. *And upon his horns ten crowns*; which diſtinguiſhes *Rome* papal from *Rome* pagan; the crowns in *Rome* pagan were upon the heads, or upon the emperors, that reſided at *Rome*; and tho' it had ten horns, as here, and was divided into ſo many provinces, which were governed by deputies, proconſuls, *&c.* yet they were not kings, they had no crowns; but here the horns have crowns on them, becauſe the governours of theſe ten kingdoms are crowned kings: *and upon his heads the name of blaſphemy*; which refers not to *Rome* pagan, being called the eternal city, and *Rome* the goddeſs, and the like; but to *Rome* papal, or antichriſt, who elſewhere is ſaid to have the name *Myſtery*, written upon the forehead, and to have blaſphemy on his heads; and is called blaſphemy in the abſtract, as being a moſt blaſphemous creature againſt God, Chriſt, and his people, and ſo his name is ſuitable to his character, mouth, and language, ver. 5, 6. aſſuming that to himſelf, which only belongs to God and Chriſt, as power over the conſcience, to forgive ſin, *&c.* and even deity itſelf; ſee 2 *Theſſ.* ii. 4. *Rev.* xvii. 3. The *Alexandrian* copy, and ſome others, the *Complutenſian* edition, the *Vulgate Latin*, *Syriac*, and *Arabic* verſions read, *names of blaſphemy*.

Ver. 2. *And the beaſt which I ſaw was like unto a leopard*, &c.] To which the *Grecian* kingdom is compared in *Dan.* vii. 6. becauſe of that rapidity and ſwiftneſs with which *Alexander* over-ran the world, and ſet up this monarchy; and to which the *Roman* papal monarchy bears ſome reſemblance; for as the *Grecian* monarchy was divided into ſeveral parts, which the leopard's ſpots may alſo point out, ſo the *Roman* empire was divided into ten parts, and united under the pope, as the head of them; and may be, in this form, compared to a leopard for its ſwiftneſs, *Hab.* i. 8. becauſe this beaſt as ſoon as he aroſe, and got power, quickly, and in a very ſhort time, extended it over all emperors, kings, princes, biſhops, and over all kingdoms and churches; and for its ſpots, *Jer.* xiii. 23. which may be expreſſive both of the ſpots of ſin and immorality of every kind, and of errors and hereſies, ſuperſtition and idolatry, with which antichriſt and his followers abound; and for its inſidiouſneſs and cruelty, *Jer.* v. 6. *Hoſ.* xiii. 7. It lies in wait for its prey, and ſuddenly falls upon it, and devours it; and is a lively picture of the cunning ſleight of the antichriſtian party, who lie in wait to deceive, and of their blood-thirſtineſs and barbarity. It is reported [e] of the leopard, that it is of a ſweet ſmell, and by its odour it draws the fawns, does, &c. near it, and then makes a prey of them; ſo antichriſt, by outward riches and preferments, by the external pomp and ſplendor of his religion, by his lying wonders and miracles, and by his great pretenſions to holineſs, and the like, allures multitudes unto him, and deſtroys them. *And his feet were as* the feet *of a bear*; to which the *Perſian* monarchy is compared, *Dan.* vii. 6. And this, as ſome think, may denote the ſtrength and ſtability of the kingdom of antichriſt, it having already endured a great while, and will be thought to be very firm and ſtable when its ruin is near; or rather the wars and fightings of antichriſt againſt the ſaints, the fore-feet of the bear being what that creature fights with, and tears and deſtroys ſuch as oppoſe it, or fall a prey to it; and may alſo, as before, expreſs the voraciouſneſs and cruelty of antichriſt, with reſpect to the bodies and ſouls of men: *and his mouth as the mouth of a lion*; to which creature the *Babylonian* monarchy is compared, *Dan.* vii. 4. uttering out blaſphemies againſt God, threatning ruin and deſtruction to men, and injecting fear into them, as the roaring of a lion does, and ſeizing upon, and devouring their eſtates and poſſeſſions, as well as butchering their perſons. This beaſt has all the properties of the ſeveral beaſts in *Daniel*'s prophecy, wherefore all the figures there made uſe of to deſcribe them are put together, to point unto us this monſter of iniquity. *And the dragon gave him his power*; for the coming of antichriſt is after the working of ſatan, 2 *Theſſ.* ii. 9, 10. he gave him his cunning and ſubtlety, as the old ſerpent, and taught him his arts and tricks to deceive mankind; and gave him a power to do ſigns and lying wonders, as well as communicated his malice and cruelty to perſecute and oppreſs the ſaints; or an *army* of eccleſiaſticks to fight under him, and for him: *and his ſeat*; at *Rome*, for there ſatan's ſeat was, ch. ii. 13. in the time of the pagan *Roman* empire, which was quitted by *Diocleſian* and *Maximian*, when they reſigned the government of it, the one being at *Nicomedia*, and the other at *Milan*; and when *Conſtantine* came to the throne, he removed to *Byzantium*, and rebuilt it, and called it after his name *Conſtantinople*, and had his reſidence there, as had all the eaſtern emperors afterwards; and as for the weſtern emperors, they chiefly reſided either at *Milan* or *Ravenna*, to which laſt place *Odoacer*, *Theodoric*, and other *Gothic* kings retired, when the government was in their hands; ſo that hereby this ſeat was empty, and way was made for antichriſt to take it, as he did. *And great authority*; over the *Roman* empire, and the kings and kingdoms in it; he gave him his authority as the god of this world; what Chriſt refuſed at the hands of ſatan, that his pretended vicar took, even the kingdoms of this world, and the glory of them; yea, aſſumed to himſelf all power in heaven, earth, and hell, ſignified by his triple crown, at the inſtigation of the devil; ſo that it appears that he is not the vicar of Chriſt, but the vicar of the devil; and not the ſucceſſor of *Peter*, but the ſucceſſor of ſatan; and that he holds his poſſeſſions, not by the donation of *Conſtantine*, but by the gift of the dragon.

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[b] Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 44. 4. & 55. 2. & 63. 3.

Ver. 3. *And I ſaw one of his heads*, &c.] Not the *Capitoline* mountain, or the *Capitol*, the temple of *Jupiter*, built on that hill, which was burnt by lightning in the times of *Titus*, and magnificently rebuilt by *Domitian*, which was a thing paſt, and of no ſuch moment, as to be taken notice of here; nor any one of the *Roman* emperors particularly, as *Julius Cæſar*, at whoſe death the empire received a wound, upon its firſt erection in him, but was healed by the ſettlement of *Auguſtus* in it; nor *Nero*, at whoſe death the family of the *Cæſars* ceaſed, when the empire was threatned with ruin in the following reigns, but was reſtored and re-eſtabliſhed in *Veſpaſian*, for theſe were before the times of *John*: but this is to be underſtood of the ſixth head, or form of government, which obtained in the empire; namely, that of emperors, and of the deſtruction of *Rome* itſelf, the head of the empire, and which was built on ſeven mountains, deſigned by the ſeven heads of this beaſt: and this head was *as it were wounded to death*; when the *Roman* empire was like a burning mountain caſt into the ſea; when *Rome* itſelf was taken, ſacked, and burnt, more than once, particularly by *Totilas*; when *Auguſtulus*, the laſt of the emperors, was obliged to abdicate the throne; when *Odoacer* called himſelf, not emperor of *Rome*, but king of *Italy*, and retired from *Rome* to *Ravenna*; and when *Adolphus*, another *Gothic* king, thought to have changed the name of *Rome*, and given it that of *Gothia*: this ſeemed to be a deadly wound to *Rome*, to the empire, and emperors. *And this deadly wound was healed*; by the ſetting up of ten kingdoms in it, the kings of which gave them to the beaſt, to antichriſt, the pope of *Rome*, and ſo the empire came to have an head again, a governour, tho' of another kind: ſome chooſe to underſtand this of the wound which antichriſt received at the reformation, by *Luther*, *Calvin*, and others, which has ſince been healing, popery recovering itſelf again in ſome countries, where it was driven out, and which, it is thought, will be entirely healed before his deſtruction: *and all the world wondred after the beaſt*; which expreſſes the large extent of antichriſt's dominion, which reached to all the *Roman* empire, *Luke* ii. 1. yea to all kindreds, tongues, and nations, ver. 7. ſo that the univerſality, the papiſts boaſt of, as a note of the true church, is manifeſtly a mark of the beaſt, or of antichriſt; and alſo the great eſteem he is had in by his followers, who admire his power and authority, his grandeur, pomp, and riches, his ſigns and lying wonders, his pretended infallibility and holineſs, his ſtock of merits and unwritten traditions, his ſkill to interpret ſcripture, and his power to forgive ſins, and the like: they went after him, obeyed him, embraced his doctrines, attended his religion and worſhip with wonder and amazement.

Ver. 4. *And they worſhipped the dragon*, &c.] The devil, in the idols, images, angels, and ſaints departed, to whom they give adoration, as did the *Gentiles*, whoſe ſucceſſors they are, and whoſe name they bear; ſee 1 *Cor.* x. 20. *which gave power unto the beaſt*, as in ver. 2. *and they worſhipped the beaſt*; not only in a civil way, being ſubject to him as their temporal lord, to whom they give homage, obedience, and tribute, but in a religious way; for antichriſt ſits in the temple to be worſhipped as God, ſhewing himſelf that he is God, and receives adorations from his creatures, the cardinals, and others; but wo to them that worſhip this beaſt; ſee ch. xiv. 9, 10, 11. *Saying, who is like unto the beaſt?*

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[e] Ælian. de Animal. l. 5. c. 40.

beaſt? uſing ſuch expreſſions as are uſed of God himſelf, implying that there is none like him, *Exod.* xv. 11. *Pſ.* cxiii. 5. *Iſ.* xl. 18, 25. yea, they aſcribe deity to him, calling him our Lord God the pope, God, and a God on earth; ſee the note on 2 *Theſſ.* ii. 4. *Who is able to make war with him?* And indeed, ſuch was his power and ſtrength once, that he was an over-match for emperors and kings; and thoſe were badly off, that engaged in a war with him, when his power was ſuch, that he could depoſe one, and ſet up another, kick the crowns of kings, tread upon the necks of emperors, oblige them to hold his ſtirrup, whilſt he mounted his horſe, and keep them barefoot at his gate for days together, waiting for admittance; of all which there are inſtances.

Ver. 5. *And there was given unto him a mouth*, &c.] The beaſt is ſaid to have a mouth before, like the mouth of a lion, ver. 2. but now he was moved and ſtirred up by the dragon, the devil, to open it, not only in a cruel and voracious way, but in a haughty, lying, and blaſphemous manner: and this was given him, it was at the inſtigation of ſatan, and by divine permiſſion; his coming, ſpeaking, and acting were after the working of ſatan, but not without the will of God; who, as he gave up many to a judicial blindneſs, to believe his lyes and blaſphemies, gave up him to ſpeak them, as follows: *ſpeaking great things, and blaſphemies*; great ſwelling words of vanity; calling himſelf by high and lofty titles, as Chriſt's vicar, *Peter*'s ſucceſſor, head of the church, univerſal biſhop, *&c.* promiſing great things to his followers, riches, honours, pleaſures, pardons, and heaven itſelf; and uttering things of a blaſphemous kind, or great blaſphemies, the particulars of which are mentioned in the next verſe; ſo the little horn, who is the ſame with the *Romiſh* antichriſt, is ſaid to have a mouth ſpeaking great things, very great things, and his look more ſtout than his fellows, *Dan.* vii. 8, 20. *And power was given unto him to continue forty* and *two months*; to continue in being, or to continue blaſpheming and ſpeaking great things: and indeed, as long as he continues, he'll continue blaſpheming; as ſoon as he aroſe he had a name of blaſphemy on his heads, and his mouth was immediately opened in blaſphemy, and ſo it continues, and will to the end of this date. The *Ethiopic* verſion renders it, *and power was given him to do ſigns, whatſoever he would*; miracles, lying ſigns and wonders; ſee ver. 13, 14. Some copies read, and ſo the *Arabic* verſion, *and power was given him to make war*; but he did not make war as ſoon as he aroſe, and ſo not all the time that is here allotted him; and the word *war* ſeems to be tranſcribed from ver. 7. The phraſe rather intends his being, and the continuance and duration of it; which is the ſame period of time in which the holy city is trodden under foot by this beaſt, and the ſame with the 1260 days or years, in which the witneſſes propheſy in ſackcloth, and the woman, the church, is in the wilderneſs, ch. xi. 2, 3. and xii. 6, 14. for forty-two months, reckoning thirty days to a month, as the eaſtern people did, make juſt 1260 days, for theſe things are all cotemporary; hence it appears, that 1260 prophetic days, that is, years, contain the whole period of antichriſt's reign and continuance; ſo that could we tell where they began, it might be exactly known when his reign will end; but for want of knowing the former, the beſt of calculators have failed in the latter: but ſeeing the time when he was made univerſal biſhop by *Phocas*, bids fair for the time of his open appearance, and the beginning of his reign, and of his blaſphemy, which was in the year 606, to which, if we add 1260, the expiration of his reign will fall in the year 1866; ſo that he may have upwards of an hundred and twenty years yet to continue; but of this we can't be certain; however, the conjecture is not improbable.

Ver. 6. *And he opened his mouth in blaſphemy againſt God*, &c.] By ſitting as God in the temple of God, ſhewing himſelf that he is God; by ſuffering himſelf to be called by the name of God, God on earth, Lord God the pope, and to be worſhipped as God; and by aſſuming infallibility, giving out that he cannot err, which only belongs to the God of truth; and by his idolatrous practices commanded by him, as the worſhipping of idols of gold, ſilver, wood, and ſtone, which is in ſcripture called blaſpheming God, *Iſ.* lxv. 7. *Ezek.* xx. 27. ſee *Dan.* xi. 36. *To blaſpheme his name*; his authority, by arrogating to himſelf all power in heaven, earth, and hell; by taking upon him to bind and looſe the conſciences of men, and to diſpenſe with the laws of God, and make them void by his own traditions; and to diſpoſe of the kingdoms of this world, by removing kings, and ſetting up kings at pleaſure, which is the prerogative of the king of kings; and by pretending to forgive ſin, which none but God can do; and by granting indulgences, pardons, *&c.* Moreover, by the *name* of God may be meant the ſcriptures, which are the means, by which God reveals and makes known himſelf; and theſe the man of ſin blaſphemes, by making them a noſe of wax, by impoſing on them what ſenſes he pleaſes; by aſſuming a right of being the ſole interpreter of them, and the judge of all controverſies; and by ſetting up his own unwritten traditions upon an equal foot with them, and above them; and by denying the common people the uſe of them, in their own language; and particularly the Goſpel, which is ſometimes called the name of the Lord, *Acts* ix. 15. may be intended, which is ſadly blaſphemed, and evil ſpoken of by antichriſt; as the doctrines of juſtification by Chriſt's righteouſneſs, of peace and pardon by his blood, and atonement by his ſacrifice, thro' the antichriſtian notions of merit, works of ſupererogation, pardons, pennance, purgatory, and the like: *and his tabernacle*; meaning either the human nature of Chriſt, which God pitched, and not man, the temple of his body, in which the Godhead dwells bodily, and where the eternal Word dwelt, or tabernacled among men; this is blaſphemed by pretending to tranſubſtantiate the bread and wine in the ſupper of the Lord, into the very body and blood of Chriſt, and to offer him up again in the ſacrifice of the maſs, every time that blaſphemous piece of ſervice is performed: or elſe the church of God, which is the temple of the living God, where he chuſes, deſires, and delights to dwell; this is blaſphemed by antichriſt, by ſitting in it as if he was God; aſſerting himſelf to be the head of the church, which ſolely belongs to Chriſt; taking upon him to coin new doctrines, and make new laws, and orders, and impoſe them on it, and to change and alter the ordinances and diſcipline of it, as he pleaſes; and by perſecuting and deſtroying all ſuch who will not ſubmit to his decrees and preſcripts: or elſe heaven itſelf, the habitation of God, and where his throne is, may be deſigned, which the pope blaſphemouſly affirms to have the keys of; and that he can open and ſhut it, let perſons into it, or exclude from it at pleaſure; and that he can diſpoſe of it, and ſell it for money, and make and canonize new ſaints in it, as often as he thinks fit. *And them that dwell in heaven*; either ſaints below, members of a Goſpel church, who are born from above, are partakers of the heavenly calling, and whoſe converſation is in heaven, who are by antichriſt ſtigmatized and perſecuted as ſchiſmaticks and hereticks; or rather angels and ſaints departed, who are in heaven, and dwell there, and who are worſhipped and prayed to as mediators and interceſſors; whoſe names are uſed in a very ridiculous and blaſphemous manner, to their great diſhonour and reproach, as well as to the injury of Chriſt, the only mediator between God and men.

Ver. 7. *And it was given unto him to make war with the ſaints*, &c.] The remnant of the woman's ſeed, ch. xii. 17. whom God has ſet apart for himſelf, Chriſt has cleanſed from ſin by his blood, and the Holy Spirit has ſanctified by his grace; and who under the influence of it live holy lives and converſations; againſt ſuch ſatan always bore an enmity: and it is an aggravation of the wickedneſs of the *Romiſh* antichriſt, that he makes war with ſuch, which he is ſtirred up to by ſatan, with a malicious intent, and is permitted by God for the trial of the faith and patience of his people: this war of antichriſt, with the ſaints, may be underſtood not merely ſpiritually, of his anathemas, excommunications, bulls, and the like, but literally, of his drawing the temporal ſword againſt them; ſee ver. 10. and bringing of armies againſt them, and fighting pitched battles; and it is thought there may be a ſpecial regard had to his war with the *Waldenſes* and *Albigenſes*, in which war, 'tis ſaid, that ten hundred thouſand men were ſlain; and may take in all his ways and methods of deſtroying the ſaints, by the bloody inquiſition, murders, maſſacres, and puniſhments of all ſorts; and alſo his laſt war with the two witneſſes, in which they will be ſlain, which is yet to come, ch. xi. 7. *and to overcome them*; not ſo as to ſubmit to him, and to forſake the doctrines and ordinances of Chriſt, but by killing them; and who by dying in the faith and cauſe of Chriſt, overcome ſatan, get the victory over the world, and antichriſt, and are more than conquerors thro' him that has loved them. *And power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations*; in the *Roman* empire, which wondred after him, and worſhipped him, and over whom he has reigned, and has exerciſed both a temporal and ſpiritual juriſdiction; ſee ch. xvii. 15, 18.

Ver. 8. *And all that dwell upon the earth ſhall worſhip him*, &c.] The inhabitants of the *Roman* empire, the idolatrous part of it, the men of the world, earthly-minded men; who are as they came into the world, and are of the earth, earthly, and ſeek only after earthly honours, pleaſures, and profits; theſe are the admirers and adorers of the beaſt: *whoſe names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb ſlain from the foundation of the world*; by which *book* is meant God's predeſtination of men to eternal life, or his decree of election; why this is called the *book of life*, ſee the note on ch. iii. 5. and their *names* being *written* therein *from the foundation of the world*, for ſuch a conſtruction the words will bear, denotes that election is eternal, and is not an act of time, nor dependent upon any thing done in time; and that it is of particular perſons, and not of bodies of men, of nations and churches, and ſtill leſs of propoſitions, or of perſons ſo and ſo qualified, or under ſuch conditions and circumſtances; and that it is perfectly well known to God, and is ſure and certain in its effects, and is unchangeable and irrevocable; for what is written in it, is written, and will always ſtand, not upon the foot of works, but of the ſovereign grace of God: and this is called the *Lamb*'s book; that is, Chriſt, who is compared to a lamb for its harmleſſneſs, meekneſs, and patience, and was typified by the lambs in the legal ſacrifices; and this book is called his, becauſe he was preſent at the making of it, and was concerned in putting down the names in it, *John* xiii. 18. and he himſelf ſtands firſt in it as the elect of God, and the head of all the elect, who, as members, were choſen in him: the act of election was made in him, and ſtands ſure in him; and he is the author and giver of that life, which men are choſen unto both here and hereafter: and he may be ſaid to be *ſlain from the foundation of the world*; in the decree and purpoſe of God, by which he was ſet forth, or fore-appointed to be the propitiation for ſin, and was fore-ordained before the foundation of the world, to redeem his people by his blood; and in the promiſe of God immediately after the fall of man, that the ſeed of the woman ſhould have his heel bruiſed, and he himſelf ſhould bruiſe the ſerpent's head, which made it as ſure as if it was then done; and in the ſacrifices, which were immediately upon this offered up, and were types of the death and ſacrifice of Chriſt; and in the faith of the ſaints, which brings diſtant things near, and conſiders them as if preſent; and alſo in his members, in *Abel*, and others, in whom he ſuffered, as he ſtill does in his people: to which may be added, that ſuch is the efficacy of the bloodſhed and death of Chriſt, that it reached to all the ſaints from the beginning of the world, for the juſtification of their perſons, the atonement of their ſins, and cleanſing from them; for the remiſſion of ſins, that are paſt, and for the redemption of tranſgreſſions under the firſt teſtament; for Old Teſtament ſaints from the beginning are ſaved by the grace of the Lord Jeſus, as New Teſtament ones are. Something like this the *Jews* ſay [e] of the Meſſiah upon *Gen.* xlix. 11. "he waſhed, "מיומא דאתברי עלמא, *from the day that the "world was created*; who is he? this is the king "Meſſiah.——It is written *Gen.* i. 2. *and the Spi"rit of God*, &c. This is the Spirit of the king "Meſſiah; and from the day that the world was "created, he waſhed his garments in wine;" which the *Jewiſh* writers [f] underſtand of blood, which for its redneſs is like to wine; tho' they interpret it of the blood of the ſlain, with which the garments of the Meſſiah will be ſtained. Now ſuch whoſe names are not written in this book of the Lamb, who have no intereſt in electing grace, nor in redemption by Chriſt, the ſlain Lamb of God, nor any right unto eternal life, who are reprobate perſons, veſſels of wrath fitted for deſtruction, who are fore-ordained to condemnation, and are given up to believe a lye, that they might be damned, theſe are the followers and worſhippers of antichriſt.

Ver. 9. *If any man have an ear let him hear.*] And diligently attend to this myſtical deſcription of antichriſt, as being matter of ſome difficulty to underſtand, as well as of great moment and importance, and ſeriouſly conſider it, that he may know him, and his followers, and avoid them; ſee the note on ch. ii. 7.

Ver. 10. *He that leadeth into captivity ſhall go into captivity*, &c.] As the devil, by whom men are led captive at his will, and the *Romiſh* antichriſt, who leads multitudes of ſouls to hell; theſe ſhall be taken and caſt into the lake which burns with fire and brimſtone. The *Jews* [g] have a ſaying, that "*captivity* comes into the world for idolatry, uncleanneſs, and murder;" which three things are notorious in the *Romiſh* antichriſt: and in the ſame treatiſe they ſay [h], that the ſword, the next judgment mentioned, comes into the world for delay of juſtice, and the perverſion of it. *He that killeth with the ſword, muſt be killed with the ſword*; the deſign of the phraſe is to ſhow, that there will be a juſt retaliation made to the antichriſtian beaſt, for all his cruelty to the ſaints, and the murders of them; and that becauſe he has ſhed much blood of the ſaints, blood ſhall be given him to drink, and he ſhall be uſed in like manner he has uſed others; ſee *Gen.* ix. 6. *Matt.* xxvi. 52. *Here is the patience and the faith of the ſaints*; meaning either that hereby, thro' the cruelties and barbarities of the *Romiſh* antichriſt, the patience and faith of the ſaints are tried; and that they have great need of them, and of the exerciſe of them, under ſuch uſages; and that theſe being tried, and continue, will receive much commendation, honour, and praiſe: or elſe the ſenſe is, that it requires both faith and patience in the ſaints, to believe that antichriſt will be thus deſtroyed, and to wait quietly till the time comes. The *Arabic* verſion reads, *here is the patience and prayers of the ſaints*; who cry, how long will it be 'ere our blood is avenged, and have need of patience to reſt a while, till their prayers are anſwered.

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[e] Zohar in Gen. fol. 128. 2, 3.

[f] Targum Jon. & Jeruſ. & Aben Ezra in Gen. xlix. 11.

Ver. 11. *And I beheld another beaſt*, &c.] The ſame with the firſt, only in another form; the ſame for being and perſon, but under a different conſideration; the ſame antichriſt, but appearing in another light and view: the firſt beaſt is the pope of *Rome*, at the head of the ten kingdoms, of which the *Roman* empire conſiſted; this other beaſt is the ſame pope of *Rome*, with his clergy, cardinals, archbiſhops, biſhops, prieſts, &c. before he his deſcribed as a temporal monarch, now as a ſpiritual lord; there he is repreſented in his ſecular character, as having the ſeat, power, and authorit of the dragon, of *Rome* pagan, engaging the attention and wonder of the whole world, and ſtriking terror into them, and as making war with the ſaints, and ruling over all nations and tongues; here in his eccleſiaſtic character, pretending great humility and holineſs, ſhewing ſigns and lying wonders, obliging to idolatry, and exerciſing tyranny and cruelty on all that will not profeſs his religion: that this is the ſame beaſt with the firſt in ſubſtance, tho' not in ſhew, appears from his exerciſing the ſame power, cauſing all to worſhip the firſt beaſt, or himſelf as a temporal lord, by which he is ſupported in his ſpiritual dignity; and by mention being made only of one beaſt, at the cloſe of this account, and of his mark, name, and number being but one; nor is there any other but one hereafter ſpoken of in this book, either as ruling, or as conquered, and as taken, and as going into perdition, and as caſt into the lake: this beaſt is deſcribed by his original, *coming up out of the earth*; either from under it, out of the bottomleſs pit, from hell; or out of a low condition, a poor crawling earth-worm; the extracts of many of the popes, cardinals, and religious orders, have been very mean: or this may repreſent the ſecret and private manner, and ſlow degrees by which this monſter of iniquity roſe, as things gradually riſe up out of the earth unobſerved; this man of ſin was ſpringing up in the Apoſtles time, and by degrees roſe up to the power and authority he is here ſaid to have: or rather, as this beaſt, in his other form, roſe up out of the ſea, out of the commotions raiſed in the empire by the babarous nations, by whom he was lifted up to his imperial dignity; ſo he is deſcribed in this form, and is repreſented as riſing up out of the earth, out of the earthly part of the church, or out of the apoſtaſy which the viſible church was ſunk into, thro' the outward riches and honours beſtowed on it by the chriſtian emperors, which made way for the riſing of this beaſt; and this ſhows the nature of his kingdom, which is worldly and earthly, and ſo truly antichriſtian, being diametrically oppoſite to the kingdom of Chriſt, which is not of this world: *and he had two horns like a lamb*; or *like to the lamb*; the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the Lamb of God; tho' he has ſeven horns denoting fullneſs of power, this but two; he ſtands on mount *Zion*, with the 144000, having his Father's name on their foreheads, this upon the earth, with his followers, having his own mark and name upon them. The *Ethiopic* verſion renders it, *and he had two horns, and he ſeemed as a lamb*; he affected a lamb-like diſpoſition, pretended to great humility and meekneſs, calling himſelf *ſervus ſervorum*, the ſervant of ſervants, to cover his pride, ambition, and tyranny; and would be thought to be a lamb without ſpot and blemiſh, aſcribing to himſelf infallibility, and ſuffering himſelf to be called his holineſs, when he is the man of ſin, and myſtery of iniquity: by his *two horns* ſome underſtand his twofold power, ſecular and eccleſiaſtic; but as theſe are ſeparately repreſented by two beaſts, rather theſe two horns intend the two parts of the empire, eaſtern and weſtern, into which it was divided, when this beaſt aroſe, and by which the papacy was raiſed to its power, and ſupported in it; and the two ſupreme pontiffs, the biſhop of *Rome*, and the biſhop of *Conſtantinople*; or elſe the beaſt's power of binding and looſing, of diſpenſing with the laws of God, and of impoſing his own laws on the conſciences of men. *And he ſpake as a dragon*; like the devil himſelf, affirming as he did, *Luke* iv. 6. that the power of diſpoſing of the kingdoms of this world, and the glory of them, was delivered to him, and he could give it to whom he would: he ſpake arrogantly, as if he was above all that is called God, and as if he was God himſelf; and he ſpake like a dragon cruelly, like the great red dragon, like the devil, who was a murderer from the beginning, breathing out ſlaughter and threatnings againſt the ſaints, as *Rome* pagan; and he ſpake lyes in hypocriſy, blaſphemies, idolatries, and doctrines of devils.

Ver. 12. *And he exerciſeth all the power of the firſt beaſt before him*, &c.] Sitting in the ſame ſeat, having the ſame power and authority from the dragon, making war with the ſaints by preaching, and writing againſt them, by anathemas, excommunications and bulls, and ſo overcame and ſilenced them, or delivered them over to the ſecular arm to be put to death, ruling over the conſciences of men in a tyrannical way, in all nations, kindreds, and tongues, in the empire; and all this before, in the preſence, and under the influence of the ſecular power of the papacy, ſignified by the firſt beaſt, and with his good liking, and for his credit and ſupport: *and cauſeth the earth, and them that dwell therein*; the *Roman* empire, and the inhabitants of it, eſpecially the carnal and earthly part of them: *to worſhip the firſt*

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[g] Pirke Abot, c. 5. §. 9.

[h] Ib. §. 8.

firſt beaſt; to be ſubject to the temporal power of the papacy, or to ſubmit to the pope as a temporal lord, to give homage and tribute to him, and the like, in order to ſupport his worldly power and grandeur; and this was cauſed, or brought about by his emiſſaries, his ſpiritual vaſſals, his legates, cardinals, prieſts, *&c.* by their exhortations, perſuaſions, and commands, delivered both in writing and preaching: *whoſe deadly wound was healed*; which deadly wound was given the *Roman* empire under its ſixth head, the emperors, when they ceaſed, and was healed by the *pope*, the ſeventh head, being ſet as a temporal monarch over the ten kingdoms in it.

Ver. 13. *And he doth great wonders*, &c.] Or miracles; not real, but pretended ones, lying wonders, which the popiſh legends are full of the accounts of, as done by the prieſts, or by this or the other ſaint: *ſo that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the ſight of men*; in imitation of *Elijah*; and this ſingle inſtance is put inſtead of all others, it being uſual with the *Jews* to expreſs all wonderful and miraculous operations by this miracle of *Elijah*'s: and this may be underſtood myſtically, of the pretenſions of the papacy to confer the Holy Ghoſt, and his gifts upon men, by breathing on them, which on the day of Pentecoſt were repreſented by cloven tongues, as of fire, coming down from heaven; or of their anathemas, curſes, and excommunications, at which time burning torches and candles are caſt up, and fall down, as emblems of divine wrath, which is called curſing men with bell, book, and candle; or elſe of the fire of perſecution: *from heaven*; the ſecular powers of the empire: *upon the earth*; the common people: or this may be underſtood litterally; ſo they tell us, that pope *Zachary*, once on a journey to *Ravenna*, had in the day-time a cloud to protect him from the heat, and in the night-time, *armies of fire* appeared in the clouds to go before him; and as pope *Innocent* was at maſs, a golden crown was ſeen, and on it a dove, and under it a ſmoaking cenſer, and hard by them two burning fire-brands: and it is reported of pope *Hildebrand*, that whenever he pleaſed, he could ſhake his ſleeves, and ſparks of fire would come out; and by theſe miracles deluded the eyes of the ſimple with a ſhow of holineſs; which, witho ther inſtances, are taken notice of by *Napeir*, *Brightman*, and other writers: and ſo here this is ſaid to be done *in the ſight of men*; to their apprehenſion, ſeemingly, in their view; they being cheated and deluded with an appearance and ſhow of things which were not real.

Ver. 14. *And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth*, &c.] The *Complutenſian* edition, and two of *Stephens*'s copies, read *mine*, inſtead of *them*; creatures of God, and profeſſors of Chriſt, carnal and unregenerate men; not the elect of God, and true believers in Chriſt, theſe cannot be deceived by the ſigns and wonders of falſe Chriſts and falſe prophets; antichriſt's deceiveableneſs of unrighteouſneſs, only operates in them that periſh: *by the means of thoſe miracles which he had power to do in the ſight of the beaſt*; the ſecular power of the papacy encouraging, confirming, and giving a ſanction to thoſe lying miracles, and obliging all to believe them, and come into the things, doctrines, or practices, they are deſigned to promote: *ſaying to them that dwell on the earth*; the apoſtate church, or the carnal inhabitants of the empire: ordering and commanding them *that they ſhould make an image to the beaſt which had the wound by a ſword, and did live*; meaning the *Roman* empire, which had received a deadly wound in its ſixth head, the emperors, by the ſword of the *Goths*, *Huns*, &c. but now revived in its ſeventh head, the pope of *Rome*, to whom the ten kings gave their kingdoms: the image made to this beaſt ſome underſtand of the tranſlation of the empire to *Charles the Great*, and his ſucceſſors the emperors, by the pope of *Rome*, he ordaining ſo many electors to chuſe a king of the *Romans*, and elect an emperor when one was wanting; and this was an image to the firſt beaſt, a ſhadow, an appearance of the *Roman* empire, and but a ſhadow; for the power of inaugurating and crowning theſe emperors, and of ſetting up and depoſing them when the pope pleaſed, he reſerved to himſelf: but rather this deſigns the image-worſhip, or the worſhipping of idols of gold and ſilver, of wood and ſtone, which he cauſed the inhabitants of the earth to make, and give adoration to; or elſe the whole papal religion, and the papacy itſelf, for the beaſt, and the image of the beaſt, are all along in this book afterwards mentioned together as being the ſame, ch. xiv. 9. and xv. 2. and xvi. 2. and xix. 20. and xx. 4. which is an image of the *Gentile* religion, in their high-prieſt, prieſts, temples, idols, offerings, garments, worſhipping of angels, and ſaints departed, with a numerous train of rites and ceremonies, borrowed from the old pagan religion; hence the *Papiſts* are called *Gentiles*, ch. xi. 2. the *Roman* empire repreſented by theſe two beaſts, and this image, had now one head, the pope, as before an emperor, and a religion in it much reſembling its antient one; but before that was ſet up, this image was in being.

Ver. 15. *And he had power to give life unto the image of the beaſt*, &c.] Or *breath*; he breathed into it, and animated it; he gave this new religion a ſanction, he confirmed and eſtabliſhed it, and obliged all in his dominions to embrace and acknowledge it; and this he did by his decrees and canons, and thoſe that refuſed, were delivered over to the ſecular power, which he alſo exerciſed under another conſideration: *that the image of the beaſt ſhould both ſpeak*; ſo that it was not like *Nebuchadnezzar*'s golden image, that he ſet up, which required another to ſpeak for it, and demand adoration to it; and ſhould ſeem to be preferable to the dumb idols of the *Gentiles*, which have mouths, but ſpeak not; and may be underſtood either of the images of the virgin *Mary*, and other ſaints, which 'tis pretended, and the people are made to believe, that they do at times actually ſpeak, and really weep and laugh, as it may ſerve their different purpoſes; or this image may be ſaid to ſpeak by the decrees, canons, anathemas, curſes, threatnings, perſuaſions, doctrines, and blaſphemies of the pope and his clergy; ſo that this image is like both the firſt and ſecond beaſt; it has a mouth ſpeaking blaſphemies, as the firſt, and it ſpeaks like a dragon, as the ſecond: *and cauſe that as many as would not worſhip the image of the beaſt ſhould be killed*; which, according to the generality of copies, refers to the image itſelf, that that has a power from the beaſt as to ſpeak, ſo to put to death thoſe that refuſe to worſhip it; but the *Complutenſian* edition reads ϗ ποιει, *and cauſes*; that is the beaſt cauſes, or orders all thoſe that will not worſhip the image, to be killed; that is, that as many as will not embrace and profeſs the popiſh religion, ſhall be put to death; and theſe are the known orders and decrees of the papacy, which have been executed by the inquiſition, and other hands, in innumerable inſtances; the blood of all the ſaints and prophets are found in *Rome* papal, and will be avenged; theſe are the martyrs of Jeſus, with whoſe blood the whore on the ſcarlet-coloured beaſt has been made drunk; and this ſenſe is confirmed by the *Eaſtern* verſions.

Ver. 16. *And he cauſeth all, both ſmall and great, rich and poor, free and bond*, &c.] Men of all ranks and degrees, ſtates and conditions, within his juriſdiction; this refers to the beaſt, and not to the image: *to receive a mark in their right-hand, or in their foreheads*; or *that they might give themſelves marks*, as the *Complutenſian* edition reads; which is an alluſion either to the cuſtom among the *Romans* of imprinting marks upon their ſervants and ſoldiers, by which they might be known to whom they belonged; ſervants had them in their foreheads[i], and ſoldiers in their hands[k]; or to the uſages of the *Jews* in binding their phylacteries upon their arms and foreheads, to put them in mind of the law of God, and their obedience to it; or to the practices of the heathens, in putting the mark of the god they worſhipped upon their bodies; ſee 3 *Maccab.* ii. 21. ſo *Maimonides*[l] ſays, it was a cuſtom with the *Gentiles* to mark themſelves with their idols, ſhewing that they were their bought ſervants, and were marked for their ſervice; the ſenſe is, that ſome received the mark in one place, and ſome in another: thoſe who were obliged to receive the mark in the right-hand, ſeem to be the clergy, ſuch who entered into holy orders; who lifted up their right-hand and ſwore and vowed allegiance to the pope, and teſtified they were ready to defend and ſupport his religion and intereſt; and who in their ordination are ſaid to have an indelible character impreſſed on them: and thoſe who received the mark in their foreheads, are the common people in general, who one and all have the ſame impreſs upon them; which may intend either the ſign of the croſs in baptiſm, or rather their open confeſſion of the popiſh religion, which they as publickly avow and declare as if it had been written on their foreheads.

Ver. 17. *And that no man might buy or ſell*, &c.] Either in an eccleſiaſtical ſenſe, as to be in any church-office, or perform any ſuch ſervice, to ſay maſs, hear confeſſion, give abſolution, ſell pardons and indulgences, *&c.* or in a civil ſenſe, as to trade, and exerciſe merchandize; and this was forbidden by ſeveral popiſh councils and ſynods; the *Lateran* council under pope *Alexander*, decreed againſt the *Waldenſes* and *Albigenſes*, that no one ſhould preſume to retain or encourage them in their houſes or countries, or *trade* with them; and the ſynod of *Tours* in *France* forbid any reception of hereticks, or protection, and that any communion ſhould be had with them *in buying and ſelling*, as Mr. *Mede* has obſerved; and it was ordered by a bull of pope *Martin* the Fifth, that no contract ſhould be made with ſuch, and that they ſhould not follow any buſineſs and merchandize: *ſave he that had the mark*; took the oath to be true to the pope, or made a publick profeſſion of the popiſh religion: *or the name of the beaſt*; papiſts, ſo called from the pope; thus the antichriſtians are called from antichriſt, as the chriſtians from Chriſt: *or the number of his name*; which is either the ſame with the number of the beaſt, in the following verſe, or is ſomething diſtinct from it; and thoſe who have it may be ſuch perſons who neither have the indelible character of the *Romiſh* clergy, nor are open profeſſors of the popiſh religion, but are in heart inclined to it, and privately and ſecretly promote it, by their doctrines and practices; and ſo are numbered, reckoned, eſteemed, and accounted of by the papiſts, and receive favours from them; or rather ſuch who openly *furniſh the drink-offering* in the maſs, mixed with wine and water, למני, *for that number*, *Iſ.* lxv. 11.

Ver. 18. *Here is wiſdom*, &c.] Not only in the above deſcription of the two beaſts, but in what follows as to the number of the beaſt, theſe two now coaleſcing in one, and have one and the ſame number; and to wrap it up, and conceal it in ſuch an obſcure manner, ſhows great wiſdom in God, as it requires much in men, and ſerves greatly to exerciſe all his intellectual powers to find it out: *let him that hath underſtanding count the number of the beaſt*; whoever has ſkill in numbers, let him make uſe of it, that he may know the name and nature of the antichriſtian beaſt, and the numerical letters of his name, or the number of him, and of the time when he aroſe, and when he will expire: *for it is the number of a man*; either a number that may be reckoned by man, or which is in common uſe among men; ſee ch. xxi. 17. or that which is contained in the name of a man: *and his number is ſix hundred threeſcore and ſix*; which ſome think refers to the time of the riſe of antichriſt, in the year 666; but that ſeems rather to be in the year 606, when the biſhop of *Rome* obtained the name of univerſal biſhop; others have been of opinion that it refers to the expiration of the beaſt, which they thought would have been in the year 1666, the number of the thouſand being dropped, as it is in our common way of ſpeaking; as when we ſay the *Spaniſh* invaſion was in 88, meaning 1588, and the civil wars began in 41, that is, 1641. but time has ſhewn that this was a miſtaken ſenſe; the more prevailing opinion is that of Mr. *Potter*, who has wrote a peculiar and learned treatiſe upon this paſſage, who makes the counting of this number to be no other than the extracting of its root, which is the number 25, which when multiplied into itſelf, and the fraction in working it 41 is added, makes up the ſquare number 666; and now 25 being added to A. D. 33, makes 58, which was the time of the beaſt's conception, to which if 666 is added, it brings us to the year 724, when he arrived to his age of manhood, and when the war about the worſhipping of images broke out: but others think that the numeral letters in ſome man's name which amount to this date, and which agrees with antichriſt, are intended; and here various conjectures are made; ſome have obſerved, that in genealogical arithmetic the number of *Adonikam*'s poſterity is 666, *Ezra* ii. 13. whoſe name ſignifies *a lord riſing up*, or *riſen*; and ſuits very well with antichriſt, who is riſen up, and aſſumes a lordly domination over the kings of the earth; and it is further obſerved, that the *Hebrew* word רומיית, which ſignifies *Roman*, and having the word beaſt or kingdom joined to it, deſigns the *Roman* beaſt, or kingdom, conſiſts of numeral letters, which make up this ſum; and ſo the *Hebrew* word סתור, *Sethur*, which is the name of a man, *Num.* xiii. 13. and ſignifies *myſtery*, in its numeral letters comes juſt to this number, and one of the names of the whore of *Babylon* is *myſtery*, *Rev.* xvii. 5. but the name *Lateinos* bids as fair as any, which is mentioned by ſo antient a writer as *Irenæus*, who was a hearer of *Polycarp*, a diſciple of *John*, the writer of this book; now the numeral value of the letters of this word makes up exactly 666 thus; λ. 30. α. 1. τ. 300. ε. 5. ι. 10. ν. 50. ο. 70. ς. 200. in all 666; and it is well known that the church of *Rome* is called the *Latin* church, and the pope of *Rome* the head of the *Latin* church, and his ſeat is in the *Latin* empire, and the ſervice of the beaſt is in the *Latin* tongue, and the Bible is kept in that language, from the reading of the common people: it has been obſerved that the numeral letters in *Ludovicus*, or *Lewis*, which is a common name of the *French* kings, and is the name of the preſent *French* king, make up this ſame number; and may denote the deſtruction of antichriſt, which will quickly follow the downfall of the kingdom of *France*, under a king of this name; and the rather, ſince this was the laſt of the ten kingdoms that was ſet up, and in which the primitive beaſt ſubſiſts, and the only one that has not yet been conquered, or in which a revolution has not been; and ſince this is the tenth part of the city which ſhall fall a little before the third wo comes on: and that it may fall under *Ludovicus*, or *Lewis*, the preſent *French* king, may be hoped for, and is deſireable.

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[i] Apulei Metamorph. l. 9. Auſonii Epigram. l. 15. Seneca de Ira, l. 3. c. 3.

[k] Aetius apud Turnebi Adverſ. l. 23. c. 12.

[l] Hilchot Obede Cochab. c. 12. §. 11.

CHAP. XIV.

THIS chapter contains three viſions; one of the Lamb on mount *Zion*, another of the three angels preaching againſt *Babylon*, and the third of the harveſt and vintage. The viſion of the Lamb is in ver. 1. which is no other than Chriſt, deſcribed by his ſimilitude, as a lamb; by the place where he was, mount *Zion*; by his poſition there, ſtanding, and by the company that were with him, whoſe number were 144000, and their character, his Father's name written on their foreheads; at the ſame time a voice was heard from heaven, comparable to the ſound of many waters, of thunders, and of harps, and a ſong ſung which none could learn but the above number with the Lamb, ver. 2, 3. who are deſcribed by their purity, chaſtity, and ſtrict adherence to Chriſt; by their redemption thro' him; by their being the firſt-fruits of God and of the Lamb, and by their integrity and unblemiſhed character, ver. 4, 5. next follows the account of the three angels; the firſt comes with the everlaſting Goſpel, to preach it to all men, loudly calling upon all to fear and worſhip God, and give glory to him, ſince he is the creator of all, and the hour of his judgment is come, ver. 6, 7. the ſecond proclaims the fall of *Babylon*, with the reaſon of it, ver. 8. and the third denounces the wrath of God upon the worſhippers of the beaſt in the moſt public manner, and that for ever, ver. 9, 10, 11. and this viſion is cloſed with ſome expreſſions, ſhewing that till this was done, the patience the ſaints would be tried, and the true worſhippers of the Lamb be diſcovered, and comforting them with an aſſurance of that reſt that remains after death for the faithful followers of Chriſt, ver. 12, 13. after this is the viſion of the harveſt and vintage of the earth. The reaper is deſcribed by his form, like the Son of man; by his ſeat, a white cloud; by a golden crown on his head, and by a ſharp ſickle in his hand, ver. 14. who is called upon by an angel out of the temple to make uſe of his ſickle, and reap, becauſe the time of reaping was come, the harveſt being ripe, ver. 15. upon which he thruſts in his ſickle, and reaps the earth, ver. 16. after this, another angel appears out of the temple, with a ſharp ſickle, to whom another angel from the altar, that had power over fire, calls to make uſe of his ſickle, and gather the cluſters of the vine, ſince the grapes were fully ripe, ver. 17, 18. upon which he thruſts in his ſickle, and gathers them, and caſts them into the wine-preſs of divine wrath, which being trodden, blood comes out of it to the horſes bridles for the ſpace of a thouſand and ſix hundred furlongs, ver. 19, 20.

Ver. 1. *And I looked, and lo a Lamb*, &c.] The *Alexandrian* copy, and ſome others, read *the Lamb*; the ſame that had been ſeen before in the midſt of the throne, ch. v. 6. and all the *Oriental* verſions have the ſame article alſo; the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the Son of God, for mention is made of his Father in a following clauſe; the king of *Zion*, where he is ſeen ſtanding, and the redeemer of his people, who are at large deſcribed; it is the ſame lamb who is ſo often ſpoken of in this book before: in the two preceding chapters an account is given of the ſtate of the church, as oppreſſed under *Rome* pagan, and *Rome* papal, and here of its more glorious and victorious condition, with Chriſt at the head of it; in the laſt chapter antichriſt is deſcribed, with his followers and worſhippers, and as exerciſing tyranny and cruelty upon the ſaints, and here Chriſt and his followers are repreſented in viſion, and ſome hints given of the fall of *Babylon*, and of the wrath of God upon the worſhippers of the beaſt, and of the happineſs of thoſe who belong to the Lamb: and of him it is here ſaid, that he *ſtood on the mount Zion*; by which is meant not heaven, but the church on earth; why that is called mount *Zion*, ſee the note on *Heb.* xii. 22. here Chriſt the Lamb *ſtood*, as preſiding over it, being king of *Zion*, or the church; where he ſtood and fed, or ruled, in the name of the Lord, and in the majeſty of his God; and where he appeared in the defence of his church and people, oppreſſed by antichriſt; for he is *Michael* that ſtandeth for the children of his people, and who ſtands with courage, and in the greatneſs of his ſtrength, and is invincible; nor does he ſtand here alone: *and with him an hundred forty and four thouſand*; the ſame with thoſe in ch. vii. 3, 4. tho' all the world wondered after the beaſt, and all that dwelt upon the earth worſhipped him, yet there was a number preſerved that did not bow the knee to him; a remnant according to the election of grace, who were called out of the world, and brought to *Zion*, and were on the ſide of the Lamb, and abode by him, and cleaved unto him: *having his Father's name written in their foreheads*; not baptiſm, adminiſtred in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt, as ſome think; nor eternal election, as others, tho' as their names were written in the Lamb's book of life, ſo this was manifeſt to themſelves and others, as if his name and his Father's had been written in their foreheads; but rather adoption, the new name of a child of God, they having the ſpirit of adoption, whereby they cried *Abba*, Father, and being openly and manifeſtatively the children of God, by faith in Chriſt Jeſus; unleſs it ſhould be thought there is an alluſion to the inſcription in the mitre on the forehead of the high-prieſt, *holineſs to the Lord*, and ſo be expreſſive of that viſible holineſs which will be on the ſaints in the ſpiritual reign of Chriſt, which this viſion reſpects; ſee *Zech.* xiv. 20. or to the frontlets between the eyes of the people of *Iſrael*, to put them in mind of the law, and their obedience to it, *Deut.* vi. 8. and ſo may here denote the engagements of thoſe ſaints in the ſervice of God; tho' perhaps no more is intended than their open and hearty profeſſion of their faith, and that they were not aſhamed of appearing in the cauſe of God and truth, nor of Chriſt and his words, his Goſpel and ordinances: the *Alexandrian* copy, the *Complutenſian* edition, the *Vulgate Latin*, *Syriac*, and *Arabic* verſions read, *having his name* (the Lamb's) *and his Father's name written in their foreheads*; and the *Ethiopic* verſion adds, *and of his Holy Spirit*. Mr. *Daubuz* thinks this viſion refers to the times of *Conſtantine*, and to the chriſtians then, and particularly the council of *Nice*, and as cotemporary with that in ch. viii.

Ver. 2. *And I heard a voice from heaven*, &c.] The ſame with the voices heard in heaven upon the ſounding of the ſeventh trumpet, ch. xi. 15. *as the voice of many waters*; very loud, and uttered by a great multitude of people, ſignified by waters in this book, ch. xvii. 15. the ſame with thoſe that praiſe the Lord for the deſtruction of antichriſt, and for the marriage of the Lamb, ch. xix. 1—7. *and as the voice of a great thunder*; to which the Goſpel may be compared for its open, loud publication, being heard far and near, as thunder is: *and I heard the voice of harpers, harping with their harps*; that is, ſinging the praiſes of God, for the fall of *Babylon*, the happy ſtate and condition of the church, and the bleſſings of grace; the harp being a muſical inſtrument, uſed under the Old Teſtament in ſinging praiſe: *Brightman* thinks that theſe different ſounds repreſent the courſe of Goſpel doctrine, and the church's voice throughout the reign of antichriſt; that when the church firſt went into the wilderneſs, her voice was like the murmuring of waters, confuſed and indiſtinct; when ſhe began to revive under the *Waldenſes* and *Albigenſes*, *Wickliff*, *Huſs*, &c. her voice was like thunder, loud and terrible; and at the reformation, it was as the voice of harpers, when confeſſions of faith were publiſhed with ſweet harmony and conſent. Others have thought that the different properties and efficacy of the Goſpel are deſigned; as its rapidity and irreſiſtible force, by the many waters; its ſtriking and ſhaking the conſciences of men by the thunder, Chriſt's miniſters being ſometimes *Boanergeſſes*, ſons of thunder; and its harmonious muſick, pleaſant ſound, peace, joy, and comfort it brings by the voice of harpers. The *Alexandrian* copy, the *Complutenſian* edition, the *Vulgate Latin*, and all the *Oriental* verſions read, *the voice which I heard was as harpers*, &c.

Ver. 3. *And they ſung as it were a new ſong*, &c.] The ſong of redeeming grace; the ſame with that in ch. v. 9. ſee the note there: this is to be underſtood of the 144000, who ſung it *before the throne, and before the four beaſts and the elders*; that is, publickly in the church, the miniſters and members being preſent; of theſe ſee the notes on ch. iv. 4, 6. *and no man could learn that ſong, but the hundred and forty and four thouſand, which were redeemed from the earth*; out of every kindred, tongue, people, and nation; from among the men of the earth, and out of the apoſtate church, called the earth, in oppoſition to the pure church, which ſo often goes by the name of heaven in this book; and theſe in conſequence of being redeemed by the blood of Chriſt, were called by grace out of the world; and ſuch only can ſing the ſong of redemption with application to themſelves; and ſay he has redeemed us, and loved us, and waſhed us from our ſins in his blood; to none but theſe is it given to know ſpiritually and experimentally the myſteries of electing and redeeming grace; the natural and carnal man neither knows nor receives the things of the Spirit of God; nor can he learn them by hearing, reading, ſtudy and converſation, unleſs it be only in a notional and ſpeculative way. The *Jews* ſpeak of a new ſong, which the angels have never uſed[m]; "it is ſaid, *Pſ.* xcviii. 1. *ſing unto the Lord a new ſong*; a new ſong, for there is an old ſong; but this ſong is what the angels never praiſed him with, and therefore it is new;" and indeed the ſong of redeeming love is peculiar to men.

Ver. 4. *Theſe are they which were not defiled with women*, &c.] With the whore of *Rome*, and her harlots, ſhe is the mother of; whilſt the kings and inhabitants of the earth were drunk with the wine of their fornication, or committed idolatry with them, which is ſpiritual fornication, and is here meant by being defiled with them, theſe were free from ſuch pollutions, or idolatrous practices: *for they are virgins*; for their beauty and comelineſs in Chriſt, chaſtity, ſincerity of their love, incorruptneſs in doctrine and worſhip, and for the uprightneſs of converſation; ſee the note on *Matt.* xxv. 1. *theſe are they which follow the Lamb whitherſoever he goeth*; as the ſheep follow the ſhepherd of the flock, and which is a character of Chriſt's ſheep, *John* x. 4, 5, 27. Theſe follow Chriſt in the exerciſe of the graces of humility, patience, and love; and in the performance of the ſeveral duties of religion, and ſubjection to ordinances, and in the path of ſufferings; and in every way in which Chriſt the Lamb has gone before them, or in his word and providence leads and directs them to, whether it be grateful to the fleſh or not; particularly they follow where he is preached, and his word and ordinances are faithfully adminiſtred; and they follow him to heaven, where he is: it was part of the oath taken by the *Roman* ſoldiers τοις ϛρατηγοις ακολυθειν οποι ποτ᾽ αν αγωσι, *to follow the generals wherever they ſhould lead*[n], to which it is thought there is an alluſion here; ſee 2 *Sam.* xv. 21. *theſe were redeemed from among men*; by Jeſus, as the *Syriac* and *Arabic* verſions add, and ſo the *Complutenſian* edition; by the blood of Chriſt, for all men are not redeemed by it; and in conſequence of this they were called, and delivered from this preſent evil world, and the men of it, and from a vain, wicked, and idolatrous converſation with it: being *the firſt fruits unto God, and to the Lamb*; in alluſion to the firſt fruits under the law, which repreſented, and ſanctified the lump, and ſhewed that harveſt was coming; ſo theſe perſons are called the firſt-fruits to God and to the Lamb, being called by grace, and conſecrated to their worſhip and ſervice, with reference to the harveſt of ſouls, or that large number of them, which will be gathered in during the ſpiritual reign of Chriſt, which theſe perſons will be at the beginning of; and as thoſe who are firſt called and converted in a country or nation are ſaid to be the firſt-fruits of it, *Rom.* xvi. 5. 1 *Cor.* xvi. 15. ſo theſe being the firſt in the period of time to which reſpect is had, bear this name; and as the converted *Jews* received the firſt fruits of the Spirit, on the day of Pentecoſt, and at other times, ſo theſe will receive the firſt fruits of the far greater pouring forth of the Spirit in the latter day, which will begin, and uſher in the kingdom of Chriſt; ſee *Rom.* viii. 23.

Ver. 5. *And in their mouth was found no guile*, &c.] Or *a lye*, as the *Complutenſian* edition, the *Alexandrian* copy, the *Vulgate Latin*, and all the *Oriental* verſions read; by which may be meant idolatry, for idols and idolatrous practices are often called lyes, and lying vanities; ſee *Jer.* xvi. 19. *Amos* ii. 4. *Jon.* ii. 8. *Rom.* i. 25. and the ſenſe is, that the ſuperſtition and idolatry of the church of *Rome* were not among them: or it may deſign falſe doctrine, and the meaning be, that they did not ſpeak lyes in hypocriſy, as the followers of antichriſt do; nor were they given up to believe a lye, as they are: the generality of copies read, *no guile*; which is expreſſive of the ſincerity of their words; there was no deceit nor hypocriſy in them; they did not ſpeak with flattering lips to men, nor did they draw nigh to God with their mouths, when their hearts were far from him; they were *Iſraelites* indeeed, like *Nathaniel*, in whom was no guile; tho' not in ſo ſtrict a ſenſe, in which this phraſe is uſed of Chriſt, 1 *Pet.* ii. 22. *for they are without fault before the throne of God*; not as conſidered in themſelves, as if they were entirely free from ſin, and never committed any; tho' it might be true of them, that in general they were of unblemiſhed lives and converſations, that is, not guilty of any notorious and ſcandalous crimes; but rather the ſenſe is, that they were without ſpot or wrinkle, or any ſuch thing, as being waſhed in the blood of Chriſt, and ſo cleanſed from all ſin, and as being juſtified by his righteouſneſs from all iniquity; and ſo were before the throne of God, and in the ſight of divine juſtice, unblameable and irreproveable; ſee *Jude* 24. *Col.* i. 22. the phraſe *before the throne of God*, is left out in the *Alexandrian* copy, and in the *Syriac*, *Arabic*, and *Ethiopic* verſions, and in the *Complutenſian* edition.

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[m] Zohar in Num. fol. 70. 4.

[n] Vid. Lydii Differt. de Jurament. c. 2. p. 258.

Ver. 6. *And I ſaw another angel*, &c.] This is to be underſtood not of one of the miniſtring ſpirits ſo called; for tho' wings are ſometimes aſcribed to angels, and *Gabriel* is ſaid to fly ſwiftly; and tho' they deſire to look into the myſteries of the everlaſting Goſpel, yet the preaching of that is not committed to any of them; but a miniſter of the Goſpel is intended, who is the angel of the church, for in this book paſtors of churches are ſo called, ch. i. 20. and not a ſingle miniſter of the Goſpel is meant, but a ſett of Goſpel miniſters; and ſome think that thoſe are deſigned who appeared in the eighth and ninth centuries, both in the eaſtern and weſtern empire, againſt the worſhipping of images; ſince this angel calls upon the inhabitants of the earth to fear God, give glory to him, and worſhip him, and not images; but there was little of the everlaſting Goſpel preached in thoſe times. Others are of opinion that thoſe who preceded, and led on to the reformation, are pointed at by this angel, ſuch as *Wickliff* in *England*, *Franciſcus Petrarcha* in *Italy*, *John Huſs* and *Jerom* of *Prague* in *Bohemia*, with others; but theſe alſo had not the everlaſting Goſpel in its clearneſs and purity, nor did they preach it to all the inhabitants of the earth; rather I think a ſett of Goſpel preachers are intended, who will appear at the beginning of the ſpiritual reign of Chriſt, and will be a means of uſhering it in; and theſe are the watchmen of *Zion*, who will give the Lord no reſt till he has made *Jeruſalem* the praiſe of the whole earth; and who will then ſee eye to eye in Goſpel myſteries, and will publiſh good tidings of peace and ſalvation, and proclaim *Zion*'s king reigning, *Iſ.* lxii. 6, 7. and lii. 7, 8. this angel is called *another*, being diſtinct from the voice heard in ver. 2. tho' he is the firſt with reſpect to the following angels, as appears from ver. 9. the place where *John* ſaw this angel, and the poſition he was in, follow: *fly in the midſt of heaven*; the church, the great congregation, the ſeveral congregations of the ſaints; in the midſt of which theſe miniſters will preach righteouſneſs, ſalvation, loving-kindneſs, and truth, as Chriſt has done before them; and from hence the word of the Lord will go forth to all parts of the world: they will preach the Goſpel openly and publickly, with great freedom, boldneſs, and intrepidity, in the view of all men, not fearing the faces of any; and the Goſpel miniſtred by them will have a ſwift, ſudden, and univerſal ſpread; they themſelves will run to and fro, and the Goſpel will run and be glorified, and the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord, and multitudes will flock to Chriſt, who in that day will be alone exalted; for theſe miniſters will come forth publickly: *having the everlaſting Goſpel*; the Goſpel in its fullneſs and purity; the Goſpel of the grace of God, of free juſtification by the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, of peace and pardon by his blood, and of compleat ſalvation by him; called *everlaſting*, becauſe the ſubſtance of it was ſettled from all eternity, in the council and covenant of peace; it was ordained before the world was, and was hid in God from the beginning; and the revelation of it was of old; it was made to our firſt parents immediately after the fall, and was ſpoken of by all God's holy prophets which have been ſince the world began; it was preached before unto *Abraham*, and in the times of *Iſaiah*, and by other prophets, and ſo is no new, upſtart doctrine: beſides, the matter of it is everlaſting; it treats of everlaſting things; of the eternal election of perſons to ſalvation; of God's everlaſting love to them; of an everlaſting covenant he made with Chriſt on their account; of bleſſings, promiſes, and grace given to them in him, before the world began; and of his being ſet up ſo early as a mediator, and of his going forth in a way of grace from everlaſting; as well as it reveals an everlaſting righteouſneſs, and brings life and immortality, or eternal life to light, or ſhews the way to everlaſting life and happineſs; to which may be added, that it will abide for ever, it will always remain, and that inexpugnable, maugre all the oppoſition of hell and earth; it will continue till all the elect of God are gathered in, notwithſtanding the violence of perſecutors, or the craft of ſeducers; nor will it be antiquated and made void by another Goſpel ſucceeding it, for there will be no other: now this the miniſters of thoſe times will *have*; not in their heads only, by knowledge, but in their hearts, by experience, and will have it in their mouths, and ſpeak it out freely and openly, and will have a commiſſion from Chriſt to preach it, and gifts qualifying them for it: *to preach to them that dwell on the earth*; that are in the apoſtate church, carnal, unregenerate, and earthly perſons. The *Complutenſian* edition reads, *that ſit on the earth*; as perſons abject, mean, and diſtreſſed, to whom the Goſpel is acceptable: *and to every nation and kindred, and tongue, and people*; whether *Jews*, *Turks*, or pagans; for the Goſpel, as before obſerved, will now have an univerſal ſpread all the world over.

Ver. 7. *Saying with a loud voice*, &c.] Theſe miniſters ſhall lift up their voice like a trumpet, and cry aloud, and deliver out the Goſpel fully and faithfully, with great authority and power, and with much vehemence, zeal, and fervency: *fear God*; or *the Lord*, as ſome copies, the *Vulgate Latin* and *Arabic* verſions read; not the antichriſtian beaſt and his followers, as men formerly had done; but God the Lord, and him not with a ſervile fear, or a fear of puniſhment, of wrath, hell, and damnation; nor with a diſtruſt of his grace, love, power, and providence, much leſs with an hypocritical fear; but with a godly fear, which has the goodneſs of God for its object, and ſprings from a ſenſe of the love of God, and is a reverential affection for him, and is attended with faith and ſpiritual joy, and includes all worſhip of him, both internal and external; hence the *Syriac* verſion renders it, *ſerve God*: and this ſhows that the duties of religion are to be inculcated by Goſpel miniſters; and that they will be urged by them when the everlaſting Goſpel is preached in its greateſt purity: *and give glory to him*; and not to graven images, which he will not allow of; and glory is to be given to him, on account of the perfections of his nature, and the works of his hands; and is given when men aſcribe greatneſs to him, praiſe his works of creation, and acquieſce in thoſe of providence, acknowledging the power, goodneſs, and wiſdom of God in all; and when they give thanks for all his mercies, temporal and ſpiritual, and eſpecially for Jeſus Chriſt; and when they exerciſe faith on him as their God in Chriſt, and aſcribe their ſalvation to him and to the Lamb, and not to the works of their hands; and when they attend his worſhip, and the duties of religion, and ſo glorify him with their bodies and ſpirits, which are his: *for the hour of his judgment is come*; not of the great and laſt judgment, but of the government of the Lord Chriſt, committed to him by God the Father; in which ſenſe the word is uſed in *John* v. 22. for now will the time be come, when the kingdoms of this world will be his; and he will take to himſelf his great power, and reign, in a ſpiritual manner, in the world; and now alſo will be his time of judging the dead, or of avenging his people, whoſe blood has been ſhed for him, and of his judging the great whore, or of inflicting his judgments upon antichriſt and his followers; all which will be under the ſounding of the ſeventh trumpet, to which this viſion is cotemporary; ſee ch. xi. 15, 17, 18. and xvii. 1. and xix. 2. *and worſhip him that made heaven and earth, and the ſea, and the fountains of waters*; God the creator of all things, and not the beaſts, nor idols, the works of mens hands.

Ver. 8. *And there followed another angel*, &c.] A *ſecond*, as the *Alexandrian* copy, the *Complutenſian* edition, and the *Syriac* verſion add; and the *Arabic* verſion reads, *and the ſecond angel followed*; another ſett of Goſpel miniſters, who will immediately follow upon the former, proclaiming the fall of *Babylon*, which will be brought about thro' the preaching of the everlaſting Goſpel. Some think the *Waldenſes* and *Albigenſes* are here deſigned, who gave a great blow to *Babylon*, and laid a foundation for her ruin. Others have thought that *Luther*, and the reformers of his times are intended, who gave a deadly blow to *Babylon*, and ſhe has been falling ever ſince: but to me it appears, that a ſett of miniſters in the ſpiritual reign of Chriſt are meant, who will not only ſignify the fall of *Babylon* to be certain, and near at hand, but will live to ſee and declare her actual fall, as follows: *ſaying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city*; which is to be underſtood not of the world in general, which will not now be come to an end, for all nations of the world are diſtinguiſhed from this *Babylon* in the next clauſe, and is only repreſented as a city, tho' a great one; nor of *Babylon* in *Chaldea*, which was fallen many hundreds of years before this viſion; nor is there any likelihood of its being reſtored, nor any reaſon to believe that it will evermore be the ſeat of empire over all the nations and kings of the earth, as the *Babylon* mentioned in this book is, ch. xvii. 5, 18. tho' undoubtedly the alluſion is to that *Babylon*, and the very words are uſed which expreſs the fall of it, and are taken from it; ſee *Iſ.* xxi. 9. but this is to be underſtood of *Rome*, which all along in this book is called the great city; ſee ch. xi. 8. and xvi. 19. and xvii. 18. and not of *Rome* pagan, for that is fallen already; and the account of the fall of that is given before, at the opening of the ſixth ſeal, and the caſting the dragon out of heaven, upon the war there, between *Michael* and him, tho' Mr. *Daubuz* is of opinion that this is here meant; but of *Rome* papal, called *Babylon the great*, ch. xvii. 5. and xviii. 2. and ſo the *Alexandrian* copy, the *Vulgate Latin*, *Syriac* and *Arabic* verſions, read here; and the *Romiſh* antichriſt is ſo called, becauſe that city was famous for its pride and haughtineſs, for its tyranny and cruelty, and for its idolatry; and indeed its name, which ſignifies *confuſion*, well agrees with the papacy, which is a confuſed mixture of *Judaiſm*, paganiſm, and chriſtianity: ſo *Rome* is called *Babel* in ſome antient writings of the *Jews* [o], where ſome copies read *Babel*, others read *Rome*; and *Tertullian*, who wrote long before the appearance of the *Romiſh* antichriſt, ſays [p], with our *John*, *Babylon* is a figure of the *Roman* city: and of this it is ſaid, that it *is fallen, is fallen*; which words are repeated for the certain confirmation of it, as matter of fact; for the fall of antichriſt will certainly be in the ſpiritual reign of Chriſt, in the *Philadelphian* church-ſtate; ſee the note on ch. iii. 9. now will *Babylon* come in remembrance before God, and he will pour out the vials of his wrath upon her, and will give men an averſion to her; and thro' the preaching of the Goſpel ſhe will fall, juſt as the walls of *Jericho* fell at the ſounding of the rams horns: the reaſon of which fall will be, *becauſe ſhe made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication*; by her *fornication* is meant the idolatry of the church of *Rome*; ſo the idolatry of *Iſrael* and *Judah* is often expreſſed in the Old Teſtament by fornication and whoredoms; ſee *Jer.* iii. 6. *Ezek.* xxiii. 2, 3. and the *wine* of it deſigns the alluring methods uſed to draw into it; ſuch as the riches and honours, and pleaſures of this world, promiſed to men, and the great appearances of holineſs and religion, the deceiveableneſs of unrighteouſneſs, the miracles, ſigns, and lying wonders done by them, by which men are made ſottiſh and ſtupid, and induced to believe a lye; juſt as wine intoxicates, and inclines, and excites to luſt: and by *the wrath* of it, is meant either the heat of luſt unto it, or the wrath of God againſt them, which is ſtirred up by it; and now the aggravation of her ſin is, that ſhe not only drinks of this wine herſelf, or commits idolatry, being inſtigated to it by the allurements of it, tho' ſhe hereby incurs the diſpleaſure and wrath of God, but ſhe draws all nations into the ſame idolatrous practices.

Ver. 9. *And the third angel followed them*, &c.] The two preceding ones, and that very quickly; by whom is meant not *Luther*, and his aſſociates in the reformation, as ſome think; nor his ſucceſſors, or the miniſters of the Goſpel in general from his time till Chriſt's ſecond coming, as others have thought; but a ſett of Goſpel miniſters in the ſpiritual reign of Chriſt: the firſt ſett of them publiſh the everlaſting Goſpel, which leads on to the ruin of antichriſt; the ſecond ſett proclaim the downfall of *Rome*, and this third ſett denounce the wrath of God upon all that have profeſſed the popiſh religion: *ſaying with a loud voice*; as the firſt angel did, with like authority and vehemence, in order to ſtrike terror, and expreſs indignation: *if any man worſhip the beaſt and his image*; give in to the idolatries of the church of *Rome*, and embrace, maintain, and defend the popiſh religion, which bears a reſemblance to the worſhip of the heathens, and is the very image of *Rome* pagan; ſee ch. xiii. 4, 12, 15. *and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand*; openly profeſs popery, and ſwear allegiance to the man of ſin, and do all they can to ſupport his intereſt; ſee ch. xiii. 16, 17.

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[o] Zohar in Num. fol. 103. 4. & Raya Mehimna, apud ib. in Exod. fol. 49. 3.

[p] Adv. Judæos, c. 9. & Adv. Marcion. l. 3. c. 13.

Ver. 10. *The ſame ſhall drink of the wine of the wrath of God*, &c.]. Which is a juſt puniſhment for their ſin; that as ſuch have drank of the wine of the wrath of *Rome*'s fornication, ver. 8. ſo they ſhall now drink of the wine of God's wrath; it is uſual in ſcripture to expreſs the puniſhment God inflicts upon wicked men by his wrath, and by the wine-cup of his fury; and their ſuffering ſuch puniſhment, by their drinking of it; ſee *Jer.* xxv. 15. *Job* xxi. 20. ſo יין דרוגזא, *the wine of wrath*, is a phraſe uſed by the *Jews*[q]: *which is poured out without mixture, into the cup of his indignation*; ſometimes called a cup of fury and of trembling, *Iſ.* li. 17, 22. and is ſometimes ſaid to be full of mixture, *Pſ.* lxxv. 8. of various ingredients of wrath and fury; and the words may be rendered here, *which is mixed without mixture*; and tho' it ſeems to carry in it a contradiction, yet is true in different ſenſes; it may be ſaid to be mixed as wine with various ſorts, which is the ſtronger, and ſooner inebriates and intoxicates; or in alluſion to the cup the *Jews* gave to malefactors, to ſtupify them, when going to execution, which had various things put in it for that purpoſe; ſee the note on *Mark* xv. 23. and ſo deſigns the ſeveral ingredients in the cup of divine indignation, or the ſeveral ways in which God expreſſes his wrath; and yet it is without mixture; it is judgment without mercy, pure wrath, without the leaſt allay; not ſo much as a drop of cold water granted, or the leaſt favour ſhown, or any mitigation of fury for a moment: *and he ſhall be tormented with fire and brimſtone*; in alluſion to the deſtruction of *Sodom* and *Gomorrha*, which are now a burning and ſulphurous lake, called *Aſphaltites*, and is an example, pattern, and ſimilitude of the vengeance of eternal fire, *Jude* 7. and hence the beaſt and falſe prophets are ſaid to be caſt into ſuch a lake, ch. xix. 20. and here their followers will be puniſhed; which is expreſſive of the horrible torments of hell, and the dreadful puniſhment of the antichriſtian party there; ſee *Pſ.* xi. 6. and what will aggravate their miſery is, that it will be *in the preſence of the holy angels, and in the preſence of the Lamb*; the latter will be their judge, and will adjudge them to everlaſting burnings, and pronounce the ſentence on them; and the former will be the executioners of it; they will gather them out, and ſever them from the righteous, and caſt them into the furnace of fire, and will be ſpectators of their puniſhment, and rejoice at it; and the ſight of their power and glory will increaſe the torment of the ſufferers.

Ver. 11. *And the ſmoke of their torment aſcendeth up for ever and ever*, &c.] That is, the ſmoke of that fire which torments them will for ever ariſe; or in other words, there will be no end of their torment; hence their miſery is called everlaſting fire, everlaſting puniſhment, and everlaſting deſtruction, *Mat.* xxv. 41, 46. 2 *Theſſ.* i. 9. and ſmoke being very troubleſome and diſtreſſing, is mentioned to ſet forth the very uncomfortable ſtate of the wicked; and ſo it is uſed by *Jewiſh* writers: hence we read of תנן גהנם, *the ſmoke of hell*[r], with which the eyes of the wicked will be filled in the world to come: *and they have no reſt, day nor night*; the fire of divine wrath which tortures them is never quenched, and the worm of conſcience which gnaws them, never dies: this is directly contrary to a notion of the *Jews*, that the wicked in hell have reſt ſometimes; they talk of angels blowing away the ſmoke from them, ſo that they have reſt an hour and a half; and which they ſay they have three times a day, and whenever *Iſrael* ſays *Amen*, let his great name be bleſſed[s]; and particularly that hell-fire never burns on the ſabbath-day, nor does the ſmoke of it aſcend then, and that the wicked have always reſt on that day[t]; tho' ſometimes they contradict themſelves, and ſay they never have any reſt[u], which is the truth: *who worſhip the beaſt and his image, and whoſoever receiveth the mark of his name*; that is, whoever are the followers of antichriſt, or the profeſſors of the *Popiſh* religion; ſo far is ſalvation from being in the church of *Rome*, and only there, that there is none in it; and whoever live and die in the profeſſion of popery, ſhall ſurely be damned as this paſſage is true.

Ver. 12. *Here is the patience of the ſaints*, &c.] That which has required their patience, and about which has been exerciſed, what they have been patiently waiting for, namely the deſtruction of antichriſt; and now it will be come, and patience will have its perfect work; ſee ch. xiii. 10. *here are they that keep the commandments of God*; and not the inventions of men, and the traditions of antichriſt, but the ordinances of the Goſpel, as they were at firſt delivered, without any adulteration and corruption; and who kept them becauſe they were enjoined by God, and from a principle of love to him, and with a view to his glory: theſe are diſtinguiſhed from the worſhippers of the beaſt, and were preſerved throughout the apoſtacy; theſe are the witneſſes, who will now be riſen, and the remnant of the woman's ſeed, with whom the dragon made war by the beaſt; and theſe are the hundred and forty and four thouſand who are before deſcribed; theſe will be in a very glorious and comfortable church-ſtate; the word will be purely preached, and the ordinances truly adminiſtred, and the doctrines of the Goſpel will be heartily embraced and profeſſed: it follows, *and the faith of Jeſus*; meaning either the grace of faith, of which Jeſus is the object, author, and finiſher; and which theſe ſaints will have from him, and exerciſe upon him in a very ſtrong and comfortable manner; and which, and the profeſſion of it, they will hold faſt to the end; or elſe the doctrine of faith, concerning the perſon, office, and grace of Jeſus Chriſt, the faith once delivered to the ſaints, which they will have contended for, ſtood faſt in, and now will hold in a pure conſcience: theſe ſeem to be the words of *John*, declaring the faith, patience, and obedience of the ſaints of thoſe times.

Ver. 13. *And I heard a voice from heaven*, &c.] Like that which was heard at Chriſt's baptiſm and transfiguration, certifying the truth of what follows, ſo that that may be depended upon as an undoubted verity: *ſaying unto me, write*; which is a further confirmation of the following ſayings being true and faithful; ſee ch. i. 9. and xix. 9. and xxi. 5. *bleſſed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth*; merely to die is not an happineſs, for death is common to all, good and bad; it is a diſunion of ſoul and body, and cannot be in itſelf deſireable; it is the fruit of ſin, and has ſomething in it awful and terrible; and though it is the privilege of believers, as it is unſtung by Chriſt, yet not as ſimply and abſolutely conſidered; but to die in the Lord is a bleſſedneſs: ſome render the words, *which die for the Lord*; ſo the *Arabic* verſion, *which die for the faith of the Lord*; and the *Ethiopic* verſion, *which die for God*; and ſo reſtrain them to the martyrs of Jeſus: to ſuffer death for the ſake of Chriſt and his Goſpel, is a gift and an honour, and what glorifies Chriſt; and there is a glory conſequent upon it, which ſuch ſhall enjoy; but then in the ſpiritual reign of Chriſt, to which this paſſage refers, and after the deſtruction of antichriſt, there will be no more ſuffering for Chriſt, no more martyrdoms; wherefore this cannot be the ſenſe of the words: nor do they mean dying in the lively exerciſe of faith and hope in the Lord; for tho' it is a happineſs ſo to die, both to perſons themſelves, and to their friends and relations, yet theſe are not the only perſons that are bleſſed; there are ſome who all their life-time are ſubject to bondage, and go off in the dark, and yet are happy; but to die in the Lord, is to die intereſted in him, in union to him; which union is not diſſolved by death, and which preſerves from all condemnation, at death or at judgment, and ſecures the ſoul's immediate entrance into happineſs, and the reſurrection of the body at the laſt day, and therefore ſuch muſt be bleſſed: the phraſe *from henceforth*, is differently placed; the *Ethiopic* verſion connects it with the word *write*, rendering it, *write now*; and the *Vulgate Latin* verſion reads it with the next clauſe, *hereafter*, *yea*, *ſaith the Spirit*; and ſo the *Latin* interpreter of the *Syriac* verſion, tho' that itſelf ſeems rather to place it as ours does, and which is righteſt; and is to be underſtood not of the time of *John*'s writing, thenceforward to the reſurrection; for thoſe that died before his time were as happy as thoſe who died after; nor of the time of death, tho' it is a truth, that from the time of the ſaints death, and from the very moment of their ſeparation, they are bleſſed, and are in a ſtate of happineſs until the reſurrection; but of that period of time which the declarations made by the three preceding angels refer to, from thenceforward, and after the deſtruction of antichriſt, and during the ſpiritual reign of Chriſt: and the ſenſe is, that happy will thoſe perſons be, that die in Chriſt within that time, and before the *Laodicean* church-ſtate takes place; when coldneſs, lukewarmneſs, and carnal ſecurity will ſeize upon men, and Chriſt will come upon them at an unawares; and thoſe ſharp and ſevere times will commence, ſignified by the harveſt and vintage of the earth in the following verſes, and which ſeem to be no other than the end of the world, and the deſtruction of it; wherefore happy will they be that are got to heaven before that time comes; ſee *Eccl.* iv. 1, 2. *Iſ.* lvii. 1, 2. *yea, ſaith the Spirit*; the third witneſs in heaven, who ſets his ſeal to the truth of what the voice declares, and ſhows wherein this bleſſedneſs will conſiſt: *that they may reſt from their labours*; both of body and ſoul; from all toil of body, and laborious work, from all diſeaſes and diſtempers of body, and all outward ſorrows and calamities men labour under, and are fatigued with in this life; and from all inward troubles, from a body of ſin, from the temptations of ſatan, and from all doubts and fears, from their preſent warfare-ſtate, and all conflicts with their ſpiritual enemies: *and their works do follow them*; they don't go before them, to prepare heaven and happineſs for them; nor do they take them along with them, and uſe them as pleas for their admiſſion into the heavenly glory; but they will follow them, and will be found to praiſe, and honour, and glory, and will be taken notice of by Chriſt, and graciouſly rewarded by him, at his appearing and kingdom. This is directly oppoſite to the notions of the *Jews*, who ſay, that when a man departs this life, his works *go before him*, and ſay unto him, thou haſt done ſo and ſo, in ſuch a place, and on ſuch a day [w]; and that whoever does a good work in this world, it ſhall *go before him* in the world to come [x]; and ſo they [y] repreſent good works as ſaying to a man when he is about to die, "go in peace; before thou getteſt thither אנו מקדימים אותך, *we will go before thee*, as it is ſaid, *Iſ.* lviii. 8. *thy righteouſneſs ſhall go before thee.*" Sometimes they ſay [z] they go along with him at the time of a man's departure: neither gold, nor ſilver, nor precious ſtones and pearls accompany him, but the law and good works, as it is ſaid, *Prov.* vi. 22. *when thou goeſt it ſhall lead thee*, &c.

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[q] Zohar in Gen. fol. 51. 4.

[r] Targum in Pſ. xxxvii. 20. T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 75. 1. Caphtor, fol. 109. 1.

[s] Zohar in Gen. fol. 47. 4.

[t] Zohar in Exod. fol. 36. 4. & in Lev. fol. 45. 3. & in Deut. fol. 115. 3. T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 65. 2. Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 149. 1. Niſhmat Chayim, fol. 39. 1.

[u] Zohar in Exod. fol. 62. 3. T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 152. 2.

Ver. 14. *And I looked, and behold a white cloud*, &c.] In this verſe is a deſcription of the perſon principally concerned in the harveſt of the earth, hereafter mentioned; by whom is deſigned not ſome great potentate or prince, an encourager of the reformation among his ſubjects; nor an angel in an human ſhape; nor *Martin Luther*, as others; but the Lord Jeſus Chriſt himſelf, who is deſcribed by his form, and by his ſeat, and by what he had on his head, and in his hand: *and upon the cloud one ſat like unto the Son of man*; ſo Chriſt is ſaid to be, ch. i. 13. and in *Dan.* vii. 13. where there is a like viſion of him as here, and which refers to the ſame time; it is a name by which the Meſſiah is often called, and is expreſſive of the truth of his human nature, who was found in faſhion as a man, and was really one; for his being like to the Son of man, deſigns reality and truth, and not mere appearance; ſee *Mat.* xiv. 5. *John* i. 14. and beſides, as this was in viſion, it is very properly expreſſed, for Chriſt appeared to *John* in viſion like to that human nature in which he is at the right hand of God: and here he is ſeen *ſitting* upon the *white cloud*; which ſhows that he was come to judgment in the clouds of heaven, and was ſet on one of them, as on a throne; and a white cloud repreſents the purity, uprightneſs, and juſtneſs of his proceedings in judgment; for which reaſon he is ſaid to be on a white throne, ch. xx. 11. *having on his head a golden crown*; as an enſign of royal majeſty, ſhewing that his kingdom was now come, the time for him to reign perſonally with his ſaints on earth a thouſand years; and that it was a very glorious one; and that he ſhould now reign before his antients glorioully; and that it was pure, ſolid, and durable; ſee *Pſ.* xxi. 4. *and in his hand a ſharp ſickle*; to reap the earth with, as hereafter, and is expreſſive of his power as king of ſaints and judge of the world, to gather all nations before him; for the ſickle is uſed to gather with, as well as to cut down.

Ver. 15. *And another angel came out of the temple*, &c.] Not the Holy Spirit, who being God omniſcient, knows the day and hour of judgment, which is a ſecret to men and angels, as *Napier* thinks; ſince tho' he dwells in the church as his temple, yet is never called an angel; nor does this angel repreſent the ſouls under the altar, who come out from thence, and importunately deſire vengeance on the inhabitants of the earth, the worſhippers of the beaſt, who had ſhed their blood; but rather the mighty angels who ſhall deſcend from heaven with Chriſt, and who ſhall be employed by him as reapers, to gather in his elect from the four winds, as well as to bind up the tares in bundles, and burn them; unleſs a ſett of Goſpel miniſters, as before, ſhould be intended, who either by divine revelation, or by the ſigns of the time being come, and obſerved by them, will know that the harveſt, or end of the world is come; ſince this angel is ſaid to come out of the temple, the church, which had been meaſured, and was now opened in heaven, and from whence angels are ſaid to come, ch. xi. 1, 19. and xv. 5, 6. *crying with a loud voice to him that ſat on the cloud*; as the firſt and third angels did, ver. 7, 9. denoting great vehemence and importunity: *thruſt in thy ſickle, and reap*; which being ſpoken by an inferior angel, whether this deſigns the miniſtring ſpirits, or preachers of the word, muſt be underſtood not as commanding, nor even directing what ſhould be done, but as beſeeching and intreating; ſee *Pſ.* cxxxii. 8. Dr. *Lightfoot* thinks, and not without reaſon, that there is here ſome alluſion to the putting in of the ſickle, and reaping the firſt corn in *Judea*, at the feaſt of the paſſover, by the order of the *Sanhedrim* which ſat in the temple; nor did any reap till they had the word given them, *reap*, by the meſſengers of the court, called שלוחי בית דין, *the angels*, or meſſengers *of the Sanhedrim*; to whom the reaper ſaid, ſhall I reap? and they ſay to him, קצור [a], *reap*: the reaſons follow: *for the time is come for thee to reap*; the time of the end of the world, and of the judgment of it, which is fixed by God; and of Chriſt's coming to judge both quick and dead, and of the firſt reſurrection, or the reſurrection of the ſaints: *for the harveſt of the earth is ripe*; the meaſure of the ſins of wicked men will now be filled up, and the afflictions of the ſaints will be accompliſhed in them, and the number of God's elect will be compleated in effectual vocation; they will be all called, and ſo things will be ripe for the ſecond coming of Chriſt. There ſeems to be ſome reference to *Joel* iii. 13. *put ye in the ſickle, for the harveſt is ripe*: the *Jewiſh* doctors aſk, [b] to whom is this ſaid? *R. Phineas*, in the name of *R. Hilkiah* ſays, למלאכים, *to the angels*; ſo *the mighty ones* in ver. 11. are by *Kimchi* interpreted of the angels.

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[w] T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 11. 1.

[x] T. Bab. Sota, fol. 3. 2. & Avoda Zara, fol. 5. 1. & Niſhmat Chayim, fol. 21. 1.

[y] Pirke Eliezer, c. 34. & Ya'kut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 55. 4.

[z] Pirke Abot, c. 6. §. 9.

Ver. 16. *And he that ſat on the cloud thruſt in his ſickle on the earth*, &c.] He put forth, and made uſe of that power which he had in his hand, in anſwer to the intreaty of the angel, the time being fully come which was fixed for this great event: *and the earth was reaped*; and the harveſt of it was got in; reaping and harveſt ſometimes are uſed in an ill ſenſe, and deſign the wrath of God, and his judgments inflicted upon men; ſee *Iſ.* xvii. 5. *Jer.* li. 33. *Joel* iii. 13. Hence ſome think, that both this and the vintage following, intend the judgments of God upon antichriſt, and that they are cotemporary with the pouring out of the fifth and ſixth vials upon the beaſt and his followers; and the rather, ſince the deſtruction of *Babylon* literally taken, is expreſſed in ſuch language, *Jer.* li. 33. though theſe ſeem to have reſpect to times after the fall of the *Romiſh Babylon*, before declared in ver. 8. and moſt interpreters refer the harveſt to the laſt judgment at the end of the world; and which ſenſe is greatly countenanced, and to be illuſtrated by the parable of the tares and wheat, in *Mat.* xiii. 30, 39, 41, 42. ſometimes theſe phraſes are uſed in a good ſenſe, and intend the gathering in of ſouls by the preaching of the Goſpel; as there are the appointed weeks of the harveſt, ſo there is a time fixed for the calling and converſion of God's elect; and when this time is come, and eſpecially to any number of them in any particular place, it is an harveſt, as in *Galilee* and *Samaria* in the times of Chriſt, *Mat.* ix. 39. *John* iv. 35. the reapers are the miniſters of the Goſpel; ſuch were the Apoſtles of Chriſt, *John* iv. 36, 37, 38. and the ſickle is the Goſpel, by which not only men are cut to the heart, and cut down, and removed from their old bottom, and principles and practices, but are gathered to Chriſt, and into his churches; and when large numbers are brought in, it is an harveſt-time, as in the times of Chriſt and his Apoſtles; ſee *Iſ.* ix. 1, 2, 3. *Acts* ii. 41. 2 *Cor.* ii. 14. hence ſome interpreters think that the harveſt here has reſpect to the reformation, which followed upon the preaching of *Luther*, *Calvin*, and others, when a large harveſt of ſouls were gathered in, in *Germany*, *France*, *England*, and elſewhere; but rather it may be thought to refer to the converſion of the *Jews*, and the bringing in the fullneſs of the *Gentiles* in the latter day, in the ſpiritual reign of Chriſt, to which the preceding viſions belong, as we have ſeen; the earth will be reaped indeed, and a great harveſt it will be, when a nation ſhall be born at once, and the vaſt multitudes of the *Gentiles* ſhall be brought in, as in *Iſ.* lxvi. 8. and xlix. 20. and lx. 3—11. and the rather this may be judged to be the meaning of it, ſince the paſſage from whence theſe phraſes are borrowed, reſpects the bringing again the captivity of *Judah* and *Jeruſalem*, *Joel* iii. 1, 13. tho' it ſeems beſt to underſtand it of the Lord's wheat harveſt at the end of the world, when the wheat of the earth ſhall be reaped, and gathered into Chriſt's barn, or garner, or into his and his Father's kingdom; this reaping of the earth is the removing of the ſaints out of it, not by death, but by the reſurrection of them from the dead; for when Chriſt ſhall come in the clouds of heaven, and ſit on the white cloud, or throne, the dead in him will riſe firſt, and the living ſaints will be changed, and both will be caught up together, to meet the Lord in the air; ſo that the earth will be reaped, and be clear of them, and there will be none left in it but the wicked of the world; and what will become of them is declared in the following verſes, under the repreſentation of a vintage.

Ver. 17. *And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven*, &c.] It is a ſtrange conceit of Mr. *Brightman*'s, that this angel is *Thomas* lord *Cromwell*, in the days of king *Henry* the eighth, a ſincere favourer of pure religion; and that the following angel is *Thomas Cranmer*, archbiſhop of *Canterbury*, a martyr, that had power over fire; and that the vintage, here ſpoken of, refers to the deſtroying of religious houſes, and diſpoſing of abbylands to other uſes; which was done under the king's authority, by the former of theſe, at the inſtigation of the latter, when thoſe who were ſet over that buſineſs, made ſuch havock of the goods of the papiſts, that their houſes ſeemed to ſwim in their ſpoils, as in a river of preſſed grapes. Dr. *Goodwin* much better interprets it of God's vengeance upon the carnal proteſtants and profeſſors of religion; ſince it is an angel out of the temple that will execute it, and another from the altar, zealous of God's worſhip, that will provoke to it; and ſince the wine-preſs will be trodden without the city, the church; and which began in the wars in *Germany*, in the laſt age, and will have its full accompliſhment when the whole outward court is given to the *Gentiles*; but how theſe, who are but a few, when compared with the wicked of the world, ſhould be called the vine of the earth, I ſee not. Mr. *Daubuz* thinks this viſion of the vintage has had, at leaſt in part, its fulfillment in the late wars in the times of *queen Anne*, the popiſh countries being then made the ſeat of war, in which they ſuffered much; rather they come neareſt to the truth of the matter, who take this to be the battle of the great God Almighty, under the ſixth vial, ch. xvi. 14, 16. fought by the word of God, the king of kings, and lord of lords, who will tread the wine-

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[a] Miſn. Menachot, c. 10. §. 3.

[b] Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 92. 1.

preſs of the fierceneſs and wrath of Almighty God, ch. xix. 15. when the beaſt and falſe prophet will both be deſtroyed: but inaſmuch as *Babylon* is before declared to be fallen, ver. 8. and ſince the gathering in of the Lord's wheat at the firſt reſurrection, is deſigned by the harveſt; it is beſt to underſtand this vintage of the perdition of ungodly men by fire, at the conflagration of the world, which will be at the beginning of the thouſand years reign, and of the gathering of them in at the ſecond reſurrection, at the end of it, for the deſtruction of them in hell, ſoul and body. And by this *angel* is meant, not the ſaints of the moſt high; for tho' they may be ſaid to come out of the temple, the church, and ſhall judge the world, yet they will not be employed in gathering together the wicked, and caſting them into the lake of fire, or wine-preſs of God's wrath; rather the miniſtring ſpirits are intended, who are the reapers at the end of the world, and who will gather the wicked, and bind them like tares in bundles, and caſt them into the furnace of fire; tho' it is beſt to interpret this of Chriſt himſelf, who is often called an angel in ſcripture, as the angel of God's preſence, and the angel of the covenant; and frequently in this book, as in ch. vii. 2. and viii. 3. and x. 1. becauſe, as mediator, he is God's meſſenger; and he may be ſaid to do that, which he does by others, as inſtruments, as to gather the vine of the earth, and caſt it into the wine-preſs; and he may be ſaid to *come out of the temple which is in heaven:* whether this be underſtood of heaven itſelf, which the temple, and eſpecially the moſt holy place in it, was a figure of; here Chriſt is, and from hence he is expected to come, and will come at the laſt day, as judge of all the earth; or of the church of God, for here Chriſt dwells, and grants his gracious and ſpiritual preſence until his ſecond and perſonal coming, with all his ſaints: and now he will have them all with him, both quick and dead, and will be perſonally in his temple, the church, in the great congregation of the righteous, and out from among them will he diſplay his power in the deſtruction of the wicked; and the rather he may be thought to be intended, ſince none but a divine perſon ever trod the wine-preſs of God's wrath; ſee *Iſ.* lxiii. 3, 1, 2, 3. *Rev.* xix. 13, 15, 16. to which may be added what follows, *he alſo having a ſharp ſickle*; the ſame who is deſcribed as like to the ſon of man, on a white cloud, with a golden crown on his head, and ſuch a ſickle in his hand, ver. 14. which is expreſſive of the ſame judiciary power and authority.

Ver. 18. *And another angel came out from the altar*, &c.] Where are the ſouls of the martyrs of Jeſus, ch. vi. 9. and whom this angel is thought by ſome to repreſent, in his addreſs to him that had the ſharp ſickle, crying for vengeance on the wicked of the earth, who had ſhed their blood: the alluſion ſeems to be to the altar of burnt-offerings, where the ſacrifices were ſlain, and on which they were burnt with fire; and which was an emblem of the ſtrict juſtice of God, ſhewing, that thoſe perſons, for whom theſe ſacrifices were offered, deſerved to be treated in like manner; and here the angel coming from thence ſignifies, that he came on the behalf of the juſtice of God, entreating that he, to whom vengeance belonged, would execute it upon all the ungodly, who were ripe for judgment: and hence it is further ſaid of him, *which had power over fire*; whether the angels, as they have preſided over particular kingdoms and ſtates, *Dan.* x. 20, 21. preſide over the elements, ſince this angel had power over fire, and another angel is called the angel of the waters, ch. xvi. 5. may be conſidered. According to the *Jews* [c] there are מלאכי אש, *angels of fire*, and מלאכי מים, *and angels of the waters*; particularly it is ſaid [d], that *Gabriel* is, שר של אש, *the prince of fire*, or *that has power over fire*, and *Jurkemo* is, שר הברד, *prince of hail*, or has power over it: however, fire is to be taken here, not for the Spirit, and his gifts, which not a created angel, but Chriſt only, has a power over, to baptize with; nor the Goſpel, nor martyrdom, but rather the wrath of God, which in ſcripture is often compared to fire, of which this angel was an executioner: and indeed here it may be referred, both literally to the burning of the world, and the wicked in it, in which the angels may be concerned, who will deſcend with Chriſt in flames of fire, taking vengeance on the wicked; and figuratively to hell-fire, and the deſtruction of the wicked in it, who will be caſt into it by the angels of God. *And cried with a loud cry to him that had the ſharp ſickle*, as in ver. 15. expreſſing like vehemence and importunity, *ſaying, thruſt in thy ſharp ſickle*; not commanding or directing, but intreating as before: *and gather the cluſters of the vine of the earth*; not the vine of God's planting, the vineyard of the Lord of hoſts, the church of Chriſt; but the vine of the earth, of wicked and earthly men, whoſe *vine is of the vine of Sodom*, &c. *Deut.* xxxii. 32, 33. and which is ſpread over the whole earth; a wild vine, whoſe grapes are gall, cluſters bitter, and their wine the poiſon of dragons; and to ſuch a vine the wicked are compared, for their emptineſs and unfruitfulneſs, their uſeleſſneſs and unprofitableneſs, and for their being fit fewel for everlaſting burnings; ſee *Ezek.* xv. 2, 3, 4, 5. And the *cluſters* of it may denote the great multitude of the wicked now to be cut down, gathered in, and deſtroyed, for the reaſon given, *for her grapes are fully ripe*; their wickedneſs very great, their iniquity full, the meaſure of their ſins filled up, and they fitted for deſtruction, and ripe for ruine; ſee *Joel* iii. 13. Some underſtand this of the degenerate church of *Rome*, and the deſtruction of it; ſee *Rev.* xix. 15.

Ver. 19. *And the angel thruſt in his ſickle into the earth*, &c.] Before *upon the earth*, when the harveſt was gathered in, the wheat being on the earth, but not belonging to it; but here *into the earth*, the vine being the vine of the earth, rooted in it, and natural to it: *and gathered the vine of the earth*; the *Arabic* verſion reads, *of the whole earth*; in like manner as the tares in the parable are ſaid to be gathered, and bound in bundles, and caſt into the fire, which, as here, intends the deſtruction of the wicked, at the end of the world: this vine may be ſaid to be cut down at the burning of the world, and to be gathered at the ſecond reſurrection, as the wheat-harveſt of the ſaints will be at the firſt reſurrection: *and caſt* it *into the great wine-preſs of the wrath of God*; the ſame with the lake which burns with fire and brimſtone, ſo often mentioned in this book: the torments of the wicked will lie in the wrath of God being poured forth upon them, and into them, which will be that fire that can't be quenched, and that worm that never dies; and this is ſignified by the ſqueezing of grapes in a wine-preſs, as God's judgments in this world ſometimes are, *Iſ.* lxiii. 3, 6. and which will be very heavy and intolerable, ſince this wine-preſs will be trod by the Lord God Almighty: and it is ſaid to be a *great* one, as it muſt needs be, to hold the vine of the whole earth, or all the wicked of the world, who will be like the ſand of the ſea, innumerable; and this will be big enough for them all, and they will all be caſt into it at once. *Tophet* is deep and large, *Iſ.* xxx. 33.

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[c] Sepher Raziel, fol. 39. 2. Targum in 1 Reg. xix. 11.

[d] T. Bab. Peſachim, fol. 118. 1.

Ver. 20. *And the wine-preſs was trodden without the city,* &c.] The beloved city, the new *Jeruſalem,* into which none of the wicked will enter, and without which are dogs, *&c. Rev.* xx. 9. and xxi. 27. and xxii. 15. The alluſion may be, as Dr. *Lightfoot* thinks, to the olive-preſſes, which were without the city of *Jeruſalem,* from whence *Gethſemane* had its name, whither our Lord went, and where his ſorrows began the night he was betrayed: hell is ſometimes expreſſed by outer darkneſs, and ſaid to be far off from heaven, and between the one and the other a great gulf is fixed, the diſtance is conſiderable; hence men are ſaid to go forth to behold the miſeries of the wicked; ſee *Matt.* xxii. 13. *Luke* xvi. 23, 26. *Iſ.* lxvi. 24. *and blood came out of the wine-preſs;* alluding to the juice ſqueezed out of grapes, called the blood of grapes, *Gen.* xlix. 11. *Even unto the horſes bridles, for the ſpace of a thouſand and ſix hundred furlongs;* which is only an hyperbolical expreſſion, ſetting forth the largeneſs and univerſality of the deſtruction of the wicked, and the impoſſibility of their eſcaping it. In like manner the *Jews* expreſs a great ſlaughter of men; ſo of the ſlaughter at *Bither,* by *Adrian,* they ſay [e], they went on ſlaying, עד ששקע הסוס בדם עד חוטמו, *until a horſe plunged in blood up to his noſtrils,* and the blood ran four miles into the ſea; which is not to be underſtood literally, but as expreſſing a prodigious effuſion of blood: and as to *the ſpace of a thouſand and ſix hundred furlongs,* perhaps there may be an alluſion to the meaſure of the land of *Iſrael,* and the common notion of it among the *Jews,* who make it to be the ſquare of four hundred *parſæ* [f]: hence they often ſpeak of the land of *Iſrael* ſhaking and moving four hundred *parſæ,* upon ſome extraordinary occaſions [g]; and a *parſa* contained four miles [h], ſo that four hundred *parſæ* made a thouſand and ſix hundred miles; and if miles and furlongs are the ſame, in which ſenſe only the land of *Iſrael* could be ſo large, here is the exact ſpace; for *Jerom* [i], who was an inhabitant of it, ſays, it was ſcarce 160 miles in length, to which agrees *R. Menachem* [k]; and it may be obſerved, that the *Arabic* verſion renders the words, *by the ſpace of a thouſand and ſix hundred miles.* The *Ethiopic* verſion, very wrongly, reads, *ſixteen furlongs.*

CHAP. XV.

THIS chapter is a preparation to the pouring out of the ſeven vials, and contains a viſion of the ſeven angels in heaven that ſhould do this work, of a chorus of harpers on this occaſion, and of the ſame ſeven angels coming out of the temple, and receiving the vials, in order to execute their commiſſion. The viſion of the ſeven angels, having the ſeven laſt plagues, ſo called becauſe filled up with the wrath of God, is ſaid to be a ſign, great and marvellous, ver. 1. a ſea of glaſs, mingled with fire, is ſeen, with perſons ſtanding on it, deſcribed by the victory they had got over the beaſt, his image, mark, and number of his name; by having the harps of God in their hands, and by the ſong they ſung, called the ſong of *Moſes,* and of the Lamb; in which they aſcribe to Chriſt deity, dominion over the ſaints, omnipotence, juſtice, truth, and holineſs; give him glory, celebrate his works, commend his ways, and ſuggeſt that he ought to be the object of the fear and worſhip of all, ver. 2, 3, 4. Next the temple in heaven is ſeen opened, out of which come the ſeven angels, deſcribed by the place they came from, the temple; by what they had, the ſeven plagues; by their habit, clothed in pure white linnen; and by their golden girdles about their breaſts, ver. 5, 6. to whom one of the four living creatures, made mention of in ch. iv. delivers to them ſeven golden vials full of divine wrath, upon which the temple is filled with ſmoke from the Lord; ſo that it was not poſſible for any one to enter into it, until theſe ſeven plagues were ended, ver. 7, 8.

Ver. 1. *And I ſaw another ſign in heaven, great and marvellous,* &c.] This chapter is a preparation to the pouring out of the ſeven vials, as ch. i. is to the ſending of the ſeven Epiſtles, and ch. iv. to the ſeven ſeals and ſeven trumpets: the viſion is called a *ſign,* becauſe what was ſeen was ſignificative of future events; a ſign of the coming of Chriſt, of his kingdom, and of the deſtruction of antichriſt; and it is ſaid to be a ſign *in heaven,* where *John* was called up, and where he had his viſions; and it was *another,* a different one from that in ch. xii. 1. which repreſented the downfal of paganiſm, but this the downfal of popery; and it is a very *great* one, it is expreſſive of great things, as the fall of *Babylon* the great, or the judgment of the great whore, and the great glory of the church and kingdom of Chriſt; and it is *marvellous,* for the two grand events it reſpects are very wonderful; as that antichriſt, who was once in ſuch great power, ſhould be deſtroyed, and that by ſuch weak means, in the eſteem of men, as the preaching of the Goſpel, which is no leſs marvellous than the fall of *Jericho* by the ſound of rams horns; and that the church, which was in ſo low an eſtate in the wilderneſs, for the ſpace of 1260 days or years, ſhould become ſo glorious. The viſion follows, *ſeven angels, having the ſeven laſt plagues;* theſe are not the ſame angels that blew the ſeven trumpets, for they are not cotemporary with them, but are more likely the ſame with thoſe in the preceding chapter; tho' they ſeem rather to be different from them: if theſe were angels literally underſtood, their having plagues is no objection to their being good angels, ſince ſuch are often the executioners of God's wrath; and that theſe were good ones, appears from one of them talking with *John,* and ſhewing him the judgment of antichriſt, and another the bride, the Lamb's wife, and her glory, ch. xvii. 1. and xxi. 9. tho' they ſeem rather to be the miniſters of the Goſpel, ſince they are ſaid to come out of the temple, ver. 6. and ſince the deſtruction of antichriſt will be by the breath of Chriſt's mouth, or by the preaching of the Goſpel; unleſs it ſhould be thought that members of churches are deſigned, ſince theſe angels receive their vials from one of the four living creatures, ver. 7. or preachers of the word; and may denote ſome very principal men, as kings, who will now be come to *Zion*, and be members of Goſpel churches, and will be the nurſing fathers and protectors of them; and theſe will hate the whore, and burn her fleſh with fire; but of theſe angels, ſee more on ver. 6. They are ſaid to have *the ſeven laſt plagues*; that is, in their vials; for theſe ſeven plagues are the ſame with the ſeven vials of the wrath of God, to be poured out upon antichriſt; and are no other than ſo many ſteps, ways and means, by which God will bring on, and finiſh his deſtruction: theſe are called the *laſt* plagues, becauſe they will be in the laſt days: there have been plagues before, as at the deſtruction of the old world, and of *Sodom* and *Gomorrha*, and the plagues of *Egypt*, and the downfal of ſeveral monarchies and kingdoms, and of paganiſm in the *Roman* empire; but theſe will fall upon antichriſt, and will be the laſt upon him, for they will iſſue in his utter ruin; they will be the laſt plagues upon the earth, there will be no other after them, but the conflagration of the world, and the general deſtruction of the wicked in hell. Theſe plagues are the ſame with the third wo, and are an explanation of it, and belong to the ſounding of the ſeventh trumpet, which brings in the kingdoms of this world to become the kingdoms of Chriſt, and the time of God's wrath upon the nations, or *Gentiles*, the papiſts, and of judging the dead, and deſtroying them that deſtroyed the earth, ch. xi. 15, 18. for theſe plagues don't follow upon the harveſt and vintage, nor has this viſion any reſpect to them, nor to be connected with the preceding chapter, but with ch. 11th, and gives an enlarged view, both of the glory of Chriſt's kingdom, and of the ruin of antichriſt, by theſe plagues, called the laſt: *for in them is filled up the wrath of God*; upon the beaſt, and his followers.

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[e] T. Hieroſ. Taanioth, fol. 69. 1.

[f] T. Bab. Bava Metzia, fol 28. 1. Gloſſ. in ib.

[g] T. Bab. Megilla, fol. 3. 1. & Bava Kama, fol. 82. 2. & Menachot, fol. 64. 2.

[h] T. Bab. Peſachim, fol. 93. 2. Gloſſ. in ib.

[i] Ad Dardanum, fol. 22. I. tom. 3.

[k] In Gen. fol. 60.

Ver. 2. *And I ſaw, as it were, a ſea of glaſs mingled with fire*, &c.] Not baptiſm, but rather the blood of Chriſt, which may be compared to a *ſea*, for its abundant virtue and efficacy in cleanſing from all ſin; and to a ſea *of glaſs*, ſince in it are clearly ſeen free juſtification, full pardon, peace and reconciliation; and may be ſaid to be *mingled with fire*, being attended in the application of it with the Spirit of God, whoſe gifts and graces are ſometimes ſignified by fire: and ſo according to others, this ſea may repreſent the pure church of God, as waſhed in the blood of the Lamb; compared to a ſea for the multitude of which it conſiſts, and to a ſea of glaſs, becauſe of the tranſparency and clearneſs of its principles and practices, and may be ſaid to be mingled with the fire of love and zeal: moſt interpreters underſtand it of the world, which is like a ſea for the multitude of its inhabitants; and ſometimes to a troubled one, becauſe of the reſtleſsneſs and diſquietude of the wicked in it; but here it is like a ſea of glaſs, for the quiet, and peace, and reſt it ſhall be in at this time; tho' it is commonly ſaid to be like ſuch a ſea, partly becauſe all things are manifeſt, and open to an omniſcient God; and partly becauſe of its outward ſplendor, and the brittleneſs, frailty, and tranſitorineſs of it; and to be mixed with fire, either becauſe of the light of the Goſpel, and the operation of the Spirit in the hearts of ſome, that are in it, or becauſe of the afflictions and perſecutions of the ſaints in it; tho' it ſeems beſt of all to underſtand it of the Goſpel, as in ch. iv. 6. ſee the note there; and which may be ſaid to be mingled with fire, either becauſe of the powerful and clear demonſtration of the Spirit that attends it to the minds of many, or that heat of perſecution which is raiſed by it; ſee *Luke* xii. 49. or rather it denotes the purity of the Goſpel in thoſe times, its general ſpread, and the great zeal and fervour of the profeſſors of it, ſince perſecution will now be at an end. *And them that had gotten the victory over the beaſt*; over antichriſt, ſignified by the beaſt, that roſe up out of the ſea, and out of the earth, ch. xiii. 1, 11. and which are the ſame, and were but one, tho' in different forms, as from hence appears: the beaſt firſt overcame the ſaints, by ſlaying of them; and they overcome him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their teſtimony, by preaching and profeſſing the Goſpel, by their cloſe and conſtant adherence to it, and by dying for it: *and over his image*; cauſed by him to be made to the firſt beaſt; and is no other than the popiſh religion, which bears a reſemblance to paganiſm; and which the ſaints may be ſaid to get the victory over, by ſtanding out againſt it, oppoſing and refuting it, not giving into it, but bearing their teſtimony againſt it: *and over his mark*; refuſing to receive it either in their forehead, or in their right hand; that is, either to ſwear allegiance to him, or profeſs his religion. This clauſe is wanting in the *Alexandrian* copy, *Vulgate Latin*, *Syriac*, *Arabic*, and *Ethiopic* verſions: and *over the number of his name*; that is, they would not own his ſupremacy and authority, nor embrace his doctrines, nor obey his orders, nor be reckoned his followers in any form or ſhape; ſee ch. xiii. 15, 16, 17, 18. Theſe conquerors *John* ſaw *ſtand on the ſea of glaſs*; which if applied to the blood of Chriſt, ſhows, that theſe confeſſors were purified by it, and were more than conquerors thro' it; that they were come out of great tribulation, and had waſhed their garments, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb; and were juſt come up from the waſhing, and ſtood upon, or rather, by or *near the ſea*, as the *Arabic* verſion renders it, in alluſion to the prieſts at the molten ſea, in the temple: but if the world is meant by the ſea, their ſtanding upon it deſigns their victory and triumph over it by faith, their having it under their feet, and their contempt of it; but rather, ſince the Goſpel is intended, it may denote their ſolid ſtanding upon the doctrines of it, the foundation of the Apoſtles and prophets, and their ſtedfaſt continuance in them, and faithful abiding by them, whereby they got the victory over antichriſt: *having the harps of God*; their hearts in an excellent frame, tuned and diſpoſed by God, to ſing his praiſe, and ſet forth his glory; having them filled with ſpiritual joy and gladneſs, and with great thankfulneſs, on account of their victory, the happy ſtate of Chriſt's church, and the deſtruction of its enemies: the alluſion is to the people of *Iſrael*, *Moſes* and the men, and *Miriam* and the women with timbrels and dances ſtanding on the ſea-ſhore, when the *Egyptians* were deſtroyed, ſinging the praiſes of God; as is ſtill more manifeſt from the following verſe.

Ver. 3. *And they ſing the ſong of Moſes the ſervant of God*, &c.] Not that in *Deut.* xxxii. 1. but that in *Exod.* xv. 1. and the ſenſe is, either that they obſerved the law of *Moſes*, which he as a ſervant in the Lord's houſe faithfully delivered, and kept it diſtinct from the Goſpel, and did not blend them together, as in the times before; or rather, that they ſung a ſong like that of *Moſes*, and on a like occaſion. *Pharaoh* was the very picture of the pope of *Rome*; his oppreſſion and cruel uſage of the *Iſraelites* repreſent the tyranny and cruelty of the *Romiſh* antichriſt; and the deliverance of *Iſrael* out of *Egypt*, and the deſtruction of the *Egyptians* at the red ſea, which occaſioned the ſong of *Moſes*, were an emblem of God's bringing his people out of antichriſtian bondage, and of the ruin of antichriſt, upon which this ſong is ſung; and *Rome*, in this book, is called *Egypt*, ch. xi. 8. The *Jews* have a notion, that the very ſong of *Moſes* itſelf will be ſung in the world to come, in the days of the Meſſiah; for they ſay, there are in it the times of the Meſſiah, and of *Gog* and *Magog*, and of the reſurrection of the dead, and the world to come [l]. And this ſong was ſung by the *Levites* in the daily ſervice[m]. *And the ſong of the Lamb*; the Lamb of God, who was ſlain for the ſins of men; the ſame ſong of which mention is made, ch. v. 9. and xiv. 3. the ſong of redeeming love, a ſong of praiſe for the bleſſings of grace which come thro' him, and of deliverance by him: *ſaying, great and marvellous* are *thy works, Lord God Almighty*; Chriſt is in this ſong addreſſed as a divine perſon, as Lord of all, God over all, bleſſed for ever, the Almighty God, as his works declare him to be; his works of creation, providence, and redemption, which are all great and marvellous, particularly the accompliſhment of the glorious things ſpoken of his church, and the deſtruction of his enemies, which are here deſigned: *juſt and true* are *thy ways thou king of ſaints*; made ſo by his Father, and acknowledged by all his people, and eſpecially at this time when his kingdom will more viſibly and glorioufly appear: the *Alexandrian* copy, one of *Stephens*'s, the *Complutenſian* edition, and *Arabic* verſion, read, *king of nations*, as in *Jer*. x. 7. from whence this, and the beginning of the next verſe, ſeem to be taken; the *Vulgate Latin*, and *Syriac* verſions, read, *king of ages*, an everlaſting king, as in *Jer*. x. 10. but the generality of copies read as we have it: and the ways of this king are juſt and true; his purpoſes, decrees, and counſels of old are faithfulneſs and truth; all his proceedings towards his own people, his ſubjects, are mercy and truth; his precepts and ordinances, his worſhip and ſervice, are juſt and true, in oppoſition to every falſe way; and all his judgments upon his enemies, which are intended, are juſt, being what their ſins deſerved, and are true, being agreeable to his word and threatnings.

Ver. 4. *Who ſhall not fear thee, O Lord*, &c.] At this time the people of the *Jews* ſhall ſeek after Chriſt, and fear him and his goodneſs; the forces of the *Gentiles* ſhall be brought into *Zion*, whoſe heart ſhall then fear, and be enlarged; the fear of the Lord will be in all places, and in all men, both *Jews* and *Gentiles*, *Hoſ*. iii. 5. *Iſ*. lx. 5. *and glorify thy name?* by aſcribing all divine perfections to him, giving him divine worſhip and adoration, and attributing the whole of ſalvation to him, and the glory of all that is done for his church, and againſt its enemies: *for* thou *only* art *holy*; not only perfectly holy, as man, but infinitely and eſſentially holy, as God, and the fountain of holineſs to his people, as mediator: this character ſeems to be given in oppoſition to antichriſt, who arrogantly aſſumes the title of holineſs to himſelf, when it only belongs to Chriſt. *For all nations ſhall come and worſhip before thee*; the Goſpel ſhall now be preached to all nations, and the earth ſhall be filled with the knowledge of it; the kingdoms of this world will become Chriſt's, and his kingdom ſhall be to the ends of the earth, and all people ſhall obey him: the words ſeem to be taken, with ſome other phraſes before uſed, out of *Pſ*. lxxxvi. 8, 9, 10. *for thy judgments are made manifeſt*; or *thy juſtifications*, or *righteouſneſſes*; the perfect righteouſneſs of Chriſt, and the doctrine of juſtification by it, will now be moſt clearly revealed, and generally received, in oppoſition to the popiſh doctrine of merits, works of ſupererogation, *&c.* or the judgments of the king of ſaints upon antichriſt, who will now avenge their blood, which he has ſhed; ſee ch. xvii. 1. and xix. 2. and the juſtice and righteouſneſs of his proceedings againſt the man of ſin will be notorious and manifeſt to all, and be acknowledged, as in ch. xvi. 5, 6. and xix. 1, 2.

Ver. 5. *And after that I looked*, &c.] That is, after *John* had ſeen the above viſion, he looked again, and ſaw what follows: *and behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the teſtimony in heaven was opened*; this does not refer to heaven itſelf, the antitype of the holy of holies, which is opened by the blood of Chriſt, by which he himſelf has entred, and his people have boldneſs to enter now by faith, and where their ſouls always enter upon their departure from their bodies; for of this temple can't be ſaid what is in ver. 8. nor to the *Jeruſalem* ſtate, or the moſt glorious ſtate of the church on earth, during the thouſand years reign; for in that there will be no temple, ch. xxi. 22. much leſs to any material temple on earth; the temple at *Jeruſalem* was deſtroyed before this viſion was, and is never to be rebuilt; nor will there be any third temple, as the *Jews* vainly expect: but to the church of God in the ſpiritual reign of Chriſt, under the blowing of the ſeventh trumpet; and deſigns the ſame thing as in ch. xi. 19. and this is to be underſtood as what will be, not before, but after the ſeven angels have poured out their vials; for till they have fulfilled the ſeven plagues, there is no entring into the temple for ſmoke, ver. 8. and beſides, it was *after theſe things*; after *John* had ſeen the ſeven angels, with the ſeven laſt plagues, ver. 1. that he beheld the temple opened. The church is called *the temple*, in alluſion to *Solomon*'s temple, becauſe of its builder, materials, ſituation, magnificence, ſtrength, holineſs, and uſe; ſee the note on 2 *Cor*. vi. 16. and *the tabernacle*, in alluſion to the tabernacle of *Moſes*, which was before the temple, becauſe God dwells in it, as he did in that; and becauſe like that it is moveable, and but for a while; and points at this church-ſtate, which will not always be ſo, but change and ſink into the *Laodicean* ſtate: and it is called *the tabernacle of the teſtimony*, as that was; the teſtimony was the law, or the two tables of ſtone, ſo called, becauſe they teſtified what was the good, and perfect, and acceptable will of God; and theſe being put into the ark, were a teſtimony of the covenant between God and the people of *Iſrael*, and were a witneſs againſt them, when they tranſgreſſed them, *Deut*. xxxi. 26, 27. and over theſe were the mercy-ſeat, and cherubim, as a teſtimony of the divine preſence; and the law being put into the ark, hence the ark was called the ark of the teſtimony, and that being placed in the tabernacle, that was called the tabernacle of the teſtimony, or of witneſs, *Numb*. i. 50. *Acts* vii. 44. and all theſe were types of, and came to ſignify Chriſt, and the covenant of grace, the Goſpel, and the myſteries of it; ſo that by the opening of the temple, *&c.* is meant a free exerciſe of the true religion, a ſetting up of Goſpel churches according to the original plan, a keeping of the ordinances, as they were firſt delivered, and a more clear diſcovery of Goſpel truths: it is the ſame with the open door in the *Philadelphian* church-ſtate, ch. iii. 8. as well as that at this time there will be a full manifeſtation of the judgments of God upon antichriſt: the *Alexandrian* copy leaves out the word *behold*.

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[l] Zohar in Exod. fol. 23. 2. & 24. 3, 4. & 25. 2. & T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 91. 2.

[m] Maimon. Tamidin, c. 6. §. 9.

Ver. 6. *And the ſeven angels came out of the temple*, &c.] By which it appears, that they are ſuch who are of, or belong to the church of Chriſt; and are either miniſters, or members of churches, who will be the executioners of God's wrath, upon the beaſt, and his followers; ſome copies, and the *Complutenſian* edition, read, *out of heaven*: *having the ſeven plagues*; that is, they were appointed to inflict them, and were preparing and furniſhing for it, and quickly had orders to do it: *clothed in pure and white linnen*; in which habit angels have been uſed to appear, as at our Lord's reſurrection and aſcenſion, and is by ſome thought to be expreſſive of the purity and holineſs of angels; but rather ſaints are meant, who appear in the habit of prieſts, being all made kings and prieſts; and denotes their being clothed with the pure and ſpotleſs robe of Chriſt's righteouſneſs, which is fine linnen, clean and white, and the righteouſneſs of the ſaints, ch. xix. 8. and alſo their ſpiritual joy in their preſent ſituation, and in the view of the deſtruction of antichriſt, their ſackcloth being put off, in which they, the witneſſes, before appeared. So the linnen garment of the high-prieſt was, as *Philo* the *Jew* ſays[n], made of *fine linnen*, καθαρωτατος, *moſt pure*. The *Alexandrian* copy, and ſome copies of the *Vulgate Latin* verſion, and ſome exemplars mentioned by *Andreas Cæſarienſis*, an ancient commentator on this book, read, *clothed with a ſtone, pure and white*; as if they were arrayed in garments of ſtone, which is not likely; unleſs reference is had to the ſtone *Aſbeſtos*, of an iron colour, found, as *Pliny* ſays[o], in the mountains of *Arcadia*, of which linnen was made, called *Aſbeſtinum*, and of that garments; which were ſo far from being conſumed by fire, that they became clean and brighter by it; or to the *Caryſtian* ſtone, which the inhabitants of *Caryſtus* uſed to comb, ſpin, and weave, and make carpets of[p]. *And having their breaſts girded with golden girdles*; ſuch an one as Chriſt himſelf was girded with, ch. i. 13. and this ſome underſtand of the love, which the breaſts of angels are filled with towards the ſaints, and their readineſs to perform all good offices to them, and to execute the judgments of God upon their enemies, whenever they have orders: but ſince theſe angels come out of the temple, and members of Goſpel churches ſeem deſigned, rather this is to be underſtood either of the grace of faith, which is much more precious than of gold that periſheth, which receives the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, puts it on, and girds it about the believer; or of love, the love of God and Chriſt, which encompaſs the ſaints about, and conſtrain them, and engage them in fervent love to them, and one another; or of the girdle of truth, *Eph.* vi. 14. which is near and cloſe to them, and which keeps them cloſe to Chriſt; nor can they depart totally and finally from him, or that; or in general, this may denote their ſtrength and readineſs for what ſervice they ſhall be called to; ſee *Luke* xii. 35, 36. 1 *Pet.* i. 13.

Ver. 7. *And one of the four beaſts*, &c.] Or living creatures: now we hear of them, as of the four and twenty elders, under the blowing of the ſeventh trumpet, ch. xi. 16. with which this viſion is cotemporary; theſe living creatures are the miniſters of the Goſpel; ſee the note on ch. iv. 6. and this was *one* of the firſt of them, who was like a lion, for fortitude and courage, and whoſe voice was as the noiſe of thunder, ch. iv. 7. and vi. 1. and ſo fitly repreſents thoſe miniſters who ſhall give out the vials of God's wrath: not any particular perſon is deſigned, who ſhall be at this time; and much leſs *Luke* the Evangeliſt, as lord *Napeir* thinks; nor *Peter*, who propheſied of the laſt time, 2 *Pet.* iii. 10, 11. as *Grotius*; but a ſett of Goſpel miniſters, comparable to one of the living creatures *John* had before ſeen; of whom it is ſaid, that they *gave unto the ſeven angels, ſeven golden vials full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever*: theſe ſeven vials are for the ſeven laſt plagues to be put into, and out of which they are to be taken, or poured, and inflicted; ſee ch. xxi. 9. hence it appears, that the ſeven plagues, and the wrath of God, are the ſame thing, and both deſign God's judgments upon antichriſt; and theſe being expreſſed by *vials*, which are meaſures, and large ones, ſhew the large abundance, and plenteous effuſion of God's wrath, and the ſecret, ſudden, and irreſiſtible power of it; and yet that it will be poured out in meaſure, according to righteous judgment, and therefore it is put into vials; and theſe golden ones, expreſſive of the purity, holineſs, and juſtice of the divine proceedings: and it will be very terrible; it will be, not the wrath of men, but of God, and a cup of the fierceneſs of his wrath; it will be the wrath of the living God, of him that lives for ever, and as he is, ſuch will his wrath be; it will continue for ever, for this wrath will iſſue in the everlaſting deſtruction of antichriſt; ſo the wrath of God is ſignified by a wine-cup of fury, *Jer.* xxv. 15. and that deſtruction, and thoſe plagues which God deſigned to bring upon *Pharaoh*, are by *Jonathan ben Uzziel*, in his *Targum* on *Gen.* xl. 12. called, פיילא דרוגזא, *a vial of wrath*, which he ſhould drink of: and in the pouring out of theſe ſeven vials, there is in ſome of them a manifeſt alluſion to the plagues of *Egypt*. So the *cup of trembling* in *Iſ.* li. 17. is by the *Targumiſts* called, פילי, *a vial*, and alſo *the cup of fury*, ver. 22. and that theſe vials were not ſmall narrow-mouthed veſſels, but large broad-mouthed ones, and more properly baſons or bowls, is manifeſt from the uſe of the word with *Jewiſh* writers. The diſhes on which the loaves of the ſhew-bread were ſet, each of which loaves was ten hands breadth long, and five broad[q], are by the *Targums* of *Jonathan* and *Jeruſalem* on *Exod.* xxv. 29. *Numb.* iv. 7. called, פילות, *vials*; and ſo the chargers offered at the dedication of the tabernacle, *Numb.* vii. 13, 84, 85. are, by the ſame, rendered *vials*, which weighed 130 ſhekels; and ſo the ſilver bowl they offered, is, by *Joſephus*[r], called a *vial*: the bowls in *Amos* vi. 6. are, by the *Targum* there, ſaid to be *ſilver vials*. The lordly diſh brought by *Jael* to *Siſera*, *Judg.* v. 25. the *Targum* calls *the vial* of the mighty ones; and the earthen veſſels uſed at the trial of the ſuſpected wife, and at the cleanſing of the leper, are both by *Jewiſh* writers ſaid to be *vials*[s]. Now theſe vials were given to the ſeven angels by one of the living creatures, the miniſters of the word; from whence it ſeems that theſe angels deſign members of churches, as diſtinct from miniſters; and may intend civil magiſtrates, and very principal ones, as kings of the earth, who in this ſtate of things, and times, will belong to the churches, and will be the inſtruments of deſtroying antichriſt;

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[n] De Somniis, p. 597.

[o] Nat. Hiſt. l. 37. c. 10.

[p] Pancirol. rer. memorab. par. 1. tit. 4. & Salmuth in ib. Plin. l. 19. c. 1. Turneb. Adverſar. l. 23. c. 1. Schotti Thaumaturg. l. 2. §. 10. p. 118.

[q] Miſn. Menachot, c. 11. §. 4, 5.

[r] Antiq. l. 3. c. 8. §. 10.

[s] Miſn. Sota, c. 2. §. 2. Joſeph. Antiq. l. 3. c. 11. §. 6. Miſn. Negaim, c. 10. §. 1.

and theſe vials may be ſaid to be given to them by the miniſters, ſince they will execute this vengeance in conſequence of their prayers, and the churches, called vials full of odours, ch. v. 8. and becauſe theſe great men will be ſtirred up by the miniſters of the Goſpel, and by their miniſtrations, to do this work; ſee ch. xviii. 4, 5, 6.

Ver. 8. *And the temple was filled with ſmoke*, &c.] Not with the ſmoke of falſe doctrine and ſuperſtition, that comes out of the bottomleſs pit, this from God, ch. ix. 1. and beſides, Goſpel churches will grow purer and purer, while the ſeven angels are pouring out the vials: but rather this may be underſtood of judicial blindneſs and hardneſs of heart, upon the antichriſtian party, which will come upon them from God in righteous judgment; ſo that they will not be reformed by the plagues, and vials of wrath, nor repent of their ſins; but blaſpheme God, who has power over the plagues, and ſo ſhall not be able to enter into the temple: or elſe this may deſign God's powerful and gracious preſence in his church, in alluſion to the cloud which filled the tabernacle, ſo that *Moſes* could not enter; and which filled the temple, ſo that the prieſts could not miniſter, *Exod.* xl. 34, 35. 1 *Kings* viii. 10, 11. ſince this is ſaid to be *from the glory of God, and from his power*; whoſe preſence is the glory in the midſt of his church, and a covert, a protection and defence to the ſaints, ſo that none can come in to the temple to hurt them; ſee *Iſ.* iv. 5, 6. or rather this intends *the ſmoke of the anger of God*, as the *Ethiopic* verſion renders it, and which is intolerable; and it may have reſpect not only to the wrath of God, which is inſupportable, but to that great affliction which will befal the ſaints in thoſe times, thro' the laſt ſtruggle of the beaſt; called the earthquake, and the hour of temptation, and a time of trouble, as never the like was, and which will be ſhortned for the elect ſake: *and no man was able to enter into the temple till the ſeven plagues of the ſeven angels were fulfilled.* None of the antichriſtian party will attempt to enter in, becauſe of their blindneſs and obduracy; nor can they get in to do any miſchief, becauſe the glorious and powerful preſence of God is a defence againſt them: and this may alſo have ſome reſpect to the darkneſs of God's judgments, which will not be clearly manifeſt, until theſe ſeven plagues are accompliſhed; till that time God's judgments on antichriſt will remain a great deep, and be unſearchable; there will be no entring into the temple, ſo as fully to underſtand them, which is meant by going into the ſanctuary of God, *Pſ.* lxxiii. 17. and this makes the interpretation of the pouring out of theſe vials, in the next chapter, very difficult.

CHAP. XVI.

THIS chapter gives an account of the pouring out of the ſeven vials by the angels; their orders for it are in ver. 1. The firſt angel pours out his vial on the earth, the effect of which is a noiſome and grievous ſore upon the followers of antichriſt, and the worſhippers of his image, ver. 2. The ſecond pours out his upon the ſea, the events of it are, the ſea became blood, and every living creature in it died, ver. 3. The third pours out his upon the rivers and fountains of water, which thereby became blood; upon which the angel of the waters applauds the juſtice of God, declaring the righteouſneſs of his judgments, and giving a reaſon for it; and which is confirmed by another angel from the altar, ver. 4, 5, 6, 7. The fourth angel pours out his vial on the ſun, the effects of which are ſcorching men with heat, their blaſphemy againſt God, and impenitence, ver. 8, 9. The fifth pours out his on the ſeat of the beaſt, the conſequences of which are darkneſs in his kingdom, men gnawing their tongues becauſe of their pains, their blaſphemy of the name of God becauſe of them, and their impenitence, ver. 10, 11. The ſixth angel pours out his on the river *Euphrates*, and what followed upon it are, the drying up of that river to make way for the kings of the eaſt; three unclean ſpirits are ſeen, deſcribed by their original, coming out of the mouths of the dragon, beaſt, and falſe prophet; by their form like frogs; by their internal nature, ſpirits of devils; by their works doing miracles; by the errand they are ſent, and go upon, to gather the kings of the earth to the battle of God Almighty, which they ſucceed in; but before this is done, a declaration is made of the ſuddenneſs of Chriſt's coming, exciting the ſaints to watchfulneſs, and to keep their garments, that they might not be naked, and expoſed to ſhame, ver. 12, 13, 14, 15, 16. Then the ſeventh angel pours out his vial into the air, the conſequences of which are, a voice from heaven declaring it is done; other voices, thundrings, lightnings, and an earthquake; a rupture of the great city into three parts; the fall of other cities; the remembrance of *Babylon* before God; the flight of every iſland and mountain, and a great hail ſtorm, which cauſes men to blaſpheme God, ver. 17, 18, 19, 20, 21.

Ver. 1. *And I heard a great voice out of the temple*, &c.] The church, which in the preceding chapter is ſaid to be opened; this was either the voice of God, whoſe temple the church is, and where he dwells, and who has power over theſe plagues, ver. 9. and who, when he is about to bring judgments on the earth, is ſaid to roar out of *Zion*, *Joel* iii. 16. or of Chriſt, who is always in the midſt of his church and people, and whoſe voice is as the voice of many waters; ſee ver. 15. or it may be of one of the four living creatures, the miniſters of the word, in and by whom Chriſt often ſpeaks; and the rather, ſince one of theſe gave the ſeven angels the golden vials of the wrath of God, they are now bid to pour out. *Saying to the ſeven angels, go your ways and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth*; for tho' theſe angels had the ſeven laſt plagues to inflict, and the ſeven vials of God's wrath to pour out, and were in a readineſs to do it, yet they did not move without an order, which is here given them; and they are bid to go their ways, from the temple, the church, where they were, and of which they were members, to the ſeveral parts of the antichriſtian empire; and there pour out all the wrath and vengeance of God upon his enemies, and theirs, and leave nothing behind, but give them the dregs of every cup of his fury: the earth here is to be taken in a larger ſenſe than in the following verſe, and includes the land and ſea, the fountains and rivers, and even the ambient air, and alſo the ſun in the firmament, as the pouring out of theſe vials upon them ſhew; and deſigns the whole apoſtate church, conſiſting of earthly men, all the inhabitants of the earth, that worſhip the beaſt.

The *Alexandrian* copy, the *Vulgate Latin*, *Syriac*, and *Arabic* verſions, and the *Complutenſian* edition, read, *the ſeven vials of the wrath of God*; theſe ſeven vials are not cotemporary, much leſs the ſame with the ſeven trumpets; there is indeed a likeneſs between them in ſome things, eſpecially in the firſt four; for as the firſt four trumpets affect the earth, the ſea, the fountains, and rivers of water, and the ſun, ſo the firſt four vials are poured out on the ſame, and that in the ſame order; firſt on the earth, and then on the ſea, &c. and which will give ſome light, and be a direction to obſerve the ſeveral parts of the antichriſtian empire, which will ſuffer by theſe vials, and the order in which their ruin will proceed; and as the trumpets were ſo many gradual ſteps to the ruin of the *Roman* empire, eaſtern and weſtern, when become chriſtian, ſo theſe vials are ſo many gradual ſteps to, and which iſſue in the ruin of both the eaſtern and weſtern antichriſt; tho' they don't reſpect the ſame things, nor the ſame times: the trumpets reſpect the *Roman* empire as chriſtian, under the government of emperors, after the downfal of paganiſm in it; and the vials reſpect the antichriſtian powers in their ſeveral branches, under the pope and *Turk*. Antichriſt did not appear until the fifth trumpet ſounded, whereas the firſt vial is poured out upon his followers and worſhippers, ver. 2. from whence it is a clear point, that the firſt trumpet, and the firſt vial, cannot be cotemporary; and the ſame judgment may be made of the reſt: and it may be further obſerved, that theſe vials are only poured out on the enemies of God and of Chriſt, and of his church and people; for no wrath can be poured out upon the ſaints, not the leaſt drop of it can fall upon them; this would not be conſiſtent with God's everlaſting love to them, with the ſatisfaction of Chriſt made for them, nor with the bleſſings of juſtification, pardon, adoption, &c. beſtowed on them; not but that they may meet with trouble in the time of theſe vials, thro' the wars that will be in the world, and thro' the ſtruggles of the beaſt of *Rome*, eſpecially its laſt, which will be the hour of temptation, and that time of trouble than which never was the like; yet all will work for, and iſſue in their good, and they will rejoice in God's righteous judgments; the blow will be upon antichriſt, the vengeance of God will fall upon thoſe that have the mark of the beaſt, and the worſhippers of his image, upon the ſeat of the beaſt, even upon *Babylon*, and the whole *Romiſh* juriſdiction, as appears from ver. 2, 10, 19, 20. and alſo upon the *Turkiſh* empire, and all the nations engaged in the intereſt of both *Pope* and *Turk*, ver. 12, 13, 14, 16. and it is eaſy to obſerve, that there is in many of theſe vials an alluſion to the plagues of *Egypt*; in the firſt, ver. 2. to the plague of boils, *Exod.* ix. 8, 11. in the ſecond and third, ver. 3, 4. to that of turning the waters of *Egypt* into blood, *Exod.* vii. 19—21. in the fourth, ver. 10. to the darkneſs that was over all the land of *Egypt*, *Exod.* x. 21, 23. and in the fifth there is a manifeſt reference to the frogs that diſtreſſed the *Egyptians*, *Exod.* viii. 5, 6. and in the ſeventh, to the plague of hail, *Exod.* ix. 23—26. and they have much the ſame effect, even the hardening of thoſe on whom they fall, being far from being brought to repentance by them, ver. 9, 11. and this confirms the application of the vials to the deſtruction of *Rome*, which is ſpiritually called *Egypt*, *Rev.* xi. 8. and may aſſure that they will iſſue in the ruin of antichriſt, and in the ſalvation of God's people, as the plagues of *Egypt* did in the deſtruction of *Pharaoh*, and in the deliverance of the children of *Iſrael*; and may alſo lead us to conclude, that there will be a like quick execution of the one, as of the other; for as the plagues of *Egypt* came very quick one after another, ſo it ſeems as if the pouring out of theſe vials would be in like manner; the angels receive them together, and have their orders at the ſame time; and they go forth immediately, one after another, if not together, to the reſpective parts where they are to pour them forth, and which they do directly; ſee ch. xviii. 8. Moreover, theſe vials will affect antichriſt both with reſpect to his civil and eccleſiaſtic capacity, or both in temporals and ſpirituals, and both antichriſts, eaſtern and weſtern: whether they are begun to be poured out or no, is a queſtion. I am ready to think they are not, becauſe they ſeem to me to refer to the ſeventh trumpet, which as yet has not ſounded, and are the ſame with the wrath of God, and the time of the judging the dead, or avenging the blood of the ſaints, which will be come when that ſounds, ch. xi. 18. Beſides, the outer court is not entirely given to the *Gentiles*, nor the witneſſes ſlain, which muſt be before this time of wrath upon antichriſt; not but that there has been ſome manifeſt marks of the divine diſpleaſure upon the whore of *Rome*, and ſhe has been ſinking ever ſince the reformation, at which time, ſome begin theſe vials, or before; and ſhe is reduced to a low eſtate; yet I think not to ſuch a degree as theſe vials expreſs.

Ver. 2. *And the firſt went*, &c.] The *Arabic* and *Ethiopic* verſions read, *the firſt angel*, and who undoubtedly is meant, who readily and chearfully obeyed the orders given him, as did the reſt; by this angel cannot be meant *pope Adrian*, as *Lyra*, a popiſh interpreter, imagines; for a *pope* would never hurt the worſhippers of the beaſt, as this angel does; rather ſome chriſtian proteſtant prince, or magiſtrate is deſigned, and *Brightman* applies it to queen *Elizabeth*; tho' a ſett of kings and princes, yet to come, ſeem to be intended: *and poured out his vial upon the earth*; not upon the whole earth, and the inhabitants of it; not upon the temple or church of God, and the worſhippers in it, which are meaſured, hid, and protected; nor upon the *Roman* pagan empire, which was deſtroyed under the ſixth ſeal, and which never had any worſhippers of the beaſt, and his image, in it, for then he was not riſen; nor upon the whole apoſtate church, only a part of it: ſome think the meaner and vulgar ſort of *papiſts* are meant, who were reformed by the *Waldenſes*, *Wickliff*, *Huſs*, and others before *Luther*; but rather the antichriſtian powers on the continent are deſigned, and particularly *Germany*; for as the firſt trumpet affected the earth, ch. viii. 7. and brought the *Goths* into *Germany*, and other inland countries on the continent; ſo this firſt vial affects the earth, and brings diſtreſs upon the popiſh party in the ſame place: and this reſpects not the reformation by *Luther*, as ſome have thought, nor the wars of the *Turks* here in the laſt age; tho' were it not for ſome things unfulfilled, which are to precede theſe vials, one would be tempted to think, that this vial was now pouring out upon the empire; but I rather think this refers to a time of diſtreſs yet to come, on thoſe parts, and which will iſſue in a reformation from popery again; for it ſhould be obſerved, and it may be obſerved once for all, that though theſe vials are ſo many plagues upon antichriſt, they are each of them ſo many ſteps to the advancement of Chriſt's kingdom and glory: *and there fell a noiſome and grievous ſore upon the men which had the mark of the beaſt*, *and upon them which worſhipped his image*; that is, who were profeſſors of the popiſh religion, and adherents of the pope of *Rome* in thoſe parts; ſee ch. xiii. 15, 16, 17. who will only feel the effects of this vial, and that by a noiſome and grievous ſore falling on them, in alluſion to the plague of boils in *Egypt*, *Exod.* ix. 8—11. by which may be meant, either literally ſomething external, but not the plague in *Diocleſian*'s time, for then the beaſt was not riſen; and there were none that could have his mark or worſhip his image: ſome have thought the *French* diſeaſe is intended, which firſt appeared in the world in 1490, among the papiſts, as a juſt judgment upon them, for the horrible and unnatural luſts and uncleanneſs of the *Romiſh* clergy; and others underſtand it of a very great heat, which will be before the burning of the world, and will raiſe bliſters and boils upon men: or rather this may deſign ſomething internal, either the remorſe of their conſciences, reflections on their paſt practices, and black deſpair and horror of mind; and their madneſs, wrath, and fury, their malice and envy at the ſucceſs of the preachers of the Goſpel, and of proteſtant ſtates and princes againſt them; ſee *Deut.* xxviii. 27, 28, 34, 35. Moreover, their ſecret and wicked practices, both in political and eccleſiaſtical affairs, will be diſcovered, and they will appear with boils and botches upon them all over, which will render them odious to the people, and be the means of a general reformation. Mr. *Daubuz* thinks the curſe of wickedneſs in the ninth and tenth centuries, after the invocation of ſaints and angels, and the worſhip of images were ſettled, is meant.

Ver. 3. And *the ſecond angel poured out his vial upon the ſea*, &c.] Not literally; and ſo does not deſign the ſtagnation of it, which 'tis thought will be before the general conflagration; ſee *Amos* vii. 4. nor is it to be underſtood of the ſea of this world, and the men of it, who are like a troubled ſea; but rather of popiſh doctrines and councils, which are a ſea of errors, and will now be confuted, and put an end to. *Brightman* applies it to the council of *Trent*, and makes this angel to be *Chemnitius*, a *German* divine, who wrote a confutation of it; but as the ſea is a collection of many waters, and many waters in this book ſignify the people and nations under the *Romiſh* yoke, ſea here may deſign the whole juriſdiction of *Rome*, or myſtical *Babylon*; ſee *Jer.* li. 36. and particularly its maritime powers, *Spain* and *Portugal*: and as the ſecond trumpet affected the ſea, ch. viii. 8. and brought the *Vandals* into *Spain* and *Portugal*, ſo this ſecond vial affects the ſea, and brings great wars, ſlaughter, and bloodſhed into theſe parts, when they alſo will be reformed from popery: *and it became, as the blood of a dead man*; thick, clotted together, and putrid, and ſo never to be returned to their former ſtate: *and every living ſoul died in the ſea*; thoſe that are not reformed will either die by the ſword, or fly into other parts; for there will be no comfortable living for the popiſh party in thoſe countries where now they live in power, eaſe, and affluence. This, and the following vial, are referred by Mr. *Daubuz*, the one to the firſt *cruſades*, or holy wars, for the regaining of the holy land, and the other to the latter of them.

Ver. 4. *And the third angel poured his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters*, &c.] Which alſo is not to be literally underſtood of a ſtagnation of them, before the burning of the world; nor of the deſtruction of popiſh fleets and navies, ſuch as the *Spaniſh Armado* in 1588, and others ſince; but rather of popiſh writings, of the moſt learned and ſubtle men among them, who like rivers and fountains, which ſupply and fill the ſea, ſupport and keep up the *Romiſh* juriſdiction and hierarchy; and of the confutation of them by proteſtant writers; and of the utter deſtruction of their principal orders, and chief men among them, as *cardinals*, *archbiſhops*, *biſhops*, prieſts, jeſuits, *&c.* tho' it ſeems chiefly to deſign the places near to *Rome*, ſuch as *Italy* and *Savoy*; for as the third trumpet affects the rivers and fountains, ch. viii. 10. and brings in the *Huns* into *Italy*, and iſſued in the deſtruction of the empire; ſo the third vial affects the ſame, and brings terrible wars, and great effuſion of blood, where ſo much of the blood of the ſaints have been ſhed: hence it follows, *and they became blood*; theſe countries will be covered with blood, and a reformation will enſue upon it; the alluſion is to *Exod.* vii. 19, 20, 21.

Ver. 5. *And I heard the angel of the waters ſay*, &c.] So we read in *Jewiſh* writings [t] of an angel that was, שרא דימא, *the prince of the ſea*, and of angels that were over the waters, and others over fire [u]; though here is deſigned not one of the, מלאכי מים, *angels of the water*, that preſided over the waters, as another over fire; ſee ch. xiv. 18. and the note there, but the third angel that poured out his vial upon the waters; when he had ſo done, he ſaid as follows. Dr. *Lightfoot* thinks, and that not without reaſon, that ſince theſe angels appeared in the garb of prieſts, ch. xv. 6. and ſince there was a prieſt appointed to take care of the wells, and fountains, and ditches about *Jeruſalem*, that the people might have water at the feaſts [w], there is an alluſion to him; and certain it is that there was ſuch an officer; there was one *Nechoniah* who was over the fountains and ditches [x]; and in the ſame office was *Nicodemon ben Gorion* [y], thought to be the *Nicodemus* mentioned in the New Teſtament. *Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and waſt, and ſhalt be*; which may be underſtood either of God the Father, who had power over theſe plagues, ver. 9. and ſent them; or of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who is Lord of all, and is righteous in all his ways and works, in all his judgments on antichriſt, and is the eternal I AM, which is, and was, and ſhall be; ſee ch. i. 8. The *Alexandrian* copy, and moſt others, and the *Vulgate Latin* and *Syriac* verſions, read *holy* inſtead of *ſhalt be*; for the purity and holineſs of Chriſt will be ſeen in the judgments which he will exerciſe, as follows: *becauſe thou haſt judged thus*; or *theſe things*; or *them*, as the *Ethiopic* verſion reads; that is, has brought theſe judgments upon the men ſignified by rivers and fountains, and made great havock and ſlaughter of them, expreſſed by their becoming blood; the juſtice of which appears from the following reaſon.

Ver. 6. *For they have ſhed the blood of ſaints and prophets*, &c.] Which ſhows that rivers and fountains can't be literally underſtood, but men are deſigned, wicked and bloody men; and it is notorious to all, how much of the blood of the ſaints, of the preachers of the Goſpel, of the prophets and witneſſes, have been ſhed in *Italy*, *Savoy*, and other places near *Rome*, as well as in *Rome* itſelf; ſee ch. xvii. 6. and xviii. 24. *And thou haſt given them blood to drink*; ſent the ſword among them, making great ſlaughter and devaſtation; ſee *Iſ.* xlix. 26. *for they are worthy*; or deſerving, to have their blood ſhed, by the law of retaliation.

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[t] T. Bab. Gittin, fol. 68. 3.

[u] Yalkut Simeoni, par. 1. fol. 58. 4. par. 2. fol. 167. 4.

[w] Maimon. Cele Hamikdaſh, c. 7. §. 15.

[x] Miſn. Shekalim, c. 5. §. 1.

[y] Abot R. Nathan, c. 6. fol. 3. 2.

Ver. 7. *And I heard another out of the altar ſay,* &c.] That is, another angel that came out of the altar; ſee ch. xiv. 18. and who repreſents the ſouls under the altar, whoſe blood had been ſhed by the above perſons; compare with this ch. vi. 9. tho' there, ſuch whoſe blood had been ſhed by *Rome* pagan are deſcribed; the *Ethiopic* verſion calls this angel as before, *the angel of the fountains of water*; and the *Alexandrian* copy, and *Syriac* and *Arabic* verſions read, *I heard the altar ſaying*; as follows, *even ſo Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments*; the ſame as in ch. xv. 3. and xix. 2. This angel joins the other, and approves and confirms what he ſays; applauding the judgments of Chriſt upon the worſhippers of the beaſt, from the verity of them, being what were threatned, and from the juſtice of them, being what they deſerved.

Ver. 8. *And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the ſun,* &c.] Not literally; and ſo deſigns not a violent heat, which ſhall go before, and be a preparation for the burning of the world; nor any ſore famine ariſing from it, which would be common to all, good and bad; but myſtically: ſome underſtand this of Chriſt, the ſun of righteouſneſs, not of any wrath that ſhall be poured forth on him again, being now juſtified in the Spirit; but either of that clear ſhining of Chriſt in the miniſtry of the word, in thoſe times, this vial refers to; when *Zion*'s light will be come, and the light of the ſun will be ſeven fold, and Chriſt alone will be exalted; which clear miniſtration of Chriſt, tho' it will not ſavingly enlighten, yet will convict and confound the antichriſtian party; they will be ſcorched with the beams of heat and light, which will dart from hence; theſe will torture them, and fill them with envy, rage, and malice, becauſe they will not be able to obſcure this light, or ſtop the progreſs of it; they themſelves will be ſo enlightned by it, as to ſee and know the truth of Chriſt's perſon, and offices, and grace, and yet will ſin againſt it, and ſo be guilty of blaſphemy againſt the Spirit of God, a ſin which will greatly prevail among them; and they will, like the clay, be the more hardned by this light and heat, and will not repent of their ſins, and errors, nor confeſs them, nor own the light and conviction they have received: or elſe of the wrath of Chriſt, which he will be moved by this angel to ſtir up againſt the antichriſtian party, and which they will be ſenſible of, and be fearfully looking for. Others, and which comes much to the ſame ſenſe, underſtand this of the ſcriptures, the fountain of ſpiritual light, and of the clear interpretation of them in thoſe times; when the watchmen ſhall ſee eye to eye, and when the day ſhall declare and make manifeſt every man's work, and the fire reveal and try it; and the ſame effects upon the antichriſtian party ſhall follow as before: but I rather think this refers to ſome part of the antichriſtian ſtate, as in the other vials, or to ſomething belonging to it; ſome have thought that the houſe of *Auſtria*, the chief family in the empire, or the king of *Spain*, or the emperor, who were both formerly of that houſe, or *Germany* itſelf, is meant; but the empire, as we have ſeen, ſeems to be deſigned by *the earth* in the firſt vial; wherefore, rather as the ſmiting of the third part of the ſun, moon, and ſtars, under the fourth trumpet, ſignifies the utter extirpation of the *Roman* emperor, and all other *Roman* magiſtrates, who were the ſun, moon, and ſtars in that empire; ſo this vial upon the ſun refers to the pope, and his creatures, the cardinals, *&c.* who is the ſun in the antichriſtian kingdom; and this angel may deſign the kings of the earth, who will be ſtirred up againſt him, by whom he and his dependents will ſuffer ſorely, if not deſtroyed. *And power was given unto him to ſcorch men with fire*; which may either reſpect the burning of *Rome*, and the adjacent parts; or rather the filling of the antichriſtian party with rage and malice, at the deſtruction of the pope, and his creatures; for theſe men are the ſame with thoſe in ver. 2.

Ver. 9. *And men were ſcorched with great heat,* &c.] Burned with rage againſt the followers of Chriſt; were filled with envy at the ſucceſs of his Goſpel, and with fury and madneſs at the ruinous condition of the antichriſtian ſtate, being deprived of its head, and chief officers: *and blaſphemed the name of God, which hath power over theſe plagues*; plagues or judgments are from God, when and where-ever they come; they are ſent and inflicted by him, and he can leſſen or increaſe them, continue or remove them as he pleaſes; and theſe, unleſs ſanctified, will not reform men, but harden them, and ſet them a blaſpheming the author of them. And this blaſphemy may either reſpect the nature and perfections of God, charging him with inequality in his ways, and with injuſtice and unfaithfulneſs; or the Goſpel, and the truths of it, which declare his glory, and his greatneſs; and which will now have a general ſpread, to the great mortification and confuſion of the followers of antichriſt: *and they repented not to give him glory*; that is, they did not repent of their wicked deeds, their idolatries, murders, ſorceries, fornications, and thefts, as in ch. ix. 20, 21. ſo as to own and confeſs them, which is the meaning of giving glory to God in repentance; ſee *Joſh.* vii. 19. This ſhows that repentance is not in man's power, but in the gift of God's grace; for tho' he may give ſpace, yet if he does not give grace to repent, no man will repent; nor will any means of themſelves produce it; as not the moſt powerful and awakening miniſtry, as the miniſtry of *John* the *Baptiſt*, and of Chriſt, and of the Goſpel preachers that will be in thoſe times, this vial refers to, nor the greateſt mercies and favours, ſo not the ſevereſt judgments; ſee *Amos* vi. 6—11. The event of this vial, or the plague of it, is applied, by Mr. *Daubuz*, to the wars between the emperors and the popes, and between the *Guelphs* and *Gibelines*.

Ver. 10. *And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the ſeat of the beaſt,* &c.] The beaſt is the ſame with that in ch. xiii. 1, 11. and which again ſhows that to be one and the ſame: the ſeat or throne of the beaſt is *Rome*, which, when the empire was pagan, was the ſeat of ſatan, or the dragon, ch. ii. 13. and when the beaſt or antichriſt was riſen, the dragon gave this ſeat, as well as his authority, to him, ch. xiii. 2. and is that city which is ſo often called, in this book, the great city, and is manifeſtly pointed out by its ſeven mountains, on which the city of *Rome* ſtood, ch. xvii. 9. and the pouring out of this vial upon it denotes the deſtruction of it, when it will be burnt down, and become deſolate, an habitation of devils, of every foul ſpirit, and hateful bird, ch. xviii. 2, 9. and this correſponds with the fifth trumpet; for as that brings in the riſe of antichriſt, both eaſtern and weſtern, who roſe much about the ſame time, ſo this vial affects him particularly, the weſtern antichriſt, his ſeat and kingdom. Mr. *Daubuz* refers this plague to the expulſion of the weſtern and eaſtern emperors from their capital cities, *Rome* and *Conſtantinople*, and to the miſchiefs cauſed by the antipopes in the weſt, and to the quarrels and ſchiſm in the

Greek churches in the fourteenth century. *And his kingdom was full of darkneſs*; not only of the darkneſs of falſe doctrine and ſuperſtition, for ſo it was always, being filled with the ſmoke of the bottomleſs pit; nor only of judicial blindneſs and darkneſs, which the ſubjects of the antichriſtian ſtate are given up unto; but rather of a diſcovery of all this, with all their hidden works of darkneſs, which will now be brought to light; tho' it ſeems chiefly to deſign the great affliction and diſtreſs the antichriſtian ſtate will be in at this time, which darkneſs ſometimes ſignifies; ſee *Iſ.* ix. 1, 2. *Jer.* xiii. 16. *Amos* v. 18. it having loſt its ſun, the pope, under the preceding vial, and its ſeat, the city of *Rome* under this: the ſenſe is, that it will be greatly obſcured in its glory and magnificence, in its traffick and riches, ch. xviii. 11—19. its power and authority will be greatly diminiſhed, and it will be had in contempt by the princes of the earth; tho' it will not as yet be utterly deſtroyed, for its utter deſtruction is reſerved for the ſeventh and laſt vial. The alluſion is to the plague of darkneſs in *Egypt*, *Exod.* x. 21, 22, 23. *And they gnawed their tongues for pain*; theſe are the men of the antichriſtian party, the ſubjects of the antichriſtian kingdom, now become full of darkneſs, the worſhippers of the beaſt, and his image; theſe will *gnaw their tongues*, which expreſſes their inward anguiſh and diſtreſs, their anger, wrath, and fury, their being filled with revenge, and yet in an incapacity to execute it, and will even be afraid to expreſs it; and therefore will bite their tongues in madneſs; and this *for pain*, for the pain of their mind, at the ſad and low eſtate of the antichriſtian kingdom.

Ver. 11. *And blaſphemed the God of heaven*, &c.] Who made it, and dwells in it, and from whence wrath is revealed, and comes upon the ſeat of the beaſt, upon the kingdom of antichriſt, and the ſubjects of that kingdom; they'll curſe him who is of right their king, and their God, and look upwards to heaven, where he is, *Iſ.* viii. 21, 22. and this, *becauſe of their pains and their ſores*; ſee ver. 2. the inward frettings and diſtreſſes of their minds, the gallings and gnawings of their conſciences, the horror and terror of their ſouls, and their fearful looking for of judgment, which the preſent face of things upon antichriſt will bring upon them; juſt as the *Egyptians*, in the time of their darkneſs, were diſtreſſed with internal guilt, and black horror of mind, and with evil ſpirits, which were ſent among them, and haunted them during that ſeaſon; ſee *Pſ.* lxxviii. 49. *and repented not of their deeds*; their antichriſtian works of darkneſs; ſee ch. ix. 20, 21.

Ver. 12. *And the ſixth angel poured his vial on the great river Euphrates*, &c.] Which is not to be underſtood literally of the river *Euphrates*, which ran through *Meſopotamia* and *Chaldea*, and by the walls of *Babylon*; and of the drying of it up to make way for the *Jews* in the eaſtern parts of the world, to paſs into their own land, and poſſeſs it; when a like miracle will be wrought for them as was when they came out of *Egypt*, by dividing the red ſea for them; and as when they entred into *Canaan*'s land, by laying the waters of *Jordan* on heaps, ſo that they paſſed over as on dry land; in favour of which ſenſe the paſſage in *Iſ.* xi. 15, 16. is thought to be, which the *Targum* interprets of God's ſmiting the river *Euphrates*; tho' the river *Nile* in *Egypt* ſeems rather to be meant: but it does not appear that there is any number of *Jews* beyond the river *Euphrates*; the far greater number of them is in the weſtern and northern parts of the world; ſo that there will be no need for the drying up of this river for their paſſage into their own land; nor if there were any in thoſe parts, can any reaſon be given why they ſhould be called the kings of the eaſt, who, where-ever they are, are a poor contemptible people, and have never had any enſigns of royalty among them for many hundreds of years; nor can that river be thought much to hinder, were all other impediments out of the way, nor the drying of it up much facilitate their paſſage to *Judea*, and much leſs affect their converſion: beſides, this vial, as the reſt, is a plague on antichriſt in ſome branch or other, or on ſome part or other of the antichriſtian ſtate; which if not deſigned here, is no where in the account of this vial, and therefore this muſt be underſtood myſtically; there is no doubt an alluſion to the draining of this river at the taking of *Babylon* by *Cyrus*, according as was predicted in prophecy, *Iſ.* xliv. 27, 28. *Jer.* l. 38. and li. 31, 32, 36, 37. who making ſluices and drains, turned the river another way, and marched thro' it with his army, and ſurprized and took the city at once, whilſt *Belſhazzar* and his nobles were indulging themſelves in rioting and drunkenneſs, as *Daniel* relates, ch. v. 1, 2—30. Now ſome, becauſe that *Babylon* was ſituated upon the river *Euphrates*, and *Rome*, or the *Romiſh* antichriſt is myſtical *Babylon*, think that is here deſigned, and is the object of this vial; and that the drying up of this river deſigns the withdrawing of nations and kingdoms, ſignified by waters, ch. xvii. 15. from its juriſdiction and power, which will bring on its ruin; and alſo the ſtoppage of dues and tithes, annates, *Peter*'s pence, and of all its traffick in indulgences, pardons, *&c.* whereby it will be greatly impoveriſhed, and brought to nothing: but it ſhould be obſerved, that the fifth vial affects *Rome*, the ſeat of the beaſt; and as for the beaſt himſelf, he will not be deſtroyed till the battle of *Armageddon*; and myſtical *Babylon*, or the antichriſtian ſtate, in the whole compaſs of it, will not be deſtroyed until the pouring out of the ſeventh vial; wherefore rather the eaſtern antichriſt, the *Turks*, are meant, in whoſe dominions this river is; for as the *Aſſyrian* monarch is ſignified by the waters of this river, when he was in his glory, and had his ſeat at *Babylon*, by which this river ran, *Iſ.* viii. 7, 8. ſo may the *Turks*, who inhabit by this river, be intended by it; and the rather, as this ſenſe exactly correſponds with the ſixth trumpet; for as the ſounding of that trumpet looſes the four angels bound in the great river *Euphrates*, which founded the *Turkiſh* empire, as we have ſeen; ſo the pouring out of this ſixth vial affects the ſame empire, and brings it to ruin. Mr. *Daubuz* is of opinion, that this plague refers to the depopulation and deſtruction of the *Grecian* empire, and the bringing of the *Turks* into *Europe*, who have greatly diſtreſſed and tormented the corrupted chriſtians or papiſts. *And the water thereof was dried up*; the *Ottoman* empire will be extinct, juſt as the deſtruction of the *Babyloniſh* monarchy is expreſſed by the drying up of its ſea, *Jer.* li. 36. ſo the deſtruction of the *Turkiſh* empire is ſignified by the drying up of the water of this river, which is in the heart of it: and this is the paſſing away of the ſecond wo, ch. xi. 14. *that the way of the kings of the eaſt might be prepared*; which ſome underſtand of chriſtians in general, who are made kings and prieſts unto God, and of chriſtian kings in particular, whoſe way will be prepared by the declining ſtate of antichriſt, to expreſs their hatred to the whore of *Rome*, and burn her fleſh with fire; but the *Romiſh* antichriſt is not here intended: others think, as before obſerved, that the *Jews* are deſigned; that the *Jews* will be converted in the laſt days, ſeems manifeſt from *Hoſ.* iii. 5. *Rom.* xi. 25, 26. and other places; and that they will return to their own land is ſuggeſted in abundance of prophecies, particularly in *Ezek.* xxxvii. 21. and *Amos* ix. 14, 15. and it muſt be allowed that the eaſtern, as well as the weſtern antichriſt, is a ſtumbling to them; and eſpecially the advantage which the *Turks* have gained over the powers that go under the chriſtian name, and their poſſeſſion of their land is an hindrance to their return to it; ſo that the deſtruction of the *Turkiſh* empire will undoubtedly make way for their converſion, and reſtoration to their own land; but then this will be equally advantageous to the *Jews* in the weſt as to thoſe in the eaſt, if there be any numbers of them there, which does not appear, and therefore there ſeems no reaſon why they ſhould be pointed at, and be called the kings of the eaſt: rather therefore to me it ſeems, that thro' the fall of the *Ottoman* empire, way will be made for the kings and princes of the eaſt, literally underſtood, to have and embrace the Goſpel of Chriſt; for the *Turks* being deſtroyed, the *Mahometan* religion will decline, the Goſpel will be carried into the eaſtern parts of the world, into thoſe vaſt kingdoms and countries which lie in thoſe parts, when they will become the kingdoms of our Lord, and the kings and princes of them will come to the brightneſs of *Zion*'s riſing; ſo that the ruin of this monarchy will pave the way for the ſpread of Chriſt's kingdom from ſea to ſea, and from the river, the river *Euphrates*, to the ends of the earth; and this alſo will prepare the way, and lead on for all the ſaints, who are kings, and ſhall reign with Chriſt a thouſand years, who is ſaid to come from the eaſt, ch. vii. 2. or from the riſing of the ſun, as theſe are ſaid to do, as the words may be rendred, to poſſeſs the kingdom under the whole heaven: *Philo* the *Jew* [z] has ſome expreſſions illuſtrating the literal ſenſe of this, where he ſpeaks of a *Roman* army on the banks of *Euphrates*, which kept the paſſage of *the eaſtern kings*.

Ver. 13. *And I ſaw three unclean ſpirits like frogs,* &c.] *Rome*, the ſeat of antichriſt, being deſtroyed, and the kingdom of the beaſt darkened, and brought into great contempt, *Mahometaniſm* greatly declining, the Goſpel ſucceeding every where, the *Jews* being converted, and re-ſettled in their own land, the devil beſtirs himſelf more than ordinary; and diſpatches his, and the emiſſaries of antichriſt, to the kings of the whole earth, that can any ways be engaged on their ſide, and againſt the ſaints; and theſe are no other than the creatures of antichriſt, ſuch as cardinals, prieſts, and particularly jeſuits, as their original from the dragon, the beaſt, and the falſe prophet ſhow. Mr. *Daubuz* thinks theſe *three* are the *monks*, the *religious knights*, and *ſecular clergy:* and theſe are called *ſpirits*; not becauſe they are what are called familiar ſpirits, or devils themſelves, for they are the ſpirits of devils, as in the next verſe; but either becauſe they pretend to be ſpiritual men, eccleſiaſticks, men in ſpiritual offices, and indeed are ſpiritual wickedneſſes in high places; or becauſe of their agility, ſwiftneſs, and expeditiouſneſs in going to and fro, ſatan like, to do miſchief: and they are ſaid to be *unclean*; as the evil ſpirits and devils are, being ſo by nature, and delighting in uncleanneſs, and giving themſelves up to work it with greedineſs: and they are *like frogs*; the alluſion is to the plague of frogs in *Egypt*, *Exod.* viii. 5, 6. and theſe antichriſtian emiſſaries are fitly compared to them, for their impurity, and pleaſure they take in it, as frogs do in dirt and filth; and for their being talkative, impudent, and troubleſome, like the noiſy, croaking frogs; ſo *rhetoricians* are by *Cicero* [a] compared to frogs; and as the frogs of *Egypt* got into the king's bed-chamber, *Exod.* viii. 3. *Pſ.* cv. 30. ſo theſe get into the private retirements of princes, into their cabinet-councils, and ſtir them up to war and blood-ſhed: and as for the number, *three*, this is only uſed to expreſs a ſufficient number of them, or to make the account ſquare with the dragon, beaſt, and falſe prophet, from whom they proceed; and beſides, this is omitted in the king's manuſcript. Now *John* ſaw theſe, in a viſionary way, come *out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beaſt, and out of the mouth of the falſe prophet*; by the dragon is meant the devil, ch. xii. 9. not as acting in *Rome* pagan, which has been long ago deſtroyed, rather as in the pagan parts of the world, and as in the *Turkiſh* empire, now ruined; who ſeeing his cauſe declining every where, beſtirs himſelf to ſupport and revive it, tho' this iſſues in the binding of him for a thouſand years, ch. xx. 2. By *the beaſt* is meant the firſt beaſt, in ch. xiii. 1. and ſo the *Ethiopic* verſion renders it; the antichriſtian civil ſtate, now ſadly ſhattered and weakened, by the pouring out of the fifth vial: and by *the falſe prophet* is meant, not *Mahomet*, or the ſupporters of his religion, but the ſecond beaſt in ch. xiii. 11, 12, 14, 15. or the antichriſtian eccleſiaſtic ſtate, as appears from the deſcription of this prophet in ch. xix. 20. compared with that: ſo then theſe ſpirits manifeſtly appear to be the emiſſaries of antichriſt, under a diabolical influence; his creatures, that are made, and ſent forth by him, have their commiſſions and orders from him, to act for him in every ſhape, to ſupport his intereſt, civil and religious, by lyes, murders, and falſe doctrine; a further account is given of them in the next verſe.

Ver. 14. *For they are the ſpirits of devils,* &c.] They are of their father the devil; they are acted and influenced by him; he works effectually in them, and leads them captive at his will; they do his luſts, and are murderers and liars, and falſe teachers, like him: *working miracles*; lying ones, to deceive men; this clearly points out who are meant, namely the followers of antichriſt, who as they ſpread the doctrines of devils, endeavour to confirm them by ſigns and lying wonders: *which go forth unto the kings of the earth*; thoſe who have committed fornication with the *Romiſh* antichriſt, ſuch of them as will remain: *and of the whole world*; as many pagan princes as they can come at, and engage by any ways and means in their intereſt; they will go forth to them like the lying ſpirit to *Ahab*'s prophets, 1 *Kings* xxii. 22. *to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty*; that is, they will perſuade them to gather together, to fight againſt the ſaints, the *Gentile* chriſtians in the ſeveral parts of the world, and the *Jewiſh* chriſtians, now ſettled in their own land; and this will be the battle of the Lord, who is God Almighty, and it will be fighting againſt him; and therefore the attempt muſt be vain and fruitleſs, and iſſue in the ruin of thoſe who are gathered to it, who will be deceived and drawn into it by theſe diabolical ſpirits: and this is called *the battle of that great day of God*; not of the day of judgment, for it will be before that time; but of that day of vengeance upon all the remains of his and his church's enemies, both *pagan*, *papal*, and *Mahometan*,

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[z] De Legat. ad Caium, p. 1022.

[a] Ad Atticum, l. 15. Ep. 16.

Mahometan, who will for this purpoſe be gathered together; *which*, as the *Ethiopic* verſion renders it, *God has appointed*.

Ver. 15. *Behold I come as a thief*, &c.] Theſe are the words of Chriſt, inſerted in a parentheſis in this account, before it is concluded, to acquaint his people with his near and ſudden approach, and to give them a word of caution and exhortation in theſe times of difficulty; for he is the Lord God Almighty, who ſent forth theſe angels to pour out their vials, and whoſe judgments are applauded as righteous, ver. 1, 5, 7, 14. and who ſo often in ch. xxii. 7, 12, 20. ſays *I come quickly*; and which is to be underſtood not of his ſpiritual coming, which will be already at this time, but of his perſonal coming: and which will be *as a thief*; as it is often expreſſed, 1 *Theſſ*. v. 2. 2 *Pet*. iii. 10. *Rev*. iii. 3. not in the bad ſenſe, to ſteal and kill, and to deſtroy, tho' Chriſt's coming will iſſue in the everlaſting deſtruction of the wicked; but the phraſe is deſigned to expreſs the ſuddenneſs of his coming, and the ſurprize of it: *bleſſed is he that watcheth*; againſt ſin, the luſts of the fleſh, and the cares of this life, leſt they bring a ſleepineſs upon him, and ſo the day of the Lord come upon him at an unawares; and againſt ſatan and his temptations, who goes about ſeeking whom he may devour; and againſt his emiſſaries and falſe teachers, who lie in wait to deceive; and bleſſed is he alſo who is wiſhing and waiting for the coming of Chriſt, and ſo being ready, will enter with him into the marriage-chamber, and partake of the ſupper of the Lamb: *and keepeth his garments*; either his converſation-garments, unſpotted from the world, and whenever defiled waſhes them, and makes them white in the blood of the Lamb; and keeps them from being ſtripped of them, by thoſe who would lead them into ſinful ways; or that keeps and holds faſt the robe of Chriſt's righteouſneſs, and garments of his ſalvation, which are the righteouſneſs of the ſaints, that fine linnen clean and white, that white raiment which only can cover their nakedneſs, that the ſhame thereof does not appear, ch. xix. 8. and iii. 18. *leſt he walk naked*; ערום מן המצות [b], *naked of the commandments*, or good works, according to the *Jewiſh* phraſe; having loſt, or dropped his converſation-garments: *and they ſee his ſhame*; or leſt being naked, he be expoſed to ſhame and confuſion, yea, to everlaſting ruin and deſtruction; ſee *Mat*. xxii. 12, 13. the alluſion is to the burning of the garments of thoſe prieſts who were found aſleep when upon their watch in the temple: the account that is given is this [c]; "the man of the mountain "of the houſe (the governor of the temple) goes "round all the wards (every night) with burning "torches before him; and in every ward where the "perſon does not ſtand upon his feet, the man of "the mountain of the houſe ſays to him, peace be "to thee; if he finds he is aſleep, he ſtrikes him with "his ſtaff, and he has power to burn his cloaths; and "they ſay (in *Jeruſalem*) what voice is that in the court? "(it is anſwered) the voice of a *Levite* beaten, and "his cloaths burnt, becauſe he ſlept in the time of "his watch; *R. Eliezer ben Jacob* ſays, once they "found my mother's brother aſleep, and they burnt "his clothes:" now imagine with what ſhame the poor *Levite* ſo ſerved muſt appear the next morning among his brethren, with his cloaths burnt, and he naked; and with greater ſhame and confuſion muſt he appear at the laſt day, that is deſtitute of the righteouſneſs of Chriſt.

Ver. 16. *And he gathered them together*, &c.] Or rather *they gathered them together*, as the *Syriac* verſion renders it; for tho' the verb is ſingular, a noun plural goes before it, as in ver. 14. and the ſame ſpirits that are there ſaid to go forth, to gather the kings together, theſe will gather them together; will perſuade the papal, pagan, and *Mahometan* powers, the remains of them in the ſeveral parts of the world, to join together, and make one effort for the reviving of their declining, and almoſt ruined intereſts: for which purpoſe they will be brought together, *into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon*; which may be the ſame with *Har-megiddo*, the mountain of *Megiddo*; for the *Hebrew* word הר, is read *Ar* by the *Greeks*; ſo the city *Argarize* is interpreted the mountain of the moſt high [d]: and this refers either to the ſlaying of *Joſiah* in the valley of *Megiddo*, which occaſioned ſuch mourning, that it became proverbial for any great ſorrow; ſee 2 *Chron*. xxxv. 22, 25. *Zech*. xii. 11. where it is called the valley of *Megiddon*; or rather to the ſlaughter of *Siſera*'s army at the waters of *Megiddo*, by *Barak*, *Judg*. v. 19. ſuggeſting that the ſame would be the fate of theſe united powers. Some derive the word from גרהון and חרמא, which ſignify *the deſtruction of their troops*, or *armies*; and ſo deſigns not any place, that has been or is, but which will be ſo called from the iſſue of this battle; and ſince it is an *Hebrew* name that will be given it, it may lead us to conclude it will be ſome-where in *Judea*, and very likely no other than the valley of *Jehoſhaphat*, where all nations will be gathered; and which is called the valley of deciſion, where will be the day of the Lord, and multitudes will be ſlain, *Joel* iii. 2, 13, 14. tho' the name will ſuit any place where there will be a defeat of theſe enemies; but this vial only brings them together; the utter deſtruction of them is reſerved for the next.

Ver. 17. *And the ſeventh angel poured out his vial into the air*, &c.] Or *upon the air*, as the *Alexandrian* copy, *Syriac* and *Arabic* verſions read; by which is meant the kingdom of ſatan, he being the prince of the power of the air, *Eph*. ii. 2. not that he has power over the air, to raiſe or lay winds and ſtorms in it at pleaſure; but he is ſo called becauſe he is the prince of that poſſe of devils, the principalities and powers of darkneſs, that have their dwelling in the air; hence the air, encompaſſing the whole earth, ſtands for the kingdom of ſatan all the world over: and this vial differs from all the reſt; that whereas the reſt only affect ſome part or branch of the antichriſtian ſtate, this will affect all the remains of the *pagan*, *papal*, and *Mahometan* powers, gathered and united together at *Armageddon*; and the pouring out of this vial is the execution of divine wrath and vengeance upon them all at once; and the effects of this vial will not only reach to the kings of the earth, and of the whole world, and their armies, or the united forces of the remains of *pagans*, *Papiſts*, and *Mahometans*, who will be ſlain, and their fleſh given to the fowls of the air; and not only to the beaſt and falſe prophet, who will be taken in this battle, and caſt alive into the lake of fire, which is expreſſive both of their temporal and eternal puniſhment, ch. xix. 17—21. but to the binding of ſatan upon the ſecond coming of Chriſt, of which notice is before given, ver. 15. and even to the deſtruction of *Gog* and *Magog* at the end of the thouſand years reign; yea, to the caſting of the devil into everlaſting fire, ſince this vial is the laſt plague, in which the wrath of God is filled up, and ſo brings to the end of all things, ch. xx. 1—10. The firſt

acccompliſhment

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[b] Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 91. 3.

[c] Miſna Middot, c. 1. §. 2. T. Bab. Tamid, fol. 27. 2. & 28. 1. Maimon. Beth Habbechira, c. 8. §. 10. & Cele Hamikdaſh, c. 7. §. 4.

[d] Euſeb. Prepar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 17. p. 419.

accompliſhment of this vial will be the deciſive battle at *Armageddon*, when the remains of all Chriſt's and his church's enemies will have a total defeat; and this will be the third and laſt wo, which will utterly deſtroy thoſe that have deſtroyed the earth, *pagans*, *papiſts*, and *Mahometans*, even all the open enemies of Chriſt, ſo that nothing will lie in the way of his kingdom; now will the ſpiritual reign of Chriſt, which has been gradually advancing by the pouring out of each vial, be in its full glory: but tho' antichriſt will be no more, and ſatan will have no more in form an open kingdom upon earth; yet towards the cloſe of this reign, great lukewarmneſs and coldneſs will ſeize profeſſors of religion, and immorality and prophaneneſs will abound again; which will bring on the times of the coming of the Son of man; who upon his perſonal deſcent from the third heaven into the air, will drive ſatan and his poſſe of devils from their territories, and quickly will the general conflagration begin, when the heavens ſhall paſs away with a great noiſe, and the elements ſhall melt with fervent heat; and which is no inconſiderable part of the pouring out of this vial into the air. *And there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne*; this voice is ſaid to come *out of the temple of heaven*, that is, out of the temple which is in heaven, which will now be opened, as under the ſounding of the ſeventh trumpet, with which this vial correſponds, and indeed is cotemporary; and which deſigns the church, enjoying the pure worſhip of God, the word and ordinances, and the free exerciſe of religion; and this ſhows that when this voice will be uttered, as yet the *Jeruſalem* church-ſtate will not be begun, ſince there will be no temple in that; ſee ch. xi. 19. and xiv. 17. and xv. 5. and xxi. 22. the words *of heaven*, are left out in the *Alexandrian* copy, and in the *Vulgate Latin*, *Syriac*, and *Ethiopic* verſions, which read, *out of the temple from the throne*; the ſeat of government in the church, deſcribed in ch. iv. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. the voice came with power, authority, and majeſty; not from any of the four and twenty elders, or four living creatures, or angels about the throne; but either from God the Father that ſits upon it; or from Chriſt the Lamb in the midſt of it, and rather from the latter, ſince a like phraſe was uſed by him on the croſs, *John* xix. 30. and the ſame is expreſſed by him who is the Alpha and Omega, *Rev.* xxi. 6. and this voice is called a *great* one, being the voice of a great perſon, the King of Kings, and coming with great power, and was ſpoken aloud: *ſaying it is done*; what the angel ſwore ſhould be in the days of the ſeventh angel; namely, that time, antichriſtian time, ſhould be no more, and the myſtery of God in his purpoſes and providences ſhould be finiſhed, and all the glorious things ſpoken of his church and people be accompliſhed; ſee the notes on ch. x. 6, 7. the word γεγονε may be rendered *it has been*, or *it was*, and the ſenſe is, but now is not; and the meaning may be, *Babylon* was, but is not, it is now fallen; the beaſt and falſe prophet were, but now are not; the *Turk*, or *Mahomet*, was, but is no more; all the antichriſtian powers are deſtroyed; Chriſt's body, the church, will be compleated, the *Jews* will be converted, and the fullneſs of the *Gentiles* brought in, all the elect called, and the new *Jeruſalem* prepared as a bride for her huſband; and when the utmoſt effects of this vial will take place, the end of all things will be; by the ſame *fiat* that made the heavens and the earth, they will diſappear, and new heavens and earth ſucceed in their room.

Ver. 18. *And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings*, &c.] As at the giving of the law, *Exod.* xix. 16. and at the ſounding of the ſeventh trumpet, ſee the note on ch. xi. 20. and may intend either the pure miniſtry of the Goſpel in the ſpiritual reign, the voices of Chriſt's miniſters, and the effects of them, who will be *Boanergeſſes*, ſons of thunder, and will be the means of enlightning the minds of many, as well as of ſhaking the conſciences of men, ſignified by the earthquake following; or rather the tremendous and awful judgments of God upon the remains of the antichriſtian party, as the very great commotions and changes that will be made in the world are expreſſed in the next clauſe: *and there was a great earthquake, ſuch as was not ſince men were upon the earth, ſo mighty an earthquake, and ſo great*; for as the changes made in the *Jewiſh* ſtate, civil and eccleſiaſtical, are ſignified by the ſhaking of the heavens and the earth, and as the fall of paganiſm is expreſſed by an earthquake, and the fall of the tenth part of the city is the effect of another; ſo the deſtruction of all the antichriſtian powers, and the mutations made in the earth thereby, are deſigned by this; ſee *Heb.* xii. 26, 27. *Rev.* vi. 12. and xi. 13. *Joel* iii. 16. Mr. *Daubuz* applies the whole of this vial to the reformation, when ſuch a revolution was made in a ſhort time, as has not been known ſince the world was, or men became worſhippers of the beaſt; at which time chriſtendom was divided into three parts, the eaſtern or *Greek* church, the weſtern or *Latin* church, and the reformed churches.

Ver. 19. *And the great city was divided into three parts*, &c.] By which is meant not *Chriſtendom*, diſtinguiſhed into proteſtants, papiſts, and neutrals, which has been long the caſe; nor the city of *Jeruſalem*, as inhabited by *chriſtians*, *Jews*, and *Turks*; nor the city of *Rome* itſelf, the ſeat of the beaſt, which will have ſuffered under the fifth vial; but the whole *Romiſh* juriſdiction, which is the great city, that reigns over the kings of the earth, as it will now be; tho' ſome think the *Turkiſh* empire is meant, which they ſuppoſe was only afflicted under the preceding vial, but will now be divided into three parts, and afterwards into ſix, *Ezek.* xxxix. 1, 2. and ſo come to ruin; and others are of opinion that it is included in this great city at leaſt; and doubtleſs the remains of it are to be taken into this account, and probably are conſidered in the following clauſe; wherefore it is better to underſtand this of the *Romiſh* juriſdiction, ſo often called the great city in this book, ch. xi. 8. and xiv. 8. and xvii. 18. and its diviſion into three parts is either in reference to the three heads of it, the dragon, beaſt, and falſe prophet, or to the three unclean ſpirits that come out of them, which will lead on to this ruin; tho' the alluſion ſeems rather to be to the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, *Ezek.* v. 2, 12. and denotes the utter ruin of the *Romiſh* antichriſt, in all its branches and remains; a tenth part of this city will fall towards the cloſe of the ſixth trumpet, ch. xi. 13. and now all the other nine parts will fall, a threefold diviſion will be made of the city, each diviſion containing three parts: the *Jews*[e] have a propheſy, that upon an appearance of a ſtar at *Rome*, which they ſuppoſe will be when the Meſſiah comes, the *three upper* walls of that city will fall, and the great temple, or church (St. *Peter*'s) will fall, and the governor of that city (the pope) will die: *and the cities of the nations fell*; of the *pagans* and *Mahometans*; or as there will be an utter extirpation of the papacy, ſo of *paganiſm* and *Mahometaniſm*, in the ſeveral nations where they have obtained, and where there will be now any remains of them; *and great Babylon came in remembrance before*

[e] Zohar in Num. fol. 86. 1.

fore God; not *Conſtantinople*, as *Brightman* thinks, becauſe that *Rome*, the ſeat of the beaſt, is affected under the fifth vial, and the great city under this; but ſince no other is called *Babylon* in this book but the *Romiſh* antichriſtian ſtate, it muſt be meant here; ſee ch. xiv. 8. and xvii. 5. and xviii. 2, 10, 21. for many hundreds of years *Babylon* ſeemed to be forgotten by God, no notice being taken of her ſins and iniquities in a judicial way; but now God will remember her ſins, ch. xviii. 5. and inflict deſerved puniſhment upon her: *to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceneſs of his wrath*; as a juſt retaliation for the wine of her fornication, with which ſhe has intoxicated the kings and inhabitants of the earth; the wrath of God is ſometimes ſignified in the Old Teſtament by a cup, a wine-cup, a wine-cup of fury, ſee *Pſ.* lxxv. 8. *Jer.* xxv. 15. and here the exceeding greatneſs of his wrath is expreſſed by the phraſes uſed, and intends the pouring out of all his vengeance, to the utter ruin of the *Romiſh* antichriſt.

Ver. 20. *And every iſland fled away*, &c.] This may be underſtood either of the diſſolution of the world, the preſent heavens and earth, when there will be no more ſea, ch. xxi. 1. and ſo conſequently no iſlands: *and the mountains were not found*; for the earth and the heaven will be fled away at the appearance of Chriſt the judge, and there will be no place found for them, ch. xx. 11. and new heavens, and a new earth, without ſea or mountains, will ſucceed: or rather this may ſignify the utter extirpation of all the antichriſtian powers in every ſhape, whether on iſlands or on the continent; for this day of the Lord will be upon every high mountain and hill, to bring them low, and the Lord alone ſhall be exalted, *Iſ.* ii. 14, 15, 17. and may particularly reſpect the diſſolution of monaſteries, and the plundering them of their riches and revenues.

Ver. 21. *And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven*, &c.] Which muſt be underſtood not as after the fall of the cities, and the flight of the iſlands and mountains, but at the ſame time; and it looks as if ſuch men that ſhall eſcape at the battle of *Armageddon*, that hail-ſtones from heaven will fall upon them and deſtroy them; juſt as the kings of the *Amorites* and their men were killed by hail-ſtones, caſt down by the Lord from heaven, as they fled before *Joſhua*, when more were killed by the ſtones than were ſlain by the ſword, *Joſh.* x. 11. the alluſion ſeems to be to the plague of hail in *Exod.* ix. 23—26. *every ſtone about the weight of a talent*; which is threeſcore pound weight, a prodigious weight indeed for a ſingle hail-ſtone! ſuch hail-ſtones were never known to fall; the largeſt I have read of is what *Caſpar Weſſerus* aſſured Mr. *Broughton*[f] of, at *Zurich*, which being brought from a field afar off, to the conſul, and ſo muſt melt in carriage, yet weighed a pound. It may be ſaid of this hail-ſtorm, as of the earthquake in a preceding verſe, that it will be ſuch as never was ſince men were upon earth; and denotes the ſore, heavy, and even intolerable judgments of God upon the antichriſtian party: God's judgments are ſometimes ſignified by hail-ſtorms, *Iſ.* xxx. 26—30. and particularly the judgments upon *Gog* and *Magog*, *Ezek.* xxxviii. 22. which may reſpect the ſame as here: the *Jews*[g] now expect a great hail in the times of *Gog* and *Magog*: *and men blaſphemed God becauſe of the plague of the hail*; the plague of hail brought down the hard heart of *Pharaoh*, and humbled him, ſo that he acknowledged his wickedneſs, and the ſin of his people, and owned the juſtice of God; but this more terrible ſtorm will have no effect upon theſe men, to convince and reform them, but on the contrary, they will break out into blaſphemy againſt God, who cauſed it to fall on them; it will have the ſame effect as the fourth and fifth vials: *for the plague thereof was exceeding great*; it muſt beat down all before it, and be intolerable: whether this hail-ſtorm may not alſo have ſome regard to coldneſs and lukewarmneſs, as *Napeir* ſuggeſts, and ſo may point at the cloſe of the ſpiritual reign of Chriſt, or the *Laodicean* ſtate, which will bring on the ſecond coming of Chriſt; and ſo this effect of the ſeventh vial will end where the ſeven churches and ſeven trumpets do, may be conſidered; ſee the note on ch. xi. 20.

CHAP. XVII.

THIS chapter contains a viſion of a beaſt, and a woman on it, and the interpretation of it; one of the ſeven angels that had the ſeven vials propoſes to *John* to ſhow him the whore of *Babylon*, the *Jezabel* before ſpoken of, who ſits on many waters, with whom the kings and inhabitants of the earth have committed fornication, being intoxicated by her, ver. 1, 2. in order to which he carries him into the wilderneſs, and there he ſees a woman, who is deſcribed by the beaſt ſhe ſat on, of a ſcarlet colour, full of blaſphemous names, with ſeven heads and ten horns; by her array, in purple and ſcarlet, decked with gold, pearls, and precious ſtones; by a cup ſhe had in her hand, full of abominable filth; by a name written on her forehead, given at large, and by the condition ſhe was in, drunk with the blood of the ſaints; which ſight filled *John* with great wonder and admiration, ver. 3, 4, 5, 6. wherefore, to remove his aſtoniſhment, the angel propoſes to explain to him the myſtery of the woman, and the beaſt ſhe ſat on, ver. 7. and firſt the myſtery of the beaſt is explained, by its ſeveral ſtates, paſt, preſent, and to come; by its original and end, aſcending out of the bottomleſs pit, and going into perdition; by the veneration it would be had in by the reprobate part of the world, ver. 8. its ſeven heads are interpreted of the ſeven mountains on which the city of *Rome*, deſigned by the woman, ſtood, and of ſeven kings, or forms of government, five of which had ceaſed, and one was in being in *John*'s time, another was to come, which ſhould not continue long, and the beaſt would be an eighth, ver. 9, 10, 11. its ten horns are explained of ten kings, deſcribed by their kingdom they had not as yet received, and which they ſhould have one hour with the beaſt; by their agreement in mind and conduct; and by their war with the Lamb, the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, and thoſe that are with him, the called, choſen, and faithful, and the iſſue of it, ver. 12, 13, 14. the waters on which the whore ſat are interpreted of a multitude of people, nations and tongues, ver. 15. the hatred and deſtruction of her by the ten kings, and the manner of it are declared, ver. 16. which is owing to the will of God, who put it into their hearts to agree to give their kingdom to the beaſt till the prophecies and promiſes were fulfilled reſpecting this matter, and now to deſtroy the whore that ſat upon it, ver. 17. which woman is explained of the great city of *Rome*, that reigns over the kings of the earth, ver. 18.

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[f] See his Works, p. 491.

[g] Shemot Rabba, §. 12. fol. 99. 1.

Ver. 1. *And there came one of the ſeven angels that had the ſeven vials*, &c.] It may be the firſt of them, ſince one of the four beaſts deſigns the firſt of them in ch. vi. 1, 3. tho' *Brightman* thinks the fifth angel is meant, becauſe he poured out his vial on the ſeat of the beaſt, who is by this angel deſcribed; but rather this is the ſeventh and laſt angel, concerned in the utter deſtruction of antichriſt; and therefore propoſes to *John* to ſhow him the judgment of the great whore: *and talked with me, ſaying unto me, come hither*; he converſed with him in a friendly manner, ſee *Zech.* i. 9. and deſires him to come nearer to him, and go along with him, adding, *I will ſhew unto thee the judgment of the great whore*; that noted and famous one, known before to *John* by the names of *Jezabel* and *Babylon*, who taught, and cauſed many to commit fornication, ch. ii. 20. and xiv. 8. and is no other than *Rome* papal; for that a city or ſtate is meant, is clear from ver. 18. and it is uſual for idolatrous or apoſtate cities to be called whores or harlots, ſee *Iſ.* i. 21. *Ezek.* xxiii. 2, 3, 4. *Nahum* iii. 4. and ſhe is called a *great* one, becauſe of the largeneſs of the *papal* ſee; and becauſe of the multitude of perſons, the kings of the earth, and the inhabitants of it, with whom the *Romiſh* antichriſt has committed ſpiritual fornication, or idolatry: her *judgment* ſignifies either her ſin and wickedneſs; in which ſenſe the word is uſed in *Rom.* v. 16. and which is expoſed, ver. 5, 6. namely, her idolatry and cruelty; or elſe her condemnation, and the execution of it, ſuggeſted in ver. 8. 16. and more largely deſcribed in the following chapter: *that ſitteth upon many waters*; which in ver. 15. are interpreted of people, multitudes, nations, and tongues, ſubject to the juriſdiction of *Rome*; and ſo ſeveral antichriſtian ſtates are in the preceding chapter ſignified by the ſea, and by rivers and fountains of water; and this is ſaid in reference to *Babylon*, an emblem of the *Romiſh* harlot, which was ſituated upon the river *Euphrates*, and is therefore ſaid to dwell upon many waters, *Jer.* li. 13. her ſitting here may be in alluſion to the poſture of harlots plying of men; or may denote her eaſe, reſt, and grandeur, ſitting as a queen; and is chiefly expreſſive of her power and dominion over the kings and nations of the earth, ver. 18.

Ver. 2. *With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication*, &c.] Theſe are the ten kings, who being of the ſame mind, and of one religion, the popiſh religion, gave their power, ſtrength, and kingdom to the beaſt, ver. 12, 17. and have been enticed by the whore of *Rome* to commit ſpiritual fornication with her; that is idolatry, to worſhip, as that church enjoins, idols of gold, ſilver, braſs, and wood, the images of the virgin *Mary*, and other ſaints; hence this whore appears to be no mean ſtrumpet, but one of great note, and in much vogue, being ſought after, and made uſe of by the great men of the earth: *and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication*; that is, the inhabitants of the *Roman* empire, or earthly-minded men, mere carnal perſons, have been drawn into idolatrous practices by the allurements of the church of *Rome*; ſuch as riches, honours, pleaſures, lying miracles, and great pretenſions to devotion and religion; whereby they have been intoxicated as men with wine, and have been filled with a blind zeal for that church, and the falſe doctrines and worſhip of it, and with madneſs and fury againſt the true profeſſors of religion.

Ver. 3. *So he carried me away in the ſpirit*, &c.] Not in body, as if he was removed from the Iſle of *Patmos* to ſome other place; but in a viſionary way, juſt as *Ezekiel* was carried between earth and heaven in the viſions of God, to *Jeruſalem*, *Ezek.* viii. 3. It was repreſented to the mind of *John*, to his ſpirit, or ſoul, as if he had been taken up by the angel and carried thro' the air: *into the wilderneſs*; by which may be meant either the wilderneſs of the people, the world, the church hereafter deſcribed, being a worldly one, and conſiſting of worldly men; or *Gentiliſm*, the *Gentile* world is often in the prophecies of the Old Teſtament called a wilderneſs; the *Romiſh* church having much of heathen worſhip, and heathen cuſtoms and practices in it, hence its votaries are called *Gentiles*, ch. xi. 2. or this circumſtance may be mentioned, and the thing ſo repreſented to *John*, becauſe that a wilderneſs is a ſolitary place, and fit for retirement and meditation; and where he might, without any interruption, take a full view of the following ſight, and make proper obſervations upon it; and it is worthy of notice, that this is the place where the true church fled, and became out of ſight, in the room of which this apoſtate church appears: or, as others have thought, *John* is had into the wilderneſs, where the true church was hid and nouriſhed, and the falſe one is there ſhown him, that ſeeing both together, he might compare them, and obſerve the difference between them; to all which may be added, that a wilderneſs is a fit place for ſuch a beaſt as hereafter deſcribed, to be ſeen in: *and I ſaw a woman ſit upon a ſcarlet-coloured beaſt*; the *beaſt* is the ſame with that in ch. xiii. 1. as the deſcription ſhows, and is no other than the *Roman* empire as papal; the *ſcarlet* colour is expreſſive of its imperial dignity, its power and authority, it received from the dragon; and alſo of this beaſt's cruelty and tyranny, and of its ſhedding the blood of the ſaints: the *woman* ſitting upon it, is the great city of *Rome*, as is manifeſt from ver. 18. or the *Romiſh* antichriſt, the apoſtate church of *Rome*, repreſented by a woman, as the true church is, ch. xii. 1. but in a very different form, and is the ſame with the ſecond beaſt in ch. xiii. 11. and the falſe prophet; and as the two beaſts reſpect the ſame, under different conſiderations, namely the papacy in its civil and eccleſiaſtic capacity, ſo this ſtrange phænomenon, a woman ſitting on ſuch a beaſt, means one and the ſame thing, as the horſe and his rider in the ſeals, tho' in different views; the woman deſigns the *Romiſh* church, with the pope at the head of it, and the beaſt the *Roman* papal empire as civil, by which the former is ſupported and upheld, bore up on high, and exalted in the manner it has been: moreover, as purple and ſcarlet are the colours of garments wore by the pope and cardinals, hence the woman in the next verſe is ſaid to be *arrayed in purple and ſcarlet colour*; ſo even the very beaſts on which they rode were covered with ſcarlet. *Platina* [h] ſays that pope *Paul* the Second "ordered by a public decree, on pain of puniſhment, that no man ſhould wear a ſcarlet cap but cardinals; to whom alſo, in the firſt year of his popedom, he gave cloth of the ſame colour, to put upon their horſes and mules when they rode; and beſides, would have put into the decree, that the cardinals hats ſhould be of ſcarlet ſilk:" upon which *Du Moulin* [i] makes this remark; "pope *Paul* the Second was the firſt that gave ſcarlet to the cardinals, as well for themſelves as for their mules, to the end that this propheſy, which agreeth in general with the ſee of *Rome*, might likewiſe appertain particularly to

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[h] De Vitis Pontificum, p. 312.

[i] Defence of the Catholic Faith, &c. c. 3. p. 38.

"every one of the pillars of the ſaid ſee, which is "to be ſet upon *a ſcarlet-coloured beaſt.*" It follows, *full of names of blaſphemy*; that is, the beaſt, or *Roman* papal empire, was full of them, in ch. xiii. 1, 5. a name of blaſphemy is ſaid to be upon his head, and he to have a mouth ſpeaking blaſphemy; but here his whole body is repreſented as full of them, and may refer to the blaſphemous doctrines of worſhipping of images, of pardons and indulgences, of tranſubſtantiation, *&c.* and to the multitude of images, of the virgin *Mary*, and other ſaints in the antichriſtian ſtate, in every part of it; and to thoſe blaſpheming perſons the cardinals, prieſts, and jeſuits, which abound in it; as well as to thoſe blaſphemous names and titles which are given to the pope, the head of it, or aſſumed by him; ſuch as God on earth, the vicar of Chriſt, the head, and huſband, and foundation of the church, with many others: *having ſeven heads, and ten horns*; the ſeven heads are the ſeven mountains, on which the city of *Rome*, the metropolis of the empire, is ſeated; and the ſeven kings, or ſeven forms of government, under which it has been, as appears from ver. 9, 10. ſee the notes on ch. xii. 3. and xiii. 1. and the *ten horns* ſignify the ten kings over the ten kingdoms, into which the empire was divided, when over-run by the *Goths* and *Vandals*; and which ten kings gave their kingdoms to the beaſt, the *Romiſh* antichriſt; they gave their ſtrength and power to him, being of his religion, and have been his horns, his defenders and ſupporters ever ſince, as may be gathered from ver. 12, 13, 17.

Ver. 4. *And the woman was arrayed in purple and ſcarlet colour*, &c.] Which may be expreſſive of her grandeur, authority, and power, ſitting as a queen, and ſovereign in the empire, ruling over kingdoms and nations in it; and alſo of her bloody diſpoſition to the ſaints, with whoſe blood ſhe is afterwards ſaid to be drunk: *and decked with gold, and precious ſtones, and pearls*; which may denote her hypocriſy, ſhe being *gilded* with theſe things, as the word ſignifies, when ſhe was inwardly rotten, corrupt, and filthy; and may point out the things, by which perſons have been enticed into the communion of the church of *Rome*, and to comply with her idolatrous worſhip and practices; and may alſo reſpect the prodigious riches, which have, by various methods, been brought into the pope's coffers; theſe, with other things, are reckoned among the merchandize of *Babylon*, ch. xviii. 12. and particularly this may have reference to the adorning of their temples, or churches, and the decking of their images, with thoſe things; which gaudy pompous ſhows ſtrike the minds of carnal men, amuſe them, and engage their attention. So *Philo* [k] the *Jew* deſcribes an whore as arrayed in purple, and adorned with gold and precious ſtones; ſee *Prov.* vii. 10. *Having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthineſs of her fornication*; in alluſion to *Babylon*, *Jer.* li. 7. and alſo to harlots, who give philters or love-potions to men, to excite luſt, and draw their affections to them; and this being a golden cup, may deſign the external luſtre and ſplendor of the worſhip of the church of *Rome*, by which many have been drawn into a compliance with it, which is attended with many abominable, filthy, and idolatrous practices: and perhaps ſome regard may be had to the golden chalice, in which, 'tis pretended, is the very blood of Chriſt, which the prieſts take as ſuch, and worſhip and adore, and is no other than an abominable and filthy piece of idolatry; and ſuch are the perſons that partake of it; like the *Phariſees* of old, they make clean the outſide of the cup and platter; gliſter, and make a great ſhow of devotion, but within are full of extortion and exceſs.

Ver. 5. *And upon her forehead was a name written*, &c.] As the high-prieſt had on his mitre upon his forehead written, holineſs to the Lord, *Exod.* xxviii. 36. only a different inſcription from that; the alluſion is thought to be to harlots, who not only uſed to put their names over their doors, but ſome of them upon their foreheads, that all might know who they were; of which Mr. *Daubuz* has given proofs out of *Seneca*, *Martial*, *Juvenal*, and *Petronius*; and ſuch might be ſaid to have an whore's forehead indeed: and this is expreſſive of the openneſs and impudence of the church of *Rome*, in her idolatrous worſhip; ſhe openly declares it, and pleads for it, and invites and enſnares perſons to join with her in it: the name follows, *myſtery*, *Babylon the great*, *the mother of harlots*, *and abominations of the earth*; her name is *myſtery*; not the myſtery of godlineſs, that ſhe diſlikes and oppoſes, but the myſtery of iniquity; which is the name antichriſt went by in the Apoſtle *Paul*'s time, when he was but in embryo, 2 *Theſſ.* ii. 7. Some reference may be had to the myſtery of the maſs, in which the papiſts pretend are the very body and blood of Chriſt; to their ſeven ſacraments, for where-ever almoſt they find the word myſtery, they make a ſacrament of that to which it is applied; and to their unwritten traditions, and the ſenſe of the ſcriptures, which are locked up in the pope's breaſt: and it is very remarkable what has been obſerved by ſome, that the word *myſtery* was formerly upon the frontlet of the pope's mitre, and was removed by pope *Julius* the third, when it was obſerved that the proteſtants made uſe of this paſſage of ſcripture, and applied it to the *Romiſh* antichriſt. *Joſeph Scaliger* [l] affirms, that he ſaw mitres at *Rome* with this inſcription on them. Tho' others think that this is not any part of the name, but only ſignifies that this woman was, in a myſterious or myſtical ſenſe, called *Babylon*, &c. juſt as the great city is ſpiritually called *Sodom* and *Egypt*, ch. xi. 8. but to me it ſeems to be a part of the name, as well as what follows, *Babylon the great*; that is, the great city, ch. xiv. 8. by which name the church of *Rome* may well be called, becauſe of the ſignification of it, confuſion, *Gen.* xi. 9. its doctrine and worſhip being a confuſed mixture of paganiſm, judaiſm, and chriſtianity; and becauſe of the pride and haughtineſs of it, its tyranny and cruelty, and its ſorceries and idolatry; ſee *Iſ.* xiv. 12, 13, 14. and xlvii. 6, 7, 12, 13. *Jer.* l. 38. *And the mother of harlots*; of all antichriſtian ſtates and kingdoms; and is different from the heavenly *Jeruſalem*, the Goſpel church, which is the mother of true believers, *Gal.* iv. 26. or *the mother of fornications*, as ſome copies read, and the *Vulgate Latin* and *Eaſtern* verſions render it; that is, the author and encourager of them, as the church of *Rome* has been; of corporal fornication, by commanding celibacy, and forbidding marriage to prieſts, and ſetting up of brothel-houſes; and of ſpiritual fornication or idolatry, every where required and encouraged by it: and *of the abominations of the earth*; of abominable doctrines and practices; all manner of wickedneſs, that is to be found in the earth, as murder, adultery, ſodomy, perjury, *&c.* theſe, with every thing that is vile and wicked, are practiſed and connived at by her.

Ver. 6. *And I ſaw the woman drunken with the blood of the ſaints*, &c.] To ſee a woman drunk is a ſhameful ſight; but to ſee one drunk, not with wine, but with blood, is monſtrous, cruel, and ſhocking; the ſword, when it devours, and is ſatiate, is ſaid to be drunk with blood, *Jer.* xlvi. 10. but for a woman to be ſo is unexampled; and not with her own blood, as ſhe will be, *Iſ.* xlix. 26. *Rev.* xvi. 6. but with the blood of others; and not with the blood of wicked men, but with the blood of ſaints; ſuch as God the Father has ſet apart from everlaſting, and choſen to be holy; whom Chriſt has ſanctified by his blood, or whoſe ſins he has expiated, and to whom he is made ſanctification; and who have principles of grace and holineſs wrought in them by the Spirit of God, and live holy lives and converſations: *and of the martyrs of Jeſus*; the ſaints, whoſe blood is ſhed by antichriſt, are martyrs alſo; but they ſeem to deſign the common people, and theſe the miniſters of the Goſpel, who are the martyrs of Jeſus, both in life and death; they are his martyrs or witneſſes, by their doctrine and miniſtry, bearing teſtimony to him as Jeſus, a ſaviour; teſtifying that he is the only ſaviour, that there is ſalvation in no other, in oppoſition to the antichriſtian doctrines of merit, penance, purgatory, *&c.* for which they have been cruelly put to death, and in great numbers, and ſo have ſealed their doctrine by their blood. Now the woman being drunk with their blood, denotes the blood-thirſtineſs of the church of *Rome*, her greedy and inſatiable deſire after the blood of the ſaints, and her delight in it, being exceeding mad againſt them; and the multitude of it, ſhed by her, as the ſlaughters of the *Waldenſes* and *Albigenſes*, the butcheries of the duke *d'Alva* in the low countries, the maſſacres in *France*, *Ireland*, and other places, the burning of the martyrs in queen *Mary*'s days here, with numerous other inſtances ſhow. *And when I ſaw her, I wondered with great admiration*; not at the ſight of the beaſt, which he had ſeen before, but at the ſight of the woman, as upon the beaſt; he wondered that one of her ſex, generally timorous and fearful, ſhould ride on ſuch a monſtrous creature; he was amazed at her dreſs, and grand appearance, whereas the church in his time conſiſted of poor perſons, meanly arrayed; it was aſtoniſhing to him, that one bearing the name of a chriſtian church ſhould riſe to ſuch grandeur; and he wondered at the name upon her forehead, what the whole of that inſcription ſhould mean; but above all, at her drunkenneſs with the blood of the ſaints; at her inhumanity and cruelty, being as ſavage as the beaſt ſhe rode on; and alſo at God's forbearance of her, that he, who is a pure and holy being, a lover of his ſaints, an avenger of his elect, ſhould ſuffer ſuch a brutiſh, barbarous, and blood-thirſty creature to live upon earth; ſee *Hab.* i. 13.

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[k] De Mercede Meretricis non recip. p. 861.

[l] In Scaligeran.

Ver. 7. *And the angel ſaid unto me*, &c.] The ſame as in ver. 1. *wherefore didſt thou marvel?* which is not ſaid by way of reproof, as queſtions of this kind ſometimes are, *Acts* iii. 12. for *John* did not wonder at her with a ſinful admiration, ſo as to have her in great veneration, and to do homage and worſhip to her, as the inhabitants of the world wondered after the beaſt, ch. xiii. 3. and xvii. 8. but his admiration was an amazement, or ſtupefaction of mind, joined with indignation at her; and this is ſaid by the angel to lead on to what he had to declare unto him. *I will tell thee the myſtery of the woman*; that is, what is myſteriouſly or myſtically deſigned by her; for till it was made known to *John* by the angel, it was a myſtery to him; and when it was revealed, the interpretation is given in ſuch an obſcure manner, that it is only underſtood by the mind that has ſpiritual wiſdom; and ſtill remains a myſtery to carnal men, juſt as the Goſpel itſelf does. The hidden meaning of this woman, or the myſtery of her, is told by the angel in ver. 18. *And of the beaſt that carried her, which hath the ſeven heads, and ten horns*; the myſtical ſenſe of the beaſt, its heads and horns, and which is alſo delivered in a myſterious manner, is given in ver. 8, 9, 10, 11, 12.

Ver. 8. *The beaſt which thou ſaweſt was, and is not*, &c.] It is added at the end of the verſe where the ſame deſcription is given, *and yet is*; this beaſt is to be underſtood not of the devil, who *was* the God of this world, *is not*, being caſt out by Chriſt, *and yet is* in being; for he, the dragon, is diſtinguiſhed from this beaſt, and indeed from him, the beaſt, has his ſeat, power, and authority, ch. xiii. 1, 2. nor any particular emperor, as *Domitian*, a cruel and ſavage one, who was in power in *Veſpaſian*'s time, when he was abroad, and then was out of it upon his return, and yet afterwards was in again, being as one ſent from hell, and went at laſt into perdition; but the *Roman* empire itſelf is intended, as we have ſeen, which carried and ſupported the papacy: and variouſly may this be interpreted; as that it was in the hands of the *Romans* originally, and long continued with them, but now *is not*, in *John*'s time, being in the hands of *Trajan*, a *Spaniard*, *and yet is* in being, *Rome* being the metropolis of it: it *was* a very powerful and flouriſhing empire, *and is not*, being deſtroyed by the *Goths* and *Vandals*, *and yet is* a large empire under the juriſdiction of antichriſt; it *was* an idolatrous empire, which encouraged the worſhipping of heathen Gods, *and is not* guilty of the ſame idolatrous practices, it was, as the worſhipping of *Jupiter*, *Mars*, &c. *and yet is* much given to idolatry in another way, worſhipping the virgin *Mary*, and other ſaints; it *was* under kings, conſuls, dictators, tribunes, decemvirs, and emperors, it *is not* in ſuch a form of government, *and yet is* under its ſeventh head the pope; *Rome was*, but *is not* the ſame it has been, in ſome reſpects, *and yet is* the ſame, for idolatry, cruelty, *&c.* it has the image of old *Rome*, when pagan, and under the power of the dragon; and tho' antichriſt was not riſen up in the empire to an head, to ſupreme power and dignity, yet it was in being in the Apoſtles times, and began to work, and by degrees to ſhew itſelf. In ſhort, the meaning is, that this beaſt *was* the *Roman* empire, as pagan, deſcribed by a dragon with ſeven heads, and ten horns, with crowns on the heads, but *is not* as yet in the Apoſtle *John*'s time, as papal, deſcribed with ſeven heads, and ten horns, and crowns on the horns. *And ſhall aſcend out of the bottomleſs pit*; out of hell, from whence the antichriſtian beaſt has its power; ſee ch. xi. 8. and xiii. 2. otherwiſe all civil power is from God, but not antichriſtian power, that is from the devil: *and go into perdition*; everlaſting deſtruction, the lake which burns with fire and brimſtone; this will be the end of the beaſt, ch. xix. 20. *and they that dwell on the earth ſhall wonder*; the inhabitants of the *Roman* empire, earthly-minded men, ſhall have the beaſt in great veneration, and follow and worſhip him; ſee ch. xiii. 3, 4, 12. *whoſe names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world*; none but reprobates, not any of the elect of God, are the admirers and worſhippers of antichriſt; ſee the note on ch. xiii. 8. *when they beheld*

held the beaſt that was, and is not, and yet is; the *Roman* empire in glory, under the emperors, deſtroyed by the *Goths*, and revived in the papacy. The *Vulgate Latin* and *Ethiopic* verſions leave out the laſt clauſe, *and yet is*.

Ver. 9. *And here is the mind which hath wiſdom,* &c.] This refers either to what goes before concerning the beaſt, his various ſtates, riſe, and ruin, and his admirers; or to what follows after concerning the meaning of his heads and horns, or to both; and the ſenſe is, that notwithſtanding the interpretation of theſe things by the angel, yet it requires a large ſhare of wiſdom to underſtand them; and here's enough to exerciſe the mind that is ever ſo well ſtored with knowledge and underſtanding; and ſo the *Arabic* verſion renders it, *here it is required that one ſhould have judgment and wiſdom*; for to a man that has not, the affair will ſtill be obſcure and unintelligible. The words may be rendered, *here is the mind, he that hath wiſdom*; that is, let him make uſe of it, as in ch. xiii. 18. and ſo the *Vulgate Latin* verſion renders it, *and this is the ſenſe, he that hath wiſdom*; this is the ſenſe of the beaſt, and of his heads and horns; and he that has wiſdom, let him conſider it, and take it in, and apply it to proper perſons, things and times; and ſo the *Ethiopic* verſion, *he that has wiſdom and underſtanding, let him know this*; or take cognizance of it, it being a matter of importance, and attended with difficulty: *the ſeven heads are ſeven mountains on which the woman ſitteth*; that is, they ſignify ſeven mountains, or are ſymbolical repreſentations of them; juſt as the ſeven good kine, and ſeven good ears in *Pharaoh*'s dream, ſignified ſeven years of plenty, and ſeven thin kine, and ſeven empty ears, ſeven years of famine, *Gen.* xli. 26, 27. As the woman is a city, ver. 18. theſe ſeven mountains, on which ſhe ſits, muſt be ſo many mountains on which the city is built; and what city can this be but *Rome?* which is ſo famous for being built on ſeven hills. This is taken notice of by *Virgil*[m], *Horace*[n], *Ovid*[o], *Claudian*[p], *Statius*[q], *Martial*[r], and others; and indeed there is ſcarce a poet that ſpeaks of *Rome*, but obſerves it: hence it has been ſometimes called, by writers, the ſeven hilled-city, and ſometimes *Septiceps*, the ſeven headed-city, which comes near to the language here: the names of the ſeven mountains were theſe, *Capitolinus*, *Palatinus*, *Aventinus*, *Eſquilinus*, *Cælius*, *Viminalis*, and *Quirinalis*; the four firſt of theſe were taken in by *Romulus*, the firſt founder of it, and the three laſt by *Servius Tullius*, when he enlarged it; and upon the addition of the ſeventh mountain there was a feaſt kept, called *Septimontium*; and which was kept in ſeven places in the city[s], and was annually obſerved; and in this ſituation it was in *John*'s time; for *Pliny*[t], who was cotemporary with him, expreſly ſays, that in his time it took in ſeven mountains; and that this refers to a city in *John*'s time, then reigning over the kings of the earth, is certain from ver. 18. Now there was no imperial city, ſo built in his time, but *Rome*; for though *Conſtantinople* is built on ſeven hills, yet this was not in being in *John*'s time, but was built by *Conſtantine* many years after, in imitation of *Rome*; and though the ſituation is much altered now, being in *Campus Martius*, it being greatly reduced, and in a leſs compaſs, yet this hinders not but that it is the ſame city here deſigned: and this confirms, that the beaſt before ſpoken of, on whom the woman ſat, is the *Roman* empire, ſince ſhe is here ſaid to ſit on the ſeven mountains, on which *Rome*, the metropolis of that empire, was built; and this ſhows the pope of *Rome* to be antichriſt, the great whore, *Babylon*, the mother of harlots, ſince no other has his ſeat at *Rome* but he.

Ver. 10. *And there are ſeven kings,* &c.] The *Arabic* verſion renders it, *who are ſeven kings*; and it ſhould be rendered, as it is by the *Vulgate Latin*, *Syriac*, and *Ethiopic* verſions, *and they are ſeven kings*; that is, the ſeven heads ſignify ſeven kings alſo, for they have in them a double repreſentation, firſt of ſeven mountains, and then of ſeven kings; by which are meant not ſeven ages of the world, as from *Adam* to *Noah*; from *Noah* to *Abraham*; from *Abraham* to *David*; from *David* to the *Babyloniſh* captivity; from the *Babyloniſh* captivity to Chriſt; from Chriſt to antichriſt; and from antichriſt to the end of the world; the five firſt of which were gone in *John*'s time, the ſixth was then in being, and when the ſeventh ſhall come, it will continue for a ſhort time: this is a fooliſh and abſurd interpretation of the *papiſts*, who make the beaſt to be the devil, and theſe his ſeven heads; whereas he rather is the head, or God of the world: nor are ſeven emperors of *Rome* intended, which are differently reckoned, according to the different times *John* is ſuppoſed to have had this revelation. *Grotius*, who is followed by *Hammond*, ſuppoſes this was written in the times of *Veſpaſian*, and reckons them thus; *Claudius*, *Nero*, *Galba*, *Otho*, *Vitellius*, *Veſpaſian*, and *Titus*; the firſt five of theſe were dead in *John*'s time, one was then, the ſixth, *Veſpaſian*, the then reigning emperor, and the other, *Titus*, was yet to come to the empire; and when he came to it, continued but a ſhort time, two years and two months: others, who more rightly judge that *John* wrote in *Domitian*'s time, reckon them after this manner; *Galba*, *Otho*, *Vitellius*, *Veſpaſian*, *Titus*, *Domitian*, and *Nerva*; the firſt five of theſe were dead; *Domitian* was then living, and *Nerva*, the other that was to come and ſucceed him, reigned but a little while, not quite two years; but to this ſenſe muſt be objected, that there were other emperors before either *Galba* or *Claudius*; and before *John*'s time there were more than five fallen or dead; according to the firſt account, there muſt be nine dead, and according to the latter eleven; for before *Claudius* there were *Julius*, *Auguſtus*, *Tiberius*, and *Caius*: beſides, if theſe were the ſeven heads of the beaſt, the beaſt muſt have been long ago without any head, and conſequently muſt have expired; whereas it is ſtill in being, and will be under the fifth, ſixth, and ſeventh vials, which are yet to come; it will be at the battle of *Armageddon*, and will be taken then, and caſt alive into the lake of fire; to which may be added, that the beaſt, in the form in which *John* now ſaw it, was not yet riſen in the times of theſe emperors: but by the ſeven heads are meant ſo many forms of government which took place ſucceſſively in the *Roman* empire, and were all of them idolatrous heads, as kings, conſuls, dictators, decemvirs, tribunes, emperors, and popes; it being uſual for any ſort of governours, or governments and monarchies, to be called kings, *Deut.* xxxiii. 5. *Dan.* vii. 17, 23. *Five are fallen*; or ceaſed, are no longer in being as kings, conſuls, dictators, decemvirs, and tribunes; at leaſt, the ſupreme power was not lodged in any bearing either of theſe names in *John*'s time: *and one is*; the pagan emperors; an heathen emperor, *Domitian*, then reigning, when *John* had this viſion; and theſe continued to the opening of the ſixth ſeal, which put an end to that ſucceſſion, as pagan, and till the woman brought forth the man-child, or till *Conſtantine*'s time: and *the other is not yet come*; which ſome underſtand of the chriſtian emperors, who immediately ſucceeded the pagan ones, and were another, and different from them, as to religion, tho' the form of government was the ſame, and were not another head; for they were not an idolatrous head, on which were names of blaſphemy, but another king; for from the following verſe it appears, that there are eight kings, and but ſeven heads, and therefore one of them ſhould ſeem not to be a head; and theſe, when they came, continued but a ſhort time in compariſon of the heathen emperors that reigned before them, and of the pope, or antichriſt, who was to reign after them 1260 years; for they reigned not, put them all together, more than 150 years; and eſpecially at *Rome*, their ſtay was ſhort, for *Conſtantine* removed from thence to *Conſtantinople*, in the nineteenth year of his empire. But theſe emperors, tho' in religion they differed from the others, yet their form of government and title were the ſame, and therefore muſt be included in the ſixth head: according to ſome *Theodoricus* the *Oſtrogoth*, and his ſucceſſors, are meant, who continued about a hundred years; others have thought that the exarchs of *Ravenna*, who roſe up upon the deſtruction of the weſtern empire, are intended, and who continued but a ſhort time; but then theſe had not their ſeat at *Rome*, which it ſeems neceſſary each head of this beaſt ſhould have; it is better therefore to underſtand this of the popes of *Rome*, the ſeventh and laſt head of the *Roman* empire; theſe were not yet come in *John*'s time to their ſupreme dignity and authority: *and when he cometh he muſt continue a ſhort ſpace*; forty-two months, or 1260 days; that is, ſo many years, which, tho' a long time in itſelf, and in the account of man, yet with God, with whom a thouſand years is as one day, and in compariſon of the everlaſting kingdom of Chriſt, and his people, it is but a ſhort ſpace; and ſo the reign of the beaſt, and of the ten kings with him, is ſaid to be one hour, ver. 12. and this is ſaid for the comfort of the ſaints, and to keep up their faith and patience under their ſufferings in antichriſtian ſtates. Mr. *Daubuz* makes theſe ſeven heads, or kings, ſignified by ſeven mountains, ſeven capital cities, which by degrees came to belong to the *Roman* empire; as firſt *Rome* itſelf, the capital of *Italy*; next *Carthage*, the capital of *Africa*; then *Æge*, the capital of *Macedonia*; after that *Antiochia*, the capital of the eaſt; then *Auguſtodunum*, the capital of the *Gauls*; and *Alexandria*, the capital of *Egypt*; five of theſe ſix, with the monarchies belonging to them, were fallen; one, or the firſt of them now, was the miſtreſs of all; and the other ſeventh was to come, namely, *Byzantium*, or *Conſtantinople*, which continued not long. This paſſage is ſo interpreted, as alſo the ſeven heads, in ch. xiii. 1. by this writer.

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[m] Æneid. 6.

[n] In Carmine Seculari.

[o] De Triſt. l. 1. Eleg. 4.

[p] L. 3. de Laud. Stilicon. l. 3. ver. 135.

[q] Syl. l. 1. Syl. 2. ver. 191.

[r] L. 4. Ep. 53.

[s] Alex. ab Alex. Genial Dier. l. 6. c. 11.

[t] Nat. Hiſt. l. 3. c. 5.

Ver. 11. *And the beaſt that was, and is not, even he is the eighth*, &c.] That was in embryo in *John*'s time, and yet was not come to its power and grandeur, is the eighth king; and this is the papacy, which takes the name of the beaſt, becauſe it is the head of the beaſt, and the only ſurviving head of the beaſt, or *Roman* empire, now become papal: *and is of the ſeven*; one of the ſeven heads, and the laſt of them, and is an idolatrous one, as the reſt were, requiring and encouraging the worſhip of angels, of the virgin *Mary*, and ſaints departed: the pope of *Rome* is the eighth king, and ſeventh head, the latter with reſpect to his temporal power, and the former with reſpect to his eccleſiaſtical authority; for his government is quite of a different ſort from the reſt, being of a mixed kind, partly civil, and partly eccleſiaſtical, and therefore is ſignified by two beaſts in the *thirteenth* chapter: *and goeth into perdition*; being the ſon of perdition, and is juſtly deſerving of it; ſee the note on ver. 8.

Ver. 12. *And the ten horns which thou ſaweſt are ten kings*, &c.] Not ten chriſtian emperors, which are reckoned up by *Brightman* from *Conſtantine* to *Theodoſius*; for theſe did not reign with the beaſt, or give their kingdoms to him, and much leſs did they make war with the Lamb; they are rather the angels of *Michael*, that fought for him, the Lamb, againſt the dragon, and his angels, ch. xii. 7. nor ten kings that will riſe up and divide the *Roman* empire between them, towards the end of the world, which is a ſenſe deviſed by *papiſts* to obſcure and hide from men the true meaning of the paſſage; but the ten kingdoms which roſe up, and into which the *Roman* empire was divided upon its being ruined, and torn to pieces by the *Goths*, *Huns*, and *Vandals*. They are the ſame with the *ten toes* of *Nebuchadnezzar*'s image, and the *ten horns* of the fourth beaſt, or kingdom, in *Dan.* ii. 42. and vii. 7, 23, 24. Theſe are differently reckoned up by interpreters: by *Napeir* thus, *Spain*, *France*, *Lombardy*, *England*, *Scotland*, *Denmark*, *Sweden*, *Hungary*, *Italy*, and the exarchate of *Ravenna*: by Mr. *Mede* after this manner; the *Britains* in *Britain*, under *Vortimer* their king; the *Saxons* in the ſame place, under *Hengiſt*; the *Franks* in *Gallia Belgica*, or *Celtica*, under *Childeric*; the *Burgundians*, in another part of *France*, under *Gunderic*; the *Wiſigoths* in *Aquitain*, and part of *Spain*, under *Theodoric*; the *Sueves* and *Alans* in *Gallæcia* and *Portugal*, under *Riciarius*; the *Vandals* in *Spain* and *Africa*, under *Genſeric*; the *Almains* in that part of *Germany* called *Rhetia*, under *Sumanus*; the *Oſtrogoths* in *Pannonia*, and after in *Italy*, under *Theodomir*; and the *Greeks* in the reſt of the empire, under *Marcianus*: and by another [u] writer they are accounted for in this way; the *Almains* in both the *Rhetia*, and in *Pannonia*, who roſe in the year 356; the *Oſtrogoths*, firſt in *Pannonia*, and then in *Italy*, in 377; the *Wiſigoths* in *Pannonia*, and then in *Italy*, afterwards in *France*, and laſt of all in *Spain*, in 378; the *Huns* in *Pannonia*, and for ſome time throughout all *Europe*, in 378; the *Britain-Romans* in *Britain*, and afterwards the *Saxons*, in 406; the *Sueves*, firſt in *France*, and then in *Spain*, in 407; the *Alans*, firſt in *France*, and then in *Spain*, in 407; the *Vandals*, firſt in *France*, then in *Spain*, afterwards in *Africa*, in 407; the *Burgundians* in *France*, in 407; the *Franks* in *France*, in 410. And it is generally thought all theſe ten kingdoms were up by the year 450 at leaſt. Tho' Dr. *Allix* makes the epocha of them, A.D. 486, when the weſtern empire was taken from the *Romans*, and fixes them in the following order; the *Almains* in *Rhetia* and *Pannonia*; the *Franks* in *Belgica*; the *Anglo-*

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[u] De Excidio Antichriſti apud Poli Synopſ. in loc.

Saxons in *Britain*; the *Wiſigoths* in *Gallia Aquitania* and *Hiſpania Tarraconenſis*; the *Sueves* and *Alans* in *Portugal*; the *Vandals* in *Africa*; the *Burgundians* in *Gallia Sequanenſis*; the *Oſtrogoths* in *Pannonia*, and afterwards in *Italy*; the *Lombards* in *Pannonia*, and the *Heruli* and *Turcilingi*, who conquered *Auguſtulus*: and tho' theſe kingdoms were thrown into different forms and ſhapes afterwards, yet it is remarkable they were juſt of this number; as 1. *Italy* and *Germany*; 2. *France*; 3. *Spain*; 4. *England* with *Ireland*; 5. *Scotland*; 6. *Hungary*; 7. *Poland*, with *Lithuania*; 8. *Denmark*, with *Sweden* and *Norway*, *Sweden* being ſince divided; 9. *Portugal*; 10. The *Grecian* empire ſeized by the *Ottomans*. And as theſe kings can't be underſtood of ſingle perſons at the head of theſe kingdoms, or of ſo many kings ſucceeding one another; ſo neither is it neceſſary to conſider theſe kingdoms as being in the ſame ſtate, and made up of the ſame ſort of people always; it is enough that they are in the ſame place, and within the empire; for we may obſerve, that different things, at different times, are aſcribed to them, or at leaſt to ſome. They all are at firſt of one mind, and give their kingdom to the beaſt; then they, at leaſt ſome of them, hate the whore, and burn her with fire; and yet others lament the deſtruction and burning of *Rome*, ver. 16, 17. and ch. xviii. 9. *Which have received no kingdom as yet*; in *John*'s time, when the *pagan* empire was in being, and the beaſt was not riſen, with whom they were to reign; hence theſe horns have no crowns on them, ch. xii. 3. *But receive power as kings one hour with the beaſt*; as ſoon as he was riſen; and therefore the horns are repreſented with crowns upon them, ch. xiii. 1. Their riſe was with the papal beaſt, who roſe not to his ſupreme power and dignity until the weſtern emperor, which let and hindred, was removed out of the way; which was done by the barbarous nations, who ſet up theſe kingdoms, which made way for the lordly and tyrannical government of the pope of *Rome*; ſo that he and they roſe up together: and this may be meant by the *one hour*; namely, that at one and the ſame hour or ſeaſon, he came to his ſupreme authority and grandeur, and they received their kingly power with him; or this may denote the time of their continuance in their honour and greatneſs; it was but for an hour, or a ſhort time, as that phraſe ſometimes ſignifies, *Philem.* 15. and ſo the *Ethiopic* verſion renders it, *for one hour*; to which agrees the *Arabic* verſion, *and their power ſhall be of one hour*: and this ſhall be *as kings*; for they only have the title of kings, but not ſovereign power; they are vaſſals to the beaſt, the pope, who reigns over them, ver. 18. and ſets up kings in theſe kingdoms, and depoſes them at pleaſure; exalting himſelf above all that is called God, or above all civil magiſtrates; ſo that theſe have only the name, not the thing; they are as kings, and look like ſuch, but are not really ſo; tho' what power they have, they receive, not from the beaſt, but from God; the beaſt receives his power and authority, as well as ſeat, from the dragon; but civil power and magiſtracy is from God, who ſuffers theſe princes, and gives them up to ſuch ſtupidity as to give their kingdom to the beaſt, and to exerciſe their power as he directs.

Ver. 13. *Theſe have one mind*, &c.] The princes of theſe kingdoms, and their ſubjects, become, in time, of one religion; firſt they were *Arians*, and then *Papiſts*; and for a long ſeries of time there was great unity between them, with reſpect to religious ſentiments, being zealouſly attached to the church of *Rome*, its principles and practices: and *ſhall give their power and ſtrength unto the beaſt*; the papal antichriſt, the eighth king, and ſeventh head; to him they have given power to exerciſe all eccleſiaſtical authority in their kingdoms; as to ordain biſhops, and deliver the pall to whom they will; to excommunicate offenders, and even lay their kingdoms under an interdict when they pleaſed; and have aſſiſted and defended the popes of *Rome* with all their force, with all their might and main, and to the utmoſt of their power, and have engaged in what have been called the holy wars, at their motion; they have given their riches and wealth, which are called the forces of ſtrength, *Job* xxxvi. 19. which they have, by various methods, drained them of; hence the whore of *Rome* came to be decked with gold, and pearls, and precious ſtones; yea, they have given them their kingdoms, and have received them from them, and become tributary to them.

Ver. 14. *Theſe ſhall make war with the Lamb*, &c.] The Lord Jeſus Chriſt, ſo often ſpoken of in this book under this character, ch. v. 6, 12. and vi. 1. and vii. 10. and xiv. 1. And this war is not to be underſtood of a war with him perſonally, or of that laſt and deciſive battle at *Armageddon*, in which will be the kings of the earth; but of a war with his members, of their perſecuting of the ſaints, and faithful witneſſes of Chriſt in all ages, within their juriſdictions, being inſtigated to it by the beaſt, under whoſe influence they are: *and the Lamb ſhall overcome them*; partly thro' the conſtancy of his people, who will not love their lives to the death, but freely lay them down for him; nor can any thing ſeparate them from the love of Chriſt, or prevail upon them to deſert him, his truths and ordinances, cauſe and intereſt, but are more than conquerors thro' him, and ſo he overcomes in them; and partly thro' a reformation which he effects, as in ſome of thoſe kingdoms already, as *Sweden*, *Denmark*, *England*, *Scotland*, and *Ireland*, and others, and will do in others hereafter; ſee ver. 16. *for he is lord of lords, and king of kings*; he is ſo by nature, as God and creator, to whom the kingdom of nature and providence belongs; and by office, as mediator, being made higher than the kings of the earth; hence he is an over-match for them, they can't ſtand before him; this is a reaſon why he overcomes them, and it can't be thought it ſhould be otherwiſe: this lamb is the lion of the tribe of *Judah*, and when he rouſes himſelf, and ſtirs up his wrath, and exerts his power, kings and great men flee from him; ſee *Rev.* vi. 15, 16, 17. *Pſ.* ii. 6, 9, 10, 11, 12. This is a proof of Chriſt's proper deity, the ſame titles being given to him, the Word and Son of God, as to God himſelf, *Rev.* xix. 16. 1 *Tim.* vi. 15, 16. *And they that are with him*; his ſervants and his ſoldiers, that fight under him, and abide by him, are *called, and choſen, and faithful*; they are choſen in Chriſt from all eternity, to grace here, and glory hereafter, and ſo ſtand oppoſed to the admirers of the beaſt, whoſe names are not written in the book of life, ver. 8. for this is to be underſtood of their eternal election, and not of their ſeparation by effectual vocation in time, for that is expreſſed by their being *called*; and tho' their calling is here ſet before election, as in 2 *Pet.* i. 10. yet it does not precede it; the *Arabic* verſion reads, *choſen, called, faithful*; firſt *choſen* by God the Father, then *called*, not with the bare external call by the miniſtry of the word, for ſo, many are called, and not choſen; but by ſpecial grace to ſpecial benefits, and with an holy and heavenly calling, and which is irreſiſtible, and without repentance; and being called they remain *faithful:* the meaning is, either that they have faith, or are believers in Chriſt; which faith they have beſtowed on them in effectual vocation, as a fruit of electing grace; and by this they overcome the world: or elſe, that they are perſons of integrity and uprightneſs, that are on the ſide of Chriſt; they are the faithful in the Lord, and are made ſo by him; and they are faithful to him, and abide by his Goſpel and ordinances, and in his cauſe and intereſt, even unto death; and ſo this character is expreſſive of the perſeverance of thoſe who are choſen and called, even unto the end.

Ver. 15. *And he ſaith unto me*, &c.] That is, the angel, who propoſed to give *John* the interpretation of the viſion, he went on with it as follows: *the waters which thou ſaweſt, where the whore ſitteth*, ver. 1. ſee the note there, *are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues*; denoting the vaſt multitude of people, of which the ſeveral kingdoms, of divers languages, conſiſt, which belong to the juriſdiction of *Rome* papal: it is an eaſtern way of ſpeaking, and is particularly uſed to expreſs the various kingdoms, and infinite number of people belonging to the *Babyloniſh* monarchy, which was an emblem of the antichriſtian ſtate, *Dan*. iii. 4, 7, 29. and iv. 1. and theſe are compared to waters, to many waters; which phraſe ſometimes is uſed for the ſea, *Pſ*. cvii. 23. becauſe of the vaſt numbers of them; the whole world wondred after the beaſt, and the kings and inhabitants of the earth have been ſubject to the ſee of *Rome*; and becauſe of their over-bearing force, carrying all before them; ſee *Iſ*. viii. 7, 8. *Jer*. xlvii. 2. *Rev*. xiii. 3, 4. and becauſe, like waters, they are continually upon the flux, one generation ſucceeding another; and becauſe of their inſtability, fickleneſs, and inconſtancy, as in religion, ſo in their conſtitution, they'll hate the whore they love; and as they frequently change and alter in their form, at laſt they will utterly ceaſe: ſo the *Jews*[w] interpret many waters, in *Cant*. viii. 7. of all people, and of the kings of the earth, and of the nations of the world; and they ſay, that many waters never ſignify any other than all the nations, and thoſe that are appointed over them[x]. So, *he drew me out of many waters*, *Pſ*. xviii. 16. is by the *Targum* on the place explained, *he delivered me from many people*. And ſo *Pſ*. xlvi. 4. is paraphraſed by the *Targumiſt*; "people, *as rivers*, and their ſtreams "ſhall come, and make glad the city of the "Lord;" ſee the *Targum* on *Iſ*. viii. 7. and in *Ezek*. xxxii. 2. where it is obſerved kingdoms are compared to waters[y].

Ver. 16. *And the ten horns which thou ſaweſt upon the beaſt*, &c.] Ver. 3. and which are interpreted of ten kings, ver. 12. The *Alexandrian* copy, the *Complutenſian* edition, and the *Syriac*, *Arabic*, and *Ethiopic* verſions read, *and the beaſt*; and then the ſenſe is, that the ten kings and ſtates in particular, who have defended antichriſt, and the whole empire in general, which has bore up and ſupported the whore of *Rome: theſe ſhall hate the whore*; her principles and ſentiments, her doctrines, which are doctrines of devils, her wicked practices, her idolatries, adulteries, murders, and thefts; they'll repent of their fornications with her, and ceaſe from them; their love will be turned to hatred, and the latter will be greater than ever the former was, like *Amnon*'s to *Tamar*; and as it uſually is with men towards harlots, when they ſee their follies, and how they have been deceived and abuſed by them: *and ſhall make her deſolate*; leave her, quit her communion; no more commit fornication with her, or join with her in her idolatrous worſhip; but come out from that apoſtate church, and renounce all fellowſhip with her, and perſuade and engage as many as they can influence to do the ſame: *and naked*; ſtrip her of her purple, ſcarlet colour, gold, pearls, and precious ſtones; ceaſe to give their power and ſtrength, with-hold their taxes and tribute, deprive her of her power and authority, civil and eccleſiaſtical, in their realms, and take away even her patrimony from her; and not only ſo, but expoſe her ſhame and filthineſs, her abominable principles and practices to all the world; which has been in part done already: *and ſhall eat her fleſh*; not literally, but myſtically; not out of love, but hatred; they ſhall take that to themſelves, and make uſe of, which have fattened her, as biſhopricks, and other benefices, lands, endowments belonging to abbies, and monaſteries, and other religious houſes; an inſtance and example of which we have in king *Henry* the eighth's time; ſo ſome underſtand this phraſe of devouring the ſubſtance of others, in *Pſ*. xxvii. 2. *Dan*. vii. 5. So the *Targumiſts* often interpret *fleſh and fatneſs*, by *riches*, *goods*, or *ſubſtance*; the phraſe in *Iſ*. xvii. 4. *the fatneſs of his fleſh ſhall wax lean*, is paraphraſed, עותר יקריה, *the riches of his glory ſhall be carried away*; and the words in *Mic*. iii. 3. *who ſhall alſo eat the fleſh of my people*, &c. are rendered, *and they who ſpoil*, נכסי עמי, *the goods* or *ſubſtance of my people, and take away their precious mammon*, or *money from them*. And again, *Zech*. xi. 9. *let the reſt eat, every one the fleſh of another*, is in the *Targum*, *let a man ſpoil*, נכסי, *the goods* or *ſubſtance of his neighbour*; and in ver. 16. *he ſhall eat the fleſh of the fat*; the paraphraſe is, *he ſhall* ſpoil, נכסי, *the goods* or *ſubſtance of the rich*. *And burn her with fire*; alluding to the law in *Lev*. xxi. 9. which required, that the daughter of a prieſt, that played the whore, ſhould be burnt with fire; and this is to be underſtood literally of burning the city of *Rome*, the ſeat of the whore, with fire; of which ſee ch. xviii. 8, 9, 18. It has been very near being burnt in times paſt, as by *Alaricus* the *Goth*, *Attila* the *Hun*, *Genſeric* the *Vandal*, and by *Totilas*, and in later times by *Charles* the fifth; and would have been, had they not been diſſuaded or diverted from it; and which were ſo many preludes and warnings of its future fate: and we may learn from hence, that *Rome*, and the *Romiſh* antichriſt, will not be deſtroyed by the *Turks*, but by the chriſtians; and by the ſame ſtates, and kingdoms, and princes, by which the whore of *Rome* has been ſupported in her grandeur, power, and authority, who will revolt from popery, and embrace the pure Goſpel of Chriſt: and this ſhows, that the ten horns, or kingdoms, into which the *Roman* empire has been divided, will ſubſiſt in this form at the deſtruction of *Rome*; wherefore, it has been rightly obſerved by ſome, that not one of theſe kingdoms ſhall ever be able to riſe to univerſal monarchy. *France* has been for many years attempting it, but in vain; and we may ſit down eaſy and ſatisfied, aſſuring ourſelves with the greateſt confidence, that all attempts this way will be fruitleſs; there never will be another univerſal monarchy on earth, but that of Chriſt's; ſee *Dan*. ii. 37, 39, 40. and vii. 3, 23, 27.

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[w] Targum in Cant. viii. 7. Shirhaſhirim Rabba, fol. 26. 1. & in Num. fol. 105. 3. Bemidbar Rabba, §. 2. fol. 179. 4.

[x] Zohar in Gen. fol. 51. 3. & Raya Mehimna in ib.

[y] Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 93. 2.

Ver. 17. *For God hath put in their hearts to fulfill his will*, &c.] By doing the preceding things to the whore of *Rome*, whoſe deſtruction is according to the will of God; it is his approving will, what he likes of, and will be well-pleaſed with; it is his will of command, what he will order to be done, ch. xviii. 6, 7. and it is his determining will, his will of purpoſe, his decree, what he has reſolved ſhall be done; he has fixed the time of her reign, and longer than that ſhe ſhall not continue: and theſe kings in deſtroying her, will not do ſo much their own will, as the will of God, and God will put it into their hearts to do it; he will work in them both to will and to do; he'll fill them with hatred to her; he'll incline their minds to do the above things, as it will be in the power of their hands to do them; he who has the hearts of all men, and even of kings in his hands, and can turn them as rivers of water, will move them hereunto, *Prov.* xxi. 1. he that turned the hearts of the *Egyptians* to hate his people *Iſrael*, *Pſ.* cv. 25. will turn the hearts of theſe kings to hate the whore, and do unto her as is here predicted; and the ſame God will do this, who has, on the other hand, already put into their hearts to do the following things: *and to agree*; this clauſe is wanting in the *Alexandrian* copy, and in the *Vulgate Latin* verſion, and is the ſame with that of having one mind, ver. 13. that is, being of the ſame religion; God giving them up to a reprobate mind, to believe a lye, that they might be damned; which muſt be underſtood not of the ſame individuals, but of their predeceſſors; unleſs this is to be interpreted of their agreeing together againſt the whore, to pull her down, and ſet up the pure worſhip and ſervice of God; for this is a bleſſing of grace from God, who gives his people one heart and one way, that they may fear him, *Jer.* xxxii. 39. but the former ſenſe ſeems beſt, ſince it follows, *and give their kingdom unto the beaſt*; the eighth king, and ſeventh head, the pope of *Rome*; to whom they have given their power and ſtrength in things civil and eccleſiaſtical, their wealth and riches; and have received their crowns from him, and have held their kingdoms by him, and become tributary to him: and this is done, and will be, *until the words of God ſhall be fulfilled*; concerning the afflictions of his church and people, and the reign of antichriſt, for the ſpace of forty and two months, ch. xi. 2. and xiii. 5. all which while they are fulfilling the ſecret will of God, unknown to them, and yet act againſt his revealed will, and break his commands; juſt as the *Jews*, ignorant of the prophecies of the Old Teſtament, fulfilled them in condemning Chriſt, *Acts* xiii. 27. That God ſhould put it into the hearts of theſe kings to fulfill his will, in deſtroying the whore of *Rome*, is eaſily received; but there ſeems ſome difficulty that he ſhould put it into their hearts, to agree and give their kingdom to the beaſt, which was ſinful: now this he did, not by infuſing ſin into them, which is contrary to his pure and holy nature; but by leaving them, and giving them up to their own hearts luſts; ſtirring up, and moving upon their minds, and directing the motions of it, to ſuch and ſuch objects, which they readily and voluntarily fell in with; and yet the concern of God herein does not, nor do his decrees about ſin infringe the liberty of the will in acting, or excuſe the ſinfulneſs of the action, or make God the author of ſin; as the inſtances of ſelling of *Joſeph* by his brethren, and the crucifixion of Chriſt by the *Jews*, ſhew.

Ver. 18. *And the woman which thou ſaweſt*, &c.] Ver. 3. as there deſcribed, *is that great city*, often mentioned in this book; great *Babylon*, the city of *Rome*, ch. xi. 8. and xiv. 8. and xvi. 19. *which reigneth over the kings of the earth*; which then reigned in *John*'s time over the kings of the earth; and this clearly points out the city of *Rome*, for there was no other city then, but that, which reigned over the kings of the earth; that was then the metropolis of the *Roman* empire, to which the whole world was ſubject; and therefore it is called all the world, *Luke* ii. 1. and ſince, all the kings of the empire have been under the juriſdiction of *Rome* papal. It was formerly called, urbs regum, *a city of kings* [z], either for the reaſon in the text, or becauſe its inhabitants looked like kings.

CHAP. XVIII.

THIS chapter gives an account of the fall of *Babylon*, and of the lamentation of many, and of the joy of others by reaſon of it; which account is publiſhed by ſeveral angels: the firſt that declares her fall, is deſcribed by his original, deſcending from heaven; by the great power he had; by his reſplendent glory, and by his mighty cry in publiſhing her deſtruction; which is illuſtrated by the deſolate condition ſhe will be in upon her fall; the reaſons of which are given, becauſe the nations and kings of the earth had committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth were enriched by her luxury, ver. 1, 2, 3. Another voice is heard from heaven, calling upon the people of God, firſt to come out of her, leſt partaking of her ſins they ſhould ſhare in her plagues, ſeeing her iniquities had reached to heaven, and were remembred before God; and next to take full vengeance on her, becauſe ſhe had glorified herſelf, lived deliciouſly, and in great ſecurity, ver. 4, 5, 6, 7. And then follows a continuation of the account of her deſtruction, what her plagues would be, death, mourning, famine, and fire; and which would be ſudden, in one hour, and certain, from the power and juſtice of God, ver. 8. Next follow the lamentations of the kings, merchants, and maſters of ſhips, becauſe of her greatneſs, riches, and merchandize, which are all come to nothing, ver. 9—19. And then the church, the ſaints, apoſtles, and prophets, are called upon to rejoice at the vengeance taken on her, ver. 20. upon which a mighty angel appears, who by an action ſignifies the manner of her deſtruction, and the irrecoverableneſs of her ſtate and condition, ver. 21. and declares her utter ruin, by affirming that nothing that was either delightful or profitable, or neceſſary or comfortable, ſhould any more be found in her; giving the reaſons of it, becauſe of her luxury, idolatry, and blood-ſhed, ver. 22, 23, 24.

Ver. 1. *And after theſe things*, &c.] The viſion of the woman on the ſcarlet-coloured beaſt, and the interpretation of both by the angel: *I ſaw another angel*; not the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, tho' the ſeveral things ſaid of this angel agree with him; nor one of the miniſtring ſpirits, tho' the characters of him will alſo ſuit with one of them; but rather a miniſter of the Goſpel, or a ſett of Goſpel miniſters, who will ariſe a little before the downfal of *Babylon*, in the ſpiritual reign of Chriſt; tho' not the ſame with the angel of fire, ch. xiv. 18. as ſome have thought, becauſe of his illuſtrious appearance, and the loudneſs of his voice; but the ſame with the angel, or third thundering voice in ch. xiv. 6. for not only the times of both agree, but the ſelfſame words are expreſſed by one as by the other; and this angel is diſtinct from him that ſhowed *John* the preceding viſion, and gave him the interpretation of it, and from all the ſeven angels that had the vials, and is deſcribed as follows: and firſt by the place from whence he came, *John* ſaw him *come down from heaven*; denoting the ſuddenneſs of his appearance and cry; he came down at once, and cried out immediately; the ſubject of his cry the deſtruction of *Babylon*, being what will be at an unawares; and alſo the commiſſion and authority of the miniſters ſignified by him, who will have their warrant from heaven to ſay what they will deliver; ſo that this likewiſe expreſſes the truth of their meſſage, ſince both that and they come from heaven: *having great power*; to do great work, to declare the fall of *Babylon* the great: or *having great authority*; being ſent from the king of kings, in his name, as his embaſſador, to proclaim what ſhortly will come to paſs; an event of the greateſt importance to the glory of God, the intereſt of Chriſt, and the comfort of his people: *and the earth was lightned with his glory*; ſee *Ezek.* xliii. 2. by which is meant the glorious Goſpel of Chriſt, the light of which will at this time be very great: theſe miniſters will run to and fro the earth, and knowledge will be increaſed, and the earth will be filled with it: the *Arabic* verſion reads, *with the ſplendor of his countenance*; and the *Ethiopic* verſion, *with the ſplendor of his countenance, and his glory*; ſee *Iſ.* lx. 1, 2, 3.

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[z] Juſtin. l. 18. c. 2.

Ver. 2. *And he cried mightily with a ſtrong voice*, &c.] Which ſhews not only the vehemence and affection of the miniſters of the word, who will publiſh what follows, but the greatneſs and importance of it; and this loud voice may be, as for the ſake of the whole church in general, that all may hear, ſo for the ſake of thoſe of the Lord's people in particular, that will be in *Babylon* at this time; and it may have regard to that deep ſleep and ſpirit of ſlumber that *Babylon* itſelf will be in, which notwithſtanding this loud cry, will remain inſenſible of its ruin till it comes upon her, as was the caſe of old *Babylon*, *Jer.* li. 39, 40, 41. *ſaying*, *Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen*; the whole world is not deſigned by *Babylon*, for it is diſtinguiſhed from all nations in the following verſe; nor *Babylon* in *Chaldea*, which was fallen long before *John* ſaw this viſion, but *Rome* papal; ſee the note on ch. xiv. 8. ſo the woman is called in ch. xvii. 5. who ſits on ſeven mountains, and is that great city, the city of *Rome*, that reigns over the kings of the earth, ver. 9, 18. this is ſaid to be fallen, becauſe in a very little time after this declaration it will fall; for as yet it was not deſtroyed, ſince after this the Lord's people are called upon to come out of her, and are bid to reward her double; and it is declared, that her plagues ſhould come in one day, and ſhe ſhould be burnt with fire; and an angel after this throws a milſtone into the ſea, ſaying, that ſo ſhould *Babylon* be thrown down, ver. 4, 6, 8, 21. and it is repeated to denote the certainty and utter deſtruction of her: and which is more fully expreſſed by what follows, *and is become the habitation of devils*; as old *Babylon* was of *ſatyrs*, *Iſ.* xiii. 21. dæmons which appeared in a hairy form, like goats, and the word is rendered devils in *Lev.* xvii. 7. and the inhabitants of *Rome* now are no other; the pope and his cardinals, the prieſts, jeſuits, monks, and friars, are the ſpirits of devils, and their doctrines the doctrines of devils; ſee ch. xvi. 14. 1 *Tim.* iv. 1. *and the hold of every foul ſpirit*; devils are frequently called unclean ſpirits, and theſe appear in deſert and deſolate places, *Matt.* xii. 43. where they are either of choice, or rather are obliged to it; and ſo the word tranſlated *hold* ſignifies a priſon, or place of confinement; and ſuch as are comparable to unclean ſpirits, now haunt and abound in *Rome*, and its territories; ſee ch. xvi. 13. *and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird*; ſuch as vultures, kites, owls, &c. which generally reſide in deſolate and uninhabited places; the *Alexandrian* copy, the *Syriac* and *Ethiopic* verſions add, *and the hold*, or *ſeat of every unclean and hateful beaſt*; and ſo the deſolation of old *Babylon*, is deſcribed by wild beaſts and doleful creatures dwelling in it, *Iſ.* xiii. 21, 22. *Jer.* l. 39. and li. 37. Some conſider all this as a reaſon of the deſtruction of *Babylon* or *Rome*, becauſe it now is the reſidence of perſons comparable to devils, foul ſpirits, hateful birds, and beaſts of prey; but this account rather deſcribes its ſtate and caſe in which it will be after its ruin, being never more to be inhabited by men, in alluſion to old *Babylon*, *Iſ.* xiii. 19, 20. *Jer.* li. 62.

Ver. 3. *For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication*, &c.] That is, all the nations of the *Roman* empire, the *European* nations, otherwiſe the pagan and *Mahometan* nations have not; but theſe have, being made to drink by her, and made drunk therewith, that is, with her idolatries; ſee the note on ch. xiv. 8. *And the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her*; joined with her in her idolatrous worſhip and practices, and encouraged the ſame, and obliged their ſubjects to them in their dominions; ſee the note on ch. xvii. 2. *And the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies*; or *luxury*; which is not to be underſtood in a literal ſenſe; tho' it is true that many merchants, in all ages, have enriched themſelves by ſending their commodities to *Rome*, where, thro' the vaſt conſumption and luxuriousneſs of the place, they have bore a good price; but this is to be interpreted of ſpiritual merchants; theſe are ſuch who do not merchandize by ſea, but are land-merchants, the merchants of the earth, and are ſaid to be *the great men of the earth*, ver. 23. ſuch as are equal to princes, lords, and nobles; ſuch are the cardinals, archbiſhops, and biſhops; tho' the inferior clergy of the *Romiſh* church, who are under theſe, may be included: to which may be added, that one part of their wares is ſaid to be *the ſouls of men*, ver. 13. which plainly ſhows what ſort of merchants theſe are; they are ſuch who make merchandize of men, and pretend to ſell them heaven, and the ſalvation of their ſouls; theſe are they that deal in pardons and indulgences, which they ſell to ignorant people, and for a ſum of money ſay maſs to fetch ſouls out of purgatory: all things have been ſaleable at *Rome*, crucifixes, prieſts, altars, temples, prayers, heaven, Chriſt, yea God himſelf, as the poet *Mantuan* expreſſes it; and becauſe of theſe idolatries, and wicked practices, *Rome* will be at laſt deſtroyed.

Ver. 4. *And I heard another voice from heaven*, &c.] Either of another, or of the ſame angel, or rather of God, or Chriſt himſelf, ſince the perſons addreſſed are called his people: *ſaying*, *come out of her my people*; meaning either his elect ones, till now uncalled, being ſuch whom God had choſen for his people, and were ſo by virtue of the covenant of grace, were given to Chriſt as his people, and were redeemed by him, tho' till this call, in an unconverted ſtate; or elſe ſuch who had been ſecretly called by the grace of God, but had not made a publick profeſſion of the Goſpel, nor bore an open teſtimony againſt the *Romiſh* idolatry; for as the Lord had a righteous *Lot* in *Sodom*, and ſaints where ſatan's ſeat was, *Rome* pagan, ſo he will have a people in *Rome* papal, at the time when its deſtruction draws near; and theſe will be called out, not only in a ſpiritual ſenſe, to quit the communion of the church, to forſake its idolatries, and not touch the unclean thing, ſeparate themſelves from her, and bear a teſtimony againſt her doctrines and worſhip, but in a literal ſenſe, locally; they ſhall be bid to come out of her, as *Lot* was ordered to go out of *Sodom* before its burning, and the people of the *Jews* out of *Babylon* before the taking of it, *Jer.* l. 8. and li. 45. to which reference is here had; and as the chriſtians were called out of *Jeruſalem* before the deſtruction of it: this ſhows the particular knowledge the Lord has of his people, be they where they will, and the gracious care he takes of them, that they periſh not with others; and that it is his will they ſhould be a ſeparate people from the reſt of the world; and this call of his ſufficiently juſtifies the proteſtants in their ſeparation from the church of *Rome*, and every ſeparation from any apoſtate church: *that ye be not partakers of her ſins*; by conniving at them, or committing the ſame; and all ſuch are partakers of them, and have fellowſhip with theſe unfruitful works of darkneſs, that are in the communion of that church; and thoſe that dwell at *Rome* are in great danger of being ſo, and cannot well avoid it; yea, even thoſe that only go to ſee it, and ſtay but for a time in it, and that not only thro' the ſtrength and influence of example, but thro' the force of power and authority: *and that ye receive not of her plagues*; or puniſhments; the ſeven laſt plagues, which belong to her, the vials of which will be poured out upon one or other of the antichriſtian ſtates, and the fifth particularly will fall upon *Rome*, the ſeat of the beaſt, and is what is here referred to.

Ver. 5. *For her ſins have reached unto heaven*, &c.] Or *have followed unto heaven*; one after another, in one age after another, until they have been as it were heaped up together, and have reached the heavens; the phraſe denotes the multitude of them, God's knowledge and notice of them, and the cry of them to him; ſee *Gen.* xviii. 20. *Jon.* i. 2. the *Alexandrian* copy and *Complutenſian* edition read, *have cleaved*, or *glued*, and ſo the *Syriac* and *Arabic* verſions ſeem to have read; her ſins were as it were ſoldered together, and ſtuck faſt to her, and being joined and linked together, made a long chain, and reached to heaven, and cleaved to that, and cried for vengeance: *and God hath remembred her iniquities*; and is about to puniſh her for them; for as forgiveneſs of ſin is ſignified by a non-remembrance of it, ſo puniſhment of ſin by a remembrance of it, and of the perſons that commit it; ſee ch. xvi. 19.

Ver. 6. *Reward her even as ſhe rewarded you*, &c.] This is ſpoken to the people of God, who are before called out of *Babylon*; and the chief of them are the ſeven angels with the ſeven laſt plagues of the wrath of God, and the ſame with the ten kings that will burn the whore with fire; theſe are called upon to take vengeance, by way of retaliation for what ſhe had done to them, in alluſion to what is ſaid of old *Babylon*, *Jer.* l. 15. and li. 24, 35. and muſt be underſtood not of what ſhe will have done to them perſonally, but to their predeceſſors in the faith of Chriſt in former ages; that as ſhe had hated them, and made war with them, ſo now they ſhould hate her, and make war with her; and as ſhe had ſtripped them naked of their cloaths, and ſpoiled them of their worldly goods and ſubſtance, ſo now they ſhould ſtrip her naked of her harlot's attire, of her gold, ſilver, and precious ſtones, and make her and her territories deſolate; and as ſhe has burnt many of the precious ſaints in the flames, as here in *England*, and elſewhere, ſo now they ſhall utterly burn her with fire; and as ſhe has ſhed the blood of the righteous, and drank it, and been drunk with it, they ſhall give her blood to drink; and as ſhe hath killed multitudes with the ſword, ſo now ſhall they kill her and her children; ſee ch. xiii. 12. nor is this contrary to the doctrine of Chriſt and his Apoſtles, and the ſpirit of chriſtianity, which will not admit of revenge, *Matt.* v. 38, 39. *Rom.* xii. 17, 19, 20, 21. ſince this will not be private, but public revenge, inflicted by chriſtian princes and magiſtrates, who are miniſters of God, and revengers to execute wrath on them that do evil: *and double unto her double according to her works*; the meaning is not to inflict upon her a puniſhment doubly greater than her ſins, for this would be contrary to the juſtice of God; nor does ever God puniſh men in this life more, but leſs than their iniquities deſerve; nor can any temporal puniſhment be doubly greater than ſin, which deſerves eternal death; and with this ſhe will be puniſhed hereafter, and therefore will not have her full puniſhment now, and much leſs a greater than her ſins required; to which may be added, that this will be according to her works, her wicked works, and therefore will not exceed the demerit of her ſins: but the ſenſe is, that if it was poſſible to be done, they ſhould uſe her with double ſeverity to that ſhe had uſed them with; ſeeing her ſins deſerved a ſeverer treatment than even they had had from her; the phraſe ſignifies an abundant and utter deſtruction, a puniſhment which was ſuitable and ſufficient; ſee *Iſ.* xl. 2. *Jer.* xvi. 18. and xvii. 18. and it ſuggeſts, that they ſhould not ſpare her, nor pity her, but uſe her with the greateſt ſeverity imaginable, it being not poſſible to exceed her due deſerts, or what her works required: *in the cup which ſhe hath filled*, *fill to her double*; not in the cup of her abominations, her errors, idolatries, and wickedneſs; but in the cup of afflictions and trouble, which ſhe wrung out to the people of God, in that give her double portion: the ſenſe is the ſame as before.

Ver. 7. *How much ſhe hath glorified herſelf*, &c.] And acted the proud and haughty part in exalting herſelf above all emperors, kings, and princes, above all kingdoms and ſtates, and alſo above all churches, aſſuming arrogant titles, and even blaſphemous names; ſee ch. xiii. 1, 5. *and lived deliciouſly*; in a very luxuriant manner, as the popes, cardinals, archbiſhops, biſhops, prieſts, monks, and friars have done; ſome being clothed in purple and ſcarlet, and in gold and ſilver, and all living upon the fat of the land, and in rioting and drunkenneſs, in chambering and wantoneſs: *ſo much torment and ſorrow give her*; by pulling down her pride, which goes before a fall, than which nothing could more torment and afflict her; by ſtripping her of her fine cloaths and rich apparel; and by taking away her fat benefices from her, which will cut her to the heart; and by burning her with fire, which will be very excruciating: *for ſhe ſaith in her heart*, *I ſit a queen*; a lady of kingdoms,

doms, as in *Iſ.* xlvii. 5. to which the reference is; having a temporal power and authority over the kings of the earth, and a ſpiritual juriſdiction over all churches, apoſtate ones, being the mother of harlots; and her *ſitting* as ſuch, as it well agrees with the whore on many waters, and the woman on the ſcarlet-coloured beaſt and ſeven mountains, who are all the ſame, and is very ſuitable to antichriſt, who pretends to ſit in *Peter*'s chair, and does ſit in the temple of God, as if he was God; ſo it is expreſſive of her empire and government over nations and churches, and of the continuance of it, as ſhe imagines, ſee *Iſ.* xlvii. 7. and ſo the *Ethiopic* verſion renders it, *I ſhall reign always*: to which ſhe adds, *and am no widow*; nor never ſhall be, as ſhe flatters herſelf, ſee *Iſ.* xlvii. 8. Were ſhe the true ſpouſe of Chriſt, as ſhe boaſts herſelf, ſhe indeed would be no widow, for Chriſt is an everlaſting and never-dying huſband; but ſhe is the whore of the kings of the earth, and though ſhe fancies ſhe ſhall be no widow, that is, bereft of people and power, ſee *Lam.* i. 1. becauſe ſhe now ſits on many waters, people, multitudes, and nations and tongues; yet ere long, like old *Babylon*, ſhe will have no men in her, but will be inhabited by devils, foul ſpirits, and hateful birds: *and ſhall ſee no ſorrow*; thro' loſs of children, power, and authority; ſee *Iſ.* xlvii. 8. but in this alſo ſhe will be miſtaken; her children will be killed with death, as is threatned to *Jezabel*, ch. ii. 23. and her plagues ſhall come upon her at once: now theſe words may be conſidered either as ſpoken by her when in the height of her power and glory, as ſhe was about three or four hundred years ago; or juſt before her deſtruction, which ſeems to be the caſe, and looks as if ſhe would regain her power, and be in *ſtatu quo* before her utter ruin; ſee the note on ch. xi. 2.

Ver. 8. *Therefore ſhall her plagues come in one day*, &c.] The ſeven laſt plagues, which will be in a very little time executed upon her, very ſpeedily and very quickly one after another, if not all together; and particularly the fifth vial may be reſpected, as well as the plagues that follow; ſee *Iſ.* xlvii. 9. *death*; not the ſecond death, which will not be till after the deciſive battle at *Armageddon*, when the beaſt will be taken, and caſt alive into the lake which burns with fire and brimſtone, which is the ſecond death; but either the peſtilence, which is called ſo, ch. vi. 8. or rather death by the ſword, war, which will be brought upon her, and in which ſhe and her children will be ſlain with the ſword: *mourning*; for the loſs of her children, the deſtruction of the city of *Rome* itſelf, the ſeat of the beaſt, and for the darkneſs of his kingdom, the inhabitants of which ſhall be in ſuch pain, as to gnaw their tongues for it: *famine*; which generally attends war, at leaſt ſieges; and it looks as if *Rome* would be beſieged a while before it is deſtroyed, which will produce a grievous famine in it; this is oppoſed to her living deliciouſly, as well as the two former are to her notion of ſitting a queen for ever, and knowing no ſorrow: *and ſhe ſhall be utterly burnt with fire*; the burning of *Rome* has been attempted ſeveral times, by different perſons, and has been burnt in part, but not wholly, ſee the note on ch. xvii. 16. but now it will be entirely deſtroyed by fire; either by fire from heaven, as *Sodom* and *Gomorrha* were; or by fire breaking out of the earth, it being very manifeſt that there are *Volcano's*, burning mountains, and ſubterraneous fires in thoſe parts, which ſeem to be ſo many preparations in nature for the burning of that city; or rather by the ten kings, who will ſet fire to it; and it may be by all theſe ways. The *Jews* have a notion that at the coming of the Meſſiah, *Rome* will be burnt [a], as *Sodom* has been; you will find, ſay they [b], that of *Sodom* and of that kingdom (*Rome*, of which they are ſpeaking, and which they afterwards call the fourth kingdom) it is decreed concerning them both, that they *ſhould be burnt with fire*; of *Sodom*, *Gen.* xix. 24. and of the fourth kingdom (*Rome*) *Iſ.* xxxiv. 9. *for ſtrong is the Lord God that judgeth her*; the *Alexandrian* copy reads, *that has judged*; and ſo the *Syriac* and *Arabic* verſions; that is, has purpoſed and determined her deſtruction, and therefore it is unavoidable; he that has reſolved upon it, and foretold it, and has adjudged her to it, is the Lord God Almighty; and he is able to execute the ſentence determined and pronounced, and it is impoſſible ſhe ſhould eſcape: it may be underſtood of Chriſt the mighty God, the judge of quick and dead; ſee *Jer.* l. 34.

Ver. 9. *And the kings of the earth who have committed fornication*, &c.] Idolatry, ch. xvii. 2. and xviii. 3. *and lived deliciouſly with her*; ver. 3, 7. joining with her in her ſenſual, as well as in her idolatrous practices: *ſhall bewail her*, *and lament for her*; ſhall mourn inwardly, and by various geſtures outwardly expreſs their ſorrow at her deſolation; ſee *Ezek.* xxvii. 30, 31, 32. theſe will not be the ten kings who will burn the whore with fire, and then repent of what they have done, and weep over her, as *Titus* did at the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*; as ſome *Popiſh* writers have fancied, for they will hate the whore, and eat her fleſh; but earthly and idolatrous kings, who will be in the communion of the church of *Rome*: *when they ſhall ſee the ſmoke of her burning*; as *Abraham* ſaw the ſmoke of *Sodom* and *Gomorrha* go up like the ſmoke of a furnace; by which they will perceive that her judgment is come, and her ruin begun.

Ver. 10. *Standing afar off for the fear of her torment*, &c.] Leſt they themſelves ſhould ſhare in it, who have partook of her ſins; either they will not be in a capacity to help her, or they will be diſpirited, and will be in awe and dread of God's righteous judgments: *ſaying*, *alas*, *alas! that great city Babylon! that mighty city!* it will aggravate their ſorrow, when they reflect upon the former grandeur, magnificence, power, and authority of the city and ſee of *Rome*, ſo often called in this book the great city; and ſo it is by other writers; the *Jews* call it ſo: they ſay [c], when the Meſſiah comes, "the kings "of the world ſhall be gathered to קרתא רבתא, "*the great city* of *Rome*; and the holy bleſſed God "will caſt upon them fire and hail, and great hail-"ſtones (with which compare ch. xvi. 21.) and "they ſhall periſh from the world, except thoſe "kings that do not come there." It is common with the *Jewiſh* writers to call the *Roman* empire *Edom*; and *Magdiel*, one of the dukes of *Edom*, *Gen.* xxxvi. 43. who has his name from *greatneſs*, is interpreted by one of their commentators [d] of *Rome*; the reaſon of which, another of them ſays [e], is becauſe *Rome* is become *great* above all kingdoms: the mount of *Eſau* in *Obad.* ver. 21. is interpreted ית כרכא רבא, *that great city* of *Eſau*, which is *Rome* [f]; and the ſame epithet it has in the *Talm*[illegible]; and *Porphyry* calls it την μεγαλην πολιν, *that great city*, without making mention of its name, as here; ſo among the *Latins* [h], *Magnæ ſpes altera* Romæ: *for in one hour is thy judgment come*; the *Ethiopic* verſion

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[a] Zohar in Gen. fol. 74. 3. & in Num. fol. 86. 1.

[b] Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 48. 2.

[c] Zohar in Gen. fol. 74. 3.

[d] Jarchi in Gen. xxxvi. 43.

[e] Abarbinel in Dan. fol. 42. 3.

[f] Jarchi in Obadiah, ver. 21.

[g] T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 21. 2.

[h] Servius in Virgil, Eclog. 6. p. 67.

ſion reads, *the hour of her judgment*; the time of her puniſhment fixed by God; but the ſenſe is, that her vengeance was ſuddenly come upon her; this is the judgment of the great whore, which the angel propoſed to ſhow to *John*, ch. xvii. 1.

Ver. 11. *And the merchants of the earth ſhall weep and mourn over her*, &c.] Who theſe are, ſee the note on ver. 3. and what their lamentation, ver. 16. the reaſon of their weeping and mourning follows: *for no man buyeth their merchandize any more*; what their merchandize is, is expreſſed in the two next verſes; and this ſhows that it is not to be underſtood merely in a literal ſenſe; for ſuch commodities in general as are there mentioned, if they go not off at one place, they will at another; and the decay of trade in one city does not put a ſtop to buſineſs all the world over; and often ſo it is, that the ruin of commerce in one place is the riſe of it in another; and all the things hereafter ſpoken of, excepting the laſt article, are what will be merchandized in one place or another to the end of the world; unleſs the ſenſe ſhould be, that no man at *Rome*, and the parts adjacent, will buy of this merchandize any more; but though they ſhould not, this could not be cauſe of ſuch lamentation as is afterwards expreſſed, ſince their goods might be taken off elſewhere; but it looks as if this muſt be underſtood of ſuch kind of wares as will be diſuſed and deſpiſed all the world over, and they will meet with no cuſtomers any where to deal with them in them.

Ver. 12. *The merchandize of gold and ſilver, and precious ſtones, and of pearls*, &c.] Things for treaſure and ornament, and with which the great whore is ſaid to be decked, ch. xvii. 4. and literally underſtood, may denote the vaſt riches which theſe ſpiritual merchants, or factors for *Rome*, cardinals, archbiſhops, biſhops, prieſts, monks, and friars bring into their own coffers and the pope's, by the trade they drive in her wares, with the ſouls of men; and may have alſo a regard to what their images, chalices, crowns, mitres, *&c.* are made of, and what ſome of them are adorned with; and as *Tyre*, to whom the reference is in the ſeveral particulars of this account, had her merchants for theſe things, *Ezek.* xxvii. 12, 16, 22. ſo Mr. *Brightman* thinks that in theſe, and in ſome following ones, *Spain* is *Rome*'s merchant, which fetches them from the *Indies* for her: but theſe things myſtically taken, ſometimes deſign the doctrines of the Goſpel, 1 *Cor.* iii. 12. and which are to be preferred to, and more to be eſteemed than thouſands of gold and ſilver; and theſe *Rome*'s merchants pretended to deliver out; but inſtead of them, they put off wood, hay, and ſtubble, yea doctrines of devils, and lyes in hypocriſy; and ſometimes the grace of God is meant, *Rev.* iii. 18. which is more precious than gold that periſheth; and this they pretend to convey to men *ex opere operato*, in the ordinances, as baptiſm, *&c.* and to communicate the Spirit, with his gifts and graces, for money, which is direct ſimony; yea, they pretend to ſell eternal life, nay Chriſt and God himſelf: *and fine linnen, and purple, and ſilk, and ſcarlet*; things which belong to apparel and dreſs; and literally taken, the *fine linnen* is for their copes, w[illegible] by biſhops and by chantors, and ſub-chantors, and for ſurplices wore by their prieſts, in imitation of the *Jewiſh* prieſts, and for maſs-cloaths, *&c.* the *purple*, *ſilk*, and *ſcarlet*, were for the popes, cardinals, archbiſhops, and biſhops; ſo the woman on the ſcarlet-coloured beaſt is ſaid to be arrayed in purple and ſcarlet, ch. xvii. 4. *Tyre* had its merchants for theſe, *Ezek.* xxvii. 7, 16, 24. the fine linnen and ſilk may myſtically denote the holy lives, good works, and merits of the ſaints, thoſe of them called works of ſupererogation, which become the church's ſtock, and they ſell out for money to others that want; which is a monſtrous kind of ware, and a dreadful impoſition upon men, ſince men cannot be ſaved and juſtified by works; and the beſt of men are ſo far from having a redundancy of works, that in every thing they ſin and offend, and are greatly deficient; and they are ſo far from helping others, that they are unprofitable ſervants themſelves: the purple and ſcarlet may ſignify the blood of Chriſt, which they pretend to ſell in the maſs; nay, they have pretended to have had the very liquid blood of Chriſt, which they have carried in a chryſtal glaſs, thick on one ſide, and tranſparent on the other; and ſo could not be ſeen by perſons in a mortal ſin, until they had given a good deal of money, and then the clear ſide was by ſleight of hand turned to them; and which was no other than the blood of a duck, renewed weekly by the prieſt; which trick for a long time brought in vaſt ſums of money, and was detected at *Hales* in *Glouceſterſhire*, in *Henry* the Eighth's time; or theſe may intend the ſufferings of the ſaints, which likewiſe come into the treaſure of the church, and are at its diſpoſe for money, the virtue of which being very great for the ſalvation of mens ſouls: *and all thyne wood, and all manner veſſels of ivory, and all manner veſſels of moſt precious wood, and of braſs, and iron, and marble*; things for utenſils and furniture, not ſo much for their houſes, as for their churches; *Tyre* had its merchants for theſe, *Ezek.* xxvii. 5, 6, 12, 13, 15. *Thyne wood*, *Pliny* ſays [1], was very durable, and of it the rafters of antient temples were made; and may deſign ſuch like laſting and odoriferous wood as cypreſs, cedar, *&c.* uſed in the popiſh churches, for the embelliſhing of them, and for images in them; it may be the ſame with the wood of the *Almug*, or *Algum* trees, ſince theſe are rendered *Thyne wood* in the *Vulgate Latin* verſion in 1 *Kings* x. 11, 12. 2 *Chron.* ix. 10, 11. *veſſels of ivory*, may be boxes made thereof, in which the hoſt is put, and the reliques of ſaints are preſerved: and *veſſels of moſt precious wood*, or *ſtone*, as the *Alexandrian* copy, *Vulgate Latin*, and *Ethiopic* verſions read, *and of braſs, iron, and marble*, may intend various veſſels uſed in their churches; as veſſels for holy water, fonts of marble, and other valuable ſtones, for baptiſm, cenſers of iron and braſs to burn incenſe in. *Cocceius* thinks that by theſe veſſels of different materials are meant good men; who are like ſweet-ſmelling wood for the fragrancy of their doctrines and lives; and like iron, braſs, and marble for their courage, conſtancy, and patience; and who have been canonized for ſaints, which has brought in much money into the pope's coffers: this is a practice in imitation of the heathens, who deified men, and ſet them over particular days and affairs; and the privileges of ſuch canonization among the papiſts are, that ſuch a ſaint has his name ſet in the calendar in red letters, may have churches and altars dedicated to him, and his image ſet up in them, and a holyday be kept for him, and may be prayed to, and worſhipped; a practice dreadfully derogatory to the glory of Chriſt's perſon and office, but is that in which theſe merchants have found their account; for thro' references, commiſſions, and reports, for proof of the ſaints character and miracles, his friends are at very great expence before the affair is iſſued, eſpecially if rich; our king *Henry* the Seventh was very deſirous of having his kinſman *Henry* the Sixth canonized, and ſolicited the pope for it, but he would not do it under fifteen hundred ducats of gold, which the king thought was too much, and ſo declined it.

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[1] Nat. Hiſt. l. 13. c. 16.

Ver. 13. *And cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincenſe,* &c.] Things for delight and pleaſure, for the gratifying of the ſenſes; *cinnamon and odours* were uſed for perfuming, *Prov.* vii. 17. anointing with *oil* was uſed at feaſts, *Pſ.* xxiii. 5. and *frankincenſe*, or cenſings, at banquets, and for the regaling of perſons after food [k]: theſe cuſtoms obtained among the eaſtern people. *Tyre* had its merchants for theſe things, *Ezek.* xxvii. 19, 22. and Mr. *Brightman* thinks *Italy* is *Rome*'s merchant in theſe, which it fetches from *Greece*, *Arabia*, and *Egypt*; it may be theſe rather reſpect the eccleſiaſtical uſe of them: *cinnamon*, *odours*, and *frankincenſe* may ſignify the perfumings and cenſings uſed in churches, or the burning incenſe in imitation of the ſweet incenſe under the law; and *ointments* may denote their chriſm, or anointing with oil at baptiſm, imagining that Chriſt was anointed with material oil at his baptiſm, whereas it was with the Holy Ghoſt: moreover, theſe things may be myſtically underſtood, *Cinnamon* being uſed by harlots in perfuming their bed, *Prov.* vii. xvii. may intend the ſtews and brothel-houſes erected at *Rome*, and licenſed by authority, each whore paying ſo much per week; the revenues of which would ſometimes yearly amount to twenty thouſand ducats: *ointments* may be underſtood of chriſm in baptiſm, and extreme unction at death: *odours* and *frankincenſe* may mean their prayers and pater-noſters, their prayers for the dead, which were never made without the pence; hence that proverbial expreſſion, no pence, no pater-noſter. *And wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beaſts, and ſheep*; things for civil uſe; theſe are things which belong to food, to eating and drinking, and are the moſt material and neceſſary things of life, *Pſ.* iv. 7. *Jer.* xxxi. 12. *Hoſ.* ii. 21, 22. *Gen.* ix. 3. *Iſ.* xxii. 13. *Tyre* had her merchants for theſe, *Ezek.* xxvii. 17, 18, 21. and Mr. *Brightman* will have *Italy* to be *Rome*'s merchant for wine and oil; *Sardinia* and *Sicily* her merchants for fine flour and wheat; *Germany* for beaſts, and *England* for ſheep: and with reſpect to the eccleſiaſtical uſe of theſe things, *wine* is for the chalice, uſed in daily maſſes, and drank only by the prieſts; *oil* for chriſm at baptiſm, and for the extreme unction; *fine flour* for the maſs, or to make their breaden god of; and *wheat, beaſts, and ſheep* for tithes for the clergy: *and horſes, and chariots, and ſlaves*; things for ſplendor, equipage, and attendance; *horſes and chariots* for the popes, cardinals, archbiſhops, and biſhops to ride in ſtate and grandeur, and *ſlaves* to wait upon them. *Tyre* had her merchants for theſe, *Ezek.* xxvii. 14, 20. and Mr. *Brightman*'s opinion is, that the *French* are *Rome*'s merchants for horſes and chariots, and the *Swiſs* for ſlaves, or *bodies*, as the word may be rendered, who live by exerciſing their bodies, and hiring them out in war; and who are many of them the guards of the perſon of the *pope* of *Rome*: and laſt of all it is added, *and ſouls of men*; ſtill in alluſion to the merchandize of *Tyre*, ſome of whoſe merchants are ſaid to trade in the perſons of men, *Ezek.* xxvii. 13. which the *Targum* and *Septuagint* render, *in the ſouls of men*; the popes have ſome of them ſold their own ſouls to the devil, to get into the chair, and when in, have been the means of deſtroying of thouſands of others; they aſſume a power over the ſouls of men, of binding and looſing the conſciences of men, impoſing new laws upon them, and freeing them from obligation to the laws of God and men, to the ruin of their ſouls; and it has been ſaid by their ſycophants, that if the pope ſhould ſend thouſands of men to hell, no one ſhould ſay to him what doſt thou? the *Romiſh* prieſts pretend to redeem ſouls out of purgatory for ſuch a ſum of money, and ſell pardons and indulgences, ſay maſs, and promiſe heaven itſelf for money; and this they get at the expence of mens ſouls, by their falſe doctrine and ſuperſtitious worſhip, and ſo make merchandize of them, as is ſaid of the falſe teachers, 2 *Pet.* ii. 3. moreover, as by *ſlaves*, or bodies, in the preceding clauſe, are meant ſuch who ſerve with their bodies, either by way of attendance, or in unnatural luſt; ſo by *ſouls* of men may be meant men of ſoul, of great natural wit and underſtanding, of great parts, abilities, and learning, with which they ſerve the man of ſin, and his intereſt, ſuch as *Bellarmine*, and others.

Ver. 14. *And the fruits that thy ſoul luſted after are departed from thee,* &c.] Or *the autumn of the deſire of thy ſoul*; the deſireable fruits which are then in ſeaſon; the *Vulgate Latin* and *Ethiopic* verſions render it *apples*, which are ripe in autumn; and may deſign all ſuch fruit as *Italy* abounds with, which will now be deſtroyed; and ſeems to point at the time of year when *Babylon*'s deſtruction will be: but in the myſtical ſenſe, theſe fruits may intend univerſal dominion over nations and churches, the obedience of kings and princes, riches, honours, and pleaſures of all ſorts; things greatly affected by the papacy, and of which a large harveſt was expected, but now all will be at an end: *and all things which were dainty and goodly are departed from thee*; all that were palatable to the taſte, and pleaſant to the ſight, that were excellent and deſireable; as the triple crown, cardinalſhips, archbiſhopricks, biſhopricks, deanaries, fat benefices, and good livings: *and thou ſhalt find them no more at all*; for this will be an utter deſtruction; at the reformation theſe deſireable things were taken from her in ſeveral nations, and in ſome places ſhe has recovered them again, as in *Germany* and other places; and the outward court, or the reformed church, ſinking into an outward ſhow and form, will be wholly given to the *Gentiles*, the papiſts, and they'll have theſe things in their hands again before *Rome*'s utter deſtruction, but after that they'll no more be regained.

Ver. 15. *The merchants of theſe things,* &c.] Before-mentioned, who have traded in them for themſelves and for *Rome*: *which were made rich by her*, ſee ver. 3. *ſhall ſtand afar off for fear of her torment*; as the kings of the earth before, ver. 10. being conſcious to themſelves of their being partners in her crimes, and ſo might juſtly fear they ſhould ſhare in her puniſhment; and it may be, they will outwardly deny they are now of her religion, and will externally embrace the reformed religion; tho' they will be inwardly *weeping and wailing* for the deſtruction of *Rome*, and the loſs of their merchandize and goodly things.

Ver. 16. *And ſaying alas, alas! that great city,* &c.] Uſing the ſame words the kings of the earth do, ver. 10. only adding, ſuitable to their characters as merchants, and the things they traded in with her, *that was clothed in fine linnen, and purple, and ſcarlet, and decked with gold, and precious ſtones, and pearls*; ſee the notes on ver. 12. and on ch. xvii. 4. ſee alſo *Ezek.* xxvii. 32.

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[k] Miſn. Beracot, c. 6. § 6.

Ver. 17. *For in one hour ſo great riches is come to nought*, &c.] That is, in a very ſhort time, expreſſing the ſuddenneſs and ſpeedineſs of *Rome*'s deſtruction, the quick diſpatch and expedition that will be made in it, by the inſtruments of it, as in ver. 10. *Rome* was always famous for its great wealth and riches; the *Jews* have a ſaying [1], that if ten kabs of riches deſcend into the world, the antient *Romans* take nine of them, and the other the whole world: *and every ſhip-maſter, and all the company in ſhips, and ſailers, and as many as trade by ſea, ſtood afar off*; the lamentation of the kings and merchants of the earth being ended, maſters of ſhips, ſailors, and ſeafaring men begin theirs: by *ſhips* are meant dioceſes, abbeys, priories, and monaſteries; and by the *maſters*, or governors of them, biſhops, abbots, priors, the heads of monaſteries, and of the ſeveral orders of the *Franciſcans*, *Dominicans*, &c. and by *all the company in ſhips*, or *every ſhipmate*, the fellows that belong to every religious houſe and order; and by *ſailers* and *traders at ſea*, all ſuch who compaſs ſea and land to make proſelytes to the *Romiſh* religion, like the phariſees of old, and who, as they, make them two-fold more the children of hell than themſelves; and in general, theſe traders abroad may deſign the pope's legates, ſent by him into various parts, to collect his revenues, and the jeſuits, who are every where ſent abroad to ſow ſedition and falſe doctrine, and the prieſts that travel about to ſell pardons and indulgences: theſe *ſtood afar off*; as the kings and merchants before, for fear of ſharing in the condemnation and puniſhment of *Babylon*; knowing full well that they deſerved it, having been aſſociates with her in her crimes.

Ver. 18. *And cried when they ſaw the ſmoke of her burning*, &c.] See the note on ver. 9. *ſaying, what city is like unto this great city?* as before for magnificence and grandeur, ſo now for ſorrow, deſolation, and ruin; nor was any city like it for power and authority, for pride and luxury, for idolatry and ſuperſtition, blaſphemy and impenitence; the like the ſailors ſay of *Tyre*, *Ezek.* xxvii. 32. from whence this, and other expreſſions are borrowed in this lamentation.

Ver. 19. *And they caſt duſt on their heads*, &c.] As the ſeafaring men on account of *Tyre*, *Ezek.* xxvii. 30. this was a geſture uſed in mourning when perſons were in afflicted and diſtreſſed circumſtances, denoting diſorder, confuſion, and debaſement; ſee *Joſh.* vii. 6. *Job* ii. 12. *and cried, weeping and wailing, ſaying alas, alas! that great city*; as in ver. 10, 16. ſo it was once, tho' now in flames: *wherein were made rich all that had ſhips in the ſea*; not only the merchants of the earth, as in ver. 3. the cardinals, archbiſhops, and biſhops, but the governors of religious houſes; theſe accumulated great wealth to themſelves, and got the beſt of lands into their poſſeſſion for the uſe and ſupport of their abbeys and monaſteries: *by reaſon of her coſtlineſs*; or coſtly things; pardons, indulgences, abſolution, ſaying maſs, and praying ſouls out of purgatory, all which are coſtly, and hereby theſe traders have been enriched; and now the remembrance of theſe things, of which they will be deprived, will affect and grieve them, as well as the ſuddenneſs of *Rome*'s ruin: *for in one hour is ſhe made deſolate*; her judgment come, and her riches come to nought, ver. 10, 17.

Ver. 20. *Rejoice over her thou heaven*, &c.] This is ſaid by the voice from heaven, ver. 4. which having called upon the ſaints to come out of *Babylon*, and to take vengeance on her, now calls upon all good men to rejoice at her ruin, whilſt others were weeping and wailing; not at that ſimply conſidered, but as the juſtice of God is diſplayed therein: *heaven* may be literally underſtood, which ſometimes is addreſſed when any thing of very conſiderable note and moment is done or ſpoken of, whether it be ſomething exceeding bad, as in *Iſ.* i. 2. *Jer.* ii. 12, 13. or ſomething exceeding great and good, as in *Pſ.* xcvi. 11, 12, 13. or elſe the inhabitants of heaven, either the angels, who as they rejoice at the good and happineſs of the ſaints, ſo at the confuſion and deſtruction of their enemies; and the *Syriac* verſion reads, *heavens and angels*; or elſe the ſouls of men departed, particularly the ſouls under the altar, that have been long crying for vengeance on account of the ſhedding of their blood, ch. vi. 9. who may be made acquainted with *Rome*'s deſtruction; or rather the true church of Chriſt upon earth, which in this book often goes by the name of heaven, in oppoſition to the apoſtate church, called the earth, becauſe its members, doctrines, and ordinances are from heaven, and its happineſs lies there: *and ye holy Apoſtles and prophets*; the *Alexandrian* copy and *Complutenſian* edition read, *and the ſaints, and the Apoſtles, and prophets*; making three diſtinct ſorts of perſons of which heaven, or the church conſiſts: by *ſaints* may be meant private members of churches, who are ſanctified by the Spirit of God, and live holy lives and converſations; and by *Apoſtles*, not the twelve Apoſtles, or perſons in ſuch an office as they were, but ordinary miniſters of the word, who are ſent forth to preach the Goſpel, and will be upon the ſpot at the deſtruction of *Babylon*, and will be ſuch as ſhall have preached and defended the pure apoſtolic doctrine; and by *prophets* are intended not the prophets of the Old Teſtament, nor ſuch under the New who had the gift of fortelling things to come, but ſuch who have a gift of interpreting the ſcriptures and preaching the Goſpel; the ſame with the two witneſſes, who till this time will have propheſied in ſackcloth, but ſhall now put it off, and put on the garments of praiſe and joy: *for God hath avenged you on her*; or *judged your judgment on her*; that is, has executed righteous judgment on her, for all the evils done by her to the ſaints in ages paſt, the predeceſſors of the perſons here mentioned, as well as to themſelves: vengeance belongs to the Lord, and he will avenge his elect ſooner or later.

Ver. 21. *And a mighty angel*, &c.] Not Chriſt, nor one of the miniſtring ſpirits, but ſome man, or ſett of men, perhaps the ſame with him in ver. 1. *took up a ſtone like a great mill-ſtone, and caſt it into the ſea*; juſt as *Jeremiah* took a ſtone and bound it to his book after he had read it, and caſt it into the river *Euphrates*, as a ſign and token of the deſtruction of old *Babylon*, *Jer.* li. 63, 64. ſee *Exod.* xv. 5. *Neh.* ix. 11. *ſaying, thus with violence ſhall that great city be thrown down, and ſhall be found no more at all*; which is expreſſive of the utter deſtruction of *Rome*, and of the violence, force, and power with which it will be deſtroyed, and of the ſuddenneſs and ſwiftneſs of its deſtruction, and of the irrecoverableneſs of its ſtate and condition.

Ver. 22. *And the voice of harpers, and muſicians, and of pipers and trumpeters*, &c.] Which were for mirth, delight, and pleaſure: *ſhall be heard no more at all in thee*; the words ſeem to be taken from *Iſ.* xxiv. 8. *Ezek.* xxvi. 13. and may not only regard the loſs of every thing that was delightful and pleaſant to the ear in private houſes, at feſtivals, and nuptials, and the like, but the ceaſing of church muſic; there will be no more bells, nor organs, or any other inſtruments of muſic; no more chantors, and ſub-chantors, choriſters, ſinging-men and boys: *and no craftſman of whatſoever craft* he be *ſhall be found any more in thee*; which are very uſeful and neceſſary in cities and ſocieties; it is threatned to *Judah*, that the cunning artificer ſhould be taken from her, *Iſ.* iii. 3. and it is reckoned as a conſiderable part of the diſtreſs of the *Babyloniſh* captivity, that the carpenters and ſmiths were carried away from *Jeruſalem*, *Jer.* xxiv. 1. and this judgment may fall on *Rome* for her worſhipping idols of gold, ſilver, braſs, ſtone, and wood, the works of mens hands, artificers and craftſmen, and who are employed in making other trinkets and wares for antichriſt: *and the ſound of a mill-ſtone ſhall be heard no more at all in thee*; to grind corn with, ſee *Jer.* xxv. 10. there will be a famine at the time that *Rome* is beſieged, ver. 8. and after it is deſtroyed, there will be no corn to grind, nor inhabitants to eat it, and ſo no uſe of the mill-ſtone; this is ſaid in oppoſition to her luxurious and delicious living, ver. 3, 7, 9. and this may alſo refer to feaſts and rich entertainments, for which ſpices were ground and prepared by an hand-mill [m] in the houſe; and ſo may ſignify here that there would be no more of ſuch entertainments and rich living; with which ſenſe agrees what follows. This clauſe is wanting in the *Syriac* and *Ethiopic* verſions.

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[1] T. Bab. Kidduſhin, fol. 49. 2.

Ver. 23. *And the light of a candle ſhall ſhine no more at all in thee*, &c.] Either for common uſe, or at feaſts, or at marriages, which being kept at night, required candles, lamps, or torches; this ſhows that *Babylon*, or *Rome*, ſhall be deprived of every thing, even of the leaſt thing that is comfortable in life; ſee *Jer.* xxv. 10. this will be a juſt puniſhment upon her for her abuſe of this bleſſing of life; ſo where wax candles in great numbers have been burning in the day-time, there will not be ſo much as a ſingle candle to give light in the night; and where candles have been lighted up for the dead, there will not be one for the uſe of the living: *and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride ſhall be heard nomore at all in thee*; there will be no marrying, nor giving in marriage; no procreation of children, or propagation of poſterity in this place; which denotes the utter extirpation of the inhabitants of it; the phraſes are taken from *Jer.* vii. 34. and xvi. 19. and xxv. 10, 11. and this will be in righteous retaliation for the prohibition of marriage, which God has inſtituted, and is honourable, 1 *Tim.* iv. 2. the reaſons of *Babylon*'s deſtruction follow: *for thy merchants were the great men of the earth*; in alluſion to the merchants of *Tyre*, ſaid to be princes, *Iſ.* xxiii. 8. for by trading and dealing in the wares and merchandize of *Rome*, perſons of mean extract, and of very low circumſtances of life, have grown exceeding rich, and have equalled the princes of the earth; as for inſtance, cardinal *Woolſey* here in *England*, a butcher's ſon at *Ipſwich*; and on the other hand, the princes and great men of the earth have become *Rome*'s merchants, and have thought it an high honour to get a cardinal's hat, as the cardinals, *Albertus* duke of *Auſtria*, *Bourbon*, *Pool*, and others, mentioned by *Brightman*: *for by thy ſorceries were all nations deceived*; meaning her falſe doctrines, traditions, idolatry, ſuperſtition, and will-worſhip, with which, as another *Jezabel*, ſhe has bewitched, allured, and deceived the nations of the empire, and the kings thereof, ver. 3.

Ver. 24. *And in her was found the blood of prophets and of ſaints*, &c.] Such as before mentioned, in ver. 20. this is another reaſon of her deſtruction, beſides her luxury and idolatry, namely, her ſhedding the blood of the ſaints, with which ſhe is ſaid to be drunk, and therefore blood is now given her to drink, ch. xvii. 6. and xvi. 6. for ſhe will now be found guilty of ſlaying the witneſſes, who are meant by the prophets and ſaints, that have been from the beginning of the apoſtacy: *and of all that were ſlain upon the earth*; not only of thoſe that have been ſlain in the city of *Rome*, but of all thoſe that have been ſlain throughout the empire; they being ſlain by her order, or with her conſent, and ſhe conniving at it, encouraging it, and therefore will be juſtly chargeable with it all; ſee *Matt.* xxiii. 31, 32, 35. the *Ethiopic* verſion adds, *for the name of Chriſt*.

CHAP. XIX.

THIS chapter contains the triumph of the ſaints over *Babylon*, and their thankſgiving to God becauſe of his judgments on her; the marriage of Chriſt and his church, and a battle between him and his and her enemies, with the ſucceſs of it. The congratulations are firſt of a promiſcuous multitude in the church, aſcribing ſalvation, praiſe, honour, glory, and power, to God, becauſe of the righteouſneſs of his judgments, and becauſe of the perpetuity of them, ver. 1, 2, 3. and then of the four and twenty elders and four living creatures, who worſhip God, aſſent to what had been before ſaid, and join in praiſing the Lord, ver. 4. and then another voice out of the throne is heard, calling upon all the ſervants of the Lord, and thoſe that fear him, whether ſmall or great, to praiſe our God, ver. 5. after which is heard the voice of a great multitude, ſtirring up one another to praiſe, becauſe of the reign of the Lord God Almighty, and to rejoice and be glad becauſe the time of the Lamb's marriage with his bride was come; who is deſcribed by her dreſs, the righteouſneſs of the ſaints, comparable to fine linnen, clean and white, ver. 6, 7, 8. upon which an angel bids *John* write thoſe perſons happy who are invited to the marriage-ſupper of the Lamb, and affirms theſe to be the true ſayings of God; wherefore *John*, in a tranſport of joy, was juſt going to worſhip the angel, had he not been forbidden by him; from which he diſſuades him, by obſerving that he was his fellow-ſervant, that God only is the object of worſhip, and that the teſtimony of Jeſus is the ſpirit of prophecy, ver. 9, 10. next follows a viſion of a battle between Chriſt and his enemies; and firſt he the general is deſcribed, by the horſe he ſat upon, a white one; by the characters he bears, faithful and true; by what he did, judging and making war in righteouſneſs; by his eyes, which were as a flame of fire; by his having many crowns on his head; by having a name, or names unknown, and particularly one, which is the word of God; by his habit, a veſture dipped in blood; by the armies he was at the head of, riding on white horſes, and clothed in fine linnen; by a ſharp ſword coming out of his mouth, with which he ſhould utterly deſtroy the nations; and by having a name on his veſture and thigh, King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, ver. 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16. upon which an angel is ſeen ſtanding in the ſun, and calling to all the fowls of the heaven to come to the ſupper of the great God, and to eat the fleſh of kings, captains, mighty men, horſes and horſemen, of all ranks and degrees, ver. 17, 18. and next an account is given of the armies of the beaſt, and of the kings of the earth, that came to make war with the above warrior, ver. 19. the iſſue and ſucceſs of which follow; the beaſt and falſe prophet are taken, and caſt alive into a lake of fire and brimſtone; and the reſt are killed by the ſword of the above general, and the fowls have a feaſt of their fleſh, ver. 20, 21.

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[m] Schindler. Lex. Pentaglott. in Voce רוח, Col. 1712.

Ver. 1. *And after theſe things,* &c.] After the angel had declared the fall of *Babylon*, a voice from heaven had called the people of God out of her, and had ordered them to take vengeance on her; after the mournful lamentation of the kings, merchants, and ſeafaring-men; after another voice had called upon the ſaints to rejoice at her overthrow, and a mighty angel had deſcribed the manner of it, and had expreſſed her ruin in the ſtrongeſt terms, with the reaſons of it, *John* heard the ſongs of the righteous, as follow: *I heard a great voice of much people in heaven*; not literally taken, for theſe are not the innumerable company of angels, who are never called people; nor the ſpirits of juſt men made perfect, or the ſouls of departed ſaints, but men on earth; wherefore heaven deſigns the church, as in ch. xviii. 20. and frequently in this book; the people are the ſame with the 144000 ſeen with the Lamb on mount *Zion*, ch. xiv. 1. and with thoſe on the ſea of glaſs, who had got the victory over the beaſt, ch. xv. 2. and are no other than God's covenant-people, who are given to Chriſt, and made willing to be his in the day of his power; and tho' they are but a ſeed, a remnant, a ſmall company, when compared with the world and carnal profeſſors; yet are a large body of themſelves, eſpecially they will be at this time, when the nation of the *Jews* ſhall be born at once, and the fulneſs of the *Gentiles* will be brought in: and their voice on this occaſion, the downfall of *Rome*, is ſaid to be *great*; partly on account of their number, who will join together in acclamations of praiſe, and partly on account of their great affection and vehemency of ſpirit, which will be raiſed hereby: *ſaying Alleluja*; an *Hebrew* word, which ſignifies *praiſe ye the Lord*. The *Jews* ſay [n], that the book of *Pſalms* conſiſts of ten ſorts of ſongs, but *Hallelujah* is the greateſt of them, becauſe it comprehends the name (*Jehovah*) and praiſe in one word: and it is obſervable that this word, which is often uſed in the *Pſalms*, is firſt uſed when the *Pſalmiſt* deſires the utter conſumption and deſtruction of ſinners and wicked men on earth, and is here taken up by the ſaints at the deſtruction of the man of ſin and ſon of perdition; ſee *Pſ.* civ. 35. and its being an *Hebrew* word, ſhows that at this time the *Jews* will be converted, and that *Jews* and *Gentiles* will become one church-ſtate, and will worſhip and praiſe the Lord together; for the word is a call upon the ſaints to join together in ſolemn praiſe and thankſgiving; who is to be praiſed for the perfections of his nature, for the works of his hands, both of nature and grace, and for his righteous judgments on his and his church's enemies; and this is to be done in concert: *ſalvation, and glory, and honour, and power unto the Lord our God*; ſalvation, temporal, ſpiritual, and eternal, is of God; *ſalvation* from antichriſtian power and tyranny, and from all enemies, and the everlaſting ſalvation of the ſoul; and the *glory* of it belongs to all the three perſons; they are glorious in themſelves, and deſerve all glory to be aſcribed to them by man, and eſpecially by the ſaints: *honour* is alſo their due; God the Father is to be honoured becauſe he is the Father, and the Son is to be honoured as the Father is, and the Holy Spirit is not to be grieved, but to be highly eſteemed and valued, and equally with the other two perſons: and *power* belongs to them all, and is ſeen in the works of creation, redemption, and ſanctification.

Ver. 2. *For true and righteous are his judgments,* &c.] As in ch. xv. 3. and xvi. 7. ſee the notes there: this is to be underſtood of God's judgments in general, and is a reaſon of the attribution of praiſe and glory to him; which may be ſaid to be *true*, becauſe being threatned, are now fulfilled; and to be *righteous*, becauſe, according to the demerit of ſin; and particularly God's judgments on antichriſt are intended: *for he hath judged the great whore*; *Jezabel*, *Babylon*, the *Romiſh* antichriſt, before ſpoken of, ch. xvii. 1. not only by paſſing a ſentence of condemnation on her, but by executing it, putting it into the hearts of the kings to hate and burn her, and utterly deſtroy her; and which is judging right, ſince it follows: *which did corrupt the earth with her fornication*; drew the kings and inhabitants of the *Roman* empire into wicked and idolatrous practices, and ſo corrupted and deſtroyed them in ſoul, body, and eſtate; ſee the note on ch. xi. 18. for this viſion is cotemporary with the ſeventh trumpet: *and hath avenged the blood of his ſervants at her hand*; ſhed by her, ch. xviii. 20, 24. and xvi. 6. and this being done in righteous judgment, is matter of joy and praiſe to the ſaints.

Ver. 3. *And again they ſaid Alleluja,* &c.] Or a *ſecond time* they ſaid it; they began and ended their ſolemn worſhip and ſervice with it; ſo ſome *Pſalms* begin and end with this word, as *Pſ.* cvi, cxiii. *&c.* and the repeating of the word ſhows how hearty, earneſt, and conſtant they were in the work of praiſe on this account: *and her ſmoke roſe up for ever and ever*; they repeated their hallelujah, or gave one ſpiritual *huzzah* more at the burning of *Rome*, and this followed: or the words may be rendered, *for her ſmoke roſe,* &c. and ſo are a reaſon for the ſecond *hallelujah*; it looks as if *Rome*, like another *Sodom* and *Gomorrha*, would ſink into a ſulphurous burning lake, and continue ſo: reſpect is had to the everlaſting puniſhment of antichriſt and his followers in hell, and to the everlaſting burnings that will follow *Rome*'s temporal deſtruction, which was an example and ſymbol of the vengeance of eternal fire; ſee ch. xiv. 11. ſo the *Jews* [o] ſay of the burning of *Rome*, that its fire ſhall not be quenched for ever, and that *its ſmoke ſhall riſe up for ever*.

Ver. 4. *And the four and twenty elders and the four beaſts,* &c.] Mentioned in ch. iv. 4, 6. and who repreſent the churches of Chriſt and miniſters of the Goſpel in the ſeveral periods of time, theſe join in the chorus, and praiſe the Lord on the account of the deſtruction of *Rome*, and ruin of antichriſt; ſo they are often heard of in this book, when any remarkable thing is done, or when there is any breaking forth of the kingdom and glory of Chriſt; ſee ch. v. 8, 9, 10, 14. and vii. 11. and xi. 16, 17. and xiv. 3. and xv. 7. theſe *fell down*; on their faces before God, as in ch. iv. 10. and xi. 16. in great reverence of him, and of his righteous judgments: *and worſhipped God that ſat on the throne*; deſcribed in ch. iv. 2, 3. this refers to the public worſhip of God in the churches, by the miniſters and members of them: *ſaying Amen, Alleluja*; they ſaid *Amen*, and ſignified their aſſent to what the much people in heaven had ſaid, ver. 1, 2, 3. and joined

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[n] Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 89. 1. T. Bab. Peſachim, fol. 117. 1.

[o] Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 48. 2.

in the ſame *Hallelujah*, or expreſſions of praiſe to God, for this great appearance of his in the downfal of *Babylon*. Both theſe words are uſed together in *Pſ*. cvi. 48. ſee ch. v. 14.

Ver. 5. *And a voice came out of the throne*, &c.] Not from God the Father, that ſat upon it, for the phraſe, *praiſe our God*, could not be ſaid by him with propriety and pertinence; but rather from Chriſt, the Lamb, in the midſt of the throne, who as mediator could ſay of him to his people, my God, and your God, and my Father, and your Father, *John* xx. 17. tho' it ſeems beſt to underſtand it of the voice of one of the angels about the throne, ſince one of theſe is afterwards ſpoken of, whom *John* would have worſhipped, but was forbid, ver. 9, 10. and which may deſign either one of the miniſtring ſpirits, or a preacher of the Goſpel, and a ſett of ſuch, calling upon the ſaints to the diſcharge of their duty, or to return to it on this occaſion: *ſaying, praiſe our God all ye his ſervants*; meaning not the miniſters of the Goſpel only, who ſerve in the Goſpel of Chriſt, by preaching and defending it, and in the adminiſtration of Goſpel ordinances to the comfort of the ſaints, but all the people of God; for tho' they are ſons, and no more ſervants to ſin and ſatan, and the world, yet they are ſervants of God, and of righteouſneſs, and ſerve him willingly and chearfully in a way of duty, and without ſlaviſh fear, and with a godly one, and from principles of love and gratitude, and without mercenary views, and ſelfiſh ends; and theſe are called upon, as a part of their ſervice, to ſay hallelujah, or to ſing the praiſes of God for his judgments on antichriſt; ſee *Pſ*. cxxxiv. 1. and cxxxv. 1, 2. *and ye that fear him, both ſmall and great*; who fear the Lord, not with a ſervile, but filial fear, with the new covenant grace of fear, which ſprings from, and is increaſed by the goodneſs and grace of God; whether greater or leſſer believers, fathers, young men, or children; whether *Jews* or *Gentiles*, or of whatſoever nation, kindred, or people; ſee *Pſ*. cxv. 13. *Rev*. xi. 18.

Ver. 6. *And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude*, &c.] Even of all the ſervants of the Lord, and them that fear him, ſmall and great; a vaſt multitude of converted *Jews* and *Gentiles*, in the ſeveral parts of the world, who in anſwer to the voice out of the throne, which came with great power and energy, lift up their voices in praiſe to God, both for their own converſion, and for the downfal of *Babylon*: *and as the voice of many waters*; falling down in a deſcent, or in rough and rocky places, which make a great noiſe, and is heard afar off; and ſuch muſt be the united voice of ſo great a multitude of converts, as will be gathered together every where at this time: the ſame metaphor is uſed of the voice of Chriſt in ch. i. 15. *and as the voice of mighty thunderings*; violent claps of it, which are ſometimes ſo loud, that they rend the very heavens, and ſtrike the inhabitants of the earth with the utmoſt conſternation: theſe are the ſame voices which will be heard in the church, when the ſeventh angel ſounds his trumpet, ch. xi. 15. *ſaying Alleluja*; or praiſe ye the Lord; they will call upon one another to celebrate the praiſes of God, on account of the above things, in the ſame manner, and uſing the ſame word, the people in heaven, and the four and twenty elders, and four living creatures do; and this is the fourth time the word is uſed in this context, and confirms the obſervation that has been made, that this viſion refers to the converſion of the *Jews*, which will quickly follow the deſtruction of *Rome*: and the *Jews* themſelves have a notion, that when *Rome* is deſtroyed, the Meſſiah will come; and ſo he will in his ſpiritual reign. They ſay [o], "our redemption will be immediately upon the deſtruction of *Rome*." And again [p], "the root of our redemption depends upon the deſtruction of *Rome*." The reaſon for their ſaying *hallelujah* follows, *for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth*; by whom is meant the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who is Lord of all, and God over all, bleſſed for ever, and is the almighty; and tho' he was ſet up as king over the holy hill of *Zion*, and has reigned over the church in every age, and came as king into this world, tho' his kingdom was not of it, and at his reſurrection was declared Lord and Chriſt, and his kingdom was then more manifeſt, and he has ever ſince diſplayed his kingly power in defending his church, and defeating the enemies of it; yet now will he reign more viſibly and glorioſly, his kingdom will be enlarged from one end of the earth to the other, and he will be king over all the earth, which will occaſion great joy to *Jews* and *Gentiles*; ſee *Pſ*. xlvii. 1, 2. and xcvii. 1. and the note on *Rev*. xi. 17.

Ver. 7. *Let us be glad, and rejoice, and give honour to him*, &c.] The ſaints particularly; the converted *Jews* will call upon one another to expreſs their gladneſs at the glorious diſplay of Chriſt's kingly power and authority, and at the deſtruction of his enemies, and the happy and comfortable ſtate of his church and people; and to rejoice in him as the Lord their righteouſneſs and ſtrength, and to give him the honour and glory of ſalvation, and to return him thanks for all the benefits they ſhall have received from him, particularly on account of what follows: *for the marriage of the Lamb is come*; that is, of Chriſt, the Son of God, with the *Jewiſh* church more eſpecially; there was a ſecret betrothing of all the elect to Chriſt before the world began; and there is an open eſpouſal of every individual of them at converſion; but the public and general ſolemnization of the nuptials, will not be until the new *Jeruſalem* church-ſtate takes place in the perſonal reign of Chriſt, hereafter mentioned, ch. xxi. 1, 2, 9. but here, and as previous to that, there will be a very general and open marriage of Chriſt with the people of the *Jews*, who have long rejected and forſaken him; for if the converſion of a ſingle perſon may be called a marriage with Chriſt, much more the converſion of ſuch numbers; and which is often propheſied of under this metaphor of a marriage, as in *Iſ*. lxii. 4, 5. *Hoſ*. ii. 19. And now the time will be come for the accompliſhment of it, the evidence of which follows: *and his wife hath made herſelf ready*; or *dreſſed herſelf*; by decking herſelf with jewels, and putting on her wedding-garment, provided for her, and given to her by her huſband, the Lamb, as appears from the next verſe: this preparation will lie partly in the number of converts that will be brought into the *Jewiſh* church, which ſhe will receive and clothe herſelf with, as with the ornament of a bride, *Iſ*. xlix. 18. and partly by the exerciſe of the ſeveral graces of the Spirit upon Chriſt, comparable to the jewels of a bride, with which ſhe will be adorned for her huſband; and alſo by putting on the robe of his righteouſneſs, hereafter mentioned, which the old *Jewiſh* ſynagogue rejected, and therefore was caſt off, *Rom*. x. 3. *Matt*. xxii. 12, 13. The *Arabic* verſion reads, *the marriage of the Lamb is now come*

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[o] Tzeror Hammor, fol. 148. 1.

[p] Ib. fol. 163. 4.

with his ſpouſe, prepared for him; and the *Ethiopic* verſion, *the marriage of his Lamb is come, and the wife is prepared*; and that her preparation is not by her own merits and works of righteouſneſs, but by the grace of her huſband, is clear from the following verſe. Mr. *Daubuz*, by *the marriage of the Lamb*, underſtands the firſt reſurrection, and the ſtate of the church at that time; and by *the fine linnen*, the dreſs of the church next mentioned, the incorruptible body of the ſaints compared to a garment, 1 *Cor*. xv. 53. 2 *Cor*. v. 2, 3, 4. and by thoſe, who are afterwards ſaid to be *called to the marriage*, the converted nations in a mortal ſtate: but all the ſaints will ſhare in the firſt reſurrection; beſides, as yet, the beaſt and falſe prophets are not deſtroyed, which muſt be before the firſt reſurrection, as the following viſion ſhows.

Ver. 8. *And to her was granted that ſhe ſhould be arrayed in fine linnen*, &c.] Or *Byſſine*: the *Byſſus* of which fine linnen is made, is ſaid to grow on a tree, in height like to a poplar, and its leaves like a willow, and to be brought out of *Judea* into *Egypt*, which the *Egyptians* uſed in moſt of their holy things[q]. A dreſs neat and modeſt, and not like the attire of the whore of *Rome*, ch. xvii. 4. and this is ſaid to be *clean and white*, and is interpreted in the next clauſe: *for the fine linnen is the righteouſneſs of ſaints*; or *righteouſneſſes*; not good works, or their own righteouſneſs; for tho' theſe are evidences of faith. by which the ſaints are juſtified, and are what God has prepared for them, that they ſhould walk in them; yet theſe are not comparable to fine linnen, clean and white, but are like filthy rags, and cannot juſtify in the ſight of God; but the righteouſneſs of Chriſt is meant, and juſtification by that; for that is the only juſtifying righteouſneſs of the ſaints: and tho' it is but one, yet it may be called *righteouſneſſes*, or *juſtifications* in the plural number; partly becauſe of the ſeveral ſeaſons in which the act of juſtification paſſes, firſt in God's mind from eternity, next on Chriſt as the ſurety, when he roſe from the dead, and on all the elect in him, and then in the conſciences of the ſaints when they believe, and the ſentence of it will be notified and declared to men and angels at the laſt judgment; and partly becauſe of the many perſons that are juſtified by it, as alſo becauſe of the excellency of it; ſo the *Jews* uſe the word in the plural number: the *Targumiſt* on *Zech*. iii. 4. paraphraſes the text, *I will clothe thee*, זכוך, *with righteouſneſſes*[r]; upon which words *Jarchi* has this note, "change of beautiful garments is all one as "if it had been ſaid, זכיות, *righteouſneſſes*; and "becauſe ſin is like to filthy garments, righteouſ"neſs is like to garments beautiful and white." Chriſt's righteouſneſs may be compared to fine linnen, clean and white, becauſe of its ſpotleſs purity; thoſe that are arrayed with it being unblameable and irreproveable, and without ſpot and blemiſh, and without fault before the throne; with this the *Jewiſh* church will be clothed; all the Lord's people will be righteous, they will have on the beſt robe, and wedding-garment, which was deſpiſed by the *Jews* in Chriſt's time, who refuſed to come to the marriage-feaſt; and their being arrayed with it will be owing to the grace of Chriſt, who grants it; and ſo Chriſt's righteouſneſs is called the gift of righteouſneſs, the free gift, and gift by grace, and abundance of grace; and faith, which receives it, and puts it on, is the gift of God, *Rom*. v. 15, 16, 17. *Eph*. ii. 8. Not only the garment is a gift of grace, but the putting of it on is a grant from Chriſt, and what he himſelf does, *Iſ*. lxi. 10. *Zech*. iii. 4.

Ver. 9. *And he ſaith unto me write*, &c.] What follows, becauſe of the importance of it, and to ſhew the certainty of it, and that it may be regarded and remembred: the perſon ſpeaking is either the voice from the throne, ver. 5. or the angel that attended *John* all along, and ſhewed him this revelation, ch. i. 1. or the angel that propoſed to ſhow him the judgment of the great whore, ch. xvii. 1. *Bleſſed are they which are called to the marriage-ſupper of the Lamb*; by which is meant the Goſpel miniſtry and ordinances, and communion in them, to which the *Jews* will be called to partake of in the latter day; theſe at the firſt of the Goſpel diſpenſation are called a *dinner*, to which the *Jews* were invited, but refuſed to come, and now a *ſupper*, becauſe made in the evening of that diſpenſation; to which being called with an effectual calling, they will come, and partake of it; on which account they are pronounced bleſſed, being the bride, the Lamb's wife, having on his righteouſneſs, partaking of his benefits, and being called unto, and made meet for eternal glory and happineſs; or elſe theſe may deſign converted *Gentiles*, who will be invited to join with them, and will. *And he ſaith unto me, theſe are the true ſayings of God*; the *Syriac* verſion reads, *theſe my true words are of God*; being true, it is plain they are of God, and being of God, it is certain they are true; for he is the God of truth, and cannot lye, and therefore may be depended upon.

Ver. 10. *And I fell at his feet to worſhip him*, &c.] Being tranſported with the news he brought him of the marriage, or converſion of his countrymen the *Jews*, and ſtruck with reverence and awe of the glory and majeſty in which the angel appeared to him; and forgetting himſelf, that worſhip was only due to God, he behaved in this manner; which is not to be excuſed nor juſtified, as appears from the angel's words: *and he ſaid unto me, ſee* thou do it *not*; the words are in the original very ſhort and conciſe, and are ſpoken in an abrupt manner, and in great haſte; as fearing he would be guilty of idolatry, before he could ſpeak all his mind, and uſe the arguments that were neceſſary to diſſuade from it: *I am thy fellow-ſervant, and of thy brethren that have the teſtimony of Jeſus*; if this was one of the miniſtring ſpirits, he was a ſervant of the ſame Lord as *John*; and if he was a miniſter of the Goſpel, he was ſtill more literally a fellow-ſervant of his, and of the Apoſtles, and preachers of the Goſpel; which is meant by the teſtimony of Jeſus, that bearing teſtimony to the perſon, office, grace, obedience, ſufferings, and death of Chriſt, and the glory following; and therefore being but a ſervant, and a ſervant in common with *John* and his brethren, was by no means to be worſhipped; not the ſervant, but maſter; not the creature, but the creator: *worſhip God*; and him only, even God the Father, Son, and Spirit; not the Father to the excluſion of the Son, the firſt-born whom all the angels are called upon to worſhip; nor of the Spirit, who is equally joined with the Father and Son in baptiſm, a part of religious worſhip, and in other parts of it alſo; but this excludes all creatures, angels and men, things animate or inanimate, and images of them; the worſhipping of which will now be no more, or at leaſt will be quickly at an end. *For the teſtimony of Jeſus is the ſpirit of prophecy*;

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[q] Philoſtrat. Vita Apollon. l. 2. c. 9. Vid. Apul. Apolog. p. 225. Pauſan. l. 5. ſive Eliac. p. 294.

[r] See Iſ. lxi. 10. & Targum in Hoſ. x. 12.

phecy; that is, the teſtimony of Jeſus, or the Goſpel which *John* and his brethren had, is the very ſpirit, life, and ſoul of the prophecy of this book; for as all the prophets bore witneſs to Chriſt, ſo does the Spirit of God in this; or the teſtimony which they had, and bore to Chriſt, was equal to the ſpirit of prophecy with which this angel was endowed; ſo that he and they were upon an equal foot; and he was no more a proper object of divine and religious adoration, than they were.

Ver. 11. *And I ſaw heaven opened*, &c.] This viſion refers not to the ſame time the firſt ſeal does, ch. vi. 2. for tho' a white horſe, with a rider on it, is ſeen here, as there; that reſpects the firſt times of the Goſpel, this the latter part of the diſpenſation of it; nor to the war in heaven between *Michael* and the dragon, and their angels, ch. xii. 7. that iſſued in the downfal of paganiſm in the *Roman* empire, this will iſſue in the downfal of the papacy in it; nor to the perſonal coming of Chriſt to the laſt judgment, of which an account is given in the following chapter; but to the battle at *Armageddon*, to which the ſixth vial is a preparation, and which is finiſhed under the ſeventh, ch. xvi. 13, 14, 16, 17. and what is briefly hinted at there, is at large related here; in which Chriſt, the general, and his armies, on the one hand, and the kings of the earth, with the beaſt and falſe prophet, and their armies, on the other hand, appear to give battle to each other: and the iſſue of the battle is particularly repreſented, in order to have a view of which, *John ſaw heaven opened*; not literally, as at Chriſt's baptiſm, and at the ſtoning of *Stephen*, nor in a ſpiritual ſenſe, by the blood of Chriſt, but viſionally, as in ch. iv. 1. and ſince heaven, often in this book, ſignifies the church on earth, a more glorious and comfortable ſtate of the church may be deſigned; when her gates ſhall be opened continually, and not ſhut day nor night, to receive the forces of the *Gentiles*, and their kings, *Iſ.* lx. 15. ſuch a ſtate as is referred to in ch. xi. 19. and xv. 5. to which viſions this is cotemporary; and it may denote a very glorious appearing of Chriſt, not in perſon, which will be after this, but in his kingdom and power, in defeating his enemies, and reigning ſpiritually with his ſaints; and it may alſo deſign the clear revelation and diſcerning *John* had of the following things: *and behold a white horſe*; which, as in ch. vi. 2. may be a ſymbol of the Goſpel, and Goſpel miniſters, as there, in the former, here in the latter part of the Goſpel diſpenſation; ſignified by a *horſe*, to denote the ſwift progreſs of the Goſpel in the latter day, the majeſty, power, and authority with which it will come, bearing down all oppoſition made againſt it; and by a *white* horſe, to expreſs the purity of the Goſpel, and of its preachers and profeſſors, and the peace it publiſhes, and gives, and the joy it brings, and the triumphs that will attend it. *And he that ſat upon him* was *called faithful and true*; that Chriſt is here meant, is evident from the deſcription of his eyes, ver. 12. being the ſame as in ch. i. 14. and from his name, ver. 13. which is the peculiar name of the Son of God, *John* i. 1, 14. and he ſits upon, and is bore by, and rides forth in the Goſpel, and the miniſtry of it, with glory and majeſty, and proſperouſly, *Pſ.* xlv. 3, 4. and the characters of *faithful and true*, well agree with him; ſee ch. iii. 7, 14. and the notes there. He is *faithful and true* to God, who appointed him a leader and commander of the people, and to them he is the commander of: and theſe characters well ſuit him now, when he will accompliſh all the glorious things ſpoken of the church, relating to her ſpiritual and happy ſtate in the latter day, and ſerve greatly to recommend him as a general. *And in righteouſneſs he doth judge and make war*; which is to be underſtood not of the laſt judgment, tho' that will be executed in righteouſneſs, and therefore is called the righteous judgment, yet in that day there will be no war, no oppoſition, the wicked will at once ſubmit; but of Chriſt's judging of his people, and avenging their blood on their enemies, and the remainder of them among papiſts, pagans, and *Mahometans*; who will be gathered together at *Armageddon* in battle array againſt them, when there will be an utter diſcomfiture of them in righteous judgment; for as in times paſt the beaſt made war with the ſaints and witneſſes, and overcame them, Chriſt will enable his people to make war with him and his accomplices, and overcome them, as the ſequel of this viſion ſhows, Chriſt being at the head of them, though not in perſon, yet in power.

Ver. 12. *His eyes were as a flame of fire*, &c.] Which denotes the perſpicuity and penetration of them, the omniſcience of Chriſt to look into, and diſcover the ſecret machinations, ſchemes, and devices of his enemies againſt his people, and his exerciſe of it in favour of them, his eyes, like a flame of fire, running to and fro on their behalf; and alſo this may ſignify the fierceneſs of his anger againſt the enemies of his people, the eyes of his glory being provoked by their cruelty and wickedneſs; and likewiſe the ſuddenneſs of their deſtruction, and the inevitableneſs of it. *And on his head were many crowns*; for he has not only a crown, as the creator and governour of the univerſe, in right of nature, but he has one which his Father has put upon his head, when he ſet him as king over his holy hill of *Zion*, *Pſ.* xxi. 3. and there's another which his mother, the church, crowned him with in the day of his eſpouſals, *Cant.* iii. 11. and beſides theſe, every believer puts a crown on his head, gives him the glory of their ſalvation, and all of them caſt their crowns at his feet: to which may be added, that the crowns of all the kings of the earth are his; they reign by him, and are accountable to him. This part of the deſcription may be expreſſive of that all power in heaven and earth, given to Chriſt at his reſurrection, and exerciſed by him ever ſince; and particularly of the extenſiveneſs of his kingdom at the time this viſion refers to, when the kingdoms of this world ſhall be his, ch. xi. 15. for this viſion, and the ſeventh trumpet, are cotemporary; and it may be a ſymbol of the many victories obtained by him, and of the laſt and cloſing one that ſhould now be obtained by him. *And he had a name written that no man knew but he himſelf*; which ſeems to be his name, the Son of God, as the unknown name of the overcomer, in ch. ii. 17. is a child of God; and the ſenſe is, that his divine nature, in which he is the Son of God, is incomprehenſible, and that the begetting or generation of him, as ſuch, is ineffable, *Prov.* xxx. 4. and that without a divine revelation the name itſelf could not be known; or it could not be known that God had a Son, and that Chriſt is he, and bears that name, *Matt.* xi. 27. and xvi. 16, 17. or elſe his name *Immanuel*. The incarnate God may be intended, which is a ſecret and wonderful name, and contains in it, without controverſy, a great myſtery, which cannot be comprehended by finite minds; or his name, פלא, *wonderful*, *ſecret*, *Iſ.* ix. 6. and *Judg.* xiii. 18. This name is ſaid to be *written*; that is, in the ſcriptures of truth, in which it is revealed that Chriſt is the Son of God, and *Immanuel.* In ver. 16. the name of king of kings, *&c.* is ſaid to be written on his veſture, and on his thigh; and the *Ethiopic* verſion makes this to be written on his crown or diadem, reading the words thus; *and upon his head a crown, and there was written in his diadem a name, and no man knew it, but he himſelf only*; as the high-prieſt had *holineſs to the Lord* written on his mitre. The *Syriac* verſion inſerts a clauſe between the two laſt, *having names written,* and then follows, *and a name written,* &c. and ſo the *Complutenſian* edition.

Ver. 13. *And he was clothed with a veſture dipt in blood,* &c.] Either in his own, by which he became the ſaviour of his church and people; or elſe in the blood of his ſaints, he now comes to avenge; or rather in the blood of his enemies, with which he appears as ſtained, before the battle is fought, the victory being ſure, and their ſlaughter unavoidable: the metaphor is taken from perſons treading in a wine-preſs, whoſe garments are ſtained with blood of grapes; ſee ver. 15. *Gen.* xlix. 11. and *Iſ.* lxiii. 1, 2, 3. Here may be alſo an alluſion to the *Roman* general's veſture, which was ſometimes purple or ſcarlet, in which he fought, as did *Lucullus*[s]. *And his name is called the Word of God*; the name of Chriſt, often uſed by *John* in his Goſpel, Epiſtles, and in this book, *John* i. 1, 14. 1 *John* i. 1. and v. 7. *Rev.* i. 2, 9. Of the ſignification, reaſon, and import of this name, ſee the note on *John* i. 1. The reaſon why he is called by it here, may be partly to expreſs his greatneſs, glory, and majeſty, this being a name which principally belongs to him, as a divine perſon, as the creator of all things, and as previous to his incarnation; and partly becauſe all the promiſes of God in his word, and which are all yea and *amen* in Chriſt, will be now ſhortly fulfilled.

Ver. 14. *And the armies which were in heaven,* &c.] Not the angels, tho' they are God's hoſt, and are the armies of the heavens; they are in heaven, and dwell there, and follow Chriſt, attend upon him, and miniſter to him, and have been ſometimes repreſented by horſes and horſemen, 2 *Kings* ii. 11. and vi. 17. *Zech.* i. 8. and they are pure and holy creatures, and will come with Chriſt to judgment: but this viſion refers not to the day of judgment; and beſides, the ſaints are meant, as appears by their habit, for the fine linnen, white and clean, is the righteouſneſs of the ſaints, ver. 8. and the righteouſneſs of angels and ſaints is not the ſame. Moreover, theſe are the ſame company deſcribed in ch. xvii. 14. The ſaints are in a ſtate of warfare, have many enemies to fight with, ſin, ſatan, and the world; they are enliſted as volunteers under Chriſt, the captain of ſalvation; they are provided with the whole armour of God, and are very numerous, and always more than conquerors thro' Chriſt: theſe are deſcribed by the place where they were, *in heaven*; not being glorified ſaints in heaven; with theſe indeed Chriſt will come to judgment, even with all his ſaints with him; but members of the church militant, ſaid to be in heaven, becauſe that is often called the kingdom of heaven; and becauſe their names are written in heaven, and they are of heavenly extract; they are born from above, and are partakers of the heavenly calling; they belong to heaven, they are citizens of it, and are preſſing on to it. And theſe *followed him*; Chriſt, their leader and commander in the exerciſe of grace, and in the diſcharge of duty; having gone on in his ways thro' a train of ſufferings, and cleaved unto him, and now attend him; not to aſſiſt in fighting, but to add to the glorious and triumphant appearance of their general; and therefore are ſaid to be *upon white horſes:* they had ſerved Chriſt in his Goſpel, which ſome of them had preached, and all profeſſed, and had maintained the purity of it in doctrine and practice, and now triumphed in Chriſt, and along with him, riding upon horſes of the ſame colour with his, as being his princes and nobles, and whom he had made kings as well as prieſts; the former may be ſignified by their horſes; ſee *Judg.* v. 10. and the latter by their following habit, *clothed in fine linnen, white and clean*; not the horſes, but the armies on them; which deſigns not their inward purity, which was very glorious; nor their outward converſation-garments, waſhed and made white in the blood of the Lamb; but the robe of Chriſt's righteouſneſs, which is pure and ſpotleſs: theſe have no armour on, for they are not to ſtrike a blow, only their general, who has the bloody garment on, is to tread the wine-preſs, and deſtroy antichriſt with the breath of his mouth, or with his ſword proceeding out of it, as follows.

Ver. 15. *And out of his mouth goeth a ſharp ſword,* &c.] The *Complutenſian* edition, and all the *Oriental* verſions, with the *Vulgate Latin,* read, *a ſharp two-edged ſword.* The word of God, or the judiciary ſentence of Chriſt according to it, and which he will fully execute, to the utter deſtruction of all his enemies; ſee the note on ch. i. 16. *that with it he ſhould ſmite the nations*; the *Gentiles,* the papiſts, the antichriſtian ſtates, thoſe that have adhered to *Babylon,* and have drunk of the wine of her fornication. This is predicted in *Numb.* xxiv. 17, 18, 19. and on account of this the nations will be angry under the ſounding of the ſeventh trumpet, with which this viſion is cotemporary, ch. xi. 18. *And he ſhall rule them with a rod of iron*; uſe them with the utmoſt ſeverity; the phraſe is taken out of *Pſ.* ii. 9. a prophecy of Chriſt, and mentioned twice before in this book, ch. ii. 27. and xii. 5. ſee the notes there: *and he treadeth the wine-preſs of the fierceneſs and wrath of almighty God*; the fierce wrath of God againſt ſinners is compared to a wine-preſs; and the wicked antichriſtian party are likened to cluſters of grapes; who being ripe for deſtruction, are caſt into it, and preſſed, ſqueezed, and trodden down by the mighty power of Chriſt, the Word of God, whoſe veſture is therefore before ſaid to be dipped in blood; the ſame metaphor is uſed in ch. xiv. 19, 20. the alluſion ſeems to be to *Iſ.* lxiii. 3, 6.

Ver. 16. *And he hath on his veſture, and on his thigh a name written,* &c.] This name, afterwards expreſſed, is ſaid to be written on his veſture, in alluſion to the cuſtom of perſons of note and eminence, having their names interwoven in their garments, and which was ſometimes done in letters of gold, as *Zeuxis* had[t]; and it is expreſſive of the conſpicuouſneſs of Chriſt's kingdom, which now will come with obſervation; his judgments, the adminiſtrations of his kingly office will be manifeſt, and he will reign before his ancients glorioſly: and its being ſaid to be written on his thigh, may mean either that it was upon that part of his garment which covered his thigh; or elſe that it was alſo on his ſword, which he ſometimes girt upon his thigh. Mr. *Daubuz* has given an inſtance out of *Victor Vitenſis,* of *Clementianus,* a monk, who had written on his thigh, "a *manichee* diſciple of Jeſus Chriſt."

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[s] Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 1. c. 20.

[t] Plin. Nat. Hiſt. l. 35. c. 9.

And this being done in *Africa*, he ſuppoſes it to be a *Phœnician* cuſtom continued. It may here denote the perpetuity of Chriſt's name, power, and dominion, which will continue to the lateſt poſterity, *Pſ.* lxxii. 17. which ſpring from the thigh; and it may denote the ſubjection of his people to him, ſignified by the putting the hand under the thigh, *Gen.* xxiv. 2. And this name is *king of kings and lord of all lords*; which will well ſuit him now when he ſhall be openly king over all the earth; ſee the note on ch. xvii. 14.

Ver. 17. *And I ſaw an angel ſtanding in the ſun*, &c.] By whom is meant, not the angel of the fourth vial, who poured it on the ſun, taken in another ſenſe than here, and therefore could not ſtand in it; nor the archangel with the laſt trumpet, for as yet the dead riſe not, nor does the judgment come on; nor one of the miniſtring ſpirits; nor Chriſt himſelf, for he is the great God, to whoſe ſupper this angel invites, but a miniſter of the Goſpel; or rather a ſett of Goſpel miniſters, ſuch as in ch. xiv. who may be ſaid to ſtand in the ſun, in like manner as the woman, the church, was ſeen clothed with it, ch. xii. 1. and may denote the conſpicuouſneſs of Goſpel preachers; for as the church now will be eſtabliſhed upon the top of the mountains, ſo her teachers ſhall not be removed into corners any more, but her eyes ſhall behold her teachers; and alſo the clear ſight they ſhall have of the doctrines and myſteries of the Goſpel, who ſhall now ſee eye to eye; and particularly the further breakings forth of the glory of the latter day, and the enſuing victory of Chriſt over all his enemies; and alſo ſhews the great ſtrength of their ſight, who, far from being like moles and bats, will be able both to look upon the ſun, and to ſtand in it: and it may likewiſe ſignify the glory and majeſty of Chriſt's kingdom; the comfortable influence of him, the ſun of righteouſneſs, who will now ariſe upon his people with healing in his wings; and the ſtedfaſtneſs of Chriſt's miniſters to him, and his pure Goſpel, and the glorious truths of it. *And he cried with a loud voice*; that he might be heard far and near, having ſomething of moment and importance to publiſh: *ſaying to all the fowls that fly in the midſt of heaven*; meaning not the barbarous nations, the *Goths*, and *Vandals*, and *Saracens*, which over-run and deſtroyed the weſtern and eaſtern empires; theſe times are too late for them, they roſe up under the ſix firſt trumpets; nor devils and unclean ſpirits, which will prey upon and torment antichriſt, and his followers, in hell; nor military and avaritious men among proteſtants, but chriſtian princes, and their people, are deſigned; they are ſuch as are in heaven, the church, and of note there, who will ſhare the ſpoils of the antichriſtian people, and poſſeſs their kingdoms, ſubſtance, and eſtates: theſe are invited by the angel, ſaying, *come and gather yourſelves together unto the ſupper of the great God.* The *Alexandrian* copy, the *Vulgate Latin* and *Syriac* verſions read, *to the great ſupper of God*; and ſo the *Complutenſian* edition; not the Lord's ſupper, where not the fleſh of men, but the fleſh of Chriſt is eat by faith; nor the marriage-ſupper of the Lamb, which will be of another kind than this; nor is any ſpiritual repaſt intended, ſuch as living by faith on Chriſt, and ſupping with him, being entertained with his promiſes, preſence, and the diſcoveries of his love; but the ſlaughter of Chriſt's enemies, and his victory over them, which is his ſacrifice; and theſe are the gueſts he bids, ſee *Zeph.* i. 7. and whom he calls to ſhare in the conqueſt and ſpoils, and to expreſs their joy on this occaſion: *the great God*, is no other than Chriſt the general of the armies in heaven, called before the Word of God, and king of kings, and lord of lords; who will gain this victory, and will be known to be the great God by the judgment he will execute. This is a proof of our Lord's divinity; ſee *Tit.* ii. 13.

Ver. 18. *That ye may eat the fleſh of kings*, &c.] Of the earth, and of the whole world, who will fall in the battle at *Armageddon*; ſee ch. xvi. 14. and xix. 19. and deſign either thoſe antichriſtian kings and ſtates, which have drunk of the wine of *Rome*'s fornication, and will bewail the downfal of *Babylon*, ch. xviii. 3, 9. or thoſe pagan kings which will be drawn in by the *Pope* and *Turk*, to aid and aſſiſt in this war, or both, when, upon the defeat of them, the chriſtian princes will ſeize upon, poſſeſs and enjoy their kingdoms and dominions, which is meant by eating their fleſh; ſee the note on ch. xvii. 16. *And the fleſh of captains*; of their generals, and officers under them: *and the fleſh of mighty men*; the common ſoldiers, who are ſo called, *Jer.* xlvi. 5. who will be rifled and plundered: *and the fleſh of horſes, and of them that ſit on them*; whoſe rich trappings and clothes will be taken away from them: *and the fleſh of all men, both free and bond, both ſmall and great*; that is, the ſubſtance of all the inhabitants of the antichriſtian empire, both eaſtern and weſtern, of whatſoever rank, ſtate, and condition they be, ch. xiii. 16. The metaphors are taken from, and there is a manifeſt alluſion to *Ezek.* xxxix. 17—20. and the whole denotes the entire ſlaughter, and utter ruin of the whole antichriſtian army, and the certainty of Chriſt's victory over it before hand; and alſo the deſtruction of all that are the followers of antichriſt, throughout his dominions, which will now wholly fall into the hands of the ſaints, and be enjoyed by them.

Ver. 19. *And I ſaw the beaſt*, &c.] Not the devil, for after this he is taken and bound for a thouſand years, and then looſed, and laid hold on again, and caſt into the lake of fire; not but that this war will be by his inſtigation, and under his influence, ch. xvi. 14. not the *Roman* pagan empire, which has been deſtroyed long ago, under the ſixth ſeal, and was the iſſue of the battle between *Michael* and his angels, and the dragon and his; but the antichriſtian civil powers, or antichriſt in his civil capacity; and which, tho' it may chiefly regard the weſtern antichriſt, and the remains of the *Latin* idolatry, yet may take in the eaſtern antichriſt, or the *Mahometan* powers, which may all join together in this battle; the beaſt will ſurvive for a while the downfal of his ſeat, *Babylon* or *Rome*. *And the kings of the earth*; theſe, as they ſtand diſtinguiſhed from the beaſt, or the antichriſtian kings, and civil ſtates, may deſign as many of the pagan kings and princes, as the pope and *Turk* by their emiſſaries can perſuade to aſſiſt them in this war; ſee the note on ch. xvi. 14. *And their armies gathered together*; at *Armageddon*, or in the valley of *Jehoſhaphat*, ch. xvi. 16. *Joel* iii. 2, 12. to make war againſt him *that ſat on the horſe*; the white horſe, ver. 11. as the *Arabic* and *Ethiopic* verſions read, which muſt be downright folly and madneſs, ſince he is the Word of God, the great God, the king of kings, and lord of lords: *and againſt his army*, ver. 14. who, tho' unarmed, and only clothed in fine linnen, have nothing to fear, ſince Chriſt, the captain of their ſalvation, is at the head of them.

Ver. 20. *And the beaſt was taken*, &c.] At the firſt onſet, as ſoon as ever the battle begun, and carried away captive, as it was threatened he ſhould, ch. xiii. 10. and this by Chriſt, who will deſtroy him with the breath of his mouth, and the brightneſs of his coming, 2 *Theſſ.* ii. 8. *And with him the falſe prophet*; that is, the ſecond beaſt in ch. xiii. 11, 12, 13, 14. as appears by the characters by which he is here deſcribed, or antichriſt in his eccleſiaſtic capacity; that is, the pope with his clergy: and indeed, when the antichriſtian princes and ſtates are taken and deſtroyed, which are the ſupport of the papacy, that muſt in conſequence ſink, be cruſhed and ruined; the *Alexandrian* copy reads, *and they that* are *with him, the falſe prophet Jezabel*; the falſe propheteſs and her children, who will now be killed with death, ch. ii. 20, 23. *that wrought miracles before him*; the beaſt, or the civil antichriſtian powers, even ſigns and lying wonders, which were approved of, and applauded by him, by which, believing them, he was confirmed in antichriſtian principles: *with which he deceived them that had the mark of the beaſt, and them that worſhipped his image*; the ſeveral ſubjects of the antichriſtian ſtates; ſee ch. xiii. 14, 15, 16, 17. but none of God's elect, who cannot be ſeduced by ſuch means, *Matt.* xxiv. 24. *Theſe both were caſt alive into a lake of fire burning with brimſtone*; which is the ſecond death, ch. xxi. 8. The ſevere puniſhment of antichriſt, conſidered in both his capacities, civil and eccleſiaſtic, is expreſſed by being *caſt into a lake of fire*, not material fire, but the wrath of God, which will be poured out like fire, and will be intolerable; and by this lake, *burning with brimſtone*, which giving a nauſeous ſtench, aggravates the puniſhment. Says *R. Joden*[t], when a man ſmells the ſmell of brimſtone, why does his breath draw back at it (or catch)? becauſe he knows he ſhall be judged with it in the world to come. The alluſion ſeems to be to the place where *Sodom* and *Gomorrha* ſtood, which is become a ſulphurous lake, and is an emblem of the vengeance of eternal fire, *Jude* 8. and theſe two are ſaid to be *caſt alive* into it, which ſhews, that they will not only ſuffer a corporal death at this battle, and in the iſſue of it, but will be deſtroyed, body and ſoul, in hell: the phraſe denotes the awfulneſs, inevitableneſs, and ſeverity of their puniſhment; there ſeems to be ſome reference to the earth's ſwallowing up *Korah*, and his company alive, *Num.* xi. 33. ſee *Dan.* vii. 11.

Ver. 21. *And the remnant were ſlain*, &c.] Not only the kings of the earth, and their armies, that will now be gathered together, but all the remains of *Papiſts*, *Pagans*, and *Mahometans*, in the ſeveral parts of the world, even all the enemies of Chriſt: theſe will be ſlain *with the ſword of him that ſat upon the horſe*; upon the white horſe, as the *Ethiopic* verſion reads; the *Arabic* verſion reads, that ſat upon the throne, *which* ſword *proceedeth out of his mouth*, ver. 15. and is the word of God, or the judiciary ſentence of Chriſt according to it; and the meaning is, either that theſe ſhall be ſubdued, conquered, and converted by the word; and ſo are fitly called a *remnant*, a remnant according to the election of grace among the antichriſtian party; and which ſenſe agrees with ch. xi. 13. or elſe, that they will be convicted and confounded, and not be able to ſtand againſt the light and evidence of the word of God, and will be ſentenced by Chriſt to everlaſting puniſhment; and it may be partly one, and partly the other. *And all the fowls were filled with their fleſh*; all the chriſtian princes and people will be ſatisfied with their kingdoms, riches and wealth, and will rejoice at their deſtruction, and in the righteouſneſs of God, which will be diſplayed in it: and now the world being clear of all Chriſt's enemies, *pagan*, *papal*, and *Mahometan*, the way will be prepared for Chriſt's open and glorious kingdom in it.

CHAP. XX.

THIS chapter contains the binding of ſatan, the ſaints thouſand years reign with Chriſt, the looſing of ſatan again, the deſtruction of him, and the *Gog* and *Magog* army, and the laſt judgment: the angel that is to bind ſatan is deſcribed by his deſcent from heaven; by his having the key of the bottomleſs pit, and a great chain in his hand; and by the uſe he made of them, laying hold on ſatan, binding him, caſting him into the bottomleſs pit, and then ſhutting it up, and ſetting a ſeal on him; by all which he will be prevented from deceiving the nations for the ſpace of a thouſand years, ver. 1, 2, 3. After this thrones are ſeen, with perſons on them, to whom judgment is given; who are ſaid to be ſuch as had been martyrs for Jeſus, and had not worſhipped the beaſt, or profeſſed his religion; whoſe happineſs is repreſented by living and reigning with Chriſt a thouſand years, when others will not; the ſecond death will have no power on them; they'll be the prieſts of God, and Chriſt, and reign with him during the ſaid term, having a part in the firſt reſurrection, ver. 4, 5, 6. At the expiration of which term ſatan will be looſed, and go out of priſon, deceive the nations, and gather *Gog* and *Magog* to battle; who being exceeding numerous, will cover the breadth of the earth, encompaſs the camp and city of the ſaints, when fire will come down from heaven and deſtroy them, and ſatan will be caſt into the lake of fire, where the beaſt and falſe prophet are, and be tormented for ever and ever, ver. 7, 8, 9, 10. And next an account is given of the general judgment; and the judge is deſcribed by the throne he ſat on, a white cloud, and by his majeſty, which is ſuch, that the heavens and the earth flee from before him, ver. 11. And next the perſons judged are deſcribed by their common ſtate, the dead; by their age or condition, great and ſmall, and by their poſition, ſtanding before God; and then an account of the procedure, or rule of judgment; the books are opened, and the execution of judgment according to what is found in the books, ver. 12. in order to which the ſea, death, and the grave give up the dead in them, and the two laſt are caſt into the lake, and with them thoſe who are not in the book of life, ver. 13, 14.

Ver. 1. And I *ſaw an angel come down from heaven*, &c.] All Chriſt's enemies, and ſatan's inſtruments being removed, the devil is left alone, and only ſtands in the way of Chriſt's kingdom; and what will be done to him, and how he will be in the iſſue diſpoſed of, this viſion gives an account: by the *angel*, *John* ſaw, is not to be underſtood *Conſtantine* the great; for though he is the man-child that was taken up to God, and his throne, being advanced to the empire, yet he cannot, with that propriety, be ſaid to come down from heaven; and tho' he vanquiſhed the heathen emperors, in which the dragon preſided, and caſt paganiſm out of the empire, by which the devil ruled in it, yet the binding of ſatan is another kind of work, and ſeems too great for him; and beſides, did not take place in his time, as will be ſeen hereafter: nor is an Apoſtle, or a miniſter of the Goſpel intended; ſuch are indeed called angels in this book, and may be ſaid to come down from heaven, becauſe they have their commiſſion from thence; and particularly the Apoſtles had the keys of the kingdom of heaven, but not the key of the bottomleſs pit; and a chain and ſyſtem of Goſpel truths, which they made good uſe of for the eſtabliſhing of Chriſt's kingdom, and weakening of ſatan's, but not ſuch a chain as is here meant; and they had the power of binding and looſing, or of declaring things lawful or unlawful, but not of binding and looſing of ſatan; nor was he bound in the apoſtolic age: nor is one of the miniſtring ſpirits, or a deputation of angels deſigned; for tho' Chriſt will be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, and will make uſe of them, both to gather together his elect, and to caſt the wicked into the lake of fire, yet not to bind ſatan; but the Lord Jeſus Chriſt himſelf is this angel, who is the angel of God's preſence, and of the covenant; and who is in this book called an angel, ch. vii. 2. and x. 1. to whom all the characters here well agree, and to whom the work of binding ſatan moſt properly belongs; for who ſo fit to do it, or ſo capable of it, as the ſeed of the woman, that has bruiſed the ſerpent's head, or as the Son of God, who was manifeſted to deſtroy the works of the devil, yea to deſtroy him himſelf; and who diſpoſſeſſed multitudes of devils from the bodies of men, and is the ſtrong man armed that diſlodges ſatan from the ſouls of men, and is the ſame with *Michael*, who drove him from heaven, and caſt him out from thence before, ch. xii. 7, 8. And his coming down from heaven is not to be underſtood of his incarnation, or of his coming from thence by the aſſumption of human nature; for ſatan was not bound by him then, as will be ſeen hereafter; but of his ſecond coming, which will be from heaven, where he now is, and will be local, viſible, and perſonal: of no other coming of his does this book ſpeak, as ſeen by *John*, or as future; nor will the order of this viſion, after the ruin of the beaſt and falſe prophet, admit of any other. *Having the key of the bottomleſs pit*; the abyſs or deep, the ſame out of which the beaſt aſcended, ch. xi. 7. and xvii. 8. And the key of this becomes no hand ſo well as his who has the keys of hell and death, ch. i. 18. who has all power in heaven and in earth, and has the power of hell, of opening and ſhutting it at his pleaſure, which is ſignified by this phraſe; ſee ch. ix. 1. The *Ethiopic* verſion reads, *the key of the ſun*, where ſome have thought hell to be; and yet the ſame verſion renders the word, *the deep*, in ver. 3. *And a great chain in his hand*; the key in one hand, and the chain in another; by which laſt is meant, not any material chain, with which ſpirits can't be bound, nor indeed ſometimes bodies poſſeſſed by evil ſpirits, *Mark* v. 3, 4. but the almighty power of Chriſt, which he will now diſplay in binding ſatan faſter and cloſer than ever.

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[t] Bereſhit Rabba, §. 51. fol. 45. 4.

Ver. 2. *And he laid hold on the dragon*, &c.] By whom is meant not paganiſm, for that was deſtroyed in the *Roman* empire under the ſixth ſeal, and was the conſequence of the war between *Michael* and his angels, and the dragon and his; and before this time it will be deſtroyed in other parts under the ſixth and ſeventh vials, when the kings of the earth, being gathered together at *Armageddon*, will be ſlain, and the cities of the nations will fall, not only papal, but pagan, and *Mahometan*; and what will not, will be converted, for before this time the kingdoms of this world will become the kingdoms of Chriſt: but the devil himſelf is intended, ſo called, partly becauſe of his great power, authority, and cruelty he has exerciſed in the world; and becauſe of the venom and poiſon of idolatry, ſuperſtition, falſe doctrine, and worſhip, with which he has infected the inhabitants of it. *That old ſerpent*; ſo called with reſpect to his cunning and ſubtlety, as well as his antiquity, being from the beginning of the creation, and having as early beguiled our firſt parents: *which is the devil and ſatan*; the accuſer of God and men, and the adverſary of them both. The *Complutenſian* edition, and *Syriac* verſion add, *which deceiveth the whole world*; and the *Arabic* verſion, *the deceiver of the whole world*; which ſeems to be taken out of ch. xii. 9. ſee the note there. Him Chriſt *laid hold on*, and whom he held faſt, as the word ſignifies: Chriſt will now take him, apprehend him, and detain him, as his priſoner; in the wilderneſs, ſatan only felt the dint of his ſword, the written word of God, and was obliged to leave him; but now he'll feel the weight of his hand, and the lighting down of his arm, with the indignation of his anger; in the agony or conflict with him in the garden, he was conquered by prayer; and on the croſs Chriſt deſtroyed him thro' death, but now he'll be ſeized by his power, and cruſhed under his hand. *And bound him a thouſand years*; with the great chain he had in his hand: the devil is in chains now, is under the power of divine providence, and can do nothing without divine permiſſion; but this chain is long, and he appears oftentimes to have great liberty, and ranges about the air and earth, and does much miſchief; but now he'll be ſo bound by the power of Chriſt over him, that he'll not be able to ſtir hand or foot, to diſturb the ſaints, or deceive the nations, whether with falſe worſhip, and falſe doctrine, or by ſtirring them up to perſecute the ſaints. So of the devil, *Aſmodæus*, it is ſaid in *Tobit* viii. 3. that the angel *Raphael*, אסרהו, *bound him*. The ſpace of *a thouſand years* is not a certain number for an uncertain, or a large and indeterminate ſpace of time, as in *Pſ.* xc. 4. and cv. 8. theſe years are to be taken, not indefinitely, but definitely, for juſt this number of years exactly, as appears from their having the article prefixed to them; and are called afterwards no leſs than four times, τα χιλια ετη, *the thouſand years*, or *theſe thouſand years*, ver. 3, 4, 5, 7. and from the things which are attributed to the beginning and ending of theſe years, which fix the epócha, and period of them; as the binding of ſatan, when they begin, and the looſing of him when they end, as well as the reign of the ſaints with Chriſt during the whole time; to which may be added, the reſurrection of the ſaints at the commencement of them, and the reſurrection of the wicked at the cloſe: but the great queſtion is, whether they are begun or not? if they are begun, when they began; and if not, when they will. Some think that they began either at the birth of Chriſt, or at his reſurrection, or at the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*. I put theſe together, becauſe they were all in one century, within the compaſs of ſeventy years, or thereabout; ſo that if the thouſand years began at either of them, they muſt end in the ſame century, in 1100. Now, tho' upon Chriſt's coming ſatan fell like lightning from heaven, and multitudes of men, poſſeſſed with devils, were diſpoſſeſſed by Chriſt, and he that had the power of death, the devil, was deſtroyed by him; and upon the preaching of the Goſpel by the Apoſtles in the *Gentile* world, the prince of the world was caſt out, his oracles were ſtruck dumb, multitudes were converted, and churches were ſet up every where, yet ſtill ſatan was not bound: he was not bound before the death of Chriſt; witneſs the many bodies of men poſſeſſed by him; his tempting Chriſt himſelf in the wilderneſs; his attacks upon him in the garden, and on the croſs; his putting it into the heart of *Judas* to betray him, and filling the chief-prieſts and ſcribes with malice and envy againſt him, to ſeek his death, which they brought about: nor was he bound, ſo as not to deceive the *Jews*, either before, or after the death of Chriſt, nor is he to this day; they were in Chriſt's time under the influence of their father the devil, whoſe luſts they would do, and did, in putting Chriſt to death; and after his death, they were inſtigated by ſatan to perſecute his Apoſtles in *Judea*, and elſewhere; and tho' after the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem* they had no more power to act in this way, yet they had no leſs ill-will and malice againſt the chriſtians, and are to this day filled with enmity againſt them, and are led captive by ſatan, and given up to believe a lye, that the Meſſiah is not come, and to reject the true Meſſiah, and to expect a falſe one: and as for the heathen world, notwithſtanding the progreſs of the Goſpel in it, yet for the firſt three hundred years paganiſm was the eſtabliſhed religion of the *Roman* empire; and chriſtianity was every where ſpoken againſt, deſpiſed, and perſecuted, and ſometimes triumphed over, as if it was extinct; and ſatan could never be ſaid to be bound, and in priſon himſelf, when he caſt ſuch multitudes into priſon, and cauſed them to have tribulation ten days, *Rev.* ii. 10. in which ſo many martyrs ſuffered: nor did ſatan appear to be bound, with reſpect to the church; the myſtery of iniquity began to work in the Apoſtles times, and there were then many antichriſts in the world, deceivers, falſe teachers and hereticks; there was a ſynagogue of ſatan, *Rev.* ii. 9. and ſuch a ſett of vile perſons under the name of chriſtians, as ſcarce ever was in the world; to which may be added, the great decline of love, and other graces, and of the purity of doctrine and worſhip in the beſt churches, and the many contentions among themſelves, in which ſatan had a great hand, and therefore could not be bound: moreover, ſome hundreds of years before the thouſand years ended, beginning from either of the above dates, the man of ſin, the ſon of perdition, the pope, or weſtern antichriſt, was revealed, whoſe coming is after the working of ſatan, 2 *Theſſ.* ii. 9. and therefore ſurely he could not be bound then: beſides, *Mahomet*, the eaſtern antichriſt, ſprung up, who opened the bottomleſs pit, and let out the ſmoke of it, by the *Alcoran* he delivered, and the falſe worſhip he ſet up: nor was there any thing in the eleventh century, which anſwered to the looſing of ſatan, to the *Gog* and *Magog* army, their war with the ſaints, and the iſſue of it; nor were the nations then more deceived, than they had been in ſome centuries paſt; at leaſt they were deceived in centuries paſt, both by the pope and *Mahomet*, which they would not have been, had ſatan been bound then: to which may be ſubjoined, that if ſatan was looſed, then he can't be ſaid to be looſed *a little ſeaſon*, as in ver. 3. in compariſon of the thouſand years, as that muſt be underſtood; ſince it is now between ſix and ſeven hundred years ſince, which is more than half a thouſand years. Others begin theſe years at *Conſtantine's* coming to the imperial throne; but tho' there was at that time a great ſpread of the Goſpel, an enlargement of Chriſt's kingdom, and a weakning of ſatan's, yet ſatan was far from being bound; ſee ch. xii. 7, 8. xiii. 15. witneſs the flood of errors and hereſies which he quickly brought in, as the *Eutychian* and *Neſtorian* hereſies, the one confounding the natures, the other dividing the perſon of Chriſt; the *Pelagian* hereſy, which obſcured the grace of God, and advanced the free will of man; the *Macedonian* hereſy, which denied the divinity of the Spirit; and eſpecially the *Arian* hereſy, which was oppoſed to the deity of Chriſt, and which introduced great contentions and confuſion in the churches, and iſſued in a violent perſecution of them, being embraced by the ſons of *Conſtantine*; not to take notice of *Julian*, an heathen emperor, aſcending the throne, who by many deviliſh arts endeavoured to extirpate chriſtanity; nor what has been obſerved before, the riſe of both *Mahomet* in the eaſt, and the *Romiſh* antichriſt in the weſt, which were both within this period; in proceſs of time the weſtern empire was over-run by the *Goths* and *Vandals*, and the eaſtern empire by the *Saracens* and *Turks*; to which may be added, the violent perſecutions of the *Waldenſes* and *Albigenſes*, before the year 1300, about which time the thouſand years muſt ceaſe, according to this computation, for oppoſing the pope of *Rome*, and who were ſlain where ſatan had his ſeat, *Rev.* ii. 13. and therefore not bound; nor was there any thing happened in that century which might anſwer to the looſing of him. Others date theſe thouſand years from the reformation, and ſo not much more than two hundred of them are yet paſſed; but that ſatan was not bound then, and is not now, is manifeſt. All the popiſh nations have not been reformed, but ſtill remain under the deception; and ſome that have been, have revolted again; and the devil has continued to deceive the nations with that falſe worſhip, and to ſtir them up to perſecute the reformed. Witneſs the burning of them here in queen *Mary's* days, the maſſacres in *France* and *Ireland*, the preſent inquiſition in *Spain* and *Portugal*, and the perſecution of the *Hugonots* in *France*, and other proteſtants elſewhere: and this is further evident from the decline in the reformed churches, both as to doctrine, diſcipline, and converſation; from the ſpread of errors and hereſies of all kinds ever ſince, and eſpecially in our age; and from the general prophaneneſs and infidelity of the times, which, when conſidered, no man in his ſenſes can ever think that ſatan is bound; nor indeed will he be bound, or theſe thouſand years begin, till after the converſion of the *Jews*, and the bringing in the fulneſs of the *Gentiles*, and the deſtruction of all the antichriſtian powers, pagan, papal, and *Mahometan*, as appears from the order of this viſion, and its connexion with the preceding chapter.

Ver. 3. *And caſt him into the bottomleſs pit*, &c.] Or deep, into which the devils deſired they might not be ſent, and which they dreaded as a torment, it may be, becauſe a place of confinement, *Luke* viii. 31. *Matt.* viii. 29. for this is called a priſon, ver. 7. and is diſtinguiſhed from the lake of fire, into which the devil is afterwards caſt, ver. 10. *And ſhut him up*; that ſo he might not rove about in the air, nor go to and fro in the earth, nor walk about like a roaring lion, ſeeking to affright, diſturb, or devour: *and ſet a ſeal upon him*; or upon the door of the pit, for further ſecurity, as was upon the ſtone at the mouth of the lion's den, *Dan.* vi. 17. and of Chriſt's ſepulchre, *Matt.* xxvii. 66. The *Jews*[u] make mention of a ſtone they call *Shetijah*, with which the Lord of the world *ſealed the mouth of the great deep*, or bottomleſs pit, at the beginning; but here not that, but ſatan in it is ſealed. The *Alexandrian* copy reads, *and ſealed him firmly*, ſo that it was impoſſible for him to break out: the end of this apprehenſion, binding, impriſonment, and ſecurity of ſatan is, *that he ſhould deceive the nations no more*; that is, by drawing them into idolatry, falſe worſhip, and falſe doctrine; and by exciting them to make war againſt the ſaints, or to perſecute them, as appears from ver. 8. as he had done before; and it is notorious enough, that he has deceived them both theſe ways; he deceived the pagan nations not only before, but ſince the coming of Chriſt, to worſhip the heathen deities; and the papiſts, who are called *Gentiles*, or nations, ch. xi. 2. to fall down to idols of gold, ſilver, ſtone, and wood; and the nation of the *Jews* to entertain a falſe and deluded notion of the Meſſiah; and all of them, in their turns, to perſecute the people of God, as the *Jews* at the death of *Stephen*, and afterwards; the pagan emperors for the firſt three hundred years after Chriſt; the papiſts from the riſe of the beaſt, who had power given him to make war with the ſaints, and overcome them; but now he'll be under ſuch reſtraint, and in ſuch cloſe confinement, that he'll not be able to move the wicked nations to any thing of this kind, as he will when he is looſed at the end of the thouſand years; nor will he be able ſo much as to tempt any of the ſaints, during this term of time, nor give them the leaſt moleſtation or uneaſineſs. *Till the thouſand years ſhall be fulfilled*; or ended, the whole ſpace of them run out: *and after that he muſt be looſed a little ſeaſon*; a ſmall ſpace of time, in compariſon of the thouſand years; how long it will be exactly, can't be ſaid; and this *muſt* be, not becauſe he can't be held any longer, or thro' any weakneſs in Chriſt; but becauſe of the decree of God, who has ſo appointed it, for the glorifying of himſelf, in the ſalvation of his people, and in the final deſtruction of the devil, and the *Gog* and *Magog* army.

Ver. 4. *And I ſaw thrones, and they ſat upon them*, &c.] Beſides the throne of God the Father, and the throne of glory, on which the Son of God ſits, and the twelve thrones for the twelve Apoſtles of the Lamb; there will be thrones ſet, or pitched, for all the ſaints, *Dan.* vii. 9. who will ſit on them, in the character of kings, and as conquerors, and ſhall ſit quiet, and undiſturbed, and be in perfect eaſe, and peace, for they that ſit on them are the ſame perſons hereafter deſcribed in this verſe; for after the binding of ſatan, an account is given of the happineſs and glory of the ſaints during that time: *and judgment was given unto them*; that is, power, dominion, regal authority, poſſeſſion of a kingdom, anſwerable to their character as kings, and to their poſition, ſitting on thrones, *Dan.* vii. 22, 27. unleſs it ſhould be rather underſtood of juſtice being done them, which does not ſo manifeſtly take place in the preſent ſtate of things, and of which they ſometimes complain; but now righteous judgment will be given for them, and againſt their enemies; their perſons will be openly declared righteous; their characters will be cleared of all falſe imputations faſtened on them; and their works and ſufferings for Chriſt will be taken notice of in a way of grace, and rewarded in a very glorious manner. And ſo it may reſpect their being judged themſelves, but not their judging of others, the wicked, which is the ſole work of Chriſt; nor will the wicked now be upon the ſpot to be judged; nor is that notion to be ſupported by *Matt.* xix. 28. 1 *Cor.* vi. 2, 3. ſee the notes there. The *Jews* fancy, that their chief men ſhall judge the world in the time to come; for ſo they ſay[w], "in future "time, (or in the world to come) the holy bleſſed "God will ſit, and kings will place thrones for the "great men of *Iſrael*, and they ſhall ſit and judge "the nations of the world with the holy bleſſed "God:" but the perſons here meant are not *Jews*, but ſufferers for the ſake of Jeſus, as follows: *and* I ſaw *the ſouls of them that were beheaded for the witneſs of Jeſus, and for the word of God*; theſe, with the perſons deſcribed in the next clauſe, are they who will ſit on thrones, during the thouſand years of ſatan's being bound, and will have judgment given them; even ſuch who have bore witneſs to the truth of Jeſus, being the Son of God, the true Meſſiah, and the only ſaviour of ſinners, and to him as the eſſential Word of God, or to the written word of God, the whole Goſpel, all the truths and doctrines of it; and who have been beheaded for bearing ſuch a teſtimony, as *John* the *Baptiſt* was, the firſt of the witneſſes of Jeſus: and ſince this kind of puniſhment was a *Roman* one, it ſeems particularly to point at ſuch perſons who ſuffered under the *Roman* pagan emperors, and to deſign the ſame ſouls ſaid to be under the altar, and to cry for vengeance, ch. vi. 9. This clauſe, in connexion with the former, is differently rendered; the *Syriac* verſion renders it thus, *and judgment was given to them, and to the ſouls that were beheaded*, &c. the *Arabic* verſion, *and to them was given the judgment of the ſouls killed*, &c. the *Ethiopic* verſion, *and then I ſaw a ſeat, and the ſon of man ſat upon it, and he rendered to them judgment for the ſouls of them that were ſlain for the law of the Lord Jeſus. And which had not worſhipped the beaſt, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands*; ſee ch. xiii. 1, 4, 14, 15, 16. This deſcribes ſuch who ſhall have made no profeſſion of the popiſh religion, nor have ſupported it in any way; who ſhall not have joined in the idolatry of the *Romiſh* antichriſt, but ſhall have proteſted againſt it, and departed from it, and ſhall have adhered to Chriſt, and to the true worſhip of God; ſee ch. xiv. 1. and xv. 2. And ſo this, with the preceding character, includes all the ſaints that lived under *Rome* pagan, and *Rome* papal, to the deſtruction of antichriſt, and the ſetting up of Chriſt's kingdom; not that theſe martyrs and confeſſors, or even all the ſaints of their times, are the only perſons that ſhall ſhare in the glory and happineſs of the thouſand years reign of Chriſt, and binding of ſatan; for all the ſaints will come with Chriſt, and all the dead in Chriſt will riſe firſt, or be partakers of the firſt reſurrection; and all that are redeemed by his blood, of whatſoever nation, or in whatſoever age of the world they have lived, even from the beginning of it, ſhall be kings and prieſts, and reign with him on earth, *Zech.* xiv. 5. 1 *Theſſ.* iii. 13. and iv. 14, 16. *Rev.* v. 9, 10. tho *John* only takes notice of theſe, becauſe the deſign of this book, and of the viſions ſhown to him, was only to give a prophetic hiſtory of the church, from his time, to the end of the world; and theſe particularly are obſerved to encourage the ſaints under ſufferings for Chriſt: *and they lived*; meaning not ſpiritually, for ſo they did before, and whilſt they bore their teſtimony to Chriſt, and againſt antichriſt, and previous to their death; nor in their ſucceſſors, for it would not be juſt and reaſonable that they ſhould be beheaded for their witneſs of Chriſt and his word, and others ſhould live and reign with Chriſt in their room and ſtead; nor is this to be underſtood of their living in their ſouls, for ſo they live in their ſeparate ſtate; the ſoul never dies; God is not the God of the dead, but of the living: but the ſenſe is, that they lived again, as in ver. 5. they lived corporally; their ſouls lived in their bodies, their bodies being raiſed again, and re-united to their ſouls, their whole perſons lived; or the ſouls of them that were beheaded lived; that is, their bodies lived again, the ſoul being ſometimes put for the body, *Pſ.* xvi. 10. and this is called the firſt reſurrection in the next verſe: *and reigned with Chriſt a thouſand years*; as all that ſuffer with him will, and as all that will live godly muſt, and do, 2 *Tim.* ii. 12. and iii. 12. Chriſt being deſcended from heaven, and having bound ſatan, and the dead ſaints being raiſed, and the living ones changed, he will reign among them perſonally, viſibly, and glorioſly, and in the fulleſt manner; all the antichriſtian powers will be deſtroyed; ſatan will be in cloſe confinement; death, with reſpect to Chriſt and his people, will be no more; the heavens and the earth will be made new, and all things will be ſubject to him; and all his ſaints will be with him, and they ſhall reign with him; they ſhall be glorified together; they ſhall ſit on the throne with him, have a crown of righteouſneſs given them, and poſſeſs the kingdom appointed for them; they'll reign over all their enemies; ſatan will be bruiſed under their feet, being bound; the wicked will be ſhut up in hell, and neither will be able to give them any diſturbance; and ſin and death will be no more: this reign will not be in a ſenſual and carnal way, or lie in poſſeſſing worldly riches and honours, in eating and drinking, marrying, and giving in marriage; the ſaints will not be in a mortal, but in an immortal ſtate; the children of this reſurrection will be like the angels; and this reign will be on earth, ch. v. 10. the preſent earth will be burnt up, and a new one formed, in which theſe righteous perſons will dwell, 2 *Pet.* iii. 13. of which ſee the note on ch. xxi. 1. and it will laſt *a thouſand years*; not diſtinct from, but the ſame with the thouſand years in which ſatan will be bound; for if they were diſtinct from them, and ſhould commence when they are ended, the reign of Chriſt with his ſaints would be when ſatan is looſed, which is utterly inconſiſtent with it. The *Syriac* verſion very rightly renders it, *theſe thouſand years*, referring to thoſe of *ſatan*'s binding. Nor are theſe thouſand years to be underſtood prophetically, for as many years as there are days in a thouſand years; for as this would defer the judgment of the wicked, and the ultimate glory of the ſaints, to a prodigious length of time, ſo it ſhould be obſerved, that prophetic time will now be no longer, according to the angel's oath in ch. x. 6. but theſe are to be underſtood literally and definitely, as before, of juſt ſuch an exact number and term of years; ſee 2 *Pet.* iii. 8. this is a perfect number, and is expreſſive of the perfection of this ſtate, and is a term of years that neither *Adam*, nor any of his ſons, arrived unto; but Chriſt the ſecond *Adam* ſhall ſee his ſeed, and ſhall prolong his days longer than any of them, *Iſ.* liii. 10. It is an obſervation of the *Jewiſh* Rabbins [x], that the day in *Gen.* ii. 17. is the day of the holy bleſſed God (*i. e.* a thouſand years) and therefore the firſt *Adam* did not perfect, or fill up his day, for there wanted ſeventy years of it: and it is a notion that prevails with them, that the days of the Meſſiah will be a thouſand years [y]; and ſo they will be at his ſecond coming, but not at his firſt, which they vainly expect, it being paſt: and alſo they ſay [z], that in theſe thouſand years God will renew his world, and that then the righteous will be raiſed, and no more return to duſt; which agrees with *John*'s new heaven and new earth during this ſtate, and with the firſt reſurrection: and ſo *Jerom*, who was converſant with the *Rabbins*, ſays [a] that the *Jews* expect a thouſand years reign.

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[u] Targum Jon. in Exod. xxviii. 30.

[w] Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 41. 4.

Ver. 5. *But the reſt of the dead*, &c.] Meaning not the dead ſaints, for they'll be all raiſed together, but the wicked dead; and not them as morally or ſpiritually, but as corporally dead: theſe *lived not again until the thouſand years were finiſhed*; ſo that there will be ſuch an exact term of years between the reſurrection of the ſaints and the reſurrection of the wicked; nor will there be any wicked living upon earth, or in bodies, during that time; for the wicked dead will not be raiſed with the ſaints at Chriſt's coming, and the wicked living will be deſtroyed in the conflagration of the world, and neither of them ſhall live again until the end of theſe years. This clauſe is left out in the *Syriac* verſion. *This is the firſt reſurrection*, which is not to be connected with the living again of the reſt of the dead at the end of the thouſand years, for that will be the ſecond and laſt reſurrection; but with the witneſſes of Jeſus, and the true worſhippers of God living again, in order to reign with Chriſt a thouſand years; for this reſurrection is not meant of a reſurrection from the death of ſin to a life of grace; though the work of grace and converſion is ſometimes ſo repreſented, it cannot be deſigned here; for ſuch a reſurrection the above witneſſes and worſhippers were partakers of before their ſufferings, and which was antecedently neceſſary to their witneſs and worſhip; beſides, this reſurrection was future in *John*'s time, and was what was to be done at once, and was peculiar to the commencement of the thouſand years; whereas the ſpiritual reſurrection was before his time, and has been ever ſince the beginning, and is ſucceſſive in all ages, and not affixed to any one period of time, though there may be more inſtances of it in one age than in another; nor is this ever called the firſt reſurrection, nor can any reaſon be given why it ſhould; for tho' one man may be converted before another, his converſion can't be called the firſt reſurrection, ſince there are many inſtances of this nature before, and many more after; beſides, at this time, there will be none of God's people to be raiſed in this ſenſe; they'll be all quickened and converted before; the nation of the *Jews* will be born again, and the fullneſs of the *Gentiles* brought in; to which may be added, that if the firſt reſurrection is to be underſtood in a ſpiritual ſenſe, then the ſecond reſurrection of the wicked dead, at the end of the thouſand years, muſt be underſtood in like manner: nor is a reviving of the cauſe of Chriſt and his intereſt here intended, particularly thro' the calling of the *Jews*, and the numerous converſion of the *Gentiles*; for tho' the former of theſe eſpecially is ſignified by the quickening of the dry bones in *Ezekiel*'s viſion, and is expreſſed by bringing the *Jews* out of their graves, and is called life from the dead, *Rom.* xi. 15. yet that cannot with any propriety be called the firſt reſurrection; for there was a great reviving of true religion in the time of *John* the *Baptiſt*, Chriſt and his Apoſtles, eſpecially after the effuſion of the Spirit on the day of Pentecoſt, both among *Jews* and *Gentiles*; and there was a revival of the chriſtian religion in the times of *Conſtantine*, and again at the reformation from popery; and as for the converſion of the *Jews* and the *Gentiles* in the latter day, that will be the laſt reviving of the cauſe and intereſt of Chriſt, which will uſher in his ſpiritual reign, and therefore ſhould rather be called the laſt, than the firſt reſurrection; beſides, this affair will be over before this time; this is ſignified by the marriage of the Lamb in the preceding chapter; and the kingdoms of the world will become Chriſt's under the ſeventh trumpet, and both will be in the ſpiritual reign: moreover, this does by no means agree with the character of the perſons who ſhall ſhare in this reſurrection, they are ſuch who ſhall have lived and ſuffered, at leaſt many of them, under *Rome* pagan and papal, ver. 4. and therefore can never be underſtood of *Jews* and *Gentiles* in the latter day, when neither one nor other ſhall be any more. To which may be ſubjoined, that if this was the ſenſe, then this cauſe muſt revive alſo among the wicked at the end of the thouſand years, whereas, when they are raiſed, they'll attempt the very reverſe. It remains then, that by this firſt reſurrection muſt be meant a corporal one; for as ſome of thoſe that will live again were corporally beheaded, and all of them corporally died, they will be corporally raiſed again; and in ſuch ſenſe will the reſt of the dead be raiſed at the end of theſe years; with reſpect to which this is properly called the firſt reſurrection; it is the firſt in time, it will be at the beginning of the thouſand years, and the ſecond will be at the cloſe; the dead in Chriſt will riſe firſt in order of time, 1 *Theſſ.* iv. 16. ſee the note there; they will have the dominion in this ſenſe over the wicked in the morning of the reſurrection: Chriſt's reſurrection is indeed firſt, but that is the cauſe and pledge of this; and there were particular reſurrections both before and after his, but they were to a mortal ſtate; and there were ſome ſaints that roſe from the dead immediately after his reſurrection; but theſe were but few, and were deſigned as an earneſt of this; beſides, tho' it was *a* reſurrection, it was not *the* reſurrection; and it may be further obſerved, that the reſurrection of the righteous will be the firſt at the coming of Chriſt, 1 *Cor.* xv. 22. there will be none then before theirs; theirs will be the firſt; the reſurrection of the wicked, to which this is oppoſed as the firſt, will not be till a thouſand years after: add to all which, that this reſurrection will be η πρωτη, *the firſt*, that is, the beſt, as the word is uſed in *Luke* xv. 22. the chief, the principal; the reſurrection of the wicked can hardly be called a reſurrection in compariſon of it, and in many places theirs is not taken notice of where this is, as in 1 *Cor.* xv. 1 *Theſſ.* iv. the righteous will be raiſed by virtue of union to Chriſt, in conſequence of his having the charge both of their ſouls and bodies, and in conformity to his glorious body, and to eternal life, which will not be the caſe of the wicked.

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[x] Bemidbar Rabba, §. 5. fol. 185. 4. vid. Jacchiad. in Dan. vii. 25.

[y] Midraſh Tillim, fol. 4. 2.

[z] T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 93. 1, 2. & Gloſſ. in ib. Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 42. 1. & 49. 3. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 150. 2.

[a] Comment. in Zach. xiv. 16, 18.

Ver. 6. *Bleſſed and holy is he that hath part in the firſt reſurrection,* &c.] This may be conſidered either as deſcriptive of the perſons that ſhall partake of this privilege; as that they are only ſuch who are bleſſed with ſpiritual bleſſings, with a juſtifying righteouſneſs, with pardon of ſin, and regenerating grace, and who are ſanctified by the Spirit of God; theſe, and theſe only, will be firſt raiſed, and will be called to inherit the kingdom prepared for them, *Matt.* xxv. 34. or elſe as expreſſive of their happineſs and holineſs when raiſed; they ſhall be perfectly bleſſed in ſoul and body, and perfectly holy in both: *they ſhall be bleſſed*, for *on ſuch the ſecond death hath no power*; which is the lake of fire, ver. 14. and ch. xxi. 8. the ſenſe is, they ſhall eſcape everlaſting burnings, the fire of hell, the torment and miſery of the wicked; they ſhall be delivered from wrath to come; and as their bodies will die no more, their ſouls will not be ſubject to any ſenſe of wrath, or to any ſort of puniſhment: and they will be *holy*; they will have no ſin in them: *but they will be prieſts of God and of Chriſt*; of God the Father, and of his Son Jeſus Chriſt, being made ſo to the former by the latter, ch. i. 6. or of God, even of Chriſt, that is, of God, who is Chriſt, ſince it follows: *and ſhall reign with him*; they will be wholly devoted to, and employed in the ſervice of God and of Chriſt, and will be continually offering up the ſacrifices of praiſe, or ſinging the ſong of the Lamb, adoring the grace and goodneſs of God and Chriſt unto them, ſhewn them both in providence and in grace: *and ſhall reign with him a thouſand years*; this is mentioned again, partly to aſſert the certainty of it, and partly to point at the bleſſedneſs of the riſen ſaints.

Ver. 7. *And when the thouſand years are expired,* &c.] Which are not yet expired; not in the year 1000, or 1033 or 4, reckoning from the birth or death of Chriſt, when paganiſm, which had been deſtroyed in the *Gentile* world, was introduced into the church, which bore the chriſtian name, through the man of ſin; for this had been bringing in by degrees more or leſs from the times of *Conſtantine*; whence it appears, that ſatan in this reſpect was looſe before, and therefore this was not the time of his looſing; nor in 1073, reckoning from the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, and the carrying and ſpread of the Goſpel among the *Gentiles*, in which year *Hildebrand* came to the popedom, who may be truly called the brand of hell; *Damianus*, a brother cardinal, who lived at the ſame time with him when he was archdeacon of *Rome*, calls him the holy devil; he was an impoſtor, ſorcerer, and necromancer, and by wicked arts got into the papal chair; this pope raiſed the papal power over princes to a very great height, and made the ſee of *Rome* abſolutely independent, and all biſhops dependent on it; he forbid biſhops receiving their inveſtiture from the emperor, or any lay perſon, under pain of excommunication: this is the pope that made the emperor, with his empreſs and child, wait three days bare-foot at his gates, in the depth of winter, before they could be admitted to him; that doctrine of devils, forbidding prieſts to marry, was eſtabliſhed by him; and in his days that monſtrous and abſurd notion of tranſubſtantiation began to prevail, tho' he himſelf uſed his breaden god but very roughly; for taking it to be really God, he required an anſwer from it againſt the emperor; but it not ſpeaking, he threw it into the fire, and burnt it. Now it will be allowed, that the devil was looſe at this time, but then ſo he was before: there had been popes before this who were conjurers, necromancers, and had familiarity and confederacy with the devil; and near five hundred years before this time, the pope was declared univerſal biſhop by *Phocas*; and the forbidding prieſts marriage was ſtarted in the council of *Nice*, and was approved of by pope *Siricius*, long before this time, tho' it was now more firmly eſtabliſhed; add to this, that if the expiration of the 1000 years, and the looſing of ſatan were at this time, he muſt have been looſed near 700 years, which can never be called a little ſeaſon, as in ver. 3. eſpecially in compariſon of the 1000 years, the time of his binding; when it is two thirds of that time: nor did theſe years expire in or about 1300 reckoning from *Conſtantine*, about which time pope *Boniface* the Eighth lived, of whom it is ſaid, that he came in like a fox, ruled like a lion, and died like a dog; upon his acceſſion to the popedom, he inſtituted a jubilee, and on the firſt day he appeared in his pontifical habit, and gave the benediction to the people, and on the next day he cloathed himſelf with an imperial habit, and put on a rich diadem, and ſat on a throne, with a naked ſword bore before him, when he uttered theſe words, *Ecce hic duo gladii*, *Behold here are two ſwords*, referring to *Luke* xxii. 38. which the papiſts would have underſtood of the temporal and ſpiritual power which *Peter* and his ſucceſſors are poſſeſſed of; at the ſame time *Ottoman* was crowned emperor of the *Mahometan* nations, who founded the *Turkiſh* empire, and ſpread the *Mahometan* religion in *Aſia* and *Greece*; and by both theſe, great diſturbances and wars were occaſioned, both in the eaſt and weſt: but ſtill this does not make it appear that now was the time of ſatan's looſing; ſince before this time the papal power was at its utmoſt height, and the *Mahometan* religion had been hundreds of years in the world, and had greatly prevailed; and therefore ſatan muſt be looſed before; and indeed, it is in vain to ſeek after the expiration of theſe years, and the looſing of ſatan, when as yet the years are not begun, nor has ſatan been bound, as has been ſhewn on ver. 2. but however, when they will be ended, *ſatan ſhall be looſed out of his priſon*; during the thouſand years he will be in a ſtate of confinement, being bound, ſhut, and ſealed up in the bottomleſs pit, which is therefore here called a priſon, as is the place of damned ſpirits, in 1 *Pet.* iii. 19. but when theſe will be at an end, his chain will be taken off, at leaſt will be lengthened; the ſeal upon him will be broken off, the bottomleſs pit will be opened, and he let looſe; which will be done not by himſelf, but by him that bound him, or by divine permiſſion.

Ver. 8. *And ſhall go out*, &c.] Of his priſon, the bottomleſs pit, and ſhall walk to and fro in the earth, and go about like a deceitful ſerpent, and roaring lion, as before: *to deceive the nations*; as he had done before the thouſand years began, and from which he was reſtrained during that time; he had before deceived the pagan, papal, and *Mahometan* nations, and now he'll go forth to deceive thoſe at this time *which are in the four quarters of the earth*; all the world over: the names of which nations are, *Gog and Magog*; not the ſame which are mentioned in *Ezekiel*, ch. xxxviii. and xxxix. tho' there is an alluſion to them, and from thence the names are taken, and ſome of the figures borrowed, and deſign the enemies of God's people, who will be in the world at this time; ſo the *Jews*[b] ſpeak of a *Gog* and *Magog*, that will come up againſt *Jeruſalem* in the days of the Meſſiah, whom they ſtill expect, by whom they ſhall be deſtroyed: *to gather them together to battle*; not one againſt another, as ſome think, as the pope againſt the *Turk*, and the *Turk* againſt the pope, nor are they deſigned at all; nor *to kill them*, as the *Ethiopic* verſion renders it; but againſt the ſaints and people of God, in the beloved city and camp; herein will lie his deception of them: *the number of whom is as the ſand of the ſea*; that is, innumerable, in alluſion to *Gog* and *Magog* in *Ezek.* xxxviii. 9, 15, 16. but the great queſtion is, who are meant by theſe?—Not the papiſts, the nations made drunk with the wine of *Rome*'s fornication, the *Gentiles*, by whom the holy city is trodden under foot, and who will be angry when the time of avenging the ſaints is come, ch. xi. 2, 18. and xviii. 2. for theſe will be all deſtroyed, even all the remains of them, at the battle of *Armageddon*; nor is antichriſt himſelf intended, who will be deſtroyed in the ſpiritual reign of Chriſt, with the breath of his mouth; and at the above deciſive battle the beaſt and the falſe prophet will be taken alive, and caſt into the lake of fire: nor are the *Turks* deſigned, the people of *Magog* being *Scythians* originally, as *Joſephus* ſays[c], from whence the *Turks* ſprung; or *Tartarians*, for *Paulus Venetus*[d] ſays, the countries of *Gog* and *Magog* are in *Tartary*, called *Jug* and *Munjug*; hence ſome think theſe are the ſame with the four angels bound at the river *Euphrates*, and looſed, whoſe armies are repreſented as exceeding numerous, ch. ix. 14, 16, 17. but tho' the *Turkiſh* dominions are very large, yet they don't extend to the four quarters of the world; and when the *Turks* were let looſe, and came even into *Europe*, it was not againſt the true chriſtians, the camp of the ſaints, the beloved city, as here, but againſt the antichriſtian party; the papiſts have ſuffered moſt by the incurſions of the *Turks*, tho' it has not brought them to repentance; beſides, the looſing of the four angels, or the *Turkiſh* nations, and their chiefs, is long before theſe thouſand years begin; that is paſt already, under the ſixth trumpet, whereas the ſeventh trumpet will be blown, and all the ſeven vials poured out, and the world cleared of all Chriſt's enemies, and after that a thouſand years muſt run out, before this *Gog* and *Magog* army will appear: nor are the *Americans* the nations here ſpoken of; for they are but in one quarter of the world; nor is there any reaſon to believe there will be there more enemies of Chriſt's people than in any other part, ſince in the ſpiritual reign of Chriſt the earth ſhall be full of his knowledge, and his ſpiritual kingdom will be to the ends of the earth: and as for that notion that thoſe inhabiting the other hemiſphere will be ſaved from the general conflagration, there's no reaſon to believe it, ſince the earth, and whatſoever is therein, ſhall be burnt up, 2 *Pet.* iii. 10. Some think that the wicked living in the diſtant parts of the world, in the corners of the earth, are meant, who upon Chriſt's coming, will flee thither, and remain in continual dread and terror to the end of the thouſand years, when ſatan will gather them together, and ſpirit them up againſt the ſaints; but this cannot be, becauſe they'll all be deſtroyed at the univerſal conflagration of the world; nor will there be any in the new earth but righteous perſons: but theſe will be all the wicked dead, the reſt of the dead, who lived not again until the thouſand years are ended, when will be the ſecond reſurrection, the reſurrection of all the wicked that have been from the beginning of the world; and theſe, with the poſſe of devils under ſatan, will make up the *Gog* and *Magog* army: all the characters agree with them; theſe may be called *nations*, or *Gentiles*, being aliens from the true *Iſrael* of God, the dogs that will be without the holy city; theſe may be ſaid to be in *the four quarters* of the world, ſince where they die and are buried, there they'll riſe and ſtand upon their feet, an exceeding great army; and as they'll die enemies to Chriſt and his people, they'll riſe ſuch; as they will go down to hell with their *weapons of war*, as is ſaid of *Meſhech* and *Tubal*, the people of *Gog*, *Ezek.* xxxii. 27. they'll riſe with the ſame; the grave, the duſt of the earth, will make no change in their vile bodies, nor the flames of hell any alteration in the diſpoſition of their minds; yea, as is ſaid in the above place, they'll *lay their ſwords under their heads*, and ſo be in a readineſs when they riſe, to make uſe of them againſt the ſaints, and to avenge themſelves; for their envy, malice, and revenge, will be heightened and increaſed by their confinement and puniſhment in hell: nor need this be wondered at, ſince the devils, notwithſtanding they have been ſo long expelled the realms of light, and have been in chains of darkneſs, and in expectation of everlaſting torment, retain the ſame enmity as ever; and tho' the deception will be very great, to attack ſaints in an immortal ſtate, who are like the angels that die not, nor will theſe die any more, and eſpecially ſince Chriſt the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, who rules the nations with a rod of iron, will be at the head of them; yet it need not ſeem ſtrange, when they will riſe as weak and feeble, and as little able to reſiſt temptation, and as much expoſed to ſeduction as they were before; ſatan will have as much power over them as ever; and what with their own numbers, and the poſſe of devils at the head of them, and eſpecially conſidering the deſperateneſs of their ſtate, and that this is their laſt ſtruggle and effort for liberty, they will animate themſelves and one another to this ſtrange undertaking. Theſe now may be called *Gog* and *Magog*, as the one ſignifies *covered*, the other open, or *uncovered*; theſe being all the enemies of Chriſt and his people, both ſecret and open: and this ſenſe well accounts for their number, being as the ſand of the ſea; and which the *Arabic* verſion ſeems to confirm, *and Jagog and Magog ſhall riſe with him*. The *Jews* have a notion that this deception of ſatan will be at the day of judgment, which agrees with this account; for immediately upon this will follow the judgment of the wicked: they ſay[e], "in the day that judgment ſhall be found in the "world, and the holy bleſſed God ſhall ſit upon the "throne of judgment, ſatan אסטי לעילא ותתא, "*ſhall deceive above and below* (angels and men) and "he ſhall be found to deſtroy the world, and to "take away ſouls."

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[b] Targum in Cant. viii. 4. & Targum Hieroſ. in Num. xi. 26. Pentaglott. Col. 288.

[c] Antiq. l. 1. c. 6. §. 1.

[d] In Schindler. Lex.

Ver. 9. *And they went up on the breadth of the earth*, &c.] Either the whole earth, in the ſeveral parts of which they will be raiſed; or the land of *Iſrael*, where Chriſt and his people will be; and ſo the wicked being raiſed, will come up from the ſeveral parts of the world, and ſpread themſelves over the holy land; juſt as *Gog* and *Magog* are ſaid to cover the land of *Iſrael*, as a cloud, *Ezek*. xxxviii. 16. and it may be obſerved, that the very phraſe of רחב ארצך, *the breadth of thy land*, is uſed of *Immanuel*'s land, or the land of *Iſrael*, in *Iſ.* viii. 8. *and compaſſed the camp of the ſaints about*; theſe are the bleſſed and holy ones, who have part in the firſt reſurrection, even all the ſaints; not only the martyrs under the heathen perſecutions, and the confeſſors of Chriſt under the papacy, but all the ſaints from the beginning of the world; theſe will be all encamped together, with the tabernacle of God in the midſt of them, ch. xxi. 3. and Chriſt their king at the head of them, *Micah* ii. 13. the alluſion is to the encampment of the children of *Iſrael* in the wilderneſs, about the tabernacle, which was in the midſt of them, *Numb*. ii. 2, *&c.* afterwards the city of *Jeruſalem* itſelf was called a camp, and anſwered in all reſpects to the camp in the wilderneſs[f], to which the reference is in *Heb*. xiii. 11, 12, 13. and which ſerves to illuſtrate the paſſage here, ſince it follows: *and the beloved city*; not *Conſtantinople*, as ſome have thought, but the holy city, the new *Jeruſalem*, ch. xxi. 2. the general aſſembly and church of the firſt-born, beloved by God and Chriſt, and by the holy angels, and by one another; and theſe very probably will be with Chriſt upon the ſame ſpot of ground where the old *Jeruſalem* ſtood, a city ſo highly favoured, and ſo much diſtinguiſhed by God; ſo that where Chriſt ſuffered ſo much reproach and ſhame, and ſuch an accurſed death, he will now be glorified, and live in triumph with his ſaints: *and fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them*; not material fire; with this the earth, and the bodies of the wicked then upon it, will be burnt at the beginning of the thouſand years; but now their bodies will be raiſed immortal, and not capable of being conſumed with ſuch fire; but the fiery indignation of God, or his wrath, which will be poured out like fire, is here meant, which will deſtroy both body and ſoul; this is no other than the lake of fire, or ſecond death, into which they will be caſt; and which will not be until the judgment is over, though it is here related to ſhow what will be the event and iſſue of their attack upon the ſaints: the alluſion is to the fire ſent upon *Gog* and *Magog*, and to the burning of their weapons, in *Ezek*. xxxviii. 22. and xxxix. 6, 9, 10. and ſo the *Jews*[g] ſay of their *Gog* and *Magog*, that "they ſhall be killed with the burning of "the ſoul, with a flame of fire, which ſhall come "from under the throne of glory."

Ver. 10. *And the devil that deceived them*, &c.] Both before death, in the preſent life, by tempting and drawing them into immorality and prophaneneſs, or idolatry, ſuperſtition, and will-worſhip, or perſecution of the ſaints; and after their reſurrection, by inſtigating them to make this fooliſh attempt upon the ſaints of the moſt high: *was caſt into the lake of fire and brimſtone*; the ſame with the everlaſting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels; this will be his full torment, in which he is not as yet; and this will not be until the judgment is finiſhed hereafter deſcribed; tho' it is here mentioned to iſſue the account of ſatan at once, and to ſhow what will be his final ſtate and condition: *where the beaſt and falſe prophet* are; ch. xix. 20. who for ſo many years have been companions in wickedneſs together; the beaſt being the firſt beaſt, that received his power, ſeat, and authority from the dragon, or devil; the falſe prophet being the ſecond beaſt, or antichriſt in his eccleſiaſtical capacity, as the beaſt is antichriſt in his civil power, whoſe coming is after the working of ſatan, with ſigns and lying wonders: *and ſhall be tormented day and night for ever and ever*; that is, not only the devil, but the beaſt and falſe prophet, for the word is in the plural number: and this will be the caſe of all wicked men, of all whoſe minds are enmity to God and Chriſt, and to his people; and is a proof of the eternity of hell-torments.

Ver. 11. *And I ſaw a great white throne*, &c.] This viſion refers not to the Goſpel-diſpenſation, from the exaltation of Chriſt to his ſecond coming; when he ſat down on his throne at the right hand of God, and was declared Lord and Chriſt; when there was a ſhaking of the heavens and the earth, a removing of the *Moſaic* œconomy, and the ordinances of the ceremonial law in *Judea*, and of paganiſm in the *Gentile* world; when the Goſpel was preached to all nations, and the dead in ſins were quickened, and aroſe and ſtood before the throne of grace; when the books of the ſcriptures were opened and explained, and the book of life was alſo opened; and by the converſion of ſome, and not others, it was known who were written in it, and who were not, and men were judged to be alive or dead in a ſpiritual ſenſe, according to the influence the opening of theſe books had upon them; and the powers of the world, comparable to a ſea, and of death and hell, were not able to hold in the dead in ſin, when they were called to life, with reſpect to whom death and hell were deſtroyed; nor was the Goſpel the ſavour of death to any but to ſuch who were not written in the book of life. This, in other words, is the ſum of *Cocceius*'s ſenſe of this viſion; but this affair will be over, and all God's elect gathered in by the preaching of the Goſpel, before this viſion takes place: nor does it reſpect the reſtoration of the *Jews*, who now are as dead, like *Ezekiel*'s dry bones, but will at this time be quickned, and ſtand upon their feet an exceeding great army, and will be gathered from the ſeveral parts where they are as dead; and when it will be known by their conduct and behaviour who are God's elect among them, and who are not; which is *Brightman*'s interpretation of the viſion: but this, as we have ſeen, will come to paſs according to the viſion in the preceding chapter, before the thouſand years begin; whereas this viſion will not begin to be accompliſhed until they are ended: it is beſt therefore to underſtand it of the general judgment at the laſt day, which is the common ſenſe of antient and modern interpreters; tho' it ſeems only to regard the judgment of the wicked, for no other are made mention of in it: the *throne* here ſeen, is a throne of judgment; it is called a *great* one, becauſe a great perſon ſat upon it, the Word of God, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, even he who is the great God, and judge of the whole earth; and becauſe of the great work that will be tranſacted upon it, the judgment of all the wicked; this will be the greateſt aſſize that ever was held; it is called the judgment of the great day, and the great and dreadful day of the Lord, *Jude* 6. *Mal.* iv. 5. this throne is alſo ſaid to be a *white* one; juſt as the ſame perſon is ſaid to ſit upon a white cloud, and ride upon a white horſe, ch. xiv. 14. and xix. 11. it may be in alluſion either to a white and ſerene cloud, or to a throne of ivory, ſuch an one as *Solomon* made, 2 *Chron.* ix. 17. and this is either expreſſive of the majeſty and ſplendor of it, it being a throne of glory, or a glorious throne, *Matt.* xxv. 31. or elſe it may denote the purity and juſtice of him that ſits on it, according to which he will proceed in judgment, and finiſh it; his character is the righteous judge, and the judgment he will execute will be righteous judgment: *and him that ſat on it*; the throne was not empty, one ſat upon it, who is no other than the Son of God; to whom all judgment is committed, and who is ordained to be judge of quick and dead; and is every way fit for it, being of great knowledge, wiſdom, and ſagacity, and of great integrity and faithfulneſs, as man and mediator, and being, as God, both omniſcient and omnipotent, and ſo capable both of paſſing a right ſentence, and of executing it; to which may be added, his great majeſty and glory, neceſſary to ſtrike an awe, and command an attention to him: *from whoſe face the earth and the heavens fled away, and there was found no place for them*; which is to be underſtood not figuratively, as in ch. vi. 14. and xvi. 20. where in the one place is deſcribed the deſtruction of paganiſm, and in the other the deſtruction of the papacy, and all antichriſtian powers; but literally, and not of the preſent earth and heaven, as they now are, for theſe will be burnt up with fire at the beginning of the thouſand years, but of the new heaven and new earth, at the end of them; and the phraſes of fleeing away, and place being found no more for them, ſhow the entire annihilation and utter abolition of them; after this there will be no place in being but the heaven of angels and ſaints, and the lake of fire, in which are the devils and damned ſpirits: but tho' this is mentioned here, it will not be till after the judgment is over; for how otherwiſe will the dead have a place to ſtand in before the throne, or hell, that is the grave, and alſo the ſea, give up their dead, ver. 12, 13. but it is obſerved here, tho' afterwards done, to ſet off the majeſty of the judge upon the throne, at whoſe ſight, and by whoſe power, this will be effected.

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[e] Zohar in Gen. fol. 73. 1.

[f] T. Bab. Zebachim, fol. 116. 2. Maimon. Hilch. Beth Habbechirah, c. 7. §. 11.

[g] Targum Jon. in Num. xi. 26.

Ver. 12. *And I ſaw the dead*, &c.] An account being given of the judge, next the perſons to be judged are deſcribed, and in this clauſe, by the ſtate and condition in which they had been; for it can't be thought they were dead when they ſtood before the throne, but were raiſed from the dead; for this character is not deſcriptive of them as dead in treſpaſſes and ſins, tho' they are ſuch as die in their ſins, and riſe in them, who are meant, but as having been corporally dead; theſe are the reſt of the dead, the wicked, who lived not again until the thouſand years were ended, ver. 5. as for the righteous, they'll be judged upon their reſurrection from the dead in the beginning of the day of the Lord; and will be declared righteous and bleſſed, and be called upon and introduced to inherit the kingdom prepared for them, which they ſhall have poſſeſſed a thouſand years when theſe wicked dead will be raiſed: who are ſaid to be *ſmall and great*; which may refer either to their age, being children and adult perſons; or to their condition, being kings and peaſants, high and low, rich and poor; or to their characters, as greater or leſſer ſinners; and this deſcription reſpects them as they are in this world, and is deſigned to ſhow that no conſideration whatever, of age, condition, or character, will exempt them from the general judgment. This is a way of ſpeaking uſed among the *Jews* [h], who ſay, "in the world of "ſouls, הגדולים והקטנים, *the great and the ſmall*, "ſtand before God." The diſputations of the ſchoolmen about the age and ſtature in which mankind will riſe and be judged, are vain and fooliſh: theſe *John* ſaw *ſtand before God*; that is, Chriſt, who is God and judge of all; before his judgment-ſeat and throne, in order to be judged; for they will ſtand not as miniſtring to him, nor as having confidence before him; in this ſenſe they ſhall not ſtand in the judgment, *Pſ.* i. 5. but as guilty perſons, to receive their ſentence of condemnation. The *Alexandrian* copy, the *Vulgate Latin*, and all the *Oriental* verſions read, *before the throne*; the ſenſe is the ſame; for if they ſtood before the throne, they muſt ſtand before God, that ſat upon it: *and the books were opened*; the book of God's omniſcience, which contains all the actions of the wicked, in which all their ſins are taken notice of, and will now be brought to light; and the book of his remembrance, in which they are all written as with a pen of iron, and with the point of a diamond; and the book of the creatures, which they have abuſed, and which will witneſs againſt them; and the book of providence, the riches of whoſe goodneſs have been deſpiſed by them; and the book of the ſcriptures, both of law and Goſpel, as well as the book of nature, of the light of nature, ſee *Rom.* ii. 12, 16. to which may be added, the book of conſcience; the conſciences of men will be awakened, and will accuſe them, and bear witneſs againſt them, and be as good as a thouſand witneſſes: *and*

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[h] Tzeror Hammor, fol. 154. 2.

another book was opened, which is the book *of life*; the ſame that is mentioned in ch. iii. 5. and xiii. 8. and xvii. 8. the book of eternal election, ſee the notes there. No other uſe ſeems to be made of this book in the judgment of the wicked, than only to obſerve whoſe names were not written in it, as appears from ver. 15. reference ſeems to be had to *Dan.* vii. 10. It is a notion that has obtained among the *Jews* [i], that "at the beginning of the year (or every new year's-day) ג׳ ספרים נפתחין, *three books are opened*, one of the wicked perfect, another of the righteous perfect, and a third of thoſe between both; the righteous perfect are written and ſealed immediately for life; the wicked perfect are written and ſealed immediately for death; the middlemoſt are in ſuſpence, and continue from the beginning of the year to the day of atonement; if they are worthy, they are written for life, if not worthy, they are written for death:" and in the ſame treatiſe [k], they repreſent God at the ſame time of the year as a "king, ſitting on a throne of judgment, and the books of the living, and the books of the dead פתוחין *open* before him:" this with them was a prelude and a figure of the future judgment: *and the dead were judged out of thoſe things which were written in the books, according to their works*; that is, they were ſentenced to everlaſting condemnation and death, according to the juſt demerit of their wicked works; for no other are done by wicked men, nor can any other be in the books, ſince they are without God and Chriſt, and deſtitute of the Spirit, have no principle of grace to act from, nor any good end in view in any action of theirs. So the *Jews* ſay [l], "all the works which a man does in this world are *written in a book*, and they come into thought before the holy king, and they are manifeſt before him."

Ver. 13. *And the ſea gave up the dead which were in it*, &c.] Which is not to be interpreted metaphorically of the world, and the men of it, who are like the troubled ſea; but literally of the ſea, and of all ſuch who have been drowned in the waters of it, as were *Pharaoh* and his hoſt; or have died upon the mighty waters, and have been caſt into them, and devoured by the fiſhes; and particular regard may be had to the men of the old world, drowned by the flood; theſe ſhall be raiſed from thence; the ſea ſhall deliver them up: now this, and what is expreſſed in the next clauſe, will not be done after the judgment is ſet, the books are opened, and the ſentence paſſed, but before all this, and in order to it, as the laſt clauſe of this verſe ſhows: *and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them*; *death*, which is here repreſented as a perſon, and elſewhere as a king, reigning and having power over men, ſignifies death in general, and every kind of death of which men have died, whether natural or violent, over whom it will now have no longer dominion, but will be obliged to deliver up all its ſubjects; and *hell* ſignifies the grave, which will now be opened, and deliver up all its priſoners, all that have been buried in the earth; ſee *Job* xxvi. 5, 6. the *Ethiopic* verſion adds, *and the earth delivered up them that were dead in it*; but this ſeems unneceſſary after the former: *and they were judged every man according to their works*; ſome to greater, ſome to leſſer puniſhment, as their ſinful works deſerved.

Ver. 14. *And death and hell were caſt into the lake of fire*, &c.] Death cannot be taken properly, nor hell be the place of torment, for devils and damned ſpirits; ſince that is the lake of fire, for then the ſenſe would be, hell is caſt into hell; but either by theſe the devil is meant, who has the power of death, and is the prince of hell, were it not that the caſting of him into this lake is mentioned before in ver. 10. or it denotes the deſtruction and abolition of death and the grave, that from henceforth they ſhould no more have power over men, or have any under their dominion, and in their hands; and ſo what has been promiſed, will now be fully performed, *Hoſ.* xiii. 14. 1 *Cor.* xv. 26. ſee ch. xxi. 4. or rather the wicked dead, which they ſhall have delivered up, and will be judged and ſentenced to eternal death, ver. 13. *this is the ſecond death*; or the deſtruction of the ſoul and body in hell, which will conſiſt in an eternal ſeparation of both from God, and in a continual ſenſe of his wrath and diſpleaſure. The *Alexandrian* copy, and the *Complutenſian* edition read, *this ſecond death is the lake of fire*; and ſo the *Arabic* verſion, *and this is the ſecond death, even the lake of fire*; and not much different is the *Ethiopic* verſion, *the ſecond death, which is the fire of hell*.

Ver. 15. *And whoſoever was not found written in the book of life*, &c.] Upon the opening of it, ver. 12. as all that worſhip the beaſt, and wonder after him, ch. xiii. 8. and xvii. 8. and all wicked men, every one of them: *was caſt into the lake of fire*; where are the devil, beaſt, and falſe prophet, ch. xix. 20. and xx. 10. It is a ſaying of *R. Iſaac* [m], "wo to the wicked, who are not written בפנקא, *in the book*, for they ſhall periſh in hell for ever and ever:" and in the *Targum* on *Ezek.* xiii. 9. it is ſaid of the falſe prophets, "that בכתב חיי עלמא, *in the writing of eternal life* (or in the book of eternal life) which is written for the righteous of the houſe of *Iſrael*, they ſhall not be written." There ſeems to be ſome alluſion in the phraſe uſed here, and in the the preceding verſe, and elſewhere in this book, to the lake *Aſphaltites*, a ſulphurous lake, where *Sodom* and *Gomorrha* ſtood, which the *Jews* call the ſalt ſea, or the bituminous lake; and whatſoever was uſeleſs, or rejected, or abominable, or accurſed, they uſed to ſay, to ſhow their rejection and deteſtation of it, let it be caſt into the ſea of ſalt, or the bituminous lake; thus for inſtance, "any veſſels that had on them the image of the ſun, or of the moon, or of a dragon, יוליכם לים המלח, *let them caſt them into the ſalt ſea*, or bituminous lake [n]."

CHAP. XXI.

THIS chapter contains an account of the happy ſtate of the church, conſiſting of all the elect, both *Jews* and *Gentiles*, which will take place upon the firſt reſurrection, and will continue during the thouſand years reign mentioned in the preceding chapter. The ſeat of the church in theſe happy times will be the new heaven and the new earth, ver. 1. the church that will dwell there is deſcribed by its names, the holy city, and new *Jeruſalem*; by its deſcent, from heaven; and by its ſtate and ornament, being prepared and adorned as a bride for her huſband, ver. 2. and her happineſs is expreſſed by the preſence of God with her, and communion with him enjoyed by her, and by a freedom from all evils endured in the preſent ſtate of things, ver. 3, 4. after which *John* hears the voice of him that ſat on the throne, declaring himſelf to be the author of the new heaven and earth; ordering him to write, that what had been ſaid was true and faithful; affirming that things were now done and finiſhed; calling himſelf the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end; promiſing grace to the thirſty ſoul, the inheritance of all things to the overcomer, and alſo divine ſonſhip; and threatning the ſecond death to ſinners, whoſe characters are given, ver. 5, 6, 7, 8. next *John* has a viſion of the bride before ſpoken of; the preface to it is in ver. 9, 10. in which is ſignified that one of the ſeven angels that had the ſeven vials talked to him in a very free and familiar manner, and propoſed to ſhow him the Lamb's wife; and in order to it carried him to an exceeding high mountain, and ſhewed him the city before-mentioned, ſaid to be great, holy, and heavenly; and which is deſcribed by the glory of God upon it, and the light that was in it, comparable to a chryſtal—jaſper ſtone, ver. 11. by its wall, which is great and high; and by its gates and foundations; its gates are in number twelve, twelve angels at them, and on them written the twelve names of the children of *Iſrael*, and theſe ſituated three at each point, eaſt, weſt, north, and ſouth; and its foundations are alſo twelve, having the names of the twelve Apoſtles on them, ver. 12, 13, 14. by the meaſure of it, which the angel took with his golden reed; of the city, which was twelve thouſand furlongs, it being four ſquare, and its length, breadth, and heighth equal; and of the wall, which was a hundred forty and four cubits, ver. 15, 16, 17. and next the city is deſcribed by the matter of which it was built; the wall of jaſper; the city of pure gold, like to clear glaſs; the foundations of precious ſtone, each foundation being of one ſtone; the gates of pearls, each gate being of one pearl; the ſtreet of the city of pure gold, like tranſparent glaſs, ver. 18, 19, 20, 21. and then by the temple in it, which is no other than the Lord God and the Lamb; and by the light, which is the ſame, it having no need of ſun or moon, ver. 22, 23. and next by its inhabitants, the nations of the ſaved ones, who walk in its light, and the kings of the earth, that bring their honour and glory to it; by its ſafety and ſecurity, and by the purity of it, none but undefiled perſons, and ſuch who are written in the Lamb's book of life, being admitted into it, ver. 24, 25, 26, 27.

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[i] T. Bab. Roſhhaſhanah, fol. 16. 2.

[k] Ib. fol. 32. 2. & Eracin, fol. 10. 2.

[l] Zohar in Gen. fol. 118. 3.

[m] Toſaphta in ib. fol. 78. 2.

[n] T. Bab. Avoda Zara, fol. 42. 2. vid. ib. fol. 49. 1. & 53. 1. & 71. 2. & Nazir, fol. 24. 2. & 26. 1, 2. Bava Metzia, fol. 52. 2. Temura, fol. 22. 2. & Meila, fol. 9. 2. & 10. 1.

Ver. 1. *And I ſaw a new heaven and a new earth,* &c.] This viſion relates to a glorious ſtate of the church, not in the times of the Apoſtles, or firſt diſpenſation of the Goſpel; when the old *Jewiſh* church-ſtate, with its ordinances, rites, and ceremonies, paſſed away, and a new church-ſtate, a new diſpenſation, new ordinances, and a new people took place; and when ſaints came not to mount *Sinai*, but to mount *Sion*, the city of the living God, the heavenly *Jeruſalem*; and when God tabernacled and dwelt with men in particular churches and congregations; and the curſe of the law, and the ſting of death were taken away by Chriſt, and there was no condemnation to them that were in him; which is the ſenſe of ſome: but death did not then ceaſe, it has reigned over men in common ever ſince, in a natural way, and immediately upon that diſpenſation aroſe perſecution unto death, both by *Jews* and *Gentiles*; and for the firſt three hundred years, inſtead of death being no more, and ſorrow and ſighing fleeing away, there was ſcarce any thing elſe; nor can it be ſaid that there was no temple, or places of public worſhip; or that the church had no need of the ſun and moon of the Goſpel and Goſpel-ordinances then, ſince theſe have continued ever ſince, and will to the end of the world; nor did the kings of the earth bring their honour and glory into that church-ſtate in any ſenſe, but ſet themſelves againſt it, and endeavoured to deſtroy it; nor were the churches even of that age ſo pure as here deſcribed, ver. 27. many perſons both of bad principles and bad practices crept into them; there were tares among the wheat, goats among the ſheep, and fooliſh virgins with the wiſe: nor does this viſion refer to the times of *Conſtantine*, when the old pagan idolatry was removed out of the empire, and the chriſtian religion was revived, and came to be in a flouriſhing condition, and a new face of things appeared, and chriſtianity was embraced and honoured by the emperor, and the great men of the earth; there was not that purity as in this ſtate; the chriſtian doctrine and worſhip were ſoon corrupted, being mixed with *Judaiſm* and paganiſm; a flood of errors was brought in by *Arius*, *Eutychius*, *Neſtorius*, *Macedonius*, *Pelagius*, and others; yea, doctrines of devils, and which at length iſſued in a general apoſtacy, and in the revelation of the man of ſin; nor was there that peace and comfort, and freedom from evils, as from death, pain, and ſorrow; witneſs the *Arian* perſecution, the incurſions of the *Goths* and *Vandals* into the empire, and the inhuman butcheries and numerous maſſacres and murders of the popiſh party ſince. Nor has this viſion any thing to do with the converſion and reſtoration of the *Jews*, when they will become a new people, quit their old principles and modes of worſhip, and there will be no more among them the ſea of corrupt doctrine, reſpecting the Meſſiah, the works of the law, &c. for this will be over before this viſion takes place, as appears from the 19th chapter: nor does it belong to the ſpiritual reign of Chriſt, which will be in the preſent earth, whereas this glorious ſtate of the church will be in the new heavens and new earth; that will be at the ſounding of the ſeventh trumpet, and in the *Philadelphian* church-ſtate, this will not be till prophetic time and antichriſtian times will be no more, when the myſtery of God will be finiſhed, and after the *Laodicean* ſtate is at an end; in that there will be public worſhip, the miniſtry of the word, and adminiſtration of ordinances, but not in this; and though there will be then great ſpirituality and holineſs, yet not in perfection, nor will the churches be clear of hypocrites and nominal profeſſors, and will at laſt ſink into a *Laodicean* ſtate. Nor is this viſion to be interpreted of the church triumphant in heaven, or of the ultimate glory of the ſaints there; ſince the new *Jeruſalem* here deſcribed deſcends from heaven, that is, to earth, where the ſaints will reign with Chriſt; and ſince the church is repreſented as a bride, prepared and adorned for her huſband, but not as yet at the entrance of this ſtate, delivered up to him; and ſince the tabernacle of God is ſaid to be with men, that is, on earth; and this dwelling of God with them is as in a tabernacle, which is moveable, and ſeems to be diſtinct from the fixed ſtate of the ſaints in the ultimate glory; to which may be added, that in this ſtate, Chriſt, as king of ſaints, will be peculiarly and diſtinctly glorified, whereas in the ultimate one, when the kingdom is delivered to the Father, God will be all in all: this therefore is to be underſtood of the glorious ſtate of the church during the thouſand years of ſatan's binding, and the ſaints living and reigning with Chriſt; the holy city, and new *Jeruſalem*, is the ſame with the beloved city in ch. xx. 9. what is there briefly hinted, is here largely deſcribed and inſiſted on; this will be the time and ſtate when the church of the firſt-born, whoſe names are written in heaven, will firſt meet together, and be brought to Chriſt, and be preſented by him to himſelf a glorious church, without ſpot or wrinkle, or any ſuch thing, and Chriſt will reign glorioſly among them: the ſeat of this church-ſtate will be the *new heaven* and *new earth* which *John* ſaw, and which are the ſame that *Peter* ſpeaks of, in which dwelleth righteouſneſs, or in which righteous perſons only dwell, 2 *Pet.* iii. 13. for as the firſt heaven and earth both here and there are to be underſtood literally, ſo in like manner the new heaven and new earth; which will be new, not with reſpect to the ſubſtance, but their qualities; they will be renewed, or purged from every thing that is diſagreeable, and is the effect of the ſin of man; the firſt heaven and earth were made chiefly for men, but on account of the ſin of man, the earth was curſed, and brought forth thorns and thiſtles, and both the earth and air, or the heaven, were attended with noxious vapours, *&c.* and the whole creation was made ſubject to vanity and corruption; from all which they will be cleared at the general conflagration, and a new earth and heaven will appear, fit for the habitation of the ſecond *Adam*, and his poſterity, for the ſpace of a thouſand years. So the *Jews* ſpeak of new heavens, as מחודשים, *renewed* ones, which are the ſecrets of ſublime wiſdom[o]: and they ſay[p], that the holy bleſſed God will renew his world a thouſand years, and that in the ſeventh millennium there will be new heavens and a new earth[q]: *for the firſt heaven and the firſt earth were paſſed away*; not thoſe in ch. xx. 11. but the heaven and the earth which were firſt made, which paſſed away, as *Peter* alſo ſays, adding with a great noiſe; meaning not as to their ſubſtance, but as to their form, faſhion, and qualities: *and there was no more ſea*; which may be underſtood either as to the being of it; it was *exhauſted*, as the *Ethiopic* verſion renders it, being dried up by the conflagration; ſee *Amos* vii. 4. and if Mr. *Burnet*'s hypotheſis can be ſupported, that the paradiſaical earth, or the earth before the flood, was without a ſea, that being made, with the mountains and hills, by the falling of the ſurface of the earth into the waters under it, there is a ſurpriſing agreement between that earth and this new one; but the *Alexandrian* copy reads, *and I ſaw the ſea no more*; it might be in being, tho' *John* ſaw it not; and ſince at the end of the thouſand years, the ſea will give up the dead which are in it, it muſt be in being, unleſs it can be interpreted of the place where the ſea was: wherefore it ſeems beſt to underſtand it with reſpect to its uſe and qualities; and that as the heaven and earth will paſs away, not as to their ſubſtance, but quality, ſo in like manner the ſea will be no more uſed for navigation, nor may it be a tumultuous and raging one, or have its flux and reflux, or its waters be ſalt, as now; the ſchoolmen ſay it will no more be a fluid, but will be conſolidated into the globe as the ſphere; and in a myſtical ſenſe, there will be no more wicked men; tumultuous and turbulent men are like the troubled ſea, that cannot reſt, *Iſ.* lvii. 20. for in the new heavens and earth only righteous perſons will dwell, 2 *Pet.* iii. 13.

Ver. 2. *And I John ſaw the holy city*, &c.] The ſame with the beloved city in ch. xx. 9. the church of God: ſometimes the church militant, is called a city, of which the ſaints are now fellow-citizens, governed by wholeſome laws, and enjoying many privileges; but here the general aſſembly and church of the firſt born, or all the elect of God, are intended, the whole body and ſociety of them, being as a city, compact together; called *holy*, not only becauſe ſet apart to holineſs by God the Father, and their ſins expiated by the blood of Chriſt, or becauſe he is made ſanctification to them, or becauſe internally ſanctified by the Spirit of God, which now is but in part; but becauſe they will be perfectly holy in themſelves, without the being of ſin in them, or any ſpot of it on them: and *John*, for the more ſtrong aſcertaining the truth of this viſion, expreſſes his name, who ſaw it, to whom God ſent his angel, and ſignified to him by theſe *Apocalyptic* viſions what ſhould be hereafter; tho' the name is left out in the *Alexandrian* copy, and in the *Syriac*, *Arabic*, and *Ethiopic* verſions: *new Jeruſalem*; the church of God, both in the Old and New Teſtament, is often called *Jeruſalem*, to which its name, which ſignifies the viſion of peace, agrees; it was the city of the great king, whither the tribes went up to worſhip; it was a free city, and a fortified one: the Goſpel church-ſtate in its imperfection is called the heavenly *Jeruſalem*, and the *Jeruſalem* above, which is free, and the mother of all; and here the church in its perfect ſtate is called the new *Jeruſalem*, where will be compleat peace and proſperity; and which is called *new*, becauſe it has its ſeat in the new heaven and new earth; the inhabitants of which will appear in their new and ſhining robes of immortality and glory; and to diſtinguiſh it from the old *Jeruſalem*, and even from the former ſtate of the church; for this will be תליתאה, *the third time* that *Jeruſalem* will be built, as ſay the *Jews*, namely, in the time of the king Meſſiah[r]: *coming down from God out of heaven*; which deſigns not the ſpiritual and heavenly original of the ſaints, being born from above, on which account the church is called the heavenly *Jeruſalem*; but a local deſcent of all the ſaints with Chriſt from the third heaven into the air, where they will be met by living ſaints; and their bodies being raiſed and united to their ſouls, they will reign with Chriſt in the new earth: and this is "the building which the *Jews* ſay God will prepare for the *Jeruſalem* which is above, לנחתא, "*to deſcend into*[s]:" *prepared as a bride adorned for her huſband*; Chriſt is the huſband, or bridegroom, and the church is his ſpouſe, and bride; and in theſe characters they will both appear at this time, when the marriage between them will be conſummated: and the church may be ſaid to be *prepared* as ſuch, when all the elect of God are gathered in, the number of the ſaints is perfected; when the good work of grace is finiſhed in them all, and they are all arrayed in the righteouſneſs of Chriſt: and to be *adorned*, when not only they are clothed with the robe of righteouſneſs, and garments of ſalvation, and are beautified with the graces of the Spirit, but alſo with the bright robes of immortality and glory. The phraſe is *Jewiſh*, and is to be read exactly as here in the book of *Zohar*[t].

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[o] Zohar in Gen. fol. 5. 2. vid. Kimchi in Iſ. lvi. 6.

[p] T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 92. 2. & Gloſſ. in ib. Zohar in Gen. fol. 69. 1. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 150. 2.

[q] Zohar in Gen. fol. 35. 3.

[r] Ib. in Gen. fol. 126. 4.

[s] Zohar in Gen. fol. 103. 4.

[t] Ib. fol. 53. 2.

Ver. 3. *And I heard a great voice out of heaven, &c.*] Either of an angel, or rather of Chriſt, or God himſelf; ſince the *Alexandrian* copy and *Vulgate Latin* verſion read, *out of the throne, ſaying, behold the tabernacle of God is with men*; in alluſion to the tabernacle being with the *Iſraelites*, and the *Shechinah*, or divine majeſty, being in the midſt of them, and as an accompliſhment of the promiſe in *Ezek.* xxxvii. 27. in the fulleſt ſenſe of it; and deſigns ſomething diſtinct from the ſpiritual preſence of Chriſt *in* his church, as his tabernacle and temple, and in the hearts of his people; and from the heavenly glory, or ultimate ſtate of happineſs, in which they will be *with him*, and that not as in a tabernacle, but as in a city, which has foundations: the phraſe ſeems to denote the perſonal preſence of Chriſt with his ſaints in human nature, like, tho' different from that in the time of his humiliation; then he dwelt or tabernacled with men on earth, but it was in the form of a ſervant; but now he'll appear in a glorious body, and indeed in all his perſonal glory, and reign among them as their king: *and he will dwell with them*; in perſon, and not by his Spirit, or by faith, as before, nor as a wayfaring man only for a night; but he will dwell with them for the ſpace of a thouſand years, and after that for ever: Chriſt and his church will now be come together as huſband and wife: *and they ſhall be his people*; that is, they ſhall appear, to be his covenant-people, that will be out of all doubt; this is made manifeſt in ſome meaſure in effectual vocation; but it does not yet appear neither to the ſaints themſelves, nor to others, what they are, and ſhall be, but now it will be evident and unqueſtionable. *And God himſelf ſhall be with them*; the *Immanuel*, God with us; not by his Spirit, as he was after his aſcenſion to heaven, and ſince is; but in perſon, he himſelf will deſcend from heaven, when his church, the new *Jeruſalem* does; the Lord their God will come in perſon with all the ſaints, and will be king over all the earth. And be *their God*, as *Thomas* ſtiles him, *my Lord, and my God*, *John* xx. 28. The covenant of grace, with all its bleſſings and promiſes, are in him, and now will it have its full accompliſhment, and the ſaints be in a ſtate inexpreſſibly happy; ſee *Pſ.* cxliv. 15.

Ver. 4. *And God ſhall wipe away all tears from their eyes, &c.*] Occaſioned by ſin, ſatan, the hidings of God's face, and afflictive diſpenſations of providence; for theſe will be no more: *and there ſhall be no more death*; natural or violent; there will be no more putting of the ſaints to death, or perſecution of them unto death, as in former times; nor will they die a natural death any more; theſe children of the reſurrection, and inhabitants of the new heaven and earth, will be like the angels who die not; there will be no more deadneſs as to ſpiritual things among the ſaints; and as for the ſecond death, that will have no power over them. So the *Jews* ſay [u], אין מיתה לעתיד לבא, *there is no death in the world to come*; good is laid up for the righteous in the world to come, and with them is no death [x]; and after the reſurrection the body is perfect, and ſhall never after taſte the taſte of death [y]. *Neither ſorrow, nor crying*; on account of ſin, or becauſe of oppreſſion and perſecution, or thro' the loſs of near relations and friends; ſorrow and ſighing will flee away, all occaſions thereof being gone: *neither ſhall there be any more pain*; either of body or mind; there will be nothing to afflict the mind, and make that uneaſy, but all the reverſe; nor will there be any ſickneſs or diſeaſes of body, for the body will be raiſed glorious, powerful, incorruptible, and ſpiritual. *For the former things are paſſed away*; not only the firſt heaven and earth, the world, its faſhion, and its luſts; but the former grievous times under *Rome* pagan and papal, and every thing which in this preſent life gives uneaſineſs and diſtreſs.

Ver. 5. *And he that ſat upon the throne, ſaid, &c.*] By whom is meant, either God the Father, who is often repreſented in this book as ſitting on the throne, and as diſtinguiſhed from Chriſt the Lamb; ſee ch. iv. 2. and v. 13. and vi. 16. and vii. 10. and who may ſeem the more to be intended, ſince he is by adopting grace the God and Father of his people, and they are his ſons and daughters; or rather Chriſt, who not only is ſet down on the ſame throne with his Father, but has a throne of his own, called the throne of the Lamb, and was ſeen upon one by *John* in the preceding viſion, ch. xx. 11. which tho' in order of time will be after this, yet in the order of the viſions was ſeen before; and eſpecially ſince the perſon on the throne ſpeaking, calls himſelf the *Alpha* and the *Omega*, the beginning and the end, as Chriſt does in ch. i. 8. and ſeeing he it is that gives to thirſty ſouls of the water of life, *John* vii. 37, 38. and makes promiſes to the overcomer ſo largely and frequently in ch. ii. and iii. He addreſſes *John*, and delivers the following things to him, *behold, I make all things new*; which is to be underſtood not of the renovation of perſons at converſion, when a new heart and ſpirit are given, and men are made wholly new creatures; for this is the work of the Spirit, and which is done daily, and is not peculiar to any particular period of time; nor of the renewing of the church-ſtate at the beginning of the Goſpel, when the *Jewiſh* church-ſtate and ordinances waxed old, and vaniſhed away, and a new covenant took place, a new and living way was opened, and new ordinances appointed, ſince all this was before *John* had this viſion; nor was there any need of it to repreſent it to him; but of the making of the new heaven, and the new earth, which Chriſt aſcribes to himſelf, and of his forming his church anew, making it a new *Jeruſalem*, beſtowing new glories upon his people, both in ſoul and body, and ſo preſenting them to himſelf a glorious church; and of the new adminiſtration of his kingdom in a very ſingular and glorious manner; ſo that it reſpects a new people, a new habitation, and a new manner of ruling over them; all which is his own doing, and is marvellous; and becauſe it is a matter of great importance, and is wonderful and certain, therefore a *behold* is prefixed to it; ſee *Iſ.* xliii. 19. The *Jews* ſay [z], that the holy bleſſed God will make ten things new in the future ſtate, or world to come; the firſt is, he will enlighten the world; (ſee ver. 11, 23.) the ſecond is, he will bring living water out of *Jeruſalem*; (ſee ver. 6.) the third is, he will make trees to bring forth their fruit every month; (ſee ch. xxii. 2.) and the fourth is, all the waſte places ſhall be built, even *Sodom* and *Gomorrha*; the fifth is, *Jeruſalem* ſhall be built with ſapphire ſtone; (ſee ver. 19.) the ſixth is, the cow and the bear ſhall feed; the ſeventh is, a covenant ſhall be made between *Iſrael*, and the beaſts, fowls, and creeping things; the eighth is, there ſhall be no more weeping and howling in the world; the ninth is, there ſhall be no more death in the world; the tenth is, there ſhall no more be ſighing, and groaning, and ſorrow in the world; ſee ver. 4. *And he ſaid unto me, write*; what *John* had ſeen, and Chriſt had ſaid, and was about to ſay; and particularly what concerned the renewing of all things, the whole being a matter of moment, and worth noting and taking down in writing, that it might be on record for ſaints to read, and receive comfort and advantage from; and to denote the certainty of it, as well as to ſhow, that it was a clear point, and to be known, whereas, when it was otherwiſe, he was bid not to write; ſee ch. i. 11, 19. and xiv. 13. and xix. 9. and x. 4. *for theſe words are true and faithful*; both what he had ſaid, and was about to ſay; they were *true*, becauſe they came from God, who cannot lye, and *faithful*, becauſe they would be punctually and exactly fulfilled; ſee ch. xix. 9. The *Syriac* verſion adds, *they are Gods*, and ſo the *Arabic* verſion.

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[u] Echa Rabbati, fol. 48. 2. & Midraſh Kohelet, fol. 61. 2.

[x] Maimon. Teſhuva, c. 8. §. 1.

[y] Midraſh Hanneelam in Zohar in Gen. fol. 70. 1.

[z] Shemot Rabba, §. 15. fol. 101. 3.

Ver. 6. *And he ſaid unto me, it is done*, &c.] The end of all things is come; it is all over with the firſt heaven and earth; theſe are no more, and the new heaven and earth are finiſhed: there ſeems to be an alluſion to the old creation, *he ſpake, and it was done*, *Pſ.* xxxiii. 9. The whole election of grace is compleated; every individual veſſel of mercy is called by grace; all the ſaints are brought with Chriſt, and their bodies raiſed, and living ſaints changed, and all together are as a bride prepared for her huſband; and the nuptials are now ſolemnized; all the promiſes and propheſies relating to the glorious ſtate of the church are now fulfilled; the myſtery of God, ſpoken by his ſervants, is finiſhed; the kingdom of Chriſt is compleat, and all other kingdoms are deſtroyed; the day of redemption is come; the ſalvation of the ſaints is perfect; what was finiſhed on the croſs, by way of impetration, is now done as to application; all are ſaved with an everlaſting ſalvation. *I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end*; which are expreſſive of the primacy, perfection, and eternity of Chriſt; of his being the ſum and ſubſtance, the firſt cauſe, and laſt end of all things, relating both to the old and new world, to things temporal and ſpiritual; ſee the note on ch. i. 8. *I will give unto him that is athirſt of the fountain of the water of life freely*; he that is *athirſt* is one that is ſo not in a natural, much leſs in a ſinful, but in a ſpiritual ſenſe; who as he has thirſted after Chriſt, and ſalvation by him; after pardon of ſin, and a juſtifying righteouſneſs; after communion with Chriſt, and conformity to him, and a greater degree of knowledge of him; ſo after the glories of his kingdom, and the happineſs of a future ſtate: to ſuch an one Chriſt promiſes to give ſuch large meaſures of grace and glory, and in ſuch abundance, as will continue to refreſh and delight, and as may be compared to a fountain of living water, namely, for refreſhment, abundance, and continuance; and all this he'll give *freely*, without money, and without price; for as pardon and righteouſneſs, and the whole of ſalvation, are all of free grace, ſo are all the enjoyments of the kingdom-ſtate, the riches, honours, and glories of it, and eternal life itſelf; alſo plentifully, and in great abundance, and anſwers to the *Hebrew* word חנם; ſee *Numb.* xi. 5.

Ver. 7. *He that overcometh*, &c.] All ſpiritual enemies, ſin, ſatan, and the world, the antichriſtian beaſt, his image, mark and number of his name; who is more than a conqueror through Chriſt; one that perſeveres to the end, notwithſtanding all temptations, trials, and difficulties; ſee the note on ch. ii. 7. *ſhall inherit all things*; the kingdom of Chriſt in the new *Jeruſalem* ſtate, and all things in it; heaven, eternal glory and happineſs, and everlaſting ſalvation; yea, God himſelf, who is the portion, and exceeding great reward of his people, and will be all in all. The *Alexandrian* copy, and the *Vulgate Latin*, *Syriac*, and *Arabic* verſions, read, *theſe things*; the new heaven, and new earth, the preſence of God with men, freedom from all evils, and divine refreſhments from the fountain of living water, before mentioned: *and I will be his God, and he ſhall be my Son*; Chriſt is not only concerned in predeſtination to the adoption of children, in making way by redemption for the enjoyment of this bleſſing, and in the actual donation of it; but he himſelf, who is the mighty God, is the everlaſting Father, and his people are his ſpiritual ſeed and offſpring, and in his kingdom he will ſee his ſeed, and prolong his days; he will long enjoy them, and preſent them to himſelf, and afterwards to his Father, ſaying as in *Heb.* ii. 13. and tho' they are now, in the preſent ſtate of things, the ſons of God, yet it does not appear ſo manifeſt that they are, or at leaſt what they ſhall be; but in this new and glorious ſtate of things, it will be abundantly manifeſt, that they are the ſons of God, and ſeed of Chriſt; and it will be known how glorious they are, and ſhall be, when they ſhall ſee Chriſt in his glory, and be like him; who will now be, πατηρ τȣ μελλοντος αιωνος, *the father of the world to come*, as the *Septuagint* render the phraſe in *Iſ.* ix. 6.

Ver. 8. *But the fearful*, &c.] Not the timorous ſheep and lambs of Chriſt, the dear children of God, who are ſometimes of a fearful heart, on account of ſin, temptation, and unbelief; but ſuch who are of cowardly ſpirits, and are not valiant for the truth, but who thro' fear of men, either make no profeſſion of Chriſt, and his Goſpel, or having made it, drop it, leſt they ſhould be expoſed to tribulation and perſecution; theſe are they that are afraid of the beaſt, and live in ſervile bondage to him. *And unbelieving*; meaning not merely atheiſts, who don't believe there is a God, or deiſts only, that don't believe in Chriſt; but ſuch who profeſs his name, and are called by it, and yet don't truly believe in him, nor embrace his Goſpel, and the truths of it, but believe a lye; theſe are condemned already, and on them the wrath of God abides, and they will be damned at laſt; tho' it may have a regard to ſuch alſo who are infidels as to the ſecond coming of Chriſt to judgment, and who are ſcoffers and mockers at it: *and the abominable*; every ſinful man is ſo in the ſight of God; but here it denotes ſuch who are the worſt of ſinners, given up to ſinning; who are abominable, and to every good work reprobate; who are addicted to the worſt of crimes, as were the *Sodomites* and others; the *Ethiopic* verſion renders it, *who pollute themſelves* with unnatural luſts. The *Syriac* and *Arabic* verſions expreſs it by two words, *ſinners and polluted*, filthy ſinners; the character well agrees with *Babylon*, the mother of harlots, and abominations of the earth, and to all that adhere to her, and join with her in her abominable idolatries. *And murderers*; of the ſaints, and prophets, and martyrs of *Jeſus*, with whoſe blood *Babylon*, or the whore of *Rome* has made herſelf drunk, and in whom it will be found. *And whoremongers*; all unclean perſons, that indulge themſelves in impure luſts, in fornication, adultery, and all lewdneſs; as the clergy of the church of *Rome*, who being forbidden to marry, and being under a vow of celibacy, and making great pretenſions to chaſtity, and ſingular holineſs, give up themſelves to all laſciviouſneſs, to work all uncleanneſs with greedineſs. *And ſorcerers*; conjurers, dealers with familiar ſpirits, necromancers, and ſuch as uſe the magic art, as many of the popes did to get into the chair, and poiſoners of kings and princes; whoredoms and witchcrafts go together ſometimes, as they did in *Jezabel*, an emblem of the *Romiſh* antichriſt. *And idolaters*; that worſhip devils, idols of gold, ſilver, braſs, ſtone, and wood, repreſenting God, and Chriſt, and the virgin *Mary*, and ſaints departed, ch. ix. 20. *And all liars*; in common, and particularly ſuch who ſpeak lyes in hypocriſy, as the followers of the man of ſin, and who are given up to believe a lye, that they might be damned; all lyes being of the devil, and abominable to God. All and each of theſe *ſhall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimſtone.* The *Jews*[a] ſpeak of ſeveral diſtinct places in hell, for ſeveral ſorts of ſinners, as particularly for ſabbath-breakers, adulterers, and liars; and ſay of the wicked, that when he is condemned, he ſhall take, חלקו, *his part* in hell[b]; ſee the note on ch. xix. 20. *which is the ſecond death*; ſee the note on ch. ii. 11.

Ver. 9. *And there came unto me one of the ſeven angels*, &c.] Either the firſt of them, as one of the four beaſts is the firſt of them, ch. vi. 1. or it may be the laſt, and very likely the ſame as in ch. xvii. 1. *which had the ſeven vials full of the ſeven laſt plagues*; that is, the wrath of God poured out by them on the antichriſtian party; ſee ch. xv. 1, 7. and xvi. 1. *And talked with me, ſaying, come hither*; ſee ch. xvii. 1. *I will ſhew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife.* The *Lamb* is Chriſt, who is often ſo called in this book; ſee ch. v. 6, 7, 9. and xiv. 1. and xiii. 8. and xxi. 23. and vii. 17. and xix. 7. and is the Son of God, the heir of all things, the maker and governour of the univerſe, the king of kings, and lord of lords; and who, as mediator, has all accompliſhments and qualifications to recommend him as a bridegroom, ſuch as beauty, riches, and wiſdom: the *bride*, his *wife*, is not any particular believer, nor any particular church; not the *Gentile* church, nor the *Jewiſh* church only, but all the elect of God, conſiſting of the raiſed and living ſaints, at the coming of Chriſt; who will make up one body, one general aſſembly, and be as a bride prepared and adorned for her huſband: theſe were firſt betrothed to Chriſt in eternity, and were openly eſpouſed by him, one by one, at converſion; and now being all gathered in by effectual vocation, the dead being raiſed, and the living changed, and all glorified, the marriage is conſummated, and they are declared publickly to be the bride, the Lamb's wife; ſee the note on *Matt.* xxii. 2. And now, tho' *John* had had a ſight of her before, ver. 2. yet that was but a glimmering one, at a diſtance, he being in the wilderneſs, ch. xvii. 3. wherefore the angel calls him to him, and propoſes to give him a clear, diſtinct, and particular view of her, in all her glory; and a glorious ſight this indeed! to ſee the bride brought to the king in raiment of needle-work, and the queen ſtand at his right hand in gold of *Ophir*. This is a ſight of a quite different nature from that of the filthy ſtrumpet, which the ſame angel propoſed to give to *John* in ch. xvii. 1.

Ver. 10. *And he carried me away in the ſpirit*, &c.] *John* was in an exſtacy, as in ch. i. 10. and iv. 2. and xvii. 3. and in the thoughts and apprehenſions of his mind and ſpirit, it ſeemed to him as if he was carried away from one place to another; for this was not a corporal ſight, nor were any of the viſions he had, but what was repreſented to his mind or ſpirit; it being with him, as it was with the Apoſtle *Paul*, when he was caught up to the third heaven, who knew not whether he was in the body, or out of the body. The *Ethiopic* verſion renders it, *the Spirit brought me*; not the evil ſpirit ſatan, who took up our Lord corporally, and carried him to an exceeding high mountain, and ſhewed him all the kingdoms of this world, and their glory, *Matt.* iv. 8. but either a good angel, or the Spirit of God: *to a great and high mountain*; to ſuch an one was *Ezekiel* brought in the viſions of God, when the frame of a city and temple was ſhown him, with their dimenſions, *Ezek.* xl. 2. as here, a city is ſhown to *John*, with its wall, gates, foundations, and their meaſures: and he was brought to ſuch a place, partly that he might have the more plain and full view of it; and partly to ſuggeſt unto him, that now the church of Chriſt was eſtabliſhed upon the top of the mountains, and exalted above the hills, and was a city on a hill, which could not be hid, *Iſ.* ii. 2. *And ſhewed me that great city*; which is no other than the church, the bride, the Lamb's wife; juſt as the apoſtate church, all along in this book before, is called the great city, ch. xi. 8. and xiv. 8. and xvii. 18. and xviii. 10, 16, 18. but now that being demoliſhed, there is no other great city in being, but the church of Chriſt, called a city before; ſee ver. 2. here a *great* one, not only becauſe of its prodigious large dimenſions, ver. 16. but becauſe of the number of its inhabitants, being ſuch as no man can number; and becauſe it is the reſidence of the great king, the tabernacle of God will be in it; tho' this epithet is left out in the *Alexandrian* copy, and in the *Vulgate Latin*, and all the *Oriental* verſions: *the holy Jeruſalem*; called *the new Jeruſalem*, ver. 2. here *holy*, in alluſion to the city of *Jeruſalem*, which was called the holy city, *Matt.* iv. 5. on account of the temple in it, the place of divine worſhip; but here this city is ſo called, becauſe it is the reſidence of the holy God, Father, Son, and Spirit, inhabited only by holy men, made perfectly ſo, and encompaſſed by holy angels. *Deſcending out of heaven from God*; as in ver. 2. ſee the note there.

Ver. 11. *Having the glory of God*, &c.] Not only upon their ſouls, which will lie in the glorious robe of Chriſt's righteouſneſs, the bride's wedding garment being on them, in the perfect holineſs, which will be in them, and in that compleat knowledge of all ſpiritual and heavenly things they will be poſſeſſed of, for they will have a glory revealed in them; but upon their bodies alſo, for this city, the church, the bride of Chriſt, will conſiſt only of riſen and changed ſaints, whoſe bodies will be freed from all diſhonour, deformity, diſeaſes, and imperfections, and will be made like unto Chriſt's glorious body, and will ſhine like the ſun in the kingdom of God. Moreover, the preſence of God may be intended by his glory, as the *Shechinah*, or the divine majeſty of God in the tabernacle and temple, was called, *Exod.* xl. 35. 1 *Kings* viii. 11. for the glorious preſence of God will now be in this church-ſtate, which will caſt a luſtre on all that are in it; for if the face of *Moſes*, and of *Stephen*, ſhone ſo bright and glorious, thro' the preſence of God with them; ſee 2 *Cor.* iii. 7. *Acts* vi. 15. how much more glorioſly will the ſaints ſhine in this ſtate, when they ſhall enjoy the preſence of God in a far more illuſtrious manner? to which may be added, that Jeſus Chriſt, who is the brightneſs of his Father's glory, will now appear in that, and in his own, and in the glory of his angels; and all the ſaints will appear with him in glory; and to ſee them in all this glory, is a glorious ſight indeed! *And her light* was *like unto a ſtone moſt precious*; by her *light* is not meant the light ſhe will have in her, tho' that will be exceeding great, but the fountain of it from whence it comes; that which holds it forth to her, and ſupplies her with it: the word Φωϛηρ ſignifies an illuminator, and is uſed of the miniſters of the Goſpel, that hold forth the word of life and light to others, *Phil.* ii. 15, 16. but here it intends Chriſt, who is the ſun of righteouſneſs, the church's light or enlightner, ver. 23. not with the light of nature, as he enlightens every man, nor with the light of grace, with which the ſaints are enlightened by him in the preſent ſtate of things, by his Spirit, thro' the word and ordinances, but with the light of glory: and he is comparable to the moſt precious ſtone; he is more precious than rubies; he is ſo now to them that believe, in his perſon, offices, grace, and righteouſneſs, and will be more ſo in his light and glory in the new *Jeruſalem* ſtate: *even like a jaſper ſtone clear as chryſtal*; God the Father, who ſits on the throne, is ſaid to be to look upon like a *jaſper*, ch. iv. 2. ſee the note there; and here Chriſt, the illuminator of his church, is ſaid to be like one, becauſe of the exceeding brightneſs of this ſtone, and the durableneſs of it, expreſſive of the perpetuity of Chriſt, as the light of his church and people; he is the everlaſting light of it, *Iſ.* lx. 19, 20. and he is compared to the chryſtallizing *jaſper*. There is one ſort which is called *Aerizuſa*, like to air[c], and another *Chryſtallizuſa*[d], clear as chryſtal. So *Pliny* ſpeaks[e] of a white *jaſper* called *Aſtrios*, and which, he ſays, is cryſtallo propinquans, *near to chryſtal*, found in *India*, and on the ſhores of *Pallene*. To this Chriſt is like, becauſe he is light itſelf, and in him is no darkneſs at all, and will cauſe an everlaſting day; and ſuch a clear and bright ſtate of things, as that there will be no night, nor any more darkneſs, nothing but everlaſting joy, peace, proſperity, and happineſs; there ſeems to be ſome reference to *Iſ.* lx. 1, 19, 20.

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[a] Raya Mehimna in Zohar in Lev. fol. 7. 2.

[b] T. Bab. Chagiga, fol. 15. 1.

Ver. 12. *And had a wall great and high*, &c.] Not the Spirit of God, who ſeparates, ſanctifies, and preſerves the ſaints, as *Cocceius* thinks, for this account reſpects not the church militant; nor the eternal decree of God, the unpaſſable gulf between heaven and hell, which everlaſtingly fixes the ſtate of men; for this regards not the ultimate ſtate of happineſs: many interpreters underſtand it of the doctrine of the Goſpel, which as it ſecures the church now from hereticks, and is like a wall very ſtrong well-built, is durable and impregnable; and may be called *great*, becauſe of the great author of it, and the great things contained in it; and *high*, ſince it is not to be reached by carnal minds; ſo none but ſuch who have embraced it, ſhall enter into the new *Jeruſalem*; for all liars, and forgers of doctrinal lyes, and who embrace the antichriſtian lyes, ſhall be without. Tho' rather the almighty power of God, which guards his church and people now, and will be their defence in this ſtate, is meant; and which ſhows the ſtate not to be that of the ultimate glory, which will need no wall, but this will; ſince an attempt will be made upon the ſaints in it, tho' it will be a fooliſh and fruitleſs one: and this wall of divine power is very great indeed, and is inſuperable by men; God himſelf is a wall of fire about his people; tho' it may be beſt to interpret this of ſalvation itſelf, which is by Jeſus Chriſt, if we compare with this text *Iſ.* xxvi. 1. and lx. 18. for thoſe, and thoſe only who are intereſted in it, will dwell in the new *Jeruſalem*; and ſalvation in this ſtate will be enjoyed in its fulneſs; and this is very great in its author, objects, and matter, being wrought out by the great God, for great ſinners, at a great expence, and including grace and glory, and not to be got over or enjoyed by thoſe who have no intereſt in it. *And had twelve gates*; though, ſtrictly ſpeaking, there is but one gate, and that a ſtrait one, which is the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, his perſon, blood, righteouſneſs, regenerating and ſanctifying grace; for as he is the only door into the ſheepfold, the church, in its preſent ſtate, or he only that has faith in him, has a right to enter there, and is the only way to heaven and eternal happineſs; ſo he is the only gate into the new *Jeruſalem*, or ſuch only will be admitted there, who are intereſted in him: but theſe gates are ſaid to be twelve, in alluſion to the twelve Apoſtles, who pointed out to men the way of ſalvation by Chriſt; and to the twelve tribes of *Iſrael*, who repreſent all the elect of God, who enter in thereat; and to the twelve gates of *Ezekiel*'s city, *Ezek.* xlviii. 31—35. *And at the gates twelve angels*; meaning either the miniſtring ſpirits, in alluſion to the cherubim in *Gen.* iii. 24. who are watchers, and encamp about the ſaints now, and will, as it were, ſtand centinels in this camp of the ſaints, as it is called, ch. xx. 8. and beſides, will be made uſe of in gathering the ſaints from the ſeveral parts of the world, and introducing them into this ſtate; or elſe the Apoſtles and miniſters of the word, often called angels in this book, who will ſhine with peculiar luſtre now, and will appear at the head of the ſeveral companies they have been uſeful to, and bring them as their joy and crown of rejoicing into this glorious ſtate: this clauſe is wanting in the *Alexandrian* copy, and in the *Syriac* verſion. The *Jews* ſpeak of שרים, *princes*, being appointed over the gates of heaven, eaſt, weſt, north, and ſouth, with the keys in their hands, whoſe names they give us[f]. *And names written thereon, which are* the names *of the twelve tribes of the children of Iſrael*; not literal, but myſtical *Iſrael*, whom God has choſen to ſalvation, Chriſt has redeemed by his blood, and the Spirit calls by his grace; denoting that all, and each of theſe, have a right to enter into the new *Jeruſalem*, and will be admitted there, and none but they. In like manner the *Jews*[g] make mention of a court of the Lord, "which has twelve gates, according to the computation of the tribes of *Iſrael*; on one gate is written *Reuben*, on another is written *Simeon*; and ſo all the tribes of *Iſrael* are written on thoſe gates; in the time they go up to appear before the Lord of the world, who ever goes up to this gate, (on which the tribe of *Reuben* is written) if he is of the tribe of *Reuben* they open to him, (and receive him) if not they caſt him without; and ſo of all whom they don't receive; they open to none but to him who is of that tribe, or whoſe name is written on the gate."

Ver. 13. *On the eaſt three gates*, &c.] On which were written the names of *Joſeph*, *Benjamin*, and *Dan*: *on the north three gates*; on which were writholineſs, give up themſelves to all laſciviouſneſs, to work all uncleanneſs with greedineſs. *And ſorcerers*; conjurers, dealers with familiar ſpirits, necromancers, and ſuch as uſe the magic art, as many of the popes did to get into the chair, and poiſoners of kings and princes; whoredoms and witchcrafts go together ſometimes, as they did in *Jezabel*, an emblem of the *Romiſh* antichriſt. *And idolaters*; that worſhip devils, idols of gold, ſilver, braſs, ſtone, and wood, repreſenting God, and Chriſt, and the virgin *Mary*, and ſaints departed, ch. ix. 20. *And all liars*; in common, and particularly ſuch who ſpeak lyes in hypocriſy, as the followers of the man of ſin, and who are given up to believe a lye, that they might be damned; all lyes being of the devil, and abominable to God. All and each of theſe *ſhall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimſtone.* The *Jews*[a] ſpeak of ſeveral diſtinct places in hell, for ſeveral ſorts of ſinners, as particularly for ſabbath-breakers, adulterers, and liars; and ſay of the wicked, that when he is condemned, he ſhall take, חלקו, *his part* in hell[b]; ſee the note on ch. xix. 20. *which is the ſecond death*; ſee the note on ch. ii. 11.

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[c] Ruæus de Gemmis, l. 2. c. 1.

[d] Dioſcorides, l. 5. c. 160.

[e] Nat. Hiſt. l. 37. c. 9.

[f] Raziel, fol. 35. 2.

[g] Zohar in Num. fol. 70. 4.

Ver. 9. *And there came unto me one of the ſeven angels*, &c.] Either the firſt of them, as one of the four beaſts is the firſt of them, ch. vi. 1. or it may be the laſt, and very likely the ſame as in ch. xvii. 1. *which had the ſeven vials full of the ſeven laſt plagues*; that is, the wrath of God poured out by them on the antichriſtian party; ſee ch. xv. 1, 7. and xvi. 1. *And talked with me, ſaying, come hither*; ſee ch. xvii. 1. *I will ſhew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife.* The *Lamb* is Chriſt, who is often ſo called in this book; ſee ch. v. 6, 7, 9. and xiv. 1. and xiii. 8. and xxi. 23. and vii. 17. and xix. 7. and is the Son of God, the heir of all things, the maker and governour of the univerſe, the king of kings, and lord of lords; and who, as mediator, has all accompliſhments and qualifications to recommend him as a bridegroom, ſuch as beauty, riches, and wiſdom: the *bride*, his *wife*, is not any particular believer, nor any particular church; not the *Gentile* church, nor the *Jewiſh* church only, but all the elect of God, conſiſting of the raiſed and living ſaints, at the coming of Chriſt; who will make up one body, one general aſſembly, and be as a bride prepared and adorned for her huſband: theſe were firſt betrothed to Chriſt in eternity, and were openly eſpouſed by him, one by one, at converſion; and now being all gathered in by effectual vocation, the dead being raiſed, and the living changed, and all glorified, the marriage is conſummated, and they are declared publickly to be the bride, the Lamb's wife; ſee the note on *Matt.* xxii. 2. And now, tho' *John* had had a ſight of her before, ver. 2. yet that was but a glimmering one, at a diſtance, he being in the wilderneſs, ch. xvii. 3. wherefore the angel calls him to him, and propoſes to give him a clear, diſtinct, and particular view of her, in all her glory; and a glorious ſight this indeed! to ſee the bride brought to the king in raiment of needle-work, and the queen ſtand at his right hand in gold of *Ophir*. This is a ſight of a quite different nature from that of the filthy ſtrumpet, which the ſame angel propoſed to give to *John* in ch. xvii. 1.

Ver. 10. *And he carried me away in the ſpirit*, &c.] *John* was in an exſtacy, as in ch. i. 10. and iv. 2. and xvii. 3. and in the thoughts and apprehenſions of his mind and ſpirit, it ſeemed to him as if he was carried away from one place to another; for this was not a corporal ſight, nor were any of the viſions he had, but what was repreſented to his mind or ſpirit; it being with him, as it was with the Apoſtle *Paul*, when he was caught up to the third heaven, who knew not whether he was in the body, or out of the body. The *Ethiopic* verſion renders it, *the Spirit brought me*; not the evil ſpirit ſatan, who took up our Lord corporally, and carried him to an exceeding high mountain, and ſhewed him all the kingdoms of this world, and their glory, *Matt.* iv. 8. but either a good angel, or the Spirit of God: *to a great and high mountain*; to ſuch an one was *Ezekiel* brought in the viſions of God, when the frame of a city and temple was ſhown him, with their dimenſions, *Ezek.* xl. 2. as here, a city is ſhown to *John*, with its wall, gates, foundations, and their meaſures: and he was brought to ſuch a place, partly that he might have the more plain and full view of it; and partly to ſuggeſt unto him, that now the church of Chriſt was eſtabliſhed upon the top of the mountains, and exalted above the hills, and was a city on a hill, which could not be hid, *Iſ.* ii. 2. *And ſhewed me that great city*; which is no other than the church, the bride, the Lamb's wife; juſt as the apoſtate church, all along in this book before, is called the great city, ch. xi. 8. and xiv. 8. and xvii. 18. and xviii. 10, 16, 18. but now that being demoliſhed, there is no other great city in being, but the church of Chriſt, called a city before; ſee ver. 2. here a *great* one, not only becauſe of its prodigious large dimenſions, ver. 16. but becauſe of the number of its inhabitants, being ſuch as no man can number; and becauſe it is the reſidence of the great king, the tabernacle of God will be in it; tho' this epithet is left out in the *Alexandrian* copy, and in the *Vulgate Latin*, and all the *Oriental* verſions: *the holy Jeruſalem*; called *the new Jeruſalem*, ver. 2. here *holy*, in alluſion to the city of *Jeruſalem*, which was called the holy city, *Matt.* iv. 5. on account of the temple in it, the place of divine worſhip; but here this city is ſo called, becauſe it is the reſidence of the holy God, Father, Son, and Spirit, inhabited only by holy men, made perfectly ſo, and encompaſſed by holy angels. *Deſcending out of heaven from God*; as in ver. 2. ſee the note there.

Ver. 11. *Having the glory of God*, &c.] Not only upon their ſouls, which will lie in the glorious robe of Chriſt's righteouſneſs, the bride's wedding garment being on them, in the perfect holineſs, which will be in them, and in that compleat knowledge of all ſpiritual and heavenly things they will be poſſeſſed of, for they will have a glory revealed in them; but upon their bodies alſo, for this city, the church, the bride of Chriſt, will conſiſt only of riſen and changed ſaints, whoſe bodies will be freed from all diſhonour, deformity, diſeaſes, and imperfections, and will be made like unto Chriſt's glorious body, and will ſhine like the ſun in the kingdom of God. Moreover, the preſence of God may be intended by his glory, as the *Shechinah*, or the divine majeſty of God in the tabernacle and temple, was called, *Exod.* xl. 35. 1 *Kings* viii. 11. for the glorious preſence of God will now be in this church-ſtate, which will caſt a luſtre on all that are in it; for if the face of *Moſes*, and of *Stephen*, ſhone ſo bright and glorious, thro' the preſence of God with them; ſee, 2 *Cor.* iii. 7. *Acts* vi. 15. how much more glorioully will the ſaints ſhine in this ſtate, when they ſhall enjoy the preſence of God in a far more illuſtrious manner? to which may be added, that Jeſus Chriſt, who is the brightneſs of his Father's glory, will now appear in that, and in his own, and in the glory of his angels; and all the ſaints will appear with him in glory; and to ſee them in all this glory, is a glorious ſight indeed! *And her light* was *like unto a ſtone moſt precious*; by her *light* is not meant the light ſhe will have in her, tho' that will be exceeding great, but the fountain of it from whence it comes; that which holds it forth to her, and ſupplies her with it: the word Φωστηρ ſignifies an illuminator, and is uſed of the miniſters of the Goſpel, that hold forth the word of life and light to others, *Phil.* ii. 15, 16. but here it intends Chriſt, who is the ſun of righteouſneſs, the church's light or enlightner, ver. 23. not with the light of nature, as he enlightens every man, nor with the light of grace, with which the ſaints are enlightened by him in the preſent ſtate of things, by his Spirit, thro' the word and ordinances, but with the light of glory: and he is comparable to the moſt precious ſtone; he is more precious than rubies; he is ſo now to them that believe, in his perſon, offices, grace, and righteouſneſs, and will be more ſo in his light and glory in the new *Jeruſalem* ſtate: *even like a jaſper ſtone clear as chryſtal*; God the Father, who ſits on the throne, is ſaid to be to look upon like a *jaſper*, ch. iv. 2. ſee the note there; and here Chriſt, the illuminator of his church, is ſaid to be like one, becauſe of the exceeding brightneſs of this ſtone, and the durableneſs of it, expreſſive of the perpetuity of Chriſt, as the light of his church and people; he is the everlaſting light of it, *Iſ.* lx. 19, 20. and he is compared to the chryſtallizing *jaſper*. There is one ſort which is called *Aerizuſa*, like to air[c], and another *Chryſtallizuſa*[d], clear as chryſtal. So *Pliny* ſpeaks[e] of a white *jaſper* called *Aſtrios*, and which, he ſays, is cryſtallo propinquans, *near to chryſtal*, found in *India*, and on the ſhores of *Pallene*. To this Chriſt is like, becauſe he is light itſelf, and in him is no darkneſs at all, and will cauſe an everlaſting day; and ſuch a clear and bright ſtate of things, as that there will be no night, nor any more darkneſs, nothing but everlaſting joy, peace, proſperity, and happineſs; there ſeems to be ſome reference to *Iſ.* lx. 1, 19, 20.

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[a] Raya Mehimna in Zohar in Lev. fol. 7. 2.

[b] T. Bab. Chagiga, fol. 15. 1.

Ver. 12. *And had a wall great and high*, &c.] Not the Spirit of God, who ſeparates, ſanctifies, and preſerves the ſaints, as *Cocceius* thinks, for this account reſpects not the church militant; nor the eternal decree of God, the unpaſſable gulf between heaven and hell, which everlaſtingly fixes the ſtate of men; for this regards not the ultimate ſtate of happineſs: many interpreters underſtand it of the doctrine of the Goſpel, which as it ſecures the church now from hereticks, and is like a wall very ſtrong well-built, is durable and impregnable; and may be called *great*, becauſe of the great author of it, and the great things contained in it; and *high*, ſince it is not to be reached by carnal minds; ſo none but ſuch who have embraced it, ſhall enter into the new *Jeruſalem*; for all liars, and forgers of doctrinal lyes, and who embrace the antichriſtian lyes, ſhall be without. Tho' rather the almighty power of God, which guards his church and people now, and will be their defence in this ſtate, is meant; and which ſhows the ſtate not to be that of the ultimate glory, which will need no wall, but this will; ſince an attempt will be made upon the ſaints in it, tho' it will be a fooliſh and fruitleſs one: and this wall of divine power is very great indeed, and is inſuperable by men; God himſelf is a wall of fire about his people; tho' it may be beſt to interpret this of ſalvation itſelf, which is by Jeſus Chriſt, if we compare with this text *Iſ.* xxvi. 1. and lx. 18. for thoſe, and thoſe only who are intereſted in it, will dwell in the new *Jeruſalem*; and ſalvation in this ſtate will be enjoyed in its fulneſs; and this is very great in its author, objects, and matter, being wrought out by the great God, for great ſinners, at a great expence, and including grace and glory, and not to be got over or enjoyed by thoſe who have no intereſt in it. *And had twelve gates*; though, ſtrictly ſpeaking, there is but one gate, and that a ſtrait one, which is the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, his perſon, blood, righteouſneſs, regenerating and ſanctifying grace; for as he is the only door into the ſheepfold, the church, in its preſent ſtate, or he only that has faith in him, has a right to enter there, and is the only way to heaven and eternal happineſs; ſo he is the only gate into the new *Jeruſalem*, or ſuch only will be admitted there, who are intereſted in him: but theſe gates are ſaid to be twelve, in alluſion to the twelve Apoſtles, who pointed out to men the way of ſalvation by Chriſt; and to the twelve tribes of *Iſrael*, who repreſent all the elect of God, who enter in thereat; and to the twelve gates of *Ezekiel*'s city, *Ezek.* xlviii. 31—35. *And at the gates twelve angels*; meaning either the miniſtring ſpirits, in alluſion to the cherubim in *Gen.* iii. 24. who are watchers, and encamp about the ſaints now, and will, as it were, ſtand centinels in this camp of the ſaints, as it is called, ch. xx. 8. and beſides, will be made uſe of in gathering the ſaints from the ſeveral parts of the world, and introducing them into this ſtate; or elſe the Apoſtles and miniſters of the word, often called angels in this book, who will ſhine with peculiar luſtre now, and will appear at the head of the ſeveral companies they have been uſeful to, and bring them as their joy and crown of rejoicing into this glorious ſtate: this clauſe is wanting in the *Alexandrian* copy, and in the *Syriac* verſion. The *Jews* ſpeak of שרים, *princes*, being appointed over the gates of heaven, eaſt, weſt, north, and ſouth, with the keys in their hands, whoſe names they give us[f]. *And names written thereon, which are* the names *of the twelve tribes of the children of Iſrael*; not literal, but myſtical *Iſrael*, whom God has choſen to ſalvation, Chriſt has redeemed by his blood, and the Spirit calls by his grace; denoting that all, and each of theſe, have a right to enter into the new *Jeruſalem*, and will be admitted there, and none but they. In like manner the *Jews*[g] make mention of a court of the Lord, “which has twelve gates, according to the computation of the tribes of *Iſrael*; on one gate is written *Reuben*, on another is written *Simeon*; and ſo all the tribes of *Iſrael* are written on thoſe gates; in the time they go up to appear before the Lord of the world, who ever goes up to this gate, (on which the tribe of *Reuben* is written) if he is of the tribe of *Reuben* they open to him, (and receive him) if not they caſt him without; and ſo of all whom they don't receive; they open to none but to him who is of that tribe, or whoſe name is written on the gate.”

Ver. 13. *On the eaſt three gates*, &c.] On which were written the names of *Joſeph*, *Benjamin*, and *Dan*: *on the north three gates*; on which were written

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[c] Ruæus de Gemmis, l. 2. c. 1.

[d] Dioſcorides, l. 5. c. 160.

[e] Nat. Hiſt. l. 37. c. 9.

[f] Raziel, fol. 35. 2.

[g] Zohar in Num. fol. 70. 4.

ten the names of *Reuben*, *Judah*, and *Levi* : *on the ſouth three gates* ; on which were written the names of *Simeon*, *Iſſachar*, and *Zabulon* : *and on the weſt three gates* ; on which were written the names of *Gad*, *Aſher*, and *Naphtali* ; ſee *Ezek.* xlviii. 31, 32, 33, 34. This denotes the collection of the ſaints from all parts of the world, who ſhall come from eaſt, weſt, north, and ſouth, and ſit down in the kingdom of God ; and therefore here are gates at every point to enter in at ; ſee *Iſ.* xliii. 5, 6. *Luke* xiii. 29.

Ver. 14. *And the wall of the city had twelve foundations*, &c.] Chriſt is the one and only foundation of his church and people, of the covenant of grace, and of ſalvation ; and of faith, hope, peace, and joy, and of eternal happineſs, and ſo of this glorious ſtate of the church ; he will be the light and temple of it, the glory and ſafety of it ; he will be all in all in it ; but becauſe he has been miniſterially laid as the foundation by the twelve Apoſtles, for men to build their preſent and future happineſs upon, therefore the foundations of the wall of ſalvation are ſaid to be twelve ; ſee *Eph.* ii. 20. Moreover, this may denote the firm and immoveable ſtate of the church at this time, it being a city which has foundations, or is well founded, *Heb.* xi. 10. with which compare *Iſ.* xiv. 32. and xxviii. 16. Hence it follows, *and in them the names of the twelve Apoſtles of the Lamb*. The *Alexandrian* copy, *Vulgate Latin*, *Syriac* and *Arabic* verſions read, *the twelve names of the twelve Apoſtles* ; the alluſion ſeems to be to the inſcribing of the names of builders on ſtones laid in the foundation, in memory of them ; and ſo theſe wiſe maſter-builders will be had in everlaſting remembrance.

Ver. 15. *And he that talked with me*, &c.] One of the ſeven angels, ver. 9. for not a man is the meaſurer of this city, as in *Ezek.* xl. 3. nor *John*, as of the temple, ch. xi. 1. but an angel, the ſame that ſhowed to *John* this great ſight. *Had a golden reed* ; not a common meaſuring reed, or rod, as in *Ezek.* xl. 4. *Rev.* xi. 1. but one covered with gold, denoting the preſent glorious ſtate of the church, being without ſpot or wrinkle, or any ſuch thing : *to meaſure the city* ; the new *Jeruſalem*, its length and breadth ; ſee *Zech.* ii. 1, 2. to ſhow how exactly conformable this church-ſtate will be to the rule of God's word, even to perfection : *and the gates thereof* ; to ſignify who had a right to enter into it, and who not : *and the wall thereof* ; its height, it being exceeding high.

Ver. 16. *And the city lieth four-ſquare*, &c.] To the four corners of the world, from whence its inhabitants come, and denotes the regularity, uniformity, perfection, and immoveableneſs of it. *And the length is as large as the breadth* ; this church-ſtate will be all of apiece, perfect, entire, and wanting nothing. *And he meaſured the city with the reed twelve thouſand furlongs* ; or fifteen hundred miles ; a monſtrouſly large city indeed! ſuch an one as never was upon earth ; ſee *Ezek.* xlviii. 35. and which ſhows, that this is not to be underſtood literally, but myſtically ; and intends the capaciouſneſs of it, here being room enough for all the twelve tribes of *Iſrael* ; that is, for all the elect of God ; for as in Chriſt's Father's houſe, ſo in this kingdom-ſtate of his, there will be many manſions, or dwelling-places, enow for all his people. This city will hold them all. The *Jews* [b] ſay of *Jeruſalem*, that in time to come it ſhall be ſo enlarged, as to reach to the gates of *Damaſcus*, yea, to the throne of glory. *The length, and the breadth, and the heighth of it are equal.* A perfectly uniform ſtate! according to the *Ethiopic* verſion, it is in length twelve thouſand furlongs, and every meaſure equal, ſo that it is ſo many furlongs in length, breadth, and heighth.

Ver. 17. *And he meaſured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits*, &c.] The root of which is twelve, for twelve times twelve is a hundred and forty-four ; which number is myſtical and apoſtolical, and ſuited to the perfect ſtate of this church : hence twelve gates, and twelve angels at them, and the names of the twelve tribes on them, and twelve foundations of the wall, and twelve thouſand furlongs, the meaſure of the city. *According to the meaſure of a man, that is, of the angel* ; who talked with *John*, and meaſured the city, gates, and wall, and who appeared in the form of a man ; and his reed might be, as ſome have ſuppoſed, the length of a man, ſix cubits, or ſix feet, as in *Ezek.* xl. 5. and may denote that this buſineſs requires the utmoſt wiſdom and underſtanding of a man, and even of an angel, to look into, and find out ; ſee ch. xiii. 18. and alſo may ſignify the angelic ſtate of the ſaints at this time, when the children of the reſurrection will be like the angels of God, for immortality and glory.

Ver. 18. *And the building of the wall of it was of jaſper*, &c.] Which is expreſſive of the impregnableneſs, duration, brightneſs, and glory of ſalvation by Chriſt, the jaſper being a very hard, durable, and bright ſtone ; and ſalvation can never be made void, and of none effect ; it will laſt for ever, and in this ſtate will come forth as light, and as a lamp that burneth ; it is repreſented by the ſame precious ſtone as God and Chriſt themſelves are ; ſee ch. iv. 2. and xxi. 11. *And the city* was *pure gold, like unto clear glaſs* ; it was made or built of gold ; its parts, buildings, houſes, and palaces, were all of gold, and that the beſt ; and it was like to tranſparent glaſs ; that is, either the city, as moſt copies read, or the gold ; for the *Alexandrian* copy reads ομοιον, and ſo the *Vulgate Latin* verſion ; the gold of which it was, is different from common gold : and as this city, the new *Jeruſalem*, deſigns the ſaints, the precious ſons of *Zion*, comparable to fine gold, the inhabitants of the new earth ; this denotes the ſolidity, excellency, and preciouſneſs of them, the rich and happy ſtate they will be in, as well as their purity and freedom from all ſin and corruption, and the clear knowledge of things they themſelves will have, and others will have of them ; their hearts and actions will be open to all ; nor will this gold have any ruſt upon it any more, or ever be changed, and become dim.

Ver. 19. *And the foundations of the wall of the city*, &c.] Which were twelve ; ſee ver. 14. were *garniſhed with all manner of precious ſtones* ; ſee *Iſ.* liv. 11, 12. not that there were all manner of precious ſtones in every foundation, but in them all there were, and each foundation had its ſtone peculiar to it, as follows ; and which are not applicable to the perſons of the Apoſtles, who were not the foundations, but on them their names only were written : and beſides, the order of them, as given in the Evangeliſts and Acts of the Apoſtles, is not certain, and always the ſame, to which theſe ſeveral ſtones may be adjuſted ; tho' they are doubtleſs comparable to them for their preciouſneſs in the ſight of God, and Chriſt, and all the ſaints ; and for the brightneſs and purity of their doctrine and lives ; and for their zeal in the cauſe of Chriſt ; and for their ſolidity, and invincible courage and conſtancy :

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[b] Shirhaſhirim Rabba, fol. 24. 1.

ſtancy: much leſs are theſe precious ſtones applicable to a ſett of miniſters in the latter day, who are to be uſeful in the converſion of the *Jews* in the ſeveral parts of the world, where theſe ſtones are found, as *Brightman* thinks, but to Jeſus Chriſt, the one and only foundation: and without entring into the particular virtues and excellencies of theſe ſtones, in general, they ſet forth the worth and preciousneſs of Chriſt, who is the pearl of great price; the pleaſure and delight had in viewing his excellencies and perfections; his brightneſs, purity, and glory, and his firmneſs and durableneſs, as a foundation. There may be ſome alluſion to the twelve ſtones in the breaſt-plate of the high-prieſt, on which the names of the tribes of *Iſrael* were written [i]. *The firſt foundation* was *jaſper*; it was laid with a jaſper ſtone, of which ſee ch. iv. 3. On this ſtone, in the breaſt-plate, *Benjamin*'s name was written. *The ſecond a ſapphire*; its colour is azure, or ſky-blue; it is tranſparent, and exceeding hard. *Schroder* ſays there are very good ones found in the borders of *Bohemia* and *Sileſia*; but thoſe which are brought from *Pegu* are moſt valuable: on this ſtone *Iſſachar*'s name was engraven. *The third a chalcedony*; it is of a miſty grey colour, clouded with blue, yellow, or purple; the beſt is that which has a pale caſt of blue; it is very much like the common agate; and the *Hebrew* word, כדכד, *Cadcod*, is rendered *Agate* in *Iſ.* liv. 12. tho' it is thought to anſwer to the carbuncle in the breaſt-plate, on which was written the name of *Levi*. And *Pliny* [k] ſpeaks of carbuncles, called *Charcedonies*, which *R. Leo Mutinenſis* ſays [l] had their name in memory of the city of *Carthagena*. There is a precious ſtone mentioned in the *Targum* of *Jonathan*, called כדכודין, *Cadcodin*, which anſwers to the diamond in the breaſt-plate, on which *Zabulon*'s name was written; and in the *Jeruſalem Targum* it is called כדכדנא, *Cadcedana*, and anſwers to the emerald, which had *Judah*'s name on it, and ſeems to be put for *Chalcodin* and *Chalcedana*, which agrees with the name of this ſtone. *The fourth an emerald*; of which ſee ch. iv. 3. The beſt of this ſort are the Eaſtern ones. *Schroder* ſays [m], they are found in *Cyprus*, *Britain*, and other places, but not ſo good as the reſt. On this ſtone *Judah*'s name was written.

Ver. 20. *The fifth ſardonix*, &c.] Which is partly of the *ſardian*, and partly of the *onyx* ſtone, which reſembles a man's nail, from whence it has its name; it is reddiſh, bordering on white; it may be thought to anſwer to the onyx in the breaſt-plate, on which was written the name of *Joſeph*. *The ſixth ſardius*; the ſame with the ſardine ſtone, ch. iv. 3. of a blood colour, and what is commonly called a *cornelian*: it is found in *Sardinia*, from whence it has its name, and in *Bohemia* and *Sileſia*, tho' thoſe of *Babylon* are the beſt. This was *Reuben*'s ſtone. *The ſeventh chryſolite*; a ſtone of a duſky green colour, with a caſt of yellow; by its name it ſhould have the colour of gold. *Schroder* ſays, it is found in *Bohemia*, and that it is the ſame the moderns call the topaz. Some think it anſwers to *Tarſhiſh* in the breaſt-plate, rendered *Beryl*, on which was the name of *Aſher*. *The eighth beryl*; a ſtone of a pale green colour, thought to be the diamond of the ancients: it may anſwer to the *Ligure* in the breaſt-plate, which the *Targum* on *Cant.* v. 14. calls *Birla*, and had the name of *Dan* on it. *The ninth a topaz*; a ſtone very hard and tranſparent, of a beautiful yellow, or gold colour: the topaz of *Ethiopia* was counted the beſt, *Job* xxviii. 19. Some ſay it is ſo called from the iſland *Topazus*; on this ſtone *Simeon*'s name was engraven. *The tenth a chryſopraſus*; a ſtone of a green colour, inclining to that of gold, from whence it has its name; for this is the agate in the breaſt-plate, which was *Napthali*'s ſtone. *The eleventh a jacinth*; or *hyacinth*; a ſtone of a purple, or violet colour, from whence it has its name; tho' what the moderns ſo call is of a deep reddiſh yellow, pretty near a flame colour. *Zabulon*'s ſtone was the diamond. *The twelfth an amethyſt*; a ſtone of a violet colour, bordering on purple: it has been thought a preſervative from drunkenneſs, from whence it ſeems to have its name. On this ſtone was written the name of *Gad*. Agreeable to this account of *John*'s, the *Jews* ſpeak [n] of the tabernacle above, being built on twelve precious ſtones; and ſometimes they ſay [o], that the holy bleſſed God will found *Jeruſalem* with ten kind of precious ſtones, and which they mention, and ſeveral of which are the ſame with theſe.

Ver. 21. *And the twelve gates were twelve pearls*, &c.] Denoting the purity and preciouſneſs of Chriſt, by whom the ſaints enter, and of the ſaints who enter in thereat, as well as of the place into which they enter. *Every ſeveral gate was of one pearl*; the pearl of great price, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who is the only gate, door, and way into this happy ſtate: this ſhows that this account cannot be taken literally, but myſtically, for no ſuch pearl was ever known, large enough to make a gate of. "A pearl is a hard, white, ſhining body, uſually roundiſh, found in a ſhell-fiſh reſembling an oyſter, but is three or four times the ſize of the common oyſter; and which ordinarily yields ten or twelve pearls, and ſometimes more. Thoſe of the largeſt ſize, that have been known, are that of *Cleopatra*, valued by *Pliny* at centies H S, or at 80000 pound ſterling; and that brought in 1574 to *Philip* the ſecond, of the ſize of a pigeon's egg, worth 14400 ducats; and that of the emperor *Rudolph*, mentioned by *Boetius*, called *la peregrina*, or the incomparable, of the ſize of a muſcade pear, and weighing 30 carats; and that mentioned by *Tavernier*, in the hands of the emperor of *Perſia* in 1633, bought of an *Arab* for 32000 tomans, which at three pounds nine ſhillings the toman, amounts to 110400 pounds ſterling [p]." But what is one of theſe pearls to make a gate of, for a wall which was an hundred and forty-four cubits high? ver. 17. The *Jews* ſay [q], that the holy bleſſed God will bring precious ſtones and *pearls* of thirty cubits by thirty, *&c.* and place them *in the gates of Jeruſalem*, as it is ſaid, *Iſ.* liv. 12. which muſt be underſtood alſo, not in a literal but myſtical ſenſe: and *L'Empereur* [r] makes mention of an ancient commentary on *Pſ.* lxxxvii. 1. which ſays, that the holy bleſſed God will make a gate at the eaſt (of the temple), and in it two doors, each of one pearl. So *R. Joſhua ben Levi* ſays [s], that there are in paradiſe two gates of agates or diamonds; ſome render the word rubies. *And the ſtreet of the city was pure gold, as it were tranſparent glaſs*; denoting the preciouſneſs and delightfulneſs of the ſaints converſation one with another;

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[i] Vid. Targum Jon. & Jeruſ. in Exod. xxviii. 17. Targum in Cant. v. 14. Shemot Rabba, §. 38. fol. 138. 2. Bemidbar Rabba, §. 2. fol. 178. 3.

[k] Nat. Hiſt. l. 37. c. 7.

[l] Shilte Hagibborim, fol. 45. 4.

[m] Pharmacopeia, l. 3. c. 5. p. 18.

[n] Zohar in Gen. fol. 17. 2. & in Exod. fol. 65. 4.

[o] Abkath Rocel, p. 150. Vid. Zohar in Exod. fol. 96. 3.

[p] Chambers's Cyclopœdia in the word *pearl*.

[q] T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 100. 1. & Bava Bathra, fol. 75. 1. & Yalkut, par. 2. fol. 54. 1.

[r] Miſn. Middot, c. 4. §. 2. Vid. Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 54. 1.

[s] Yalkut Simeoni, par. 1. fol. 7. 1.

and the purity and cleanneſs of it, there being no mire and filth of ſin in theſe ſtreets; and the ſincerity and openneſs of it, each one walking in his uprightneſs; which will be ſeen and known of all, as clearly as any thing can be beheld in a tranſparent glaſs. So the *Jews* ſay [t] of paradiſe, that the ground is paved with precious ſtones, the luſtre of which may be compared to the light of burning torches.

Ver. 22. *And I ſaw no temple therein*, &c.] No material temple, as was in the old *Jeruſalem*, or ſuch as is deſcribed in *Ezekiel*'s viſion; nor any place of publick worſhip, as under the Goſpel diſpenſation; for in this ſtate there will be no ſuch external form of worſhip, as now, ſuch as preaching the word, and adminiſtring ordinances. The *Jews* expect a third temple, but in vain. *For the Lord God Almighty, and the Lamb, are the temple of it*; God will be immediately preſent with his people, whoſe face they ſhall ſee, and whom they will ſerve in the moſt pure and ſpiritual manner; and Chriſt in his human nature, in the temple of his body, that tabernacle which God pitched, and not man, which is filled with the train of the divine perfections, and in which the fulneſs of the Godhead dwells bodily, will be the only medium of the divine preſence, and of the communications of glory to men, and of the ſaints praiſe to God, which will be the ſervice they will be employed in; and the Lamb being joined with the Lord God Almighty, ſhews his deity and his equality with his Father.

Ver. 23. *And the city had no need of the ſun, neither of the moon to ſhine in it*, &c.] Which may be underſtood either literally of theſe two luminaries, which all earthly cities need; and which, tho' they may be in being in the new heavens, yet will not have the uſe with reſpect to this city, they now have. The *Jews* ſay [u], the orb of the ſun is in this world; and the Gloſs adds, but not in the future ſtate, for the lights ſhall be renewed: and they further ſay [w], as here, that "in the world to "come, *Iſrael*, אין צריכין לאור החמה, *will have* "*no need of the light of the ſun, nor of the light of* "*the moon*, neither by day nor by night," as they ſay [x] the *Iſraelites* had not in the wilderneſs. So they repreſent the Lord ſpeaking to *Moſes*, and ſaying [y], "thy days ſhall ceaſe, but thy light ſhall not "ceaſe; for thou ſhalt have no need for ever of the "light of the ſun, nor of the light of the moon, "and of the ſtars." Or elſe it may be underſtood myſtically, but not of Chriſt, the ſun of righteouſneſs, whom the ſaints will always need and enjoy; but of the governours and diſcipline of the church in its preſent ſtate; and of the written word, which is a light unto them now, and the miniſtration of it, and the ordinances of the Goſpel, by which light and knowledge are conveyed; but in this ſtate all will be immediately taught of God; nor ſhall every one teach his neighbour, but all ſhall know the Lord perfectly; and alſo of political governours, who will be no more; ſee 1 *Cor.* xv. 24. *For the glory of God did lighten it*; the *Shekinah*, or glorious preſence of God, which filled the temple of *Solomon*, and ſhone round about the ſhepherds at the incarnation of Chriſt; with the preſence of God, who is light itſelf, which will be enjoyed in a much more glorious manner, will the church now be enlightened; and this will be an everlaſting light unto her: *and the Lamb* is *the light thereof*; in whoſe light they will ſee the face of God, and ſee God face to face; they will ſee Chriſt as he is, and behold his glory, and look upon the angels, thoſe glorious forms of light, and all the glorified ſaints, and know and converſe with each other; and they will look into, and clearly diſcern all the myſteries and doctrines of grace, and all the various ſcenes of providence, which will all be opened and laid before them. And this light will be always without any change and variation; which is no ſmall part of the commendation of this city, which is the inheritance of the ſaints in light. So the holy bleſſed God is ſaid by the *Jews* [z] to be, אורו של ירושלם, *the light of Jeruſalem*; he is the light of the new *Jeruſalem*; ſee *Iſ.* lx. 19, 20. and the light of the world to come is, by [a] them, called, *the great light*.

Ver. 24. *And the nations of them which are ſaved*, &c.] In diſtinction from them that will be deceived by ſatan, ch. xx. 8. Theſe are not all the nations of the world, which will be gathered before Chriſt, the judge, for all will not be ſaved, there's a world that will be condemned; nor the *Gentiles* only, which ſhall come into the church-ſtate of the *Jews* when called, for that ſtate is not here deſigned, and beſides, all *Iſrael* ſhall be ſaved then; nor the living ſaints at Chriſt's coming, who ſhall have eſcaped, and are ſaved from the general conflagration; for theſe, with the raiſed ones, will be caught up together to Chriſt, and deſcend and dwell together on earth, and make one church-ſtate; but all the elect of God, both *Jews* and *Gentiles*, whom God has choſen, Chriſt has redeemed, and the Spirit has called out of all the nations of the earth: theſe are only *ſaved* ones; ſuch are already ſaved, not only are determined to be ſaved, and for whom ſalvation is wrought out by Chriſt, and to whom it is applied at converſion, and who are repreſentatively ſet down in heavenly places in Chriſt, and are already ſaved by hope and faith, and with reſpect to the certainty of ſalvation; all which may be ſaid of ſaints in the preſent ſtate: but theſe will be ſuch, who will be actually and perſonally ſaved, will be in the full poſſeſſion of ſalvation, enjoying all the bleſſings of it; they'll be partakers of the firſt reſurrection, and the glories of it; the tabernacle of God will be with them; they will be free from all ſorrows and death, and will inherit all things: the *Syriac* verſion reads, *the nations that are ſaved*; who are redeemed and ſaved by Chriſt: this may teach us how to underſtand thoſe phraſes, which ſeem to favour general redemption, as all men, the world, the whole world; ſee *Iſ.* xlv. 20. and lxvi. 19. Theſe words, *of them which are ſaved*, are left out in the *Vulgate Latin*, *Arabic*, and *Ethiopic* verſions, but are in all the copies. Theſe nations are the inhabitants of this city, and they *ſhall walk in the light of it*, which is Chriſt; they ſhall enjoy it; they ſhall have the light of life, and be partakers of the inheritance with the ſaints in light, and that continually; they ſhall not only come to it, but continue in it, and walk at it, and by the light of it: the walk of theſe will be different from the walk of ſaints now, who walk by faith, and not by ſight; but theſe ſhall walk by ſight, enjoying the beatific viſion of God, and the Lamb. The *Jews* ſay [b], that *Jeruſalem*, in time to come, will be made a lamp to the nations of the world, והם מהלכים לאורה, *and they ſhall walk in its light*, or by the light of it, which is the ſenſe of

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[t] Sepher Avodah Hakkodeſh, fol. 46. 1.

[u] T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 101. 1.

[w] Raziel, fol. 17. 2.

[x] Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 57. 2.

[y] Petirat Moſch, fol. 23. 2.

[z] Yalkut Simeoni, par 2. fol. 57. 2. & 98. 1.

[a] Ben Gorion apud Aben Ezram in Pſ. xlix. 19.

[b] Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 56. 3.

Iſ. lx. 3. *the Gentiles ſhall come to thy light*; ſee Iſ. lx. 1, 3. *and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it*; by whom may be meant either myſtically all the ſaints, who will be kings as well as prieſts unto God, and will reign as ſuch with Chriſt in this ſtate, will caſt their crowns at his feet, and give him all the honour and glory; or literally, the kings of the earth, who ſhall have relinquiſhed antichriſt, hated the whore, and burnt her with fire, and who will have been nurſing fathers in the ſpiritual reign; or rather all good kings that ever have been in the earth: not that they will be kings of the earth at this time, for now all rule, authority, and power will be put down; nor will any worldly riches, honour, and glory, be brought by them into this ſtate, nor will they be needed in it; but it is to be underſtood of ſuch who have been kings on earth, tho' not of their having brought earthly riches and grandeur into the intereſt and churches of Chriſt; as *David* gave much towards the building of the temple, which was begun and finiſhed by king *Solomon* his ſon, and as *Conſtantine* greatly inriched and aggrandized the church when he became emperor; but the ſenſe ſeems to be this, that ſuch who have been chriſtian kings on earth will prefer the happineſs of this ſtate to all their riches and greatneſs here; and that could all the glory of the kings of the earth be put together, it would not equal, but be greatly inferior to the glory of the new *Jeruſalem*; *Solomon* in all his glory was not arrayed like one of the inhabitants of this place; ſee ch. xx. 6. beſides, theſe ſhall do all homage, and ſubmit to Chriſt the king of kings in the midſt of the church, which may be meant by *glory* and *honour*.

Ver. 25. *And the gates of it ſhall not be ſhut at all by day*, &c.] Which does not deſign the free communication between the living ſaints on the new earth, and the raiſed ones in the new heaven, as ſome have thought, for theſe ſhall be together, and make up one body; but rather the univerſal collection, and free admiſſion of all the ſaints from all parts into this city; tho' it ſeems beſt to interpret it of the ſafety of the inhabitants, ſee *Jer.* xlix. 31. who will have no enemy to fear, and therefore need never ſhut their gates; the beaſt and falſe prophet will have been taken, and caſt into the lake of fire long ago; ungodly men will be deſtroyed in the general conflagration, and ſatan will be bound in the bottomleſs pit during the thouſand years: *for there ſhall be no night there*; this is a reaſon given why it is before ſaid, the gates ſhall not be ſhut by day, ſince it is unuſual to ſhut gates in the day, unleſs in time of war, becauſe there will be no night in this city, and ſo no need of ever ſhutting the gates; the night-time being the ſeaſon for thieves and robbers, and for enemies to make their incurſions, and to ſurprize: but here will be no night; either literally, times and ſeaſons, as meaſured by the revolutions of the ſun and moon, will be no more, they will not have the uſe they have; at leaſt this city will ſtand in no need of them. The *Jews* ſay [c], that the world to come will be כולו יום, *all day:* or myſtically and figuratively, there will be no night of ſpiritual darkneſs and deſertion, of drowſineſs, ſleepineſs, and inactivity, of error and hereſy, or of calamity and diſtreſs of any kind; all which are ſometimes ſignified by night in ſcripture; ſee *Cant.* iii. 1. *Matt.* xxv. 5, 6. *Iſ.* xxvi. 9.

Ver. 26. *And they ſhall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it.*] The glory of the nations are the people of God, who, tho' they are reckoned the filth of the world, are the excellent in the earth; theſe will be brought into this city, and be preſented to the king of it, in a glorious manner, and that by the kings of the earth; either ſuch who have been eccleſiaſtical rulers over them, who will introduce them as their joy and crown of rejoicing; or who have been political governors of them, their fathers and protectors; or the ſenſe is as before, that whatever is great and glorious in the nations of the world, will be counted as nothing in compariſon of the glory and magnificence of this ſtate, and not to be mentioned with it: the *Arabic* verſion renders it, *the nations ſhall bring glory and honour to it*; in the ſenſe before given.

Ver. 27. *And there ſhall in no wiſe enter into it any thing that defileth*, &c.] As evil thoughts, words, and actions do; and therefore he that enters into this city muſt be free from all theſe: or *that is defiled*, as the *Vulgate Latin* and *Syriac* verſions read; or *that is unclean*, as the *Arabic* and *Ethiopic* verſions; alluding to the tabernacle and temple, into which no unclean perſon might come; ſee *Iſ.* lii. 1. No prophane ſinner, whoſe mind and conſcience are defiled, and whoſe converſation is defiling, may enter here; nor any ſelf-righteous perſon, whoſe righteouſneſs is as filthy rags, and he himſelf is as an unclean thing, ſhall be admitted here; only ſuch who are waſhed in the blood of Chriſt, and have on his righteouſneſs, and ſo are without ſpot or wrinkle; which ſhows the pure and perfect ſtate of this church, and therefore cannot deſign any ſtate of the church previous to the coming of Chriſt and the firſt reſurrection: *neither whatſoever worketh abomination*; commits ſin, which is abominable in the ſight of God, lives and dies in a courſe of wickedneſs; or particularly is guilty of idolatry, either makes idols, or ſerves them, or both, which are an abomination to the Lord; ſee 1 *Kings* xi. 7. *or* maketh *a lye*; any lye in general; who is a common liar, loves and invents a lye, and ſpeaks one; delivers that which is falſe with an intention to deceive; or in particular, who embraces and propagates antichriſtian lyes, doctrinal ones, lyes ſpoken in hypocriſy; ſuch ſhall be damned; ſee 1 *Tim.* iv. 1. 2 *Theſſ.* ii. 11, 12. *but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life*; who are predeſtinated to eternal life; and tho' they are naturally, and in themſelves defiled and ſinful creatures, yet they are juſtified by the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, and ſanctified by his Spirit, and ſo are made meet and fit to enter this city; ſee the note on ch. xiii. 8. It is by the *Jews* obſerved [d], that "the *Jeruſalem* of the world to come is not as the *Jeruſalem* of this world; the *Jeruſalem* of this world, "whoever would go up to it (or enter into it) "might; but that of the world to come, "אין עולין אלא המזומנין לה, *none may go up to* "*it* (or enter into it) *but thoſe who are prepared*, or "appointed *for it.*"

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[c] Bereſhit Rabba, §. 91. fol. 79. 4.

[d] T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 75. 2.

CHAP. XXII.

THIS chapter contains a further account of the above city, a confirmation of the viſions of this book, and the concluſion of it. The city is further deſcribed by the river that ran by it, or thro' it, called a river of water of life, ſaid to be pure and clear as chryſtal, and to have its riſe from the throne of God and the Lamb; and by the tree of life in the midſt of it, ſituated on each ſide the river, bearing twelve ſorts of fruit, yielded every month, the leaves of which heal the nations, ver. 1, 2. and the happineſs of the inhabitants of it is ſet forth, by there being no curſe in it; by the throne of God and the Lamb being in it; by the ſervice of the ſaints in it; by the pleaſure they enjoy, and the honour put upon them; by the light of the place, and the duration of the ſaints reign, ver. 3, 4, 5. next follow teſtimonies concerning the authority of the book, and the truth of things in it; and firſt, the teſtimony of the angel that talked with *John*, declaring that the things in it were true and faithful; and that he was ſent from the Lord God of the prophets to ſhew to the ſaints things that would quickly come to paſs; and that Chriſt himſelf would quickly come; and that they were happy who kept and obſerved the ſayings and prophecies of it, ver. 6, 7. then the teſtimony of *John* who ſaw and heard them, and was about to worſhip the angel that declared them, but was forbid by him, and diſſuaded from it, by obſerving to him who he was, a fellow ſervant of his and of his brethren, and that God only was to be worſhipped, ver. 8, 9. who is ordered, as it ſeems by Chriſt, not to ſeal up the prophecies delivered to him, ſince the time of their fulfillment was at hand, when men would remain juſt as they were, whether ungodly and filthy, or righteous and holy, ver. 10, 11. and who declares that he ſhould quickly come to reward every man according to his works; and that he was the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the firſt and the laſt; and that they were happy that did his commandments, ſince it would appear they had a right to the tree of life, and to entrance thro' the gates into the city before deſcribed, when wicked men, whoſe characters are given, would be without, ver. 12, 13, 14, 15. and ſtill more clearly and fully Chriſt aſſerts himſelf to be the author of this revelation, and the ſender of the angel, to teſtify it to the church, who is *David*'s root and offspring, and the morning-ſtar, whoſe coming is to be wiſhed for by the ſpirit and bride, and every truly gracious ſoul, ver. 16, 17. and to ſhow the perfection and authority of this book, as well as of the whole ſcripture, and to deter perſons from adding to it, or taking from it, he threatens to inflict on ſuch perſons the plagues herein written, and to take the names of ſuch out of the book of life, out of the holy city, and from the things written in this book, ver. 18, 19. and then he delivers out a freſh aſſeveration of his ſpeedy coming, to which *John* adds his hearty *Amen*, and earneſt requeſt that he would come quickly; and the book is concluded with a benediction uſual in the Epiſtles, eſpecially in thoſe of the Apoſtle *Paul*, ver. 20, 21.

Ver. 1. *And he ſhewed me a pure river of water of life*, &c.] Not baptiſm, which uſed to be adminiſtred in rivers and pools of water; and which engaged to purity of life; and the power and authority of adminiſtring which was from God and Chriſt; but in this *Jeruſalem*-ſtate there will be no uſe nor need of ordinances; for this chapter, to ver. 6, belongs to the preceding chapter, and is a continuation of the ſame account, this being not a new viſion, but a part of the former, which the ſame angel, as in ch xxi. 9. proceeds to ſhow to *John*: nor is the Holy Ghoſt intended by this river, whoſe gifts and graces are ſometimes for their plenty, purity, and quickening virtue, compared to rivers of living water; and who is a pure and holy ſpirit, and proceeds from the Father and the Son: nor the doctrine of the Goſpel, which comes from the bleſſed God, and is the Goſpel of Chriſt; and when purely and faithfully preached, is clear as chryſtal; and is the means of conveying ſpiritual life to men, and of ſupporting it in them: nor the ultimate joys of heaven, which may be called a river of pleaſure, for the fullneſs and variety of delight; pure, and clear as chryſtal, for the holineſs and perfect knowledge of that ſtate; and be ſaid to proceed from the throne of God and the Lamb, being the free gift of God thro' Chriſt; but this ſtate is not deſigned here: rather, therefore, by this river, is meant the everlaſting love of God, which may be compared to a *river* for its largeneſs and abundance, its height and depth, its length and breadth; and for the large diſplays of it in this ſtate, when its waters will increaſe, and be a broad river to ſwim in, and be unpaſſable; and for the ſtreams of it in election, redemption, vocation, juſtification, pardon, adoption, and eternal life, which make glad the city of God; and for the pleaſure it yields, and the fruitfulneſs it gives to thoſe who drink of it: it may be called a river *of water of life*, becauſe in the preſent ſtate of things it quickens ſuch who are dead in treſpaſſes and ſins; revives the ſaints when dead and lifeleſs, ſupports their ſpirits, and is a cordial that preſerves from fainting; it keeps and ſecures from dying the ſecond death, and is the ſpring and ſource of eternal life; and that itſelf will laſt and flow for ever, it is ever-running water, it is everlaſting love: and it may be ſaid to be *pure* and *clear as chryſtal*, it being free from all hypocriſy and diſſimulation, being real, hearty, and ſincere, both in the Father and in Chriſt, of which the fulleſt proofs and demonſtrations are given; and being clear of all motives and conditions in the creature, by which it might be influenced; and it engaging to purity and holineſs of life and converſation; for the doctrine, which brings the account of it, and the inward principle of grace, which is the fruit of it, and every diſcovery of it, have a tendency hereunto: *proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb*; not taking its riſe from man's obedience, nor from his love to God, nor from his faith in Chriſt; for the love of God is prior to all theſe, and is the ſpring and cauſe of them, and therefore can't be moved and influenced by them; but it has its origin from the ſovereignty of God and of Chriſt, ſignified by the throne of both, who will be gracious to whom they will be gracious; nor can any reaſon be given why they love any of the ſons of men, but their own ſovereign will and pleaſure; this is the ſole motive, ſpring, and cauſe of their love; and God and the Lamb being mentioned together, ſhows both the equal dignity of their perſons, being on the ſame throne, and the equality of their love to the inhabitants of the new *Jeruſalem*: and thus, as a river adds to the pleaſure, uſe, conveniency, and wholeſomeneſs of a city, this glorious city is commended by ſuch a river running by it, or in the midſt of it: there may be an alluſion to the river which ran out of the garden of *Eden*, for this will be a paradiſaical ſtate, *Gen.* ii. 9. or rather to the waters in *Ezek.* xlvii. 1—5. which came from under the threſhold of the ſanctuary; tho' this river proceeds not from the temple, there being no temple in this ſtate, but from the throne of God and the Lamb, which is inſtead of it.

Ver. 2. *In the midſt of the ſtreet of it*, &c.] That is, of the city deſcribed in the preceding chapter, which ſhows that this viſion belongs to that, and is a continuation of it, and which ſtreet was all of pure gold, ch. xxi. 21. *and of either ſide of the river*, was there *the tree of life*; not that it ſtood either in the midſt of the ſtreet of the city, which being a pavement of gold, a tree could not well ſtand there; nor on both ſides of the river, which is impoſſible, unleſs the tree of life is put for many trees of the ſame kind, as in *Ezekiel*'s viſion, to which the alluſion is; and ſo ſome were on one ſide of the river and ſome on the other, as there; ſee ch. xlvii. 7, 12. or unleſs it can be thought that ſuch a ſolution of the difficulty is ſufficient, that the root of it was on one ſide, and the branches grew over to the other; tho' the words may be better rendred, and the difficulty will be removed, and the ſenſe be clear, *between the ſtreet of it*, the city, *and the river*, *on this ſide*, *and on that ſide*; that is, the ſtreet on one ſide, and the river on the other, was *the tree of life*; compare with this *John* xix. 18. So the *Jews* ſay [e], that the tree of life is in the midſt of paradiſe, and its body covers all the garden; and that there is in it five hundred thouſand different taſtes; and that there is no likeneſs and ſmell like it. By the *tree* of life is meant not the Goſpel, nor godlineſs, nor eternal life, nor any other of the divine perſons, but Chriſt, who is the author of life, natural, ſpiritual, and eternal; ~~ſee the~~ note on ch. ii. 7. and ſituation between the ſtreet of the city, where the ſaints commune and converſe together, and the river of God's everlaſting love, which in this ſtate will appear in its fullneſs and glory, ſhows that Chriſt will be ſeen and enjoyed by all in the moſt delightful and comfortable manner that can be wiſhed for: *which bare twelve manner of fruits*, *and yielded her fruit every month*; not one ſort of fruit one month, and another ſort another month, and ſo on, but twelve ſorts every month; which is expreſſive of the fruits and ſpiritual bleſſings of grace from Chriſt, enjoyed by ſaints in the preſent ſtate, and of that variety of happineſs and pleaſures to be had in this glorious ſtate, and of the continuance of them; they being always ever-freſh and new, and will be always ſufficient for the twelve tribes of the true *Iſrael* of God, and for all that have embraced the doctrine of the twelve Apoſtles of the Lamb; whoſe drink in this ſtate will be the everlaſting love of God, and whoſe food will be the fruit of the tree of life; both which they ſhall enjoy in great abundance: *and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations*; not for the curing of diſeaſes, or repairing of health; which in the preſent ſtate of things is done by the application of the blood of Chriſt for the pardon of ſin, which is a healing of diſeaſes, and by the diſcoveries of the love of God, thro' the miniſtration of the Goſpel, and the doctrines of it, which might be thought to be ſignified by leaves; for there will be no diſeaſe either of body or mind in this ſtate; beſides, the nations that will walk in the light of this city, will be ſaved perfectly and compleatly, ch. xxi. 4, 24. but theſe leaves will be for the preſerving and continuing the health of the people of God in this ſtate, as the tree of life in *Eden*'s garden was for the preſervation of the health and life of *Adam*, had he continued in a ſtate of innocence; and it denotes that every thing in Chriſt will contribute to the comfort, health, and happineſs of the ſaints. The *Jews* interpret the paſſage in *Ezek.* xlvii. 12. to which this refers, of future time, or the world to come [f]; and ſpeak of various trees and herbs of great fragrancy and medicinal virtues, which grow quite round on the ſides of a laver that ſtands in paradiſe [g].

Ver. 3. *And there ſhall be no more curſe*, &c.] As there was in *Eden*, from whence a river came, and where was a tree of life; for there the ſerpent was curſed for his concern in man's tranſgreſſion, and the earth on account of it; but in this new earth, and paradiſaical ſtate, and on the inhabitants of it, will be no curſe; here will be no ſin, the cauſe of the curſe, nor pain and ſorrow, nor death, corporal, ſpiritual and eternal, or the wrath of God, the ſeveral effects of ſin, and parts of the curſe; the curſe of the law cannot here take place; for beſides the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, which all in the new *Jeruſalem* will be cloathed with, and ſo be bleſſed and ſecure from the curſe, they will be perfectly pure and holy in nature, and conſtant and compleat in their obedience and ſervice; they will always do the will of God on earth, as it is done in heaven; no accurſed perſon, or any one devoted to ruin and deſtruction, will be here; not the old ſerpent, the devil, he will be ſhut up in the bottomleſs pit; nor the blaſphemous beaſt and falſe prophet, they will be taken and caſt alive into the lake of fire before this time comes; no curſing, or accurſed men will dwell here; not ſuch who curſe themſelves, or the ſaints, or ſuch who will be bid to depart as curſed, theſe will be deſtroyed in the general conflagration; nor will there be any anathema denounced againſt any perſon, for here will be no introducers of another Goſpel, nor any that do not love the Lord Jeſus Chriſt; nor will any be an anathema, or accurſed from Chriſt, excommunicated from the church of Chriſt, for that will have no members deſerving of that; none but what are pure and undefiled; ſee *Zech.* xiv. 11. *but the throne of God and of the Lamb ſhall be in it*; God himſelf will be there, his tabernacle will be among men; the name of this city will be *Jehovah Shammah*, the Lord is here; the pure and ſpotleſs Lamb of God, the Son of the bleſſed, will be here, whoſe preſence will make it an happy ſtate; theſe will both have their throne, or ſeat here; they will ſit on one throne, being the one God over all bleſſed for ever; this city will be the city of the great king, where his royal glory and majeſty will be moſt illuſtriouſly diſplayed, and which will greatly make for the felicity of this ſtate, and ſecure it from the curſe: *and his ſervants ſhall ſerve him*; either the angels, who are miniſtring ſpirits, and the ſervants of God and of the Lamb; or the miniſters of the Goſpel, the ſervants of the moſt high God; or rather all the true followers of Chriſt, who ſhall be where he is, and *ſerve him*; both God and the Lamb, who are one in nature, tho' two diſtinct perſons; wherefore ſerving them both is not ſerving two maſters: and the ſervice the ſaints will be employed in, in this ſtate, will not be preaching the word, or attending on the miniſtry of it, or ſubjecting to ordinances, which will now be at an end, but celebrating the praiſes of God, adoring the perfections of his nature, aſcribing the glory of every providence, and of all ſalvation to him, and magnifying the riches of his grace; and this they will perform in the moſt ſpiritual, fervent, and perfect manner, and that continually; ſee ch. vii. 15.

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[e] Yalkut Simeoni, par. 1. fol. 7. 1.

[f] Shirhaſhirim Rabba, fol. 19. 1.

[g] Sepher Avodah Hakkodeſh, fol. 46. 1.

Ver. 4. *And they ſhall ſee his face,* &c.] The face of God, ſo as he is not to be ſeen now; they ſhall ſee him as he is; not only the angels, who always behold the face of God, but all the ſaints, riſen and changed, being pure in heart, and perfectly holy; they ſhall ſee him face to face, they ſhall have intimate and familiar communion with him; they ſhall enjoy his favour, and have the freeſt and largeſt diſcoveries of his love; and they ſhall ſee the face of the Lamb; they ſhall behold Chriſt and his glory, both with the eyes of their underſtanding, and with the eyes of their bodies; and this is a very deſireable ſight, and will be very glorious and delightful; it will be fully ſatisfying, and will make the ſaints like unto him; it will be free from all darkneſs and any interruption, and will always continue. *And his name* ſhall be *in their foreheads*; they ſhall be known to be his ſervants, as if his name was written and bore on their foreheads; it will be a clear caſe that they are the children and people of God; now they are, but it is not known, at leaſt not ſo known as it will be in this ſtate; and they will alſo in the fulleſt and freeſt manner own God to be their God, and the Lamb to be their redeemer; they will be under no fear of man, nor be under any temptation to be aſhamed of Chriſt, or of his ſervice; ſee ch. xiv. 1. Some think there is an alluſion to the inſcription on the mitre of the high-prieſt's forehead, *holineſs to the Lord*, the ſaints being now openly, viſibly, and perfectly holy.

Ver. 5. *And there ſhall be no night there,* &c.] This is repeated from ch. xxi. 25. to expreſs the certainty of it, and to obſerve, that the happineſs of this ſtate will greatly lie in the light thereof; it will be one everlaſting day, *ημερα αιωνος*, *day of eternity*, or eternal day, as in 2 *Pet.* iii. 18. *and they need no candle, nor the light of the ſun*; neither artificial nor natural light; neither the dimmer light of the ceremonial law, under the legal diſpenſation, which was like a candle lighted up in *Judea*; nor the more clear light of the Goſpel and its ordinances, under the preſent diſpenſation, which now will be at an end: *for the Lord God giveth them light*; immediately from himſelf, without the uſe of means and ordinances; and in his light the ſaints will ſee all things clearly; who will be always communicating it to them, and will be their everlaſting light; ſee the note on ch. xxi. 23. *and they ſhall reign for ever and ever*; they are made kings now, and in this ſtate they ſhall reign with Chriſt for the ſpace of a thouſand years; and when they are ended, they ſhall not ceaſe to reign; nor will Chriſt, when he delivers up the kingdom to the Father, for his and their kingdom is an everlaſting one, ch. i. 6. and v. 10. and xx. 4. *Dan.* vii. 27. and here ends the account of this glorious ſtate of things; what follows is the concluſion of the whole book.

Ver. 6. *And he ſaid unto me,* &c.] That is, the angel that talked with him, and ſhowed him the above things: *theſe ſayings are faithful and true*; not only what are delivered in particular concerning the new *Jeruſalem*-ſtate, in which are many things new, and unheard of before, and which may ſeem ſtrange, and even incredible, but all that are written in this book, ver. 7, 18, 19. all which are *faithful*; to be believed by all that read them, and in the fulfillment of which the faithfulneſs of God is engaged and diſplayed: and they are *true*; for they come from the God of truth, that cannot lye, and are to be credited, and will have a certain accompliſhment: this is ſaid to ſecure the divine authority of this book againſt the gainſayers of it, whom the Holy Ghoſt foreſaw would ariſe in the world; and which is here, and in the following part of this chapter, ſupported by the teſtimonies of Chriſt, of his angel, and of *John* his ſervant. *And the Lord God of the holy prophets ſent his angel to ſhew unto his ſervants the things which muſt ſhortly be done*; the *Lord God* is the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, as appears by comparing this with ch. i. 1. and this is a very glaring proof of the deity of Chriſt, ſince he is not only called the Lord God, but the Lord God of the holy prophets; of the prophets of the Old Teſtament, who foretold things to come, and ſpake of the Meſſiah, his perſon, office, ſufferings, death, and the glory that ſhould follow; and of the prophets of the New Teſtament, who had a gift of explaining the prophecies of the Old, as well as ſome of them predicted future events; and both ſorts were holy men, ſet apart by God for this office, and had principles of holineſs wrought in them, and were moved by the Holy Ghoſt; theſe Chriſt inſpired, and qualified with gifts ſuitable to their work; and he is, as the *Alexandrian* copy, the *Complutenſian* edition, the *Vulgate Latin* verſion, and the *Oriental* verſions read, *the Lord God of the ſpirits of the prophets*; ſee 1 *Cor.* xiv. 32. who had power over their ſpirits, could come at them, and did impreſs them with a ſenſe and knowledge of divine and future things, which none but God can do: the ſame ſent an angel of his, one of his miniſtring ſpirits he has under his command, perhaps the ſame that here ſpeaks, for ſo reads the *Syriac* verſion, *ſent me his angel*; to ſhow to *John*, and by him to all the ſaints, and to all the ſervants and followers of the Lamb, things that were in a very little time to begin to come to paſs, till all were fulfilled; and even thoſe at the greateſt diſtance were, and are to be fulfilled within a little time, with reſpect to God, with whom a thouſand years are as one day, and in compariſon of eternity, and even of the time which had elapſed from the beginning of the world; and theſe things were ſhown in the various viſions of the ſeals, trumpets, vials, and others; ſee ch. i. 1.

Ver. 7. *Behold I come quickly,* &c.] Theſe are the words not of the angel, but of Chriſt, as is manifeſt from ver. 12, 16, 20. and which are to be underſtood not of Chriſt's coming in his power to deſtroy *Jeruſalem*, for this was paſt when *John* had theſe viſions, and wrote this book; but of the ſecond and perſonal coming of Chriſt to judgment, as is clear from ver. 12. which tho' it will not be ſooner than the time appointed, yet will be as ſoon as that time is come, and ſooner than is generally expected by men. The *Ethiopic* verſion adds, *as a thief*, as in ch. xvi. 15. and becauſe the ſecond coming of Chriſt is an affair of the utmoſt moment, and will be attended with events of the greateſt conſequence and importance, in which the viſions of this book iſſue, a *behold* is prefixed to it, as a note of attention and admiration: *bleſſed is he that keepeth the ſayings of the prophecy of this book*; this book is a *prophecy* of things to come, and therefore cannot refer to the times of *Jeruſalem*'s deſtruction, which ſome interpreters make it chiefly to concern, for then it would be a narrative of things paſt; the *ſayings* of it are the things contained in it; to *keep* theſe ſayings is to read them with obſervation, to take notice of the accompliſhment of them, ſo far as it has taken place, to keep them in mind, and memory, to meditate upon them, and thro' the grace of God to ſteer the life and converſation according to the inſtructions, directions, and cautions here given; and ſuch are bleſſed in life, and will be in death; they'll die in the Lord, ſhare in the firſt reſurrection, and enter thro' the gates into the city.

Ver. 8. *And I John ſaw theſe things, and heard them,* &c.] He was both an eye and an ear-witneſs; ſome things he ſaw, and others he heard; and to render his teſtimony the more authentic, he puts his name to it; and he being an Apoſtle of Chriſt, and a man of great ſincerity and probity, is to be believed. *And when I had heard and ſeen*; the things related in this book, being amazed at them, and filled with joy on account of many of them, and firmly believing the whole as coming from God: *I fell down to worſhip before the feet of the angel which ſhewed me theſe things.* This is the ſecond time *John* did ſo, tho' warned of it, and rebuked for it, which ſhows the proneneſs even of good men to fall into ſin again and again; and what a propenſity there is in mankind to idolatry; and very likely this might be ſuffered, that a ſecond reproof might be given, and repeated inſtructions be on record, to prevent the worſhipping of angels, introduced in the firſt ages of chriſtianity.

Ver. 9. *Then ſaith he unto me,* &c.] The angel at whoſe feet *John* fell down to worſhip: *ſee thou do it not*; this he ſaid in great haſte, and with much vehemence, to hinder him from doing it, as his ſhort way of ſpeaking ſhows: *for I am thy fellow-ſervant*; of God, and of Chriſt, and am no more the object of worſhip than thyſelf; and both of us are, and ought to be, the worſhippers of God, whoſe ſervants we are: *and of thy brethren the prophets*; the Apoſtles and miniſters of the word; for propheſying and preaching are the ſame thing; theſe were the brethren of *John* in a ſpiritual ſenſe, and by reaſon of their function: *and of them which keep the ſayings of this book*; ſee ver. 7. and this is ſaid to encourage the obſervation of them, and is the character of private chriſtians, and ſhows the great condeſcenſion of the angel to put himſelf, not only upon a level with *John*, and the miniſters of the word, but with common believers: *worſhip God*; and him only, and that in a ſpiritual manner, with reverence and godly fear, in faith, and according to his revealed will; ſee the note on ch. xix. 10.

Ver. 10. *And he ſaith unto me,* &c.] Not the angel, but Chriſt, as is manifeſt from ver. 12, 13, 16, 20. This clauſe is left out in the *Ethiopic* verſion. *Seal not the ſayings of the prophecy of this book*; as the orders are, when things are intended not to be publiſhed, but concealed, at leaſt as yet, becauſe of the diſtance of the accompliſhment of them, which was not the caſe here; ſee ch. x. 4. *Dan.* viii. 26. and xii. 4, 9. Chriſt would have the things *John* ſaw and heard, written, and made publick, ſent in an open book, unſealed, to the churches, that they might be ſeen and read of all; that ſo the afflictions and perſecutions of the people of God, both under *Rome* pagan, and *Rome* papal, might be known, and the ſaints not be offended at them when they came, but be prepared for them, to endure them patiently; and that they might be apprized of the errors and hereſies that were to ſpring up, and of the appearance and wickedneſs of the man of ſin, and his followers, and beware of them; and that they might have ſome aſſurance of the deſtruction of antichriſt, and of the glorious ſtate of the church, both in the ſpiritual and perſonal reign of Chriſt, and ſo be comforted in the midſt of their tribulations, and rejoice in the faith and hope of theſe things. We may learn from hence, that the ſcriptures in general are not to be locked up, and concealed from the common people, but lie open, and are to be read by all; and in particular, that this book is not ſo dark and obſcure as it is thought to be: *for the time is at hand*; when the things in this book ſhall begin to be fulfilled; ſee ch. i. 1, 3.

Ver. 11. *He that is unjuſt, let him be unjuſt ſtill,* &c.] Theſe words are not to be conſidered as ironical expreſſions, ſuch as in *Eccl.* xi. 9. *Iſ.* l. 11. much leſs as an allowance to do injuſtice and commit filthy actions; nor even as deterring perſons from theſe things, by tacitly ſuggeſting, that ſhould they continue unjuſt and filthy, they would be ſeverely puniſhed; nor as an anticipation of an objection, that might be made againſt the publication of this book, and the ſayings of it, taken from the ill uſe that ſome men might make of it, who might be provoked to injure and perſecute the ſaints more and more, or indulge a filthy converſation; but as a prophecy of what would be at the cloſe of time, at the ſecond coming of Chriſt. The imperative is put for the future, as is uſual in the *Hebrew* language, in which it is ſaid, let ſuch and ſuch things be, when the ſenſe is, that they ſhall be; ſee *Ezek.* iii. 27. *Zech.* xi. 9. and ſo the meaning of this expreſſion is, he that is now found without a righteouſneſs, and full of all unrighteouſneſs, and acts unrighteouſly, will continue ſo; there will be no change made in him, no regeneration, renovation, repentance, or reformation; he'll remain the ſame wicked man he ever was; or he that hurts, or does injury to his fellow-creatures, will ſtill do miſchief; at leaſt he will have the ſame inclination, tho' not the opportunity and power, but will attempt it, of which there will be an inſtance in the wicked dead, when raiſed; ſee ch. xx. 8. *And he which is filthy, let him be filthy ſtill*; or he ſhall be filthy ſtill: all mankind are originally, naturally, and univerſally, filthy, or defiled with ſin. Some are cleanſed from it by the blood of Chriſt, others are not; and theſe will continue polluted, nor will the fire of hell fetch out the filthineſs of their hearts and nature: or the words may be rendered, *he that defileth, let him defile ſtill*; tho' he'll not be able to defile the temple of God, or corrupt the good communications of the ſaints, yet he'll continue to defile himſelf; the ſame evil thoughts, *&c.* will proceed out of him, as ever, which defile the man. *And he that is righteous, let him be righteous ſtill*; a truly righteous man is one that is righteous, not by his own righteouſneſs, but by the righteouſneſs of Chriſt imputed to him; he is one, who by faith looks to Chriſt for righteouſneſs, and receives it from him, and in conſequence of it, lives ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly, and ſuch will continue righteous; not that they will be made more righteous, tho' they may have a clearer view of their juſtification, for the ſentence of it will be afreſh pronounced upon them; but the meaning is, they will ever remain in a juſtified ſtate, and never enter into condemnation, their righteouſneſs being an everlaſting one. The *Alexandrian* copy, the *Complutenſian* edition, *Syriac* and *Arabic* verſions read, *and the righteous man, let him do righteouſneſs ſtill*; as he will do, for ſuch will ever be before the throne of God, and ſerve him in his temple day and night, ch. vii. 15. and xxii. 3. *And he that is holy, let him be holy ſtill.* They are holy who are ſanctified by the Spirit of God, and none but ſuch will be admitted into the pure ſtate of things upon Chriſt's ſecond coming; and ſuch will then be perfectly holy, and without ſin, and ſhall continue ſo: hence we may learn, that juſtification and ſanctification are two diſtinct things, and that both are durable. With theſe ſayings may be compared ſome expreſſions of the *Jewiſh* doctors [h], as the ſenſe of *Lev.* xi. 43, 44. "*if* a man defiles himſelf a little, they defile him much; the Gloſs on it is, they let, or ſuffer him to be more defiled; *if* below, they defile him above; *if* in this world, they defile him in the world to come; *if* a man ſanctifies himſelf a little, they ſanctify him much; *if* below, they ſanctify him above; *if* in this world, they ſanctify him in the world to come."

Ver. 12. *And behold I come quickly*, &c.] This is repeated, to confirm the truth of Chriſt's ſecond coming, and the ſpeedineſs of it, and to point at the time when the above ſhall be, and to add what follows. *And my reward is with me*; which words are taken out of *Iſ.* xl. 10. and lxii. 11. and which being compared together, furniſh out a clear proof of Chriſt being the true Jehovah, the eternal God. There is a reward of debt, or a due reward, a reward of puniſhment, which is the juſt recompence of reward, which ſhall be righteouſly given to wicked men for their ſin, *Heb.* ii. 2. *Iſ.* iii. 11. and there is a reward of grace, which is alſo called the recompence of reward, the reward of the inheritance, which is no other than the gift of eternal life, which God of his free grace beſtows upon his people, *Heb.* xi. 26. *Col.* iii. 24. and both theſe are with Chriſt; they are in his hands, he has authority from God, as mediator, to inflict vengeance on the wicked, and to give eternal life to his people; both which he will do, for this is with him: *to give every man according as his work ſhall be*; if his work is evil, and he is an unjuſt and filthy man, and the courſe of his converſation has been vicious, the reward of debt, or juſt puniſhment, will be rendered to him; but if his work is the fruit of grace, and he has had his converſation in the world by the grace of God, and he is a righteous perſon, juſtified by the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, and a holy, good man, ſanctified by the Spirit of God, the reward of grace, the crown of righteouſneſs will be given to him.

Ver. 13. *I am Alpha and Omega*, &c.] See the note on ch. i. 8. Theſe characters are all put together here, which are before uſed in ch. i. 8, 11. and xxi. 6. and are very pertinently mentioned in this place, when all promiſes and prophecies, relating to the glorious kingdom of Chriſt, were juſt finiſhing, and that itſelf was ready to appear, in which Chriſt alone ſhould be exalted, the myſtery of God would be compleated, and time itſelf be no more. The *Ethiopic* verſion adds, *the beginning and end of days*, or time. A teſtimony this, of the deity, eternity, infinity, and perfection of Chriſt.

Ver. 14. *Bleſſed are they that do his commandments*, &c.] Either the commandments of God, ch. xii. 17. and xiv. 12. the precepts of the moral law, which are the whole duty of man; which are done either legally, in order to obtain life, and then they muſt be perfectly done, which no man can do; hence none live, and are juſtified by the deeds of it, and conſequently are not bleſſed, but curſed; or evangelically, when they are done in the ſtrength of Chriſt, from love to God, in the exerciſe of faith upon him, with a view to his glory, and without dependence on them, acknowledging the imperfection of them, and looking unto Jeſus for righteouſneſs and life, in whom ſuch find both, and ſo are bleſſed perſons: or elſe the commandments of Jeſus are intended, who is ſpeaking in the context, ver. 12, 13, 16. and is ſpeaking of himſelf, and his, as the angel does in ver. 6. Chriſt's commandments are his new commandment of love, and the ordinances of baptiſm, and the Lord's ſupper; which are to be obſerved in the ſame evangelical manner, as the commandments of God, and to be kept exactly as they are delivered, without any alteration, addition, or diminution; and they are to be attended to immediately, and without delay; and ſuch as regard them in a right way and manner are bleſſed; they have much pleaſure and delight in the obſervance of them; theſe commandments are not grievous, eſpecially when they have the preſence of Chriſt, the diſcoveries of his love, and are under the gracious influences of his Spirit: or it may be rather the commandments in this book are deſigned, for it may be rendered, *that do its commandments*; keep the ſayings of this book, as in ver. 7. ſuch as relate to the worſhip of God, and forbid the worſhip of the beaſt, which caution againſt idolatry, and exhort to come out of *Babylon*, and direct to follow the Lamb, and charge not to add or take from any thing written in this prophecy; and ſuch perſons as keep the words of it are pronounced bleſſed, ch. i. 3. The *Alexandrian* copy reads, *that waſh their garments*; and ſo the *Ethiopic* verſion, and alſo the *Vulgate Latin*, which adds, *in the blood of the Lamb*, agreeable to ch. vii. 13. and ſuch whoſe perſons and garments are waſhed in the blood of Chriſt are bleſſed indeed; they are juſtified by it, pardoned thro' it, and both they and their ſervices are accepted on account of it. The inſtances of their happineſs follow, *that they may have right to the tree of life*; or *power over the tree of life*; that is, Chriſt, not of government over him, but of enjoyment of him; a liberty of eating of the fruit of this tree, having intereſt in it, and ſo a right to partake of it; which right, or liberty, is not obtained by obedience to the commands of God, or Chriſt, or of this book, for this is what is due to God, and obligatory on men; and which, when done, is but their duty, and can merit nothing; tho' a chearful and evangelical obedience to the divine will makes ſuch appear to have a right to ſuch a privilege, as the diſciples of Chriſt are not made ſo, but appear to be ſuch by bringing forth fruit, *John* xv. 8. but to have intereſt in Chriſt, the tree of life, and a right, power, and liberty to eat thereof, is a free grace gift, ch. ii. 7. and happy are thoſe who enjoy ſuch a privilege! *Prov.* iii. 18. *Cant.* ii. 3. *And may enter in thro' the gates into the city*; the *Ethiopic* verſion reads, *into this holy city*; and which intends not entrance into a particular church of Chriſt, the way into which is faith in Chriſt, and a profeſſion of it, and ſubmiſſion to the ordinance of baptiſm; nor entrance into heaven, which, as a Goſpel-church, is often called a city, and into which none ſhall enter, but ſuch who are juſtified by the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, and are regenerated by his Spirit, the gates of it are Chriſt and his grace; but the holy city, the new *Jeruſalem*, is meant, and entrance into that, which is ſo largely deſcribed in the preceding chapter, and particularly its gates; and they muſt be happy perſons indeed, who enter there; and their right to it is from, and lies in Chriſt, his blood, righteouſneſs, and grace, under a ſenſe of which they yield a ready obedience

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[h] T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 39. 1.

to his will, which makes their right to appear. Frequent mention is made of the gates of this city in the book of *Zohar*: and, ſays *R. Iſaac*[i], "when "the ſoul, זוכה לכנס בשערי, *is fit*, (or worthy, "or has a right) *to enter through the gates* of *Je*"*ruſalem* that is above, *Michael* the great prince "goes with it, who anticipates for it the peace "of the miniſtring angels, wondring at him, and "enquiring concerning it, ſaying, *who is this that* "*comes out of the wilderneſs*, &c. *Cant.* iii. 6."

Ver. 15. *For without* are *dogs*, &c.] That is, without the holy city are ſuch perſons who are comparable to dogs for their filthineſs, impudence, and voraciouſneſs, as are perſecuters, hereticks, and apoſtates, *Matt.* vii. 6. *Phil.* iii. 2. 2 *Pet.* ii. 22. Some think *Sodomites* are intended, as in *Deut.* xxiii. 18. ſo *Abarbinel* and others interpret the law; and who abound in the *Roman* juriſdiction, called therefore *Sodom*, ch. xi. 8. and indeed all wicked men, who will be caſt out into outer darkneſs, may be ſignified hereby. The *Jews* ſay[k], "when a "man dies, if he be worthy (or righteous) he de"ſcends in the likeneſs of a lion to receive *his* "ſoul, but if not, in the likeneſs of *a dog*, con"cerning which *David* ſays *Pſ.* xxii. 20." *And ſorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters*; characters of the antichriſtian party, who will have no place in this city, or glorious kingdom of Chriſt; ſee the note on ch. xxi. 8. *And whoſoever loveth and maketh a lye*; who loves both to invent and tell lyes, and loves to hear them told by others; meaning more eſpecially the doctrinal lyes of antichriſt, which are ſpoken in hypocriſy by him, and his followers are given up to believe.

Ver. 16. *I Jeſus have ſent mine angel*, &c.] As *John*, the writer of this book, ſets down his own name, who was an eye and ear-witneſs of the things contained in it, that they might be more ſurely believed, ver. 8. ſo Chriſt, the author of it, puts his name Jeſus to it, to engage the greater attention to hear, and read, and keep the words of it, as well as to make it plain and manifeſt, who is the perſon ſpeaking of his coming, ver. 7, 12. and who that has any value for Jeſus the ſaviour, but will give credit, and pay a regard to this revelation of his, which he ſent by his angel, one of his miniſtring ſpirits, made by him, and under his command, he being the creator, Lord, and head of angels: this expreſſes the dignity of his perſon, and is no inconſiderable proof of his deity: and this was done, in order *to teſtify*, to bear witneſs to the truth of the things contained in it; to ſignify and ſhew them, to ſet them forth in emblems and viſions: *unto you theſe things in the churches*; to the ſervants of the Lord, ver. 6. to *John*, and by him to others, to the paſtors of the ſeven churches, who were επι, *over* the churches, as it may be rendered, and to the members of the churches, to all that were in them; for the *Alexandrian* copy, the *Vulgate Latin* and *Arabic* verſions read εν, *in*; the *Syriac* verſion renders it, קדם, *before the churches.* What *John* ſaw he wrote in a book, and ſent it to theſe churches, ch. i. 11. The words may be rendered, *concerning the churches*; and then the ſenſe is, that the angel was ſent to ſhew to *John*, and by him to others, even to all the ſaints in all ages, the things relating to the church of Chriſt, in the ſeveral periods of time, repreſented in ſucceſſion by the ſeven churches of *Aſia*. Chriſt gives a further account of himſelf, for the greater confirmation of the faith of his people, in the certain accompliſhment of the things herein written, by ſaying, *I am the root and the offspring of David*. The former of theſe is mentioned in ch. v. 5. ſee the note there; and the meaning of it is, either that Chriſt, as God, is *David*'s Lord and head, from whom he had his being, both in a temporal and ſpiritual ſenſe, and by whom he was ſupported and ſuſtained; or that, as man, he ſprung from the root of *David*, or deſcended from him; and ſo it falls in with the latter, which may be explanative of it, *the offspring of David*; that is, the ſon of *David*, according to the fleſh, a frequent name of the Meſſiah; ſee the note on *Matt.* i. 1. God promiſed that the Meſſiah ſhould be of the ſeed of *David*, and according to his promiſe he raiſed up unto *Iſrael* of his ſeed, a ſaviour Jeſus, the ſame perſon here ſpeaking, *Acts* xiii. 23. who adds, *and the bright and morning ſtar*; Chriſt is compared to a *ſtar*, as in *Numb.* xxiv. 17. for its light, the light of nature, and of grace, and of the new *Jeruſalem* ſtate being from him; and for its glory, his glory being the glory of the only-begotten of the Father, and he having a glory, as mediator, which his ſaints will ever behold, and be delighted with; and for its influence, all the bleſſings of grace, life, and righteouſneſs being from him; and to a *bright* ſtar, becauſe he is the brightneſs of his Father's glory, and ſo ſplendid, ſhining, and illuſtrious, that he is light itſelf, and in him is no darkneſs at all; and to a bright *morning* ſtar, which ſhows the night is going off, and the day is coming on, and is the *Phoſphorus*, or bringer of light: as Chriſt by his firſt coming, who was then the day ſpring from on high, put an end to the night of *Jewiſh* darkneſs, and ſprung the great Goſpel-day, ſo often ſpoken of by the prophets, and brought life and immortality to light by the Goſpel, and ſhewed the way to eternal life by himſelf; ſo by his ſecond coming, to which this character refers, he will put an end to the night of antichriſtian darkneſs, pagan, papal, and *Mahometan*; ſo that there ſhall be no more night, and and ſhall make an everlaſting day, and bring ſuch light into the holy city, that it ſhall need no candle, nor light of the ſun or moon. The dawn of light at the reformation was a preſage of this, ch. ii. 28. called there the morning-ſtar. With great propriety and pertinence are theſe titles here aſſumed by Chriſt, as *the root and offspring of David*, or *David*'s ſon, when he was about to ſit on the throne of his father *David*, and poſſeſs his kingdom in the moſt viſible and glorious manner; and *the bright and morning ſtar*, when he was going to uſher in ſuch light into the new *Jeruſalem*, as would make all other light unneceſſary. *Aijeleth Shahar*, in the title of *Pſ.* xxii. which is a pſalm that belongs to the Meſſiah, is, by ſome *Jewiſh* writers[l], interpreted, כוכב הבוקר, *the morning ſtar*, the title of Chriſt here.

Ver. 17. *And the Spirit and the bride ſay, come*, &c.] Hearing Chriſt ſay that he ſhould come quickly, ver. 7, 12. the Spirit and the bride expreſs an earneſt wiſh, and a moſt affectionate deſire after his coming: by *the Spirit* may be meant the Spirit of God in the hearts of his people, who not only convinces them of, and acquaints with the coming of Chriſt to judgment, and gives them reaſon to expect it, but fills their ſouls with the love of his appearance, ſo that they look and long for it, and haſten in the breathings of their ſouls after it: and this in like manner he may be ſaid to wiſh for, and deſire it in them, as he is ſaid to cry *Abba*, Father, in them, *Gal.* iv. 6. and to make interceſſion for them, *Rom.* viii. 26, 27. Hence ſome interpreters, by the Spirit, underſtand ſuch as have the Spirit, and are ſpiritual men; either have ſpiritual gifts, the gift of prophecy, as *John*, who in ver. 20. expreſſes an ardent deſire that Chriſt would come quickly; or regenerate men in common, who are born of the Spirit, and bear his name, *John* iii. 5, 6. and ſo by an *Hendyadis*, *the Spirit and the bride* ſignify one and the ſame; namely, the ſpiritual bride of Chriſt, who is ſanctified by the Spirit of God; even all the elect of God, whom Chriſt loved from all eternity, and who are eſpouſed to him as a chaſte virgin; the new *Jeruſalem*, who is as a bride adorned for her huſband, and is the bride, the Lamb's wife: theſe wait for the bridegroom's coming, and moſt earneſtly deſire it, as there is good reaſon for them ſo to do, ſince his appearing in itſelf will be a glorious one, being in his own glory, and his Father's, and the holy angels; and ſeeing then will be the ſolemnization of the marriage-day between Chriſt and his church; it will be the ſaints redemption-day; they will then poſſeſs full ſalvation in ſoul and body; compleat grace will be given to them, and glory will be revealed in them, and they ſhall be for ever with the Lord. *And let him that heareth*; what the Spirit and the bride ſay; or the words of this prophecy; or that has ſpiritual ears given him, and he hears ſo as to underſtand ſpiritual things, the kingdom of Chriſt, and the glories of it, let him join the Spirit and bride, and *ſay*, *come* likewiſe; or expreſs his wiſhes and deſires in the ſame earneſt and affectionate manner, that Chriſt would haſten his ſecond coming: *and let him that is athirſt come.* Theſe ſeem to be the words of Chriſt inviting ſuch who thirſt after him, his grace and righteouſneſs, after more knowledge of him, and communion with him, to come unto him, by faith, and partake thereof, *John* vii. 37. or who thirſt after his ſecond coming, and the glories and delights of the new *Jeruſalem* ſtate, to come into it, and eat of the tree of life, and drink of the river of water of life in it; for the character ſeems to deſign ſuch, to ſpeak in the language of the *Jews*, who uſe like phraſes with this, who hunger, וצמאים לשתות מים חיים, *and thirſt to drink living water*[m], as appears by what follows: *and whoſoever will, let him take the water of life freely.* The *water of life* deſigns the free favour and love of God, and the communications and diſplays of it in the new *Jeruſalem* ſtate, even the comfort, refreſhment, and glories of that ſtate: *to take* it is to enjoy it, to partake of it, being led unto it, and that being given to them by Chriſt the Lamb in the midſt of the throne, ch. vii. 17. and xxi. 6. and which is had *freely*, without money, and without price, as in *Iſ.* lv. 1. which ſeems to be referr'd to; for the happineſs of this ſtate, as well as eternal life, is the free gift of God thro' Chriſt; and the perſons encouraged to partake of it, are, *whoſoever will*; that is, whoever has a will to divine and ſpiritual things, wrought in him by God, for no man has ſuch a will of himſelf, *Phil.* ii. 13. tho' this does not ſo much regard the character of the perſon, that may take of the water of life, as the free manner in which he may take it: ſo the *Jews* are wont to expreſs themſelves, when they would ſignify the liberty that might be uſed, or the free way in which any thing might be taken, particularly when ſpeaking of the law, and the things of it, כל הרוצה ליטול יבא ויטול, *whoſoever has a mind to take, let him come and take,* as it is ſaid, *Iſ.* lv. 1. *ho, every one that thirſteth,* &c[n]. that is, he is free to take, he's welcome to it; which paſſage referr'd to, is thus paraphraſed by the *Targumiſt*, "ho, כל דצבי, *whoſoever will* learn, "let him come and learn, *&c.*"

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[i] Medraſh Hancelam in Zohar in Gen. fol. 77. 1.

[l] Apud Kimchi in loc.

[k] Raya Mehimna in Zohar in Num. fol. 95. 2.

Ver. 18. *For I teſtify to every man,* &c.] Theſe are not the words of a ſcribe, who having wrote out a copy of this book, added the following adjuration to it, to deter perſons from adding to it, or diminiſhing it; for the book is not yet finiſhed, and both Chriſt and *John* ſpeak after this; and to inſert ſuch a paſſage into the text, would be a bold and daring action; nor are they even the words of *John*, the inſpired writer of it, but of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the faithful witneſs, as appears from ver. 16, 17, 20. who in a moſt ſolemn manner declares to every man, high or low, rich or poor, of whatſoever character, or however dignified, either in a civil or eccleſiaſtic way, *that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book* read, or explained, *if any man ſhall add unto theſe things.* To *add* to the things contained in this book, is not to deliver, or write an expoſition of it, in a modeſt manner, with a ſincere view to give light into it, agreeable to the analogy of faith; for to expound ſcripture, or to preach from it, conſiſtent with it, is not to add unto it, but to give the ſenſe of it; but then may it be ſaid to be added unto, and ſo this book, when it is wreſted and perverted, and a falſe gloſs is put upon it, as the *Phariſees* did upon the law; and when unwritten traditions are made to be equal to it, or above it, as the ſame perſons made the traditions of the elders, whereby they tranſgreſſed the law, and made the word of God of none effect, and ſo broke through the precept given, *Deut.* iv. 2. as do the papiſts in like manner; and when men pretend to viſions and revelations, and make them the rule of faith and practice, and to confirm things that are neither in this book, nor in any other part of the word of God; and when men interpolate it, and ſet up human fictitious writings upon equal authority with it; which ſhows the authenticneſs of this book, and of all the whole ſcripture, and the perfection of it, whoſe canon is cloſed with it: the puniſhment of ſuch a crime follows, *God ſhall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book*; the things threatened to the antichriſtian party, ch. ii. 22, 23. and xiii. 10. and xiv. 9, 10, 11. the ſeven laſt plagues in which the wrath of God is filled up, which will be inflicted on the ſame, ch. xvi. the lake of fire and brimſtone, into which the beaſt, the falſe prophet, the devil, and all wicked men will be caſt, ch. xix. 20. and xx. 10. and xxi. 8. ſee *Prov.* xxx. 5, 6.

Ver. 19. *And if any man ſhall take away from the words of the prophecy of this book,* &c.] As he may be ſaid to do, who denies the authority of this book, which has been done by ſome, and which the Holy Ghoſt foreſaw; or takes it away from, or denies the reading of it to the people, as the *Papiſts* do with reſpect to the whole ſcripture; and who wilfully pervert the ſenſe of it, and will not have the things in it, relating to antichriſt, to belong to him. *God ſhall take away his part out of the book of life*; by which is meant eternal election, which is the meaning of the phraſe throughout this book, in which whoever are written, ſhall certainly be ſaved. The worſhippers of the beaſt, or the antichriſtian party, who are chiefly regarded here, are not written in it, ch. xiii. 8. and xvii. 8. wherefore taking away the part of ſuch, is only taking away that which they ſeemed to have; ſee *Luke* viii. 18. and the ſenſe is, that ſuch ſhall be caſt into the lake of fire, which is the ſecond death, and will be the portion of all that are not written in the book of life, ch. xx. 15. The *Alexandrian* copy, one of *Stephens*'s, and the *Complutenſian* edition, read, *the tree of life*; and ſo do the *Syriac* and *Ethiopic* verſions; the ſenſe is the ſame; ſee *John* xv. 2. *and out of the holy city*; the new *Jeruſalem*, before deſcribed, a part in which is a right to enter into it thro' the gates, and poſſeſs the glories of it: what is mentioned here, is only a ſeeming one, which wicked men may flatter themſelves with; and the meaning is, that ſuch ſhall never enter into it, and enjoy the happineſs of it, but ſhall ever be without, ch. xxi. 27. and xxii. 15. *and from the things which are written in this book*; the bleſſings promiſed to the overcomers in ch. ii. and iii. which ſuch as detract from this book ſhall have no ſhare in. The *Alexandrian* copy, with ſome others, and the *Syriac* verſion, leave out the copulative *and*, and read *which are written*, &c. connecting them with the book of life, and holy city, which are written, and ſpoken of, in this book. The *Ethiopic* verſion connects the words with the holy city, only reading them, *which is written*, &c. The *Jews* ſay of their *Talmud*, that nothing is to be added to it, or diminiſhed from it [o].

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[m] Raziel, fol. 31. 2.

[n] Abot R. Nathan, c. 41. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 79. 4. & 82. 4. Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 54. 3. & 100. 2.

Ver. 20. *He which teſtifieth theſe things*, &c.] Not the angel, ver. 16. nor *John*, who ſometimes ~~uſed this way of ſpeaking, *John* xxi. 24.~~ but Chriſt, as appears from what follows; for he *ſaith, ſurely I come quickly*; who not only aſſerts the ſpeedineſs of his coming, as in ver. 7, 12. but expreſſes the certainty of it, ſo that it ought not to be doubted of by any, eſpecially by his own people; tho' it may ſeem to be deferred, and upon that account, be derided by ungodly men; and Chriſt may have ſome reſpect in this ſtrong repetition of it, to the certainty of the puniſhment that will then be inflicted upon ſuch who add to, or diminiſh from this book; for he himſelf will certainly come in perſon, and execute the vengeance threatned. *John* next puts his *Amen* to it, ſignifying his aſſent unto it, declaring his faith in it, and expreſſing his earneſt deſire after it, and wiſh for it: and in words at length adds, *even ſo come, Lord Jeſus*; quickly, ſpeedily, as thou haſt ſaid, and in all thy glory; ſet up thy kingdom, let that come, introduce thy people into it, and deſtroy thine enemies; this he ſaid as one that loved the appearance of Chriſt, longed for it, haſtened to it, and was impatient at the delay of it.

Ver. 21. *The grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt be with you all. Amen.*] That is, let a ſenſe of the love of Chriſt, ſhown in all his regards to his church and people, which is always the ſame in itſelf, though the ſaints have not always the ſame perception of it, abide upon you: may you ſee your intereſt in the redeeming grace of Chriſt, in all its branches, and in his juſtifying, pardoning, ſanctifying, and perſevering grace; let the fulneſs of grace in Chriſt be the object of your truſt and confidence; may you have a ſupply from it to enable you to overcome every temptation, to exerciſe every grace, and diſcharge every duty. This ſhows this book was written in the form of an Epiſtle, and ſent to the ſeven churches of *Aſia*, ch. i. 11. and thro' them to the churches in all ages. It begins with a ſalutation of them, ch. i. 4. and ends with one commonly uſed by the Apoſtle *Paul* in all his Epiſtles, 2 *Theſſ*. iii. 17, 18. The *Arabic* verſion inſtead of *you* reads *us*; and the *Complutenſian* edition, and the *Syriac* verſion read, *with all the ſaints*.

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[o] Ganz. Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 34. 1.

F I N I S.

ERRATA.

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